

GOPHER OVERSEAS'R

Volume 70, NO. 2 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Official Publication to More Than 45,000 Members of the Department of Minnesota June 2016 - September 2016

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State Commander Joseph Mauricio

Member of
VFW Post 742
New Brighton, MN



Greetings,

Well a new year has started and now is the time to get things started in our Posts, if we haven't started already.

We all know that membership is very important to everyone and let us not forget about our renewals. Our new Commander and Chief said let us not just do phone calls but to get out there and start knocking on doors.

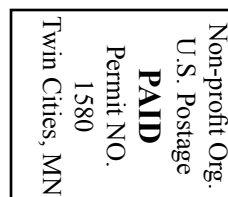
If we have not started doing things with our community yet we should start doing things now. Let them know that there is a VFW in town and that you are willing to do things with them and welcome them into your Post. Let us not forget that there are a lot of new Veterans and old Veterans that have never been asked to join or know anything about it.

On my way back from National this year I met a young man that he said he knew nothing about the VFW and never been asked to join so I told him about it and we looked up a nearby Post for him and I signed him up. Oh, I forgot to tell you that he was from Tennessee, so you see that they are out there they just need to be asked. We have a new Membership Chairman that can help you out. All you need to do, is ask for help and don't forget to ask questions if you have any.

It is very important that each Post has at least one member at each District meeting at all times. I forgot to say that if there is a college in your area, go there to talk to the new Veterans and let them know about the Veterans of Foreign Wars and invite them to your Post.

If you need Department officer to come to your Post or any event that is going on just call Department Headquarters and ask for my Department Adjutant. We will do all that we can do to help you out.

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



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

Fall Conference Heads North with New Ideas

LET'S TRY SOMETHING NEW!

The 2016 Fall Conference will feature the great displays and seminars we have all come to expect. However, it will also include a few NEW opportunities that we hope will provide an even more valuable experience for everyone. The Fall Conference Theme will focus on our V.F.W. Programs as we "Honor, Advocate and Serve Veterans".

Learn and share with other V.F.W. and Auxiliary members during this activity packed weekend of Council Meetings, Program Displays, Information Sessions and Social Activities... This will be a Fall Conference you DON'T WANT TO MISS!

LOCATION:

Adventure in the 9th District

Let's start off with a NEW Location... The V.F.W. Department Office will host the Minnesota VFW Fall Conference in Mahanomen, Minnesota. Join us as we venture to the VFW 9th District and enjoy the Hospitality of the Shooting Star Casino. This would be a great opportunity to take a little extra time to add some sightseeing onto the front or back end of your Fall Conference trip.

Hotel Reservations should be made soon, by calling the Hotel and providing them with our Block Number (found on the Housing Form included in this Overseas'r). We have a great room rate of \$85 a night plus tax which will also include breakfast. In addition, all rooms have a refrigerator and a microwave for your convenience.

Proudly owned and operated by the White Earth Nation, the Shooting Star Casino is located 35 miles north of Detroit Lakes; 70 miles northeast of Fargo and 250 northwest of Minneapolis/St Paul.

Visit with friends as you take a swim in the glass-enclosed indoor pool, relax in the Hot Tub or enjoy the atrium. Pamper yourself in the full-service Sereniitee Spa or enjoy a bite to eat in one of four on-site dining options ranging from a Four-Star Restaurant to

a grab-n-go cafe. Don't forget about the gift shop and Las Vegas-style gaming casino. To find out more about our host site, visit our State V.F.W. Fall Conference Website: www.mn.gov/vfw/fallconf

SEMINARS:

Something Old... Something NEW

This Conference is perfect for seasoned and new chairmen alike. Seminars will be conducted throughout the Conference to present Program information, deadlines and share ideas on how to best perform your chairmanship... this is a must attend for All Members and Chairmen at any level! We

will hold the Gambling Meeting on Friday and these rest of our Seminars on Saturday.

Plans include NEW session opportunities such as Panel Discussions with top Minnesota V.F.W. experts and a seminar on How to Run Efficient Meetings so you can move from Old to NEW Business faster. Learn How to Write By-Laws & Resolutions and the Meaning of Mentorship. We also hope to have "Open Office" opportunities to chat with VFW Headquarters Staff or VFW Claims Office Staff. See the Tentative Fall Conference Schedule in this Overseas'r.

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Tim 'Junior' Collier Passes at Age 61

State Commander 2001- 2002

Tim Collier was a Life Member of South St. Paul Post 295 during his Service as State Commander. Tim served in the United States Navy from 1972-1974. Tim earned his eligibility for the Veterans of Foreign Wars while serving off the coast of Vietnam.

It took less than ten (10) years for Tim to progress through the Chairs from Post Commander to State Commander.

Tim got the name of 'Junior' from then State Commander Dave Adams, Tim was Dave's State Junior Vice Commander.

Tim was a very 'social' person. He liked to spend time with his Friends. But, many of us learned over the years, Tim was a quiet and personal man. He loved spending time with his Family and he truly enjoyed his Fishing (when he could make time). Rumor has it, that he didn't catch many fish... maybe it was just the solitude that drew him to the water.



Tim Collier fought a long 'battle' with his mind. A fight that confronted him at a young age. A battle that eventually took his life.

Tim was a Great Friend, who had no enemies. Well liked and appreciated for his 'giving and forgiving' nature. He will be missed... But, he is in a better place now... Sitting on a calm and quiet lake.

Tim passed away on May 31, 2016 (Memorial Day), our day of Remembrance.

He served his Country and Community with Honor. Tim left us at an early age... you will be missed --- my Brother...



Save The Date!! Upcoming VFW Events

State Fall Conference
September 9 - 11, 2016
Mahnomen

Big 10 Conference
October 12 23, 2016
Kalamazoo, MI

Midwinter Conference
January 19 - 22, 2017
Minneapolis Marriott

National Legislative and
Voice of Democracy Conference
February 25 - March 2, 2017
Washington, D.C.

Red Events are Department Events

NATIONAL BY-LAWS CHANGE IN REGARDS TO THE MEN'S AUXILIARY

by Tate Doom, State Adjutant Quartermaster

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters of the VFW Auxiliary and the Men's Auxiliary.

As most of you may have heard a decision regarding the future viability of the Men's Auxiliary has been reached. At the 117 VFW National Convention held in Charlotte North Carolina a vote was taken on the council floor. But let me take a step back and describe how it unfolded.

There were five separate by-law changes put before the by-laws committee. Three had to deal with disbanding the Men's Auxiliary. One of the other ones was to let the Men's Auxiliary continue unimpeded by the National Organization. The last one was put through by the Department of Minnesota to change the name of the Men's Auxiliary to an ancillary team and let those Post's that had a current Men's Auxiliary to keep them unchanged and create a grandfather clause where currently Chartered Men's Auxiliaries' would be allowed to continue to exist but, no New Charters would be issued. As you can imagine the one that came out of committee was the complete and total disbandment of the Men's Auxiliary effective December 31st, 2016.

Upon the convention floor when the by-law change was recommended by the committee much discussion ensued. The idea of Grandfathering was brought up, as was a complete change of date to some place in the future. Both proposals had Departments arguing for either of the two alternative ideas and to vote the motion of disbandment down. The debate took around thirty minutes which is the longest debate that I have experienced at the National Convention on one motion. Unfortunately the motion was passed. The Department of Minnesota, along with many other department voted no to the proposal. The motion passed but just barely. Now we need to live with the ruling on the Conven-

tion floor and prepare for the December 31st, 2016 deadline.

I would urge all of my Auxiliary brothers to join the VFW Auxiliary. In Posts across the Nation Men have flocked to the new VFW Auxiliary. It is creating a stronger VFW. I am unsure of the hesitation of some. The Men's Auxiliaries were created to help the Post in achieving its mission of service to the community. There is absolutely no reason that this cannot continue. The biggest change is that now the men that are closely related to veteran can and do now have recognition at the National Level. Many men have taken on leadership positions within their Post and District. Some state's, such as Minnesota have men in their respective department chairmanship's.

What happens now is if the men would like (and I hope you do) to continue on with the works that you were doing for your local Post, you need (if you haven't already) apply to become a member of the VFW Auxiliary. Yes, you need to meet the eligibility requirements. These requirements are the exact same as they were when you first joined the Men's Auxiliary. Eligibility for the VFW Auxiliary is Article XI section 1102. "Eligibility shall be limited to spouses, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, children and grandchildren of a person who was eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars." Many members were allowed to join that were not eligible. What one needs to join the Auxiliary is a copy of the discharge papers, some form of proof that one is eligible such as a DD-214.

I am looking forward to continuing working with the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary now and in the future. I urge all eligible men that served in the Men's Auxiliary to become members of the VFW Auxiliary and continue on with the good works that you have done.

"No One Does More for Veterans"

VFW Members... Posts... Auxiliaries

We want to hear what YOU are doing for Veterans!

Email or mail us a short story about the person, activity or other noteworthy details, along with a picture and contact information if we need to follow-up.

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This years deadlines are July 28th, November 24th, and March 30th, 2017

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Kansas City, MN 64111

Please Note the below address change: (Please Print)

Name:

Address:

City:

State and Zip:

Post Number:

Membership

by Barry Henriksen, State Membership Chairman

Comrades, it is an honor to be the Membership Chairman for 2016-2017. I want to thank State Commander Joe Mauricio for this great opportunity. I also want to thank Scott Bill for laying the groundwork last year by getting the closest we have been to 100% in many years.

The path to 100% has already begun. Post Commanders have or are setting up their membership committees. These committees are critical to this year's success. Remember that anytime you are interacting with the public and prospective new members that you need to be prepared and set a good example. You are representing the finest Veterans Service Organization that there is.

Every single one of us can make a difference. Individual members that recruit 10 new members this year will be entered into a drawing for a \$1,000 stipend to the 2017 National Convention in New Orleans! Tour the National World War II Museum and enjoy the French Quarter. The drawing will be held in May, but get started now.

Post Commanders will also have opportunities to go to the National Conven-

tion in New Orleans next July. There will be a drawing at the Midwinter Conference for all posts that are 100% and in good standing. The winning post will receive \$1,000 (must attend the national convention to receive the \$1,000). There will be a second \$1,000 drawing for post commanders in March during the State Hockey Tournament in White Bear Lake.

Most importantly we serve in this organization because we have all been in harm's way at some time. We want to make sure that everyone that has served in the past or is currently serving gets all the support that they have earned. To do this membership is critical. A robust membership gets us the attention of our politicians. It helps us maintain our budget which provides additional resources.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Fall Conference during the membership seminar. Please bring feedback on membership. I also look forward to visiting all of the districts and talking to the posts.

Thanks for all that you do for our Veterans.

"Here Comes the Judge"

by Chad Solheid, State Judge Advocate

Section 218 a, 11 - Trustees

Greeting Comrades and Auxiliary members, I would like to take this time to thank all of you that have supported me and mentored me over the years. I also want to thank all of the members that supported and elected to me to be the new State Judge Advocate. I am ready to continue the work that the many comrades that have gone before me have built. I will continue the mission.

