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Commanders Column

Greetings Fellow Veterans,

Well it looks like winter has arrived and is here to stay! Please take care when traveling and during daily activities, we all know how unpredictable the weather is.

On Veterans Day, our Color Guard was participating at McKinley, Jefferson and Sand Creek elementary school programs. November 9th we had our annual Membership Dinner. We had a great turn out, our guests included the current State Commander, District 7 Commander and their spouses. We also had our Voice of Democracy winner and our Scout of the Year. This year we had 2 members receive their 65 year pin for continuous membership, that is quite an honor.

I would like to thank the Auxiliary for their help putting on our Membership dinner. The food was outstanding and the program was a great success. I hope all of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving spending time with family.

Last month MNDot had an informational meeting on the Highway 65 Project and how construction is going to affect us. The roundabout in front of the VFW and new entrance will be completed by the end of 2026. As info becomes available it will be posted in the club.

As you know, membership is the driving force to maintain our longevity within our community. We have been very active in working with organizations in our area providing support where needed.

The Kids Christmas Party December 7th was a success.

We hosted Veterans from the Minneapolis Veterans for a luncheon provided by the Auxiliary. Our officers were engaging with our guests, listening and sharing stories, comradery at its best .

Christmas is fast approaching, and for some this can be a difficult and stressful time. Reach out and check on your friends and neighbors. There is help and resources available. Be kind this holiday season.

I hope all of you have a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Years. Please be safe this Holiday season.

In Comradeship,
Corky A Olson, Commander

From your Sr. Vice Commander, Kurtis A. Hollar

Happy Holidays, everyone.

I hope this message finds you in good spirits and ready for the season ahead. Our Post has been very active in our community lately. We recently hosted the Minneapolis Veterans Home for a Thanksgiving meal, where I had the honor of sitting down with two veterans and hearing about their service. It's always fascinating—and humbling—to hear the stories veterans carry. Each of you has a story, and there is someone who wants to hear it, and maybe even needs to hear it.

We also held our Membership Dinner, which had a tremendous turnout and allowed us to celebrate major milestones within our Post. We were honored to have our State Commander and District Commander in attendance. We recognized members with anywhere from 5 to 60 years of service to the VFW. Thank you for your dedicated service and for the time you've invested in making the Sgt. John Rice Post what it is today.

As many of you have heard, the National Guard recently suffered a tragedy in our Nation's capital. Two Soldiers were severely wounded by a terrorist attack. One of them, Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, has since passed away. Our deepest condolences go out to her family. Please keep her in your thoughts, and remember all service members who have answered the call to defend our great Nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

The holidays can also be a difficult time. For some, this season brings back memories of deployments or marks anniversaries we would rather forget. If that's you—welcome home. We are here for you. You are not alone.

I hope each of you enjoys a wonderful Christmas with your family and friends, and that the New Year brings peace and strength. Time doesn't slow down for any of us—cherish the moments you have together.

God Bless you all.

Kurtis A. Hollar
Sgt., USMC

Happy New Year Sisters, Brothers and Comrades,

November 9th was the Veterans /Membership Dinner. A special thank you to the Auxiliary Sisters for working with the our great cooks and VFW preparing and serving the dinner. Job well done, as we hope everyone enjoyed the food and fellowship. Membership pins were given and the Voice of Democracy and Scout of the year winners were announced. November 20th we had 20 Veterans and Staff from the Minneapolis Veterans Home to the Post for their Thanksgiving, Turkey dinner. Thank you Auxiliary and Post members who helped with cooking, serving and assisting the staff with getting the Veterans on and off the vans. Our Veterans enjoyed the afternoon eating and visiting with all. Our sewing group gave two quilts to two lucky Veterans to enjoy these cold winter days. 23rd we decorated the hall for the holidays. We made and donated 75 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to Lisa for CRRC, Community Resource Referral Center, for our homeless Veterans in Minneapolis. Enjoyed Thanksgiving with our families.

December 7th we kicked off the holidays with the Children's Christmas Party. Thank you Mary Lou. We had 62 Children who enjoyed the games, visited with Santa, and hot dogs with all the goodies. Thank you to everyone who gave of their time for our Children and their families.