I would like to start off by touching on one of the most important jobs in the VFW- the Trustees. The trustees are the overseers of the funds that are generated and dispersed throughout our department.

Sec. 218 ((a, (11)). Trustees) - Trustees shall not be eligible to serve as an elected office, adjutant, or on a committee whose books, records, and accounts are audited by the trustees. Among the duties of the Post trustees, they shall:

At least once a month, review the

monthly reports of receipts and expenditures of the post quartermaster.

Within (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and records of the post quartermaster, post adjutant, and any activity, club room, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the post and submit a post trustees report of audit to the department quartermaster for referral to the department inspector.

This By-Law is very important because if the trustees are doing their job every month it will be easier to find any mistakes or indiscretions. Posts that have Trustees that do not perform their duties find out the hard way that their funds are gone. The time it takes to find all of the missing funds could have been spent helping the very comrades that need our help.

So please Trustees do your due diligence in your duties.

Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars Council of Administration 2016-2017

Commander	Joseph J Mauricio	724
Senior Vice Commander	Richard L Bugbee	612
Junior Vice Commander	Thomas L Hanson	1639
Quartermaster	Tate Doom	295
Adjutant	Tate Doom	295
Judge Advocate	Chad A Solheid	7
Surgeon	Dr. James R Tuorila	428
Chaplain	Leonard R Gudmunson	5555
Chief of Staff	Gordon W Kirk	724
Chief Inspector	Lawrence E Grindland	295
Past Commander	Duane B Hermanson	4452
1st District Commander	Curtis D Hermanson	4452
2nd District Commander	Dale E Hoogeveen	1791
3rd District Commander	Edward J Lozinski	5334
4th District Commander	Robert D Webster	724
5th District Commander	Michael A Gearman	1656
6th District Commander	Thomas J Tauber	6992
7th District Commander	Scott S Sutherland	246
8th District Commander	Richard J Chasse	3979
9th District Commander	John Lopez	1223

Ladies Auxiliary

Kathy Fystrom, State Auxiliary President

Greetings from the VFW Auxiliary Department of Minnesota.

I am so proud to be able to represent our State for all of the Brothers and Sisters of this great organization.

Thank you to those who joined State Commander Joe and myself for our Joint Installation and Reception in Rochester. We would like to extend a special thank you to the Rochester VFW and Auxiliary for providing and serving the reception.

I would also like to congratulate the Line Officers, District Presidents and National Appointees for 2016-17. We are all pledged to working together for our veterans.

Senior Vice Gail Brekke-Dilworth
 Junior Vice Patches Presfield- St Cloud
 Treasurer Laurie Dale-Kenyon
 Chaplain-Frankie Bill-Palmer Lake
 Conductress-Paige Amundson-Madison
 Guard-Jamie Cassavant-Crookston
 District One Karianne Hermanson-Cannon Falls
 District Two Michelle Smallidge-S St Paul
 District Three-Kathy Brockberg-Marshall
 District Four-Carol Kratz-White Bear Lake
 District Five-Ivey Vonderhaar-Madison
 District Six-Deann Reynolds-Milaca
 District Seven-Linda Walker-Richfield
 District Eight-Jean Scholar-Hoyt Lakes
 District Nine-Karen Haugen-Dilworth
 Big Ten Membership Coach-Debbie Tweet
 Big Ten Veterans & Family Support Chairman-Millie Lauer
 National Certified Recruiter Trainer - Laurie Dale
 Big Ten Conductress-Char Guse

We have a new year started with many new and wonderful things happening in the VFW Auxiliary. The special project I have chosen is for the Homeless Veterans in conjunction with the Department of MN Veterans Affairs-Homeless to raise money for "Welcome Home Kits". There are several organizations that help the homeless veterans find a job, car, housing and furniture. There is no organization that helps with the necessities of a household, such as sheets, towels, pots and pans, etc. We will work with the social worker attached to the homeless veteran. They will go with the veteran to help buy the things that our gift cards will buy. We will be contacted by the social worker on what any particular veterans may need. We intern will give the gift cards to the social worker. It is a project that is near and dear to my heart. It is my hope that the program can go on and not be just a one year project. Thank you in advance for helping with this wonderful cause.

National President Colette Bishop will be arriving in Minnesota on September 18th. This is following the Celebrating America's Freedom Event at Mt Rushmore. We will base her tour out of the St Cloud area. September 19th we will travel from St Cloud to Sauk Centre, on to Long Prairie and then to my Auxiliary and Post in Osakis and ending the day with dinner in St. Cloud. September 20th will be in the Little Falls area with a lunch with the soldiers at Camp Ripley. See the August and September General Orders for details. Everyone is welcome to come along with us. Lunch and dinner reservations for the 19th are needed. Thank you again for all your support through these years. I only hope that I represent you and our state of Minnesota proudly. Here we go on the ride with our VFW Comrades and VFW Auxiliary members to help our beloved veterans.



VFW NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

William A. Thien
 Commander-in-Chief 2013-2014
 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

TO VISIT 2016 MN FALL CONFERENCE

William A. "Bill" Thien was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on July 24, 2013, at the VFW's 114th National Convention, held in Louisville, KY.

Mr. Thien served in the U.S. Navy from 1969-1974 and served five years in the Indiana National Guard. His decorations include the Vietnam Service Medal with 3 stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal with 1960 Bar, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea), National Defense Service Medal and several from the National Guard.

He joined the VFW in 1971 at Post 3281 in New Albany, Ind., where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life Membership. He has served the VFW in many leadership positions including All American Post Commander, All State District Commander and All American State Commander. He has also held positions on numerous National committees, including Vice Chairman of Citizenship Education and Community Service and as Chairman of National Scholarship and Recognition.

Mr. Thien attended Indiana University Southeast. He worked as a Team Leader/Shift Supervisor at Duke Energy and is now retired.

Mr. Thien is a member of the American Legion, DAV, Veterans of Vietnam War Inc., National Rifle Association, Patriot Guard Riders, Military Order of the Cootie Pup Tent 51 and VFW National Home.

He and his wife Linda reside in Georgetown, Ind.



AUXILIARY NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Peggy Haake
 National Chaplain 2016-2017
 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary

TO VISIT 2016 MN FALL CONFERENCE

Auxiliary Membership

Francesca 'Frankie' Bill, State Auxiliary Membership Chairman

Brothers and Sisters, the VFW Auxiliary is kicking off a new program year for Membership. This year, the program introduces a new element called the Leadership Circle of Excellence. This initiative replaces the Outstanding Department President Award formerly offered at the national level. With attainable requirements, every Department President has the opportunity to join the Circle. For more information, visit www.vfwauxiliary.org. Select the 'MEMBER LOGIN' link and enter your credentials to locate the 2016-2017 National Program Book. Once logged in, on the left-hand side, select the 'Program and Publicity Resources' link to access the book. Details about the Circle can be found on pages 17-19 and Awards on pages 36-38.

The Life Membership Increase proposed by the National Life Membership Committee during the VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina did not pass. Instead, the floor passed by majority vote to raise life membership dues by 15% across all age categories. This will take effect January 1, 2017. If you or any of your Auxiliary members are currently annual members, you may want to consider going life before the rates become effective later this program year. Please see the new proposed life membership fees in the table below:

Age Grouping	Current Fee Structure	Increase of 15%
Through 20	\$220	\$253
21 - 25	\$210	\$241.50
26 - 30	\$200	\$230
31 - 35	\$190	\$218.50
36 - 40	\$185	\$212.75
41 - 45	\$175	\$201.75
46 - 50	\$170	\$195.50
51 - 55	\$160	\$184
56 - 60	\$150	\$172.50
61 - 65	\$140	\$161
66 - 70	\$130	\$149.50
71 - 75	\$115	\$132.25
76 - 80	\$95	\$109.25
81 - 85	\$75	\$86.25
86 - 90	\$60	\$69
91 and Over	\$50	\$57.50

Additionally, the VFW National Convention floor passed the disbandment of the Men's Auxiliary effective December 31, 2016. I encourage all brothers impacted by this change to consider joining the VFW Auxiliary. Your contributions and support for Veterans do not go unnoticed. We embrace your volunteerism, leadership skills, and enormous hearts to join us and continue to serve local Veterans, active-duty military, their families, and communities. Sign up today - we need you!

Plan Ahead To Make Your Auxiliary Stronger!!!

DUES ARE NOW DUE!!!

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



During a Ceremony at the 2016 State Convention, the "NEW" Charter of the Auxiliary is escorted in by the Color Guard, State Chaplain Patches Presfield and State Conductress Frankie Bill.



At the State Convention Joint Awards Session, the State Auxiliary paid tribute to their Outstanding Auxiliary Presidents. Taking part in the presentation, were State President Millie Lauer, National Auxiliary Guard Sandra Onstwedder, Past National Commander Gary Kurpius and State Commander Dewey Hermanson.

Peggy Haake of Kahului, Hawaii, was elected National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of the United States Auxiliary at its 103rd National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., on July 27, 2016. She is now in the third of five offices leading to the National Presidency, which she is expected to hold in 2019-2020.

Peggy is a Life Member of Wilbert Wah Hu Tom Auxiliary 3850, which she joined on the eligibility of her husband, Richard, who served in the United States Army in Vietnam from 1970-71. Since joining, she has served the organization in many capacities, including Auxiliary and State President, National Council Member and Western Conference Chairman for the Youth Activities program. She is a Life Member of VFW National Home, Camp Trotter in Michigan, the DAV and the VFW Veteran's Village in Florida.

Peggy retired after 34 years with the Bank of Hawaii and is currently an instructor for AARP's Driver Safety Program. In her spare time she enjoys bowling and volunteer work.

Claims and Service Officer Report

By: Jon Gohn, Director

Special Traumatic Brain Injury Review

I'm sure by now most of you have seen news stories regarding a KARE 11 investigation regarding Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) claims in the State of Minnesota. In July of 2015 the Department of Veterans Affairs here in St. Paul, Minnesota had a meeting with all of the Veteran Service Organizations. At that time we were all dually notified that there had been a mistake in the way they were conducting TBI exams. The information received at that time was that they were going to be doing an administrative review of all TBI claims that were submitted from 2010 to 2014. At the time this amounted to 317 claims that were initially identified.

The reason behind the special administrative review was due to the fact that the Compensation and Pension Division had an unqualified individual who completed the exams. These exams are extensive and require special credentials. The regulation states that the exams must be completed by a neurologist, psychiatrist, physiatrist, or neurosurgeon. Unfortunately numerous exams were conducted by a certified nurse practitioner. This is obviously not in accordance with their rules and regulations, and prompted the exams.

In the beginning of August 2015, the DVA sent letters to numerous veterans notifying them that they had an initial TBI exam that was not performed by one of the necessary specialists. It further went on to explain that they were offering the veteran an opportunity to reopen their claim, and directed them to fill out the proper VA Form 21-526EZ to either request an increase or reopen their previous claim.

Prior to the veterans receiving this letter in August, your VFW Claims Office made a determination to be proactive for the 52 clients that we represented on this list, and were the only organization to do so. Directly after our meeting in July we received a list of individuals that we represent, and filed informal Intent to File Claims in order to save the date of claim. Your VFW Assistant Director, Lynette Bonin, has taken this effort on with a full head of steam and has been an outstanding advocate for these veterans. At the time we were informed that the new date of claim would be the date for any increased or new rating. As it was through no fault of the veteran that their exams were performed by inadequate personnel, we were not satisfied but continued to work the issue. Shortly after filing the informal claims we followed up with formal claims for all of these individuals.

As we did not believe that it was advantageous for the veteran to have a date of claim that did not go back to the original date that they filed for TBI, it was the decision to try to obtain Equitable Relief to the Director of Compensation Service or Pension and Fiduciary (P&F) Service for one of the veterans who we represented. Equitable Relief is a remedy for an injustice done to a claimant resulting from mistakes made in applying rules and regulations that either deprived the claimant of benefits or caused the claimant to suffer a loss because he/she relied on an erroneous decision.

The reason we made this decision, which is not to be taken lightly, was in part to the VA already informing this gentleman that he would receive a nearly \$30,000.00 back payment back to the original date of claim. Because of the anticipated award the veteran began paying off some debts, and they ceased operating his wife's private business. The VA then turned around later and stated that there was no guidance from the VA Central Office, they were sorry for their mistake and the veteran would only be receiving just over \$1,000.00 in back payments.

We never did receive a determination regarding equitable relief for our veteran; however we believe that our efforts were the tip of the iceberg in regards what was to come from the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald.

Minnesota was only the starting point to this injustice. Because of what was discovered in our state, there was a call from Congress and the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to au-

dit all regional offices in the Nation. It was found that there was quite an astronomical amount of veterans across the US that experienced the same incorrect evaluations. It was further discovered that the claims only thought to have gone back to 2010, now are being reviewed back to 2007.

In June of 2016 Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald granted equitable relief to nearly 24,000 veterans with TBI claims ranging from 2007 to 2015. What was stated at that time that they would be afforded new exams and that the VA was going to correct the injustice to the claimant where they are not otherwise authorized to do so within the scope of the law.

The reason why the VA is currently only looking at claims back as far as 2007 is due to the fact that the VA policy regarding specialists such as psychiatrists, physiatrists, neurosurgeons or neurologists was developed at that time. Their expertise is vital regarding the numerous complexities that come with TBIs. Since that same year medicine has been rapidly evolving, and the VA developed guidance regarding the necessity of specialists that may have been misconstrued at the time. However, that guidance is now clear and being followed.

Since the notifications that came out in August 2015, there have been new batches of veterans that have been notified. In July 2016 your VFW Claims Office received nearly 60 new notifications, and more trickle in every day. The new batches of notifications are trying to simplify the process for those who wish to re-entertain their TBI claims. It does let the veteran know that if they are willing to undergo a new TBI examination, they must notify the VA within one year of the date of the letter received. They are not requiring the veteran to file a formal claim on a VA form 21-526EZ. They are providing the veteran with a VA form 21-4138 Statement in Support of Claim sheet. They are asking the veteran to simply state the following on this form; "I am requesting reprocessing under VA's special TBI review."

Once again this office determined it necessary to be proactive regarding the veterans that we represent through the VFW. If we are dealing with individuals that potentially have some degree of cognitive impairment, and who may find the VA letter confusing, then it is our responsibility to ensure they are taken care of. We immediately referenced our new stack of veterans' letters and submitted requests on their behalf. We predict that more notifications are to come, and we will continue to be diligent with every one of them.

To date, because of the efforts of this office, we have procured nearly \$500,000.00 in retroactive payments for the veterans that we represent. We are not done, and continue to work closely with the VA and our counterparts to ensure that our veterans and all veterans dealing with this issue are compensated correctly for their injuries.

It is stated that TBIs are the signature injury in those veterans returning home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Based on new protective gear and advances in medical technology, we are seeing may troops today who survive injuries that our warriors of past did not. As advances continue to grow we will see great strides in protecting their quality of life and longevity.

If you are still wondering about the individual that I mentioned before and how his fight turned out, I am proud to announce that to date we have been able to procure him over \$55,000.00 in combined retroactive benefits. Because of the diligence of this office, and Lynette Bonin in particular, we know that his quality of life has improved and some financial burden has been lifted off of his shoulders. We are not done yet, and hope to see even more in his future to be able to provide for his family and live a life without financial worry.

If any of you have any questions regarding your own TBI claims, or know of a friend or family member who might fall into this category, we urge you to reach out to our office. We will continue to fight the good fight in regards to these and all benefit matters, and hope that you can stand proud of your VFW Claims Office and our diligence and passion when representing our clientele.

The VFW Claims Office is located in the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive Room G900, St. Paul, MN 55111. We are located right next to Ft. Snelling. Our office number is (612)970-5669. Please call or stop in anytime, we are glad to help.

VA Secretary Provides Relief for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injuries

WASHINGTON, June 1, 2016 – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald has granted equitable relief to more than 24,000 Veterans following a national review of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) medical examinations conducted in connection with disability compensation claims processed between 2007 and 2015.

This action by the Secretary allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to offer new TBI examinations to Veterans whose initial examination for TBI was not conducted by one of four designated medical specialists and provides them with the opportunity to have their claims reprocessed. Equitable relief is a unique legal remedy that allows the Secretary to correct an injustice to a claimant where VA is not otherwise authorized to do so within the scope of the law.

"Traumatic Brain Injury is a signature injury in Veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and VA is proud to be an organization that sets the bar high for supporting these, and all, Veterans," said Secretary McDonald. "Providing support for Veterans suffering from a TBI is a priority and a privilege, and we must make certain they receive a just and fair rating for their disabilities."

To ensure that TBI is properly evaluated for disability compensation purposes, VA developed a policy in 2007 requiring that one of four specialists – a psychiatrist, physiatrist, neurosurgeon or neurologist – complete TBI exams when VA does not have a prior diagnosis.

Since 2007, medicine around TBI has been a rapidly evolving science. VA designated particular specialists to conduct initial TBI exams because they have the most experience with the symptoms and effects of TBI. As more research became available, VA issued a number of guidance documents that may have created confusion regarding the policy. VA has confirmed that its TBI policy guidance is now clear and being followed.

"We let these Veterans down," Secretary McDonald said. "That is why we are taking every step necessary to grant equitable relief to those affected to ensure they receive the full benefits to which they are entitled."

VA understands the importance of an accurate exam to support Veterans' disability claims. The Secretary's decision to grant relief will enable VA to take action on any new examinations without requiring Veterans to submit new claims. If additional benefits are due, VA will award an effective date as early as the date of the initial TBI claim.

VA will contact Veterans identified as part of this national TBI review to offer them an opportunity to receive a new examination and have their claims reprocessed. More than 13,000 of these affected Veterans are already receiving service-connected compensation benefits for TBI at a 10-percent disability evaluation or higher, which means that the diagnosis has already been established.

VA Conducts Nation's Largest Analysis of Veteran Suicide

WASHINGTON, July 7, 2016 — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has undertaken the most comprehensive analysis

of Veteran suicide rates in the U.S., examining over 55 million Veteran records from 1979 to 2014 from every state in the nation. The effort extends VA's knowledge from the previous report issued in 2010, which examined three million Veteran records from 20 states were available. Based on the data from 2010, VA estimated the number of Veteran deaths by suicide averaged 22 per day. The current analysis indicates that in 2014, an average of 20 Veterans a day died from suicide.

"One Veteran suicide is one too many, and this collaborative effort provides both updated and comprehensive data that allows us to make better informed decisions on how to prevent this national tragedy," said VA Under Secretary for Health, Dr. David J. Shulkin. "We as a nation must focus on bringing the number of Veteran suicides to zero."

The final report will be publicly released later this month. Key findings of the analysis will include:

- 65% of all Veterans who died from suicide in 2014 were 50 years of age or older.
- Veterans accounted for 18% of all deaths from suicide among U.S. adults. This is a decrease from 22% in 2010.
- Since 2001, U.S. adult civilian suicides increased 23%, while Veteran suicides increased 32% in the same time period. After controlling for age and gender, this makes the risk of suicide 21% greater for Veterans.
- Since 2001, the rate of suicide among US Veterans who use VA services increased by 8.8%, while the rate of suicide among Veterans who do not use VA services increased by 38.6%.
 - In the same time period, the rate of suicide among male Veterans who use VA services increased 11%, while the rate of suicide increased 35% among male Veterans who do not use VA services.
 - In the same time period, the rate of suicide among female Veterans who use VA services increased 4.6%, while the rate of suicide increased 98% among female Veterans who do not use VA services.

VA is aggressively undertaking a number of new measures to prevent suicide, including:

- Ensuring same-day access for Veterans with urgent mental health needs at over 1,000 points of care by the end of calendar year 2016. In fiscal year 2015, more than 1.6 million Veterans received mental health treatment from VA, including at over 150 medical centers, 820 community-based outpatient clinics and 300 Vet Centers that provide readjustment counseling. Veterans also enter VA health care through the Veterans Crisis Line, VA staff on college and university campuses, or other outreach points.
 - Using predictive modeling to determine which Veterans may be at highest risk of suicide, so providers can intervene early. Veterans in the top 0.1% of risk, who have a 43-fold increased risk of death from suicide within a month, can be identified before clinical signs of suicide are evident in order to save lives before a crisis occurs.
 - Expanding telemental health care by establishing four new regional telemental health hubs across the VA healthcare system.
 - Hiring over 60 new crisis intervention responders for the Veterans Crisis Line. Each responder receives intensive training on a wide variety of topics in crisis

Cont. on Page 5

Need Help with your Veterans Benefits and Entitlements

CALL the VFW Claims Service Office at:

612-970-5669

Capitol Hill Press

by Tom McLaughlin, State Legislative Chairman

Election Addition

After 43 years of trying, we have finally succeeded in passing legislation this past session to repeal the unfair tax that military retirees have been paying on their retirement pay. Minnesota was one of the few states in the nation still taxing our retired military veterans who have served this nation for 20 years or longer. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Minnesota has never given up fighting this unfair tax even when some thought it was hopeless. The State Commander's Task Force with Representative Bob Dettmer led the way in the house and with our membership support at Veteran's On the Hill Day we were able to succeed.

Our work is far from finished as I write this article; we still are waiting for the Governor to call a special session to pass a bonding bill. The State bonding bill contains funds for asset preservation at our Minneapolis State Veterans Home and the repair of the bridge over Minnehaha Creek. The bridge has been closed for years and is the only other access to the home for emergency equipment.

This fall we all will have the chance to exercise our rights as American citizens and Veterans to take part in the election process. We need to get our message out to those seeking public office on every level - national, state and local. Every Commander and District Officer needs to make our resources available this election, offering our Post homes to candidates for Town Hall meetings and Candidate Forums. Our National Organization is encouraging us to do so and has directed our State Departments to assist in any way we can. Contact the Department Office when you plan to host an event or have any questions and we will be happy to assist you with our resources.

Nationally, I will be attending our annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. the week of September 12th, the day after our Fall Conference. We will be receiving our Priority Legislative Goals for the upcoming sessions and sharing them in personal meetings with the Minnesota Legislative Delegation.

The passing of the tax relief for Minnesota's retired military Veterans was not the only Veterans legislation passed this session; I have enclosed other Veteran related legislation and information on how to hold a Town Hall meeting or Candidate Forum.

2016 Minnesota Legislative Session Recap - Veterans Related Legislation

Ch. 189, HF 2749

Summary

The Omnibus Supplemental Budget bill included 12 provisions of interest to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, including \$845,000 worth of funding that will directly or indirectly benefit Veterans and their dependents through programs or studies, a major tax benefit to retired Veterans residing in the state, and policy initiatives including changes to the Veterans Preference Statute, Veteran-Owned small businesses, and a provision allowing for the creation of a Medal of Honor Memorial on the Capitol Grounds.

Military Pension Tax Subtraction

Included in the Supplemental Budget bill was the provision of a new income tax subtraction for military retirement pay. The new language amends Minnesota Statutes Chapter 290 which covers Income Taxes, specifically that Section defining items which shall be subtracted from federal taxable income. The language reads as follows:

"...to the extent included in federal taxable income, compensation received from a pension or other retirement pay from the federal government for service in the military, as computed under United States Code, title 10, sections 1401 to 1414, 1447 to 1455, and 12733."

Individuals, estates and trusts eligible for this subtraction from taxable income may include:

- Members of active components of the armed forces who have performed the required years of qualifying service



- Members of a reserve component, the National Guard, Army National Guard or Air National guard who have performed or were credited for the required years of qualifying service

- Eligible combat-related disabled uniformed services retirees

- Members retired under 10 U.S.C. Chapter 61 - Retirement or Separation for Physical Disability

- Individuals, including Surviving Spouses and/or Dependent Children, eligible for the federal Survivor Benefit Plan

The new subtraction for pension or other military retirement pay is effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

Appropriations and Programming

Also included in this Omnibus bill are the following items of interest to Veterans:

- \$50,000 (onetime appropriation) for AMPERS Veterans Voices programming (Public Broadcasting)

- \$95,000 (onetime) for Veterans Voices (Minnesota Humanities Center)

- \$100,000 (onetime) in rent subsidies for Veterans at Cottages of Anoka

- \$200,000 (onetime) for "State Soldiers Assistance: Grants for Housing & Health Assistance"

- \$150,000 (onetime) for Veterans Mental Health Study - Requires the Commissioner to study, quantify and describe unmet mental health needs among veterans

- \$250,000 (onetime) for "Disabled Veterans Interim Housing Study" - Requires the Commissioner to study the feasibility of partnering with a non-profit organization to provide interim housing for disabled veterans.

- Minor changes to Veterans driver's license designation language - allow for pictorial or symbol ("V") designation on DL's

- Inclusion of Veteran-owned business in Minnesota Emerging Entrepreneur Board

- Changes to state procurement contracts to certified Veteran-owned small businesses (Businesses which are majority-owned and operated by Veterans).

"The commissioner may award a contract for goods, services, or construction directly to a veteran-owned small business without going through a competitive solicitation process up to a total contract award value, including extension options, of \$25,000."

- Language allowing MDVA to solicit donations for the Medal of Honor Memorial on the Capitol grounds.

- Character development education curriculum in elementary, middle and high school programs incorporating the history and values of Medal of Honor recipients.

- **Changes to Veterans Preference**

The following modifications were made to the Veterans Preference Act, Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 197.46:

- Increased parity in Veterans employed by county, home rule charter or statutory city, town, school district, or other municipality or political subdivision and state employed Veterans

- Hearing request changed from 60 to 30 days to request a hearing to contest a notice of dismissal

- Inclusion of the selection of an arbitrator from the MN Bureau of Mediation Services in place of a three-person panel. Important for those locations where no civil service board or commission or merit system authority exists

- The creation of a probationary period following initial hire (where Veteran is

not eligible for Vets Preference protections) in 'non-state government' political subdivisions

- Language defining who pays costs and attorney's fees

"For disputes heard by a civil service board, commission or merit system authority, or an arbitrator, the governmental subdivisions shall bear all costs associated with the hearing but not including attorney fees for attorneys representing the veteran. If the veteran prevails in a dispute heard by a civil service board, commission or merit system authority, or an arbitrator and the hearing reverses the level of the alleged incompetency or misconduct requiring discharge, the governmental subdivision shall pay the veteran's reasonable attorney fees."

Ch.90, HF3252

Bill allowing certain military members, Veterans and their spouses to have the experience requirement for real estate broker's license waived, if the licenses were cancelled due to their service.

Register to

Vote!

Register to Vote

As a citizen and VFW advocate, you should be registered to vote! Contact your local board of elections for applications and more information or use the National Mail Voter Registration Form. Print it directly from the website www.eac.gov, fill it out and send it in. Uniformed Services members and their families can find more information about absentee voter registration at the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov.

Encourage Others to Register

Plan a voter registration drive well in advance of any state registration deadlines. To ensure a good turnout:

- find a central location such as a library, a grocery store, a public transportation station, etc.;
- make sure you receive enough applications from your board of elections; and
- display banners or signs to advertise and attract attention to your booth.

CLAIMS - Cont. from Page 4

intervention, substance use disorders, screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment.

- Building new collaborations between Veteran programs in VA and those working in community settings, such as Give an Hour, Psych Armor Institute, University of Michigan's Peer Advisors for Veterans Education Program (PAVE), and the Cohen Veterans Network.

- Creating stronger inter-agency (e.g. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Defense, National Institutes of Health) and new public-private partnerships (e.g., Johnson & Johnson Healthcare System, Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, Walgreen's, and many more) focused on preventing suicide among Veterans.

Many of these efforts were catalyzed by VA's February 2016 Preventing

Host A Town Hall Meeting or Candidates Forum

Candidates and campaigns are always looking for places to host an event and audiences to speak to. Why not host an event at a VFW Post in your State. Here are some tips for hosting your own event:

- Send a letter or email of invitation to each candidate—set a date, a location and follow up with a phone call.
- Promote the event to community groups, veterans groups and the public. Use your local media to publicize it.
- Select a moderator who is comfortable speaking in front of an audience and who can keep the program on topic.
- Prepare questions in advance.

Attend Other Candidate Forums

If candidates cannot make it to your Post, ask veteran-related questions at other public forums. See that our issues are on their agendas. If you know the moderator or someone on the panel, urge them to bring up veterans issues, too.

Get Involved in the Campaign

Although VFW members cannot endorse candidates on behalf of VFW, there is nothing preventing you from working on behalf of your favorite candidate.

Campaigns are always looking for volunteers, and offering a hand can be a great way to help candidates in their election bid.

See if the candidate has a veterans council or advisory panel, and see if you can provide any input. Every effort helps.

Stay Informed

Your job isn't done when the elections are over. You must use your influence and continue to urge your representatives to support VFW and veterans issues.

Subscribe to Washington Weekly, VFW's weekly e-mail newsletter, to stay informed and on top of issues and things you need to communicate to your legislators. Join VFW's Quick Reaction Force (QRF) now on Twitter. VFW recently launched a new advocacy tool using Twitter to help provide immediate and effective constituent engagement with Capitol Hill to protect veterans' priorities. To subscribe to the weekly or our QRF on Twitter visit VFW in DC at www.vfw.org.

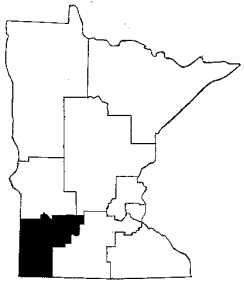
Veteran Suicide—A Call to Action summit, which focused on improving mental health care access for Veterans across the nation and increasing resources for the VA Suicide Prevention Program.

Suicide is an issue that affects all Americans. Recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data reported in [April 2016](#) that from 1999 through 2014 (the most recent year with data available from CDC), suicide rates increased 24 % in the general population for both males and females.

VA has implemented comprehensive, broad ranging suicide prevention initiatives, including a toll-free Veterans Crisis Line, placement of Suicide Prevention Coordinators at all VA Medical Centers and large outpatient facilities, and improvements in case management and tracking. Immediate help is available at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net or by calling the Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or texting 838255.

~ You Fought For the RIGHT ~
VOTE on November 8, 2016

News from YOUR District Commanders and Presidents!



**Ed Lozinski, Commander
Third District**

Greetings from the 3rd District!!
3rd District held their Annual Budget meeting on July 9, 2016 in the recently remodeled post home of Post #2603 in Wilmont, MN. Their post and auxiliary did a great job of hosting the meeting.

We had a very productive meeting with some minor changes on the budget. We discussed starting up a 3rd District VFW Riders Group. Our judge advocate, John Sullivan, is going to check into this further.

We discussed functions we can attend to obtain new members.

On July 16, 2016, some District members volunteered to have a booth at the Gun show in rural Lake Benton, MN.

On August 18, 2016, Luverne Veterans Home is hosting a tractor, motorcycle and car show with a cook-out sponsored by Luverne's Veterans Home. There will be several 3rd District members participating in the show. It should be a fun day!

Some of our local Posts are getting ready to start the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Programs. This is a great program for our local youths. It was a great year and we hope to build from this with more posts participating in the future.

I was proud of our posts in the 3rd District that participated in the programs that were offered. Roxanne Kramer, sponsored by Wilmont Post #2603, won the state Elementary Teacher award, Marc Klaiph, sponsored by Marshall Post #742, won the state Fireman's award, and Nick Antony, sponsored by Canby Post #117, finished in 2nd place in the Voice of Democracy.

Terrie Gulden, Chief Inspector would like to remind you that post inspections will begin in the near future.

Our next meeting will be held on October 15, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in Ivanhoe, MN sponsored by Lincoln County Post #2980.

Have a great 2016-2017 year!

**Kathy Brockberg, President
Third District**

Greetings from the 3rd district.

We had our first district meeting July 9th at Wilmont with President Kathy Fystrom as out state representative. Our budget was approved and we voted to continue with the craft and bake sale and raffle basket at each district meeting. We did lose one auxiliary last year, so one of our goals is to maintain the auxiliaries we have and to recruit new members.

I attended the hospital board meeting and C of A on July 16.

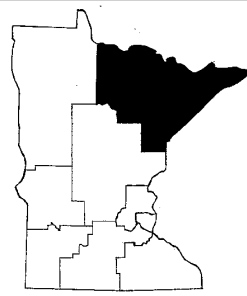
We received our program books for the year, so they will be distributed to each district chairman. Each auxiliary has activities scheduled for veterans during the year. My auxiliary, 742, will be providing a picnic lunch and serving pie and ice cream to the veterans at the Luverne Veterans Home. We are not large in numbers, but district 3 will continue to serve our veterans.

in the district can support our posts. With increased camaraderie We believe that this will increase participation and ownership in our programs.

**Carol Kratz, President
Fourth District**

I was proud to be elected Dist 4 President and I am proud to serve in this capacity and under the leadership of Dept Pres Kathy. I will try my hardest to assist the Auxiliaries in my District hoping their monthly meetings will be more productive than ever. A few upcoming goals are for Inspections to be done on Nov 14th, and Membership will be at 100% by Dec 31st with a goal of increasing our Male members. Our first meeting is scheduled for August 13th in Mendota Post / Aux 6690 and I challenge each Auxiliary in my District to increase the number of members attending. At this meeting we will hold a School of Instruction for Secretary's and Treasurers.

I chose the Buddy Poppy as my symbol. My project will be POW/MIA Awareness and my Theme will be "Dedicate Yourself to Our Military and Veterans", to remember the Veteran whose eligibility you joined under. I will ask each Dist 4 member reach out to the sisters and brothers who joined this great organization and work together to make our programs strong.



**Richard Chasse, Commander
Eighth District**

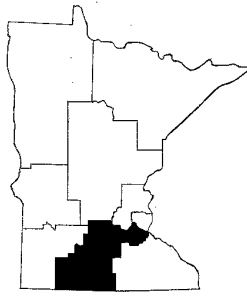
Greetings, my fellow Comrades and Auxiliaries of the Great 8th District of Minnesota. Thank you for all the hard work you have done, and continue to do, to keep the 8th District one of the greatest districts in Minnesota. The path to greatness is never easy and there is always work to be done. I know that with the leadership we have in place this year, we will continue to be one of the greatest districts this state (and nation) has ever seen.

I know I have large shoes to fill, thanks to the Commanders that precede me, but I am up for the challenge. Thanks to all who have the confidence and trust in me to lead you for the upcoming year. I sometimes feel like we, as an organization, have become

complacent with the way we have been doing things and from the looks of the numbers on membership, others may feel that way too. I believe that if we revisit the vision of our VFW founders, we can gain our strength in numbers again. Sometimes you have to take a step back in order to move forward. We cannot go wrong and will remain strong as an organization if we adhere to the foundations of our Charter granted to the Veterans of Foreign Wars by the 74th Congress of the United States, which says:

"The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America and extend the institutions of American freedom and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever."

Our mission is to honor the dead by helping the living through Veterans' Service, Community Service, and National Security. We will promote Patriotism and help Veterans in need. We will give our members a reason to stay and show new member that the VFW is the place to be because "We are the Greatest Veterans Organization on Earth."



**Dale Hoogeveen, Commander
Second District**

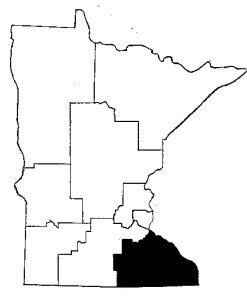
Greetings comrades of the Second District. I am honored by and I thank you for the opportunity the coming year represents as we work together to advance the mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The success of our organization is entirely dependent on the efforts of each comrade, each post commander and line officer. I thank each elected and appointed officer at the District and Post level, each trustee and each chairperson for your willingness to serve as a leader. I challenge each of you to review the duties of your position and to look at how business is conducted at all levels with a critical eye, not to criticize, but to identify opportunities for improvement. I also encourage you to help us identify the next comrade to serve at the district level. I know there are many comrades in this district who are more than capable and may just need a little encouragement to take that step.

My philosophy regarding district and post affairs is grounded in transparency. All comrades in good standing are entitled to know the financial status of our organization,

to have their vote counted as we conduct business and to have their ideas considered. The only way that will happen is by attending meetings, conferences and conventions at the post, district and department levels. This is one area District 2 can easily improve with minimal effort. I hope to see a much larger number of you at our district meetings on August 20 at Post 906 in Hutchinson and on October 29 at Post 3842 in Madelia. Fall conference is scheduled for September 9-11 at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen, make your reservation now and plan to attend the banquet on Saturday evening.

Post inspections will soon be underway and those comrades assigned as deputy inspectors will attend training on August 6 at Post 295 in South St Paul. Post inspections are not a "gotcha" event. Please prepare for your post inspection and have the requested documents available to expedite the process. If you are having difficulties meeting the requirements of our National or Department By-laws, ask for assistance. The last thing your leaders want to do is suspend a post or revoke a charter.

Lastly, membership continues to be a challenge at all levels. However, recruiting new members is not an impossible task as evidenced by the 5 new members who were recruited by Posts 1210, 1648 and 5462 between Loyalty Day and the Department convention to earn some of the district's money as part of last year's membership program. Penetration in the state of Minnesota is approximately 21% which means there are many eligible veterans out there just waiting to be recruited. Together, let's have a great year and represent the Department of Minnesota to the best of our abilities.



**Curt Hermanson, Commander
First District**

Greetings Comrades,

As we start the new VFW year I would like to thank everyone for their continued support in my second year as First District Commander.

We all know that membership is vital to our continued success, I hope that each one of you continue to make an effort

to recruit at least one new member. I know that in the outlying areas of our District new members are harder to find but they are out there if we take the time to seek them out. I have just returned from attending our 117th National Convention in North Carolina. It was wonderful to see familiar faces and meet with new people within our great organization.

The First District VFW Baseball Tournament was held July 30th - July 31st in Owatonna and I would like to extend congratulations to our First District winner.

Our First District meeting schedule will be as follows for the upcoming year;
August 6th 2016- Cannon Falls
October 1st 2016-Winona
December 3rd 2016- Austin
February 4th 2017- Kenyon
Loyalty Days- Cannon Falls

I look forward to seeing you all and continuing our prosperous year as your Commander.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Big 10 Conference

Hosted by the Department of Minnesota

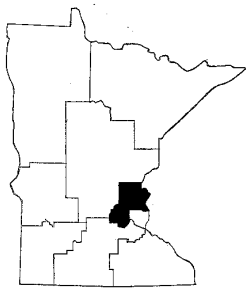
October 13-15, 2017

Bloomington, MN

Conference Meetings, Social Gatherings & More

Meet VFW & Auxiliary Members from the VFW Big 10 States

Details will be available at Dept. MN Fall Conference 2016



**Scott Sutherland, Commander
Seventh District**

Greetings, Comrades and Friends.

Right out of the gate, I want to say how proud and honored I am to once again serve as Commander of the great 7th District. As before, I have some big shoes to fill. We did a lot of great things this past year in the 7th, and kudos are in order. My personal congratulations go out to Chad Solheid on his election as Department Judge Advocate. We know you will represent well.

It appears that this next year will be as challenging as ever. July was busy from the get-go: District Budget & Finance meeting (June 30th), the 4th of July Parade, District Organizational meeting, Membership Kick-off, Department C of A, and some Post

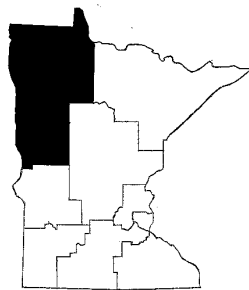
meetings in between. We do have some challenges to face in the upcoming year; I have a strong group of officers with me to face those challenges, and we are ready.

The 7th District meetings and Calendar of Events for the year are out, programs and deadlines have been addressed in detail, and several are well underway. I highly encourage attending Fall Conference in September; that is truly the best event in which to best learn about all the plans and programs for the year. The first District meeting will be October 8th at Fred Babcock Post 5555, with the following District meeting December 10th at Palmer Lake Post 3915.

In order to maintain the strength in our organization and build on that strength, Membership is always the top priority. To reiterate, Membership is, and always will be, the "lifeblood" of our organization. Without Members we have nothing!

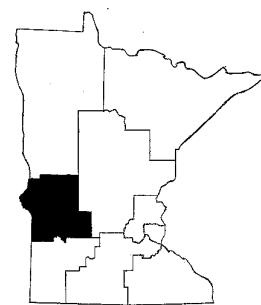
Lastly, I am pleased to have Linda Walker as my District Auxiliary President this year; we already have a great rapport and work well together. I look forward to a great year.

What's past is past. Let's all move forward and have a great year! In the 7th District, we are "working together to accomplish our mission..."



**John Lopez, Commander
Ninth District**

Congratulations to all of this year's Post officers. Please familiarize yourselves with your duties and obligations. The success of your post cannot rest with just one comrade, but must be a team effort. The first 9th District meeting will be hosted by the Roseau Post on September 24th. We will have a community service class so please bring any questions you may have. As I write this the 9th District baseball tournament is set to happen this weekend. Good luck to all the teams. The State Baseball tournament will be hosted by the Fergus Falls Post. Please come down and support the Post and the tournament. Please keep the men and women serving in our armed forces, and our comrades who are sick or hospitalized in your thoughts.



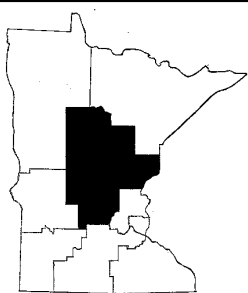
**Michael Gearman, Commander
Fifth District**

Greetings from the 5th!

We had our finance/planning meeting on July 27th in Benson and we are looking forward to a good year.

Our District meetings for 2016/17 are set for October 2 in Appleton, December 11 in Starbuck, February 12 in Willmar, and April 23 in Madison with all meetings starting at 2 p.m.

During the 2016 State Convention Joint Awards Session, the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars were 'knighted' into the 'Royalty' of the St. Paul Winter Carnival. Taking the 'oath' from King Borias and the Queen of the Snows on behalf of the Department of Minnesota VFW were State Commander Dewey Hermanson and State Senior Vice Commander Joe Mauricio.



**Thomas Tauber, Commander
Sixth District**

Well, just think, its County Fair time and harvesting has begun. Fall is nearly here. Being re-elected as District Commander of the 6th District is a great honor for me. My goal for this year is Membership. Last year the District did quite well. This year 2016 - 2017 we can do better. We cannot let up on getting new members. I know this is not an easy task. As the Membership dwindles Nationally and by states there will not be a VFW in years to come. As proud as you and I are of our Organization, we must continue forward recruiting new members. Please get out and find these potential members. This should also be a goal of all the Posts. Remember "No Members - No VFW!"

Some events that are coming soon will be the District meeting and Picnic on July 30th in Princeton. The "Never Forget" Tunnel to Tower exhibit will be at the Benton County Fair from August 2 - 7 from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM. These events could be over or in progress due to the timing and publication of the paper. The Annual BBQ of Turkeys will be held at the St. Cloud VAMC on August 7th. We could use help cleaning sweet corn and cutting turkeys. Any of you in the District having time, please give us a hand. Our District Chairmen have started working on their assignments already.... Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy, Teacher of the Year, Scout of the Year, etc.

All the good fun events in this article are above. Now, the not so good. There are three (3) Posts in the District that are close to having their Charters Suspended. You know who you are. Don't let this happen. You will be contacted soon to see if the District or Department can help. Those of you that are doing well --- keep it up! We don't want to visit your Post for non-performance. The Fall Conference is at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen. September 9 - 11. Hope to see many of you there. Our next District Meeting will be at Monticello Post 8731 on October 1, 2016 at 1:00 PM. All Post Commanders and Quartermasters are required to attend. See you there.



RE-SELLING YOUR FORMER MEMBERS ON THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Sales professionals know that selling to former customers is easier than acquiring new ones. In fact, average success rates for turning former customers into current ones range from 20 percent to 40 percent!

However, recovering lost customers is only possible if you're willing to find out why they left in the first place. Numerous surveys revealed that, when customers stop using a product or service, the reason is almost always either bad customer service (cited by 74 percent of respondents) or poor quality (cited 32 percent of respondents).

When you're looking to win back a customer, the first order of business is to find out the REAL reason that the customer bailed. The ONLY way to do this is to

summon up the courage to ask, honestly and humbly, with the full expectation that you might get an earful of unpleasantness.

Once you've figured out where the error lies, then you can apologize and explain what's changed since then to ensure that the customer will have a better experience. This is easier than you think, because even though the customer was annoyed enough to leave, there must have been SOMETHING appealing about your offering.

In many cases, former customers WANT to come back to the fold, providing the issue that caused them to leave is being addressed.

Welcome to the new membership year; assemble your recruiting teams, hit the streets and knock on some doors.



Funeral Plans for Veterans

Purple Cross has been serving America's Veterans since 1948 and continues to offer the best funeral plans available. With **Funeral Preplanning** -you: • **protect your burial funds from nursing home expenses** • **Protect your family from financial burden in time of grief** • **gain peace of mind by knowing your funeral is taken care of.**

Yes, I would like to know more about:

Traditional Funeral Cost Cremation Cost

Payment Plan Options Discount Plans

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

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Phone: _____ Birth Date _____

AD rates for the Oversea'r

Its the only way to reach 100% of this Departments Membership

The Gopher Oversea'r is the official Veterans of Foreign Wars Print in Minnesota. We Publish our paper three times a year to nearly fifty thousand Veterans in Minnesota. Our paper is four columns wide and fifteen inches deep. Please see rate chart below:

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

How To Provide Us With Your Ad

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

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

All ads must be "Camera Ready". If they are not you will be charged as additional twenty-five dollars.

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

The Deadlines for Ads in this years Papers are: September 15, 2016 and December 15, 2016

*all dates are subject to change

2016 JOINT AWARDS SESSION

RECOGNIZING THE PROGRAMS OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



Community Service

SAFETY

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

PUBLICATIONS

MEMBERSHIP

Veterans Activities

Poppies

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

HOSPITAL WORK AND BLOOD DONOR

ALL - STATE POST QUARTERMASTERS

Duane Hermanson	Cannon Falls	Post 4452
Thomas Boris	Minneapolis	Post 217
Douglas Fabre	Ogema	Post 9880
Roger Barness	Stewartville	Post 8980
Sherri Beaupre	Jenkins	Post 3839
Michael Lane	Chatfield	Post 6913
Donald Dufner	Watkins	Post 5460
James Tenhoff	Osakis	Post 7902
Thomas Wainright	Sauk Rapids	Post 6992
Gary Archambault	Brooklyn Park	Post 3915
Ross Parker	Oronoco	Post 9647
Derek Schultz	Olivia	Post 4097
Jonathan Brandtner	Jordan	Post 2854
Brian Gislason	Wilmar	Post 1639
Kelly Booge	Bemidji	Post 1260

ALL-STATE POST COMMANDERS

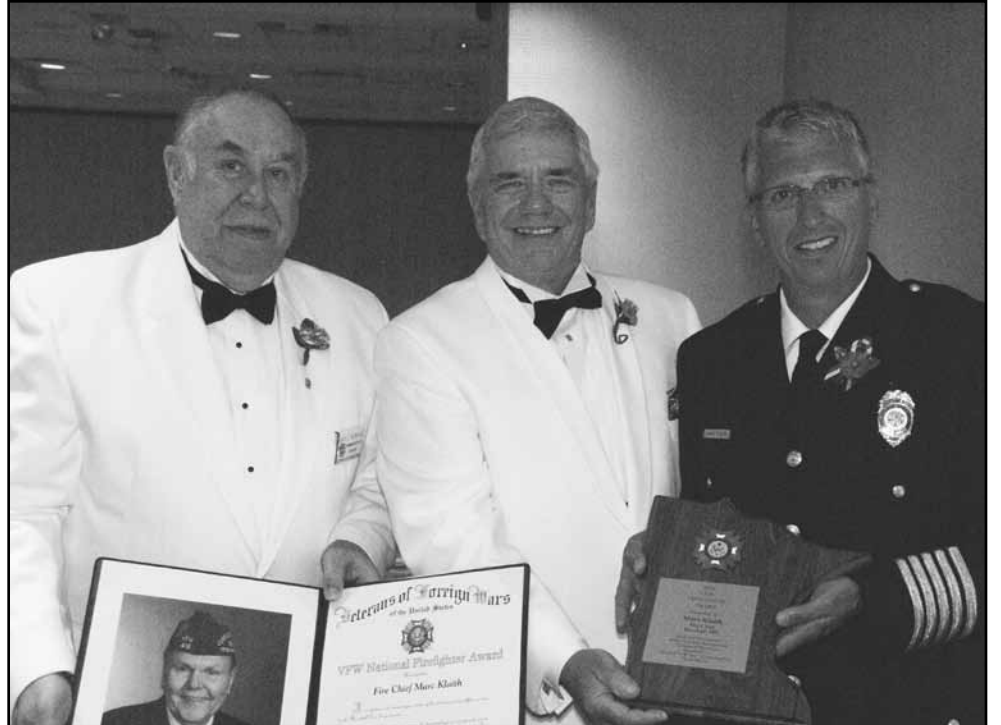
John Warren	Jenkins	Post 3839
Bruce Flaten	Cannon Falls	Post 4452
Lawrence Tucker	Chatfield	Post 6913
Donald Baker	Oronoco	Post 9647
Scott Hanson	Brooklyn Park	Post 3915
Charles Quigley	Minneapolis	Post 217
Patrick Schipper	New Ulm	Post 1648
Jim Heimerl	Hamel	Post 5903
Lester Kaenel	Wilmar	Post 1639
Richard Gwynn ***	White Bear Lake	Post 1782
Chub Hensley	Osakis	Post 7902
David Benoit	Sauk Centre	Post 6992
John Wisnewski	Elk River	Post 5518
Bruce Malterud	Bemidji	Post 1260

*** All-State Team Captain

State Convention - Public Safety Awards



The State VFW EMERGENCY TECHNICAL (EMT) GOLD AWARD was presented to Monte Fronk, the Tribal Emergency Manager for the Mille Lacs Tribal Police Department. Monte was nominated by VFW Post 2762 and the Sixth District. Pictured (l-r) are Past National Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius, State Commander Dewey Hermanson and Monte Fronk.



The State VFW FIREFIGHTER GOLD AWARD was presented to Marc Kaith, Fire Chief, City of Marshall. Marc was recommended by VFW Post 742 and the Third District. Pictured (l-r) are National VFW Representative Gary Kurpius, State Commander Dewey Hermanson and Marc Kaith.



The VFW State J. EDGAR HOOVER GOLD AWARD was presented to Jeffrey Sommers, Patrol Officer, Brooklyn Center Police Department. Jeffrey was nominated by VFW Post 3915 and the Seventh District. Accepting the Award on his behalf are Lisa Sommers (wife) and James Sommers (father). Pictured (l-r) are Past National Commander Gary Kurpius, State Commander Dewey Hermanson, Lisa Sommers and James Sommers.



The State VFW BUS DRIVER OF THE YEAR was presented to David Lehman from Madelia Public Schools ISD #837. David was nominated by VFW Post 3842 and the Second District. Pictured (l-r) are State Commander Dewey Hermanson and David Lehman.

State Convention Employment Award



During the State Convention Banquet, the VFW State EMPLOYMENT AWARD was presented to Knife River Corporation of Bemidji, Minnesota. Accepting the Award on behalf of Knife River Corporation is Trishia Newland. Knife River was nominated by VFW Post 1260 and the Ninth District. Pictured (l-r) are State Commander Dewey Hermanson and Trishia.

State Convention Teacher of the Year Awards



During the State Convention Banquet, the following were recognized as the State VFW TEACHERS OF THE YEAR. Roxanne Kremer (K-5) of Prairie Elementary School in Worthington and nominated by VFW Post 2603 and the Third District. Kari Janzen (Grades 6 - 8) of Central Middle School in White Bear Lake and nominated by VFW Post 1782 and the Fourth District. Erik Lien (Grades 9 - 12) of Maple Grove Senior High School in Maple Grove and nominated by VFW Post 3915 and the Seventh District.

Pictured (l-r) are State Teacher of the Year Chairman Barry Henriksen, Abby Kramer (daughter) accepting the award for Roxanne Kremer, Kari Janzen, Erik Lien and State Commander Dewey Hermanson.

Fall Conference From Page 1

**DISPLAYS:
So Much to See... Much MORE Time**

The 2016 Fall Conference Program displays will now be open longer. The Display area will be open Friday from 4-6:30 pm as well as 8 am- 3 pm on Saturday. These additional hours, along with the new Seminar time structure, should allow everyone ample opportunity to view the program and resource displays. There is also a time scheduled in which each display will be staffed so that questions can be asked of Chairmen, V.A. Representatives and more.

**VETERAN & YOUTH
ACTIVITIES: Place Your Bids**

The Veterans Activities Committee will be accepting bids for future events including Archery, Bowling, Corn Hole and Horseshoes. Contact the Veterans Activities Chairman in your District if you are interested in bidding any of the above events or would like more information on any of the events.

The Youth Activities Committee will be accepting bids the 2018 Baseball tournament (2nd weekend in August). Each Post offering a bid, MUST have a Post representative present to speak on the Post's behalf. Bids should be mailed to: Dept. MN VFW, Attn: Jim Hesselgrave, Youth Activities Chairman, Rice Street Station, PO Box 17146, St Paul, MN 55117.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Banquet-

Join us Saturday as we welcome Past National Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien and Auxiliary National Chaplain Peggy Haake. In addition, we are hoping to plan a surprise or two that will take place at the banquet as well. Enjoy an amazing Pork Prime Rib dinner and great company. Use the Banquet order form in this Oversea'r or your General Orders... Order EARLY for best seating.

Donation Opportunities-

NEW! Bring items/donations for the Fergus Falls V.A. to Fall Conference (something else to add to your Community Service Reports). Look for the announcement in THIS Oversea'r issue.

At each Conference we are planning opportunities for donations, activities or volunteering. The focus will be a V.A. Hospital, Clinic, Shelter, the Community or other groups that could use items, money or volunteers to continue their mission. Help us support the Fergus Falls V.A. this September.

Breakfast 'Sessions'-

Breakfast is provided every morning within a flexible time frame. Throughout this time, we will be presenting topics or ideas that we hope inspire us all to go back to our Posts and Auxiliaries with new energy for our mission to serve Veterans and our communities. Watch for details in the Conference Program book at the event.

Workout-

NEW! Start Saturday with a little activity before we spend the rest of the day sitting in Seminars and eating great meals. We are planning some simple activities that anyone can take part in. Join us for a morning walk (perhaps some may wish to take a short jog) and we may even be able to have a group participate in a water walking activity in the pool. So bring your tennis shoes or a swim suit and join us!

Hospitality-

NEW! Hospitality rooms become THE ROOM. This Fall Conference we venture into a shared Hospitality Ballroom. Each participating District will host a table in the room where they can offer their 'specialty' treats and beverages. We may also have a few games available for folks as they relax and share social time with old and new friends.

**For up-to-date
2016 Fall Conference details visit:
www.mn.gov/vfw/fallconf**

**If you have further questions about Fall Conference (or wish to lead the Saturday morning jog), please contact:
V.F.W. Department HQ: 651-291-1757
E-mail: melodymnvfw@vfwmn.us**

FALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

September 9-11, 2016

Shooting Star Casino- 777 Casino Road, Mahanomen, MN 56557

Revised 8-4-16

FRIDAY, September 9, 2016:

- 1:00 P.M. -6:00 P.M. Registration** – Event Center Foyer
*BANQUET Tickets available from 4- 6:00 P.M.
- 1:00 P.M. Finance Committee** – VFW Office
- 2:30 P.M. Gambling Meeting** – Event Center
- 4:00 -6:30 P.M. PROGRAM EXHIBITS** – Event Center
- 6:30 P.M. VFW Council of Administration** – Event Center
Auxiliary Council of Administration – Event Center
- After Meetings Hospitality & Social Time – TBD*

SATURDAY, September 10, 2016:

- 6:00.-6:30+ A.M. Rise & Shine Workout(s)**
(Options TBD- Walk, Water Walk?, Run?)
- 7:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. Registration-** Event Center Foyer
*BANQUET Tickets available during Registration
- 7:30 -8:30 A.M. **BREAKFAST & KEY NOTE PRESENTATION**
"Serving Those that Have Served"- Bejou
- 8:00 A.M. Finance Committee** – VFW Office
- 8:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. PROGRAM EXHIBITS & SEMINARS-** Event Center
Chairmen will Staff their Displays from 2:00- 3:00

	Richwood	Bealeu	Pine/Elbow	Pine Point	Callaway	Roy Lake	Rice Lake	Naytahwaush	White Earth	Waubun/Ogema	
7:30-8:30	Breakfast & Keynote Presentation "Serving Those that Have Served"										
8:00	DISPLAYS	Community Service	Auxiliary Session TBA	Meaning of Membership	Technology & Outreach		Service Officer Panel & Employment	Being a Chaplain	Veterans Activities	Round Table Discussion: Buddy Poppies	
9:00-9:45			Auxiliary Session TBA	Open Office: Computer/Email/Password Help	VFW Membership/ Recruiting	Hospital & Armed Forces Service Center	National Security & POW/ MIA	Humana: Medicare Options for Veterans	Youth Activities	Round Table: Student Essay & Art Scholarships	
10:00-10:45				Open Office: VFW Claims Staff	Publications/ Public Relations	Meaning of Mentorship	Homeless Veterans	VFW National Home for Children	Citizenship Education/ Americanism	Buddy Poppy Program Overview	
11:00-11:45					Writing By-Laws & Resolutions	Veterans & Military Support	Legislative	Humana: Medicare Options for Veterans	Youth & Veterans Activities Bids Received	Efficient Meetings & Effective Leadership	
Lunch Break											
1:00-1:45											
2:00-2:45		Visit Program Displays & Chairmen Staffing their Booth									

- 4:30 P.M. Church Service** – Pine Point
- 5:45 P.M. General Reception** – Event Center Foyer
- 6:30 P.M. Conference Banquet** – Bejou
- After Banquet Hospitality & Social Time - TBD*
- SUNDAY, September 11, 2016:**
- 7:30 -8:30 A.M. **BREAKFAST & Slide Show "Conference Take-Away Tibits"** – Bejou
- 8:30 A.M. Auxiliary Meeting** – Event Center
- 9:00 A.M. VFW Council of Administration** – Event Center

**~NEW~
Fall Conference
SERVICE
OPPORTUNITY-**

**Help out the
Fergus Falls V.A.**

Please consider the following Donation options that will be collected at Fall Conference:

- **New XL, XXL, XXL T-Shirts, Sweatpants & PJs**
- **Bingo Sponsors-**
 - \$50-\$60 in Quarters for prizes
 - Sponsor a night with treats (either by donating \$ or volunteering to bring treats)
- **September Fair Days at the V.A.**
 - Sponsor(s) wanted to help with \$500 event budget for 'Fair' food, treats, prizes & Decor

Donations can be Contributed by Individuals, Posts or Auxiliaries!

ALL Sponsors will be Identified with Posters at the Events

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

**FALL CONFERENCE
Banquet Reservations**
September 10, 2016
Shooting Star Casino, 777 Casino Road, Mahanomen, MN 56557

**Tickets \$25 each Social 5:45 pm
Banquet 7:00 pm**

Send Order Form to: Dept. MN VFW
Rice Street Station
PO Box 17146
St Paul, MN 55117

Meal: Pork Prime Rib
Cut Green Beans
Twice Baked Potato w/ Bacon Crumbles
Salad
Dessert

**No tickets will be mailed out.
Please pick them up at the
Registration Desk.**

Fall Conference Banquet Reservation Form
Banquet: Saturday, September 10th, 2016

Please reserve _____ tickets at \$25 each.

Enclosed: check # _____ to "Dept. MN VFW" for \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email:** _____

Post/Auxiliary # _____ District # _____

Special Dietary Request _____

FINAL Deadline— September 1st, 2016

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

**FALL CONFERENCE
HOUSING RESERVATIONS**
September 9-11, 2016
Shooting Star Casino, 777 Casino Road, Mahanomen, MN 56557

NEW! Call into our Room Block to make your Reservations. Simply follow the steps below to have your information ready when you call.

\$85^{tax} per Night *DEADLINE August 26th***
INCLUDES BREAKFAST!!**

STEP 1: Choose your Dates- Arrival _____ Departure _____

STEP 2: Choose Your Room- _____ Regular _____ Handicap

STEP 3: Note Special Request- _____ Pet _____ Refrigerator
_____ Smoking _____ Other _____

STEP 4: Sharing? Name(s) _____

STEP 5: Choose Your Beds- _____ One Bed _____ Two Beds

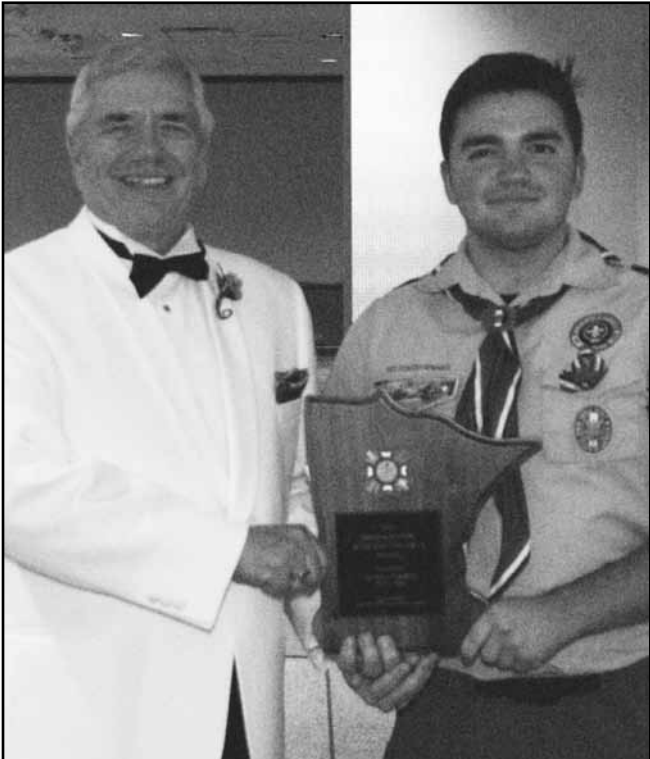
STEP 6:
Make Your Reservation-

- 1) Gather Your Room Choice from Above
- 2) Have your Credit Card Available
- 3) Call 1-800-453-7827
- 4) Press Option #1
- 5) When Making Reservations, Mention "BLOCK #1094"

Questions for VFW Headquarters?
Melody at 651-291-1757 or email melodymnvfw@vfwmn.us

State Convention and Banquet Awards (Continued)

State Convention Scout of the Year Award



During the State Convention Banquet, the State VFW SCOUT OF THE YEAR AWARD was presented to Keegan Sublette of Boy Scout Troop 269 in Lakeville, Minnesota. Keegan was nominated by VFW Post 210 and the Second District. Pictured (l-r) are State Commander Dewey Hermanson and Keegan.

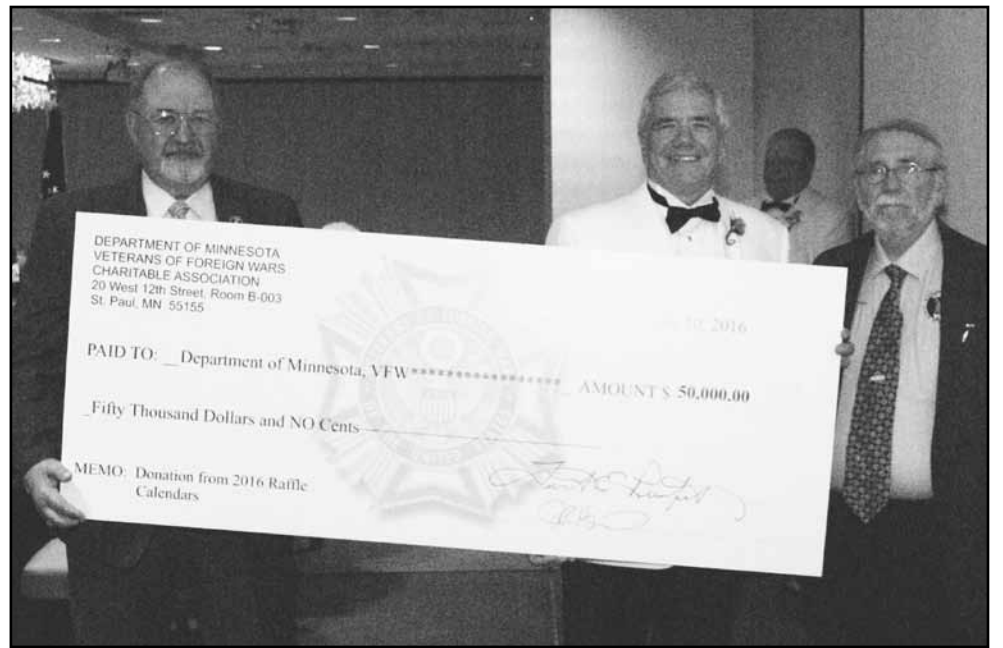


At the State Convention Banquet, State Commander Dewey Hermanson presented a \$13,000 check to ARS Bellum. This check represents the contributions made by the Minnesota VFW Posts that donated to Dewey's State Commander's Project. Pictured (l-r) are State Commander Dewey Hermanson, ARS Bellum CEO Bridget Cronin and another Representative of ARS Bellum.



Annually, the National Organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes those Comrades, Sisters and Brothers with Awards of Achievement for their Program efforts over the Past year. Pictured to the left are the Outstanding State VFW Program Chairmen for 2015 - 2016.

Pictured to the right are the Outstanding Auxiliary State Chairmen for 2015 - 2016. Presenting and helping with the presentation of these National Awards were Past National Commander Gary Kurpius, National Auxiliary Guard Sandra Onstwedder, State Auxiliary President Millie Lauer and State Commander Dewey Hermanson. (All four are seated center or front row.)



At the State Convention Banquet, State Commander Dewey Hermanson accepted a \$50,000 donation from the Minnesota VFW Charitable Association. This donation was made possible by the Annual sale of VFW Raffle Calendars. Pictured (l-r) is Charitable Association President Frank Presfield, State Commander Dewey Hermanson and Charitable Association Treasurer Jim Hesselgrave.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Who Will Fill Their Shoes – Today and Tomorrow

A Member's Perspective

Some GREAT people have passed through the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars. To name them ALL, would take up a book. But, for sake of discussion, let's talk about a few.

Past Commander-in-Chief Robert E. Hansen: The 'Godfather' of the VFW Voice of Democracy Program. The Driving Force of the VFW Cancer Center at the University of Minnesota. A 'forward thinking' State Commander and National Commander. Never took NO for an answer. Nationally known by many for his Perseverance.

Past State Commander and Long time State Legislative Chairman Alcuin Loehr: Former Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. Former Mayor of St. Cloud. Known for his Legislative expertise, both at the Minnesota State Legislature and in the halls of the United States Congress.

Past State Adjutant Quartermaster John O'Neill: No 'mission impossible'. Gave his life to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and to Veterans 24/7.

Past State Commander Patrick Bohmer: Wisdom beyond his years. A 'steal trap' for a mind. Could sell the 'shirt' off of Putin's back. The 'VFW Godfather' of the current age of Veterans.

Recruiter extraordinaire Joe Schirmers: Who could say NO to what he has to offer when it comes to Membership. The MOST DEDICATED VOLUNTER you will ever meet.

The person many called 'God', Rich Zierdt: Best Convention Director the VFW has ever had. Intelligent and a real 'problem solver'. Knows the VFW 'inside out'. A Legislative genius.

Past State Service Officer Thomas Hanson and current State Service Officer Jon Gohn: Both are Extremely Intelligent and Extremely Dedicated to the Veterans of this Nation. Nationally known by VFW Officials and the Veterans Administration.

The point is, who will 'step-up-to-the-plate' and fill the shoes of these GREAT Leaders and Dedicated Members? We talk

about HEROES. Somewhere in that conversation, we talk about how much or what they gave to get that status. One might postulate, that Heroes are measured by 'what they gave' without taking anything in return. We encounter this type of person every day as we travel through life. AND, the Veterans of Foreign Wars through the years has been Blessed with many 'heroes'. Every single Post has this type of 'giving' individual (Like Mr. VFW Chuck Quigley) and hopefully, they are being recognized for their efforts.


BUT, what should concern us, is WHO will be the next Robert E. Hansen, John O'Neill or Pat Bohmer? Who will stand up for the Veterans of this Nation with the fortitude of a Tom Hanson or Jon Gohn? Who will be OUR Protectors in the Halls of Congress when it comes to Veteran Legislation and Military Strength? Where will we find another Al Loehr, Rich Zierdt or Tom McLaughlin? Who will Protect the VFW Programs in the Tradition set forth by Stan Ostby, Emil Laborelle, Don Berg and Chuck Loftus? Who will oversee the Assets of this Department with the fiduciary responsibility garnered by Past State Quartermaster Les Orton?

Question: Will the Gen-X and Millennial Veterans take over these Leadership Roles with the same Dedication and tenacity?

Time and a lot of MENTORING will tell. We all know that the Leaders are out there. All we have to do, is FIND THEM, GET THEM INTERESTED and MENTOR THEM. Hopefully, they will 'fill the shoes' of Robert E. Hansen, Al Loehr, Pat Bohmer and the other HEROES of the Department of Minnesota Veterans of Foreign Wars.


In the end, it's all about RESPECT for a different kind of 'Hero'. A Comrade that 'Gives More Than They Take'.... Sacrifices themselves for the 'good of the whole' and mostly for his fellow VETERANS.

Anonymous Author



2016 - 2017 Voice of Democracy Theme

"MY RESPONSIBILITY TO AMERICA"



2016 - 2017 Patriot's Pen Theme

"THE AMERICA I BELIEVE IN"

MINNESOTA VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

Helping Our Fellow Veterans.... Isn't that what the Veterans of Foreign Wars is All About???

You Can Help That Process Continue!

Dear Minnesota VFW Member,

We don't know about you, but sometimes it's very difficult for us to ask for a donation or a 'helping hand'. Especially from our fellow Comrades. As a Combat Veterans, We have become accustomed to trying to help ourselves, our family and those around me. That's what we as Veterans learned in the Military — "make due with what we have and work hard to achieve our goals", whether in Combat or Life in general. But, as most of us have seen during recent years, that can sometimes be difficult.

Many Veterans, Military Service members and their families are finding it difficult to make ends meet. Unlike their civilian counterparts, these young men and women went off to Serve Our Country — sometimes putting their bodies and minds at risk for the Nation and the FREEDOM we Love so much! After our Tour of Duty was over, we have found ourselves trying to play 'catch-up' in the areas of jobs, education and raising our families. Some of us have done alright. We have been relatively successful. BUT, some of us continue to struggle!

The Minnesota VFW Charitable Association has Dedicated itself to assisting returning Veterans and older Veterans as well. We do understand that there are Programs like the Veterans Administration that work to acquire the Disability Benefits that Veterans have earned. But, this does not fill all the 'voids'. That's where the Veterans of Foreign Wars comes into play. By working in our local Communities, we can assist in the 'immediate' needs of our Veterans, Military and their families. If you or another Veteran you know, needs help, please contact our VFW Claims Service Office at 612-970-5669. They will go out of their way to assist with the filing for Veterans Benefits and Entitlements.



Unfortunately, it takes a certain amount of assets to keep the 'doors open' at our VFW Claims Office at Fort Snelling and as most of us know, professional Representatives come at a price. This is where YOU can help! Your financial contribution to the MN VFW Charitable Association under IRS Code, your donation will be Tax Deductible. Your donation could establish ongoing Funds that will work in perpetuity to assist Our Veterans receive the Benefits and Entitlements they deserve here in the State of Minnesota. The MN VFW Charitable Association has NO employees and none of its Directors are compensated from any donations. Therefore, one-hundred percent (100%) of your donation will go to a DEDICATED FUND. This can be reviewed on our Annual Form 990.



Please help your fellow Veterans by donating to the Minnesota VFW Claims Service Fund!!!

PLEASE send your Tax-Deductible donation to:
MN VFW CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION

ATTENTION: Treasurer
20 W. 12th St., Room B-005
St. Paul, MN 55155

In closing, the MN VFW Charitable Association would like to THANK YOU for your Support.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

You FOUGHT for the RIGHT to belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars!!!

PLEASE PAY YOU DUES TODAY!!!

As a Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, you should take an Interest in the Dealings of YOUR Organization on the Post, District, Department and National levels. Attending Post, District and State Meetings is a GOOD place to start.



The New Calendar's Here! The New Calendar's Here!

The VFW Charitable Association

2017 Calendar Raffle is Now Available.

This Calendar features the Minnesota VFW Ladies Auxiliary Young American Creative Patriotic Art District Winners!

EVERYONE is going to want this beautiful Calendar...



They sell for **only \$20 each** and

your **Post or Auxiliary will receive \$5 back**

for each Calendar sold... Order *your* Calendars today!

Please contact the Charitable Association Treasurer, Tate Doom, to arrange for pick-up or delivery of your Calendars to sell at tatemnvw@vfwmn.us or 651-291-1757

Please watch your mail, email and General Orders as selling updates, deadlines and other details are announced.



2016 LEONARD BUYSSE MEMORIAL VFW MOTORCYCLE RIDE

August 26 - 28, 2016

Tentative Route (Subject to Change)

Friday, August 26, 2016

- Kickstands up by 10:15 AM!
- Riders wishing to stay overnight in the Mankato area, should meet at the Mankato VFW Post 9713, 1900 N. Riverfront Drive Mankato MN, between 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM.
- Please let us know if you are staying overnight in either Mankato or Starbuck, or both, ASAP and we will block off rooms.

(The Leonard Buysse Ride is a 'pay as you go' Ride.)

ARRIVE	LOCATION, MN	DEPART	POST
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Friday, August 26, 2016

10:00 AM →	Cannon Falls →	10:15 AM	# 4452 Nelson-Scofield
11:00 AM →	Rochester →	11:45 PM	# 1215 Whitlock-Sonnenberg
12:45 PM →	Austin (Lunch) →	2:00 PM	# 1216 Olaf B. Damm
3:00 PM →	Owatonna →	4:00 PM	# 3723 Hugo Matejcek
4:15 PM →	Waseca →	4:45 PM	# 1642 Sweet-Sommers
5:15 PM →	Mankato →	Overnight	# 9713 Morson-Ario

Saturday, August 27, 2016

→ → → → →	Mankato →	10:00 AM	# 9713 Morson-Ario
12:00 PM →	Redwood Falls →	1:00 PM	# 2553 Redwood County
2:00 PM →	Willmar →	3:00 PM	# 1639 Finstad-Week
4:00 PM →	Starbuck →	Overnight	# 4582 Starbuck

****NOTE**** We would like as many riders as possible to hook-up with us along the way Or in Mankato. It would be awesome to have a large number of bikes going from Mankato to Starbuck on Saturday.

NOTE: If you have VFW Riders that are members of your Post, we ask that they come to the stop closest to your Post. Additionally, we are asking any and all VFW Riders to travel with us --- half, most --- or all the way!!! For more information or meeting locations other than those listed, contact Department Headquarters at 651-291-1757 – ask for Tate, Jim, or Amanda.

Are you a Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or Auxiliary?
Do you own and Ride a Motorcycle?

THEN, YOU CAN BE A VFW RIDER!!!!

(Cages are welcome as well.)

For Information, contact Tate Doom at 651-291-1757 or tatemnvw@vfwmn.us