The Auxiliary and individual members purchased 50 Christmas gifts, approximately \$1750, for the Veterans at the Minneapolis Home. Thank you for your generosity. We held a much needed food drive for our community. Thanks to all of our Patrons and members who donated. We collected approximately 50 pounds of food given to the Blaine United Methodist Church food shelves for our communities. Your generosity and kindness never goes unnoticed. Thank you. December 8th we had approximately 12 to 15 Veterans enjoy Coffee and donuts. Our Auxiliary and Post members visited the Minneapolis Veterans home and enjoyed an afternoon playing bingo with our Veterans. Thank you for your continued dedication. Welcome Kathy and Liza to our Auxiliary.

We continue to have our monthly activities, visits to Park River Nursing Home, Bingo, 3rd Tuesday 2pm, Benedictine, Bingo, 4th Wednesday, 5:30pm, Bake Sale, 3rd Friday 4pm, Meeting 1st Tuesday 7pm etc. Veterans Home every other month, Bingo and Blood Drives etc. We have something for everyone to do. Volunteers are needed not just at the Post Home but at all activities including the Nursing Homes and Veterans Home.

Due to the resignation and later passing of Guard, Shirley, we will be having an election for Guard. Please keep Shirley's family in your heart and prayers this holiday season. Please let some one know if you are interested in the position.

January reminds us that it is time to think about the Year-End Reports and complete whatever projects you like the Auxiliary to do, bring it to our meeting. Reports are always due in March. Check your calendars for upcoming events.

For those who have lost an loved one our prayers and sympathies are with you. For those who have been ill we wish you a speedy recovery.

Doris Anderson, President

Membership

Our sympathies to the family of lifetime member, Shirley Hagen, who passed away, and to Auxiliary member Beverly Herkenrett whose husband, Kevin, passed away. We also remember the family of past manager of the Post, Aaron Niznik, who passed away.

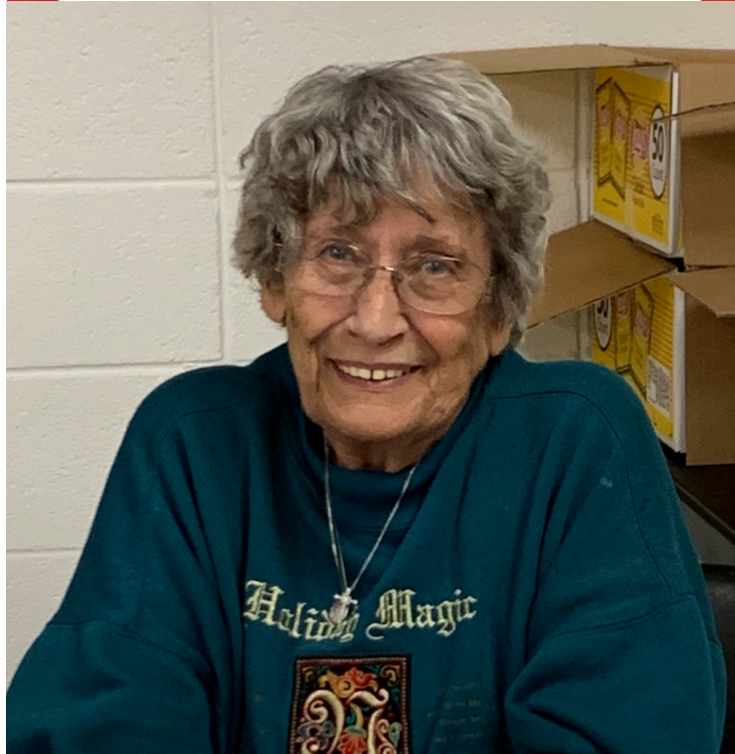
We welcome new life members Elizabeth O'Brien and Catherine Berry.

If you know of anyone who would like to join our Auxiliary and they qualify, please let us know and we will get them an application to fill out.

At this time we are 100% in Membership. THANK YOU.

Mary Lou Michels,
Sr. Vice President and Membership Chairman





Shirley Hagen joined our Auxiliary in 2016. Shirley was our Auxiliary Guard for many years and was very active helping with the funeral luncheons. Shirley enjoyed buttering the buns and making the sandwiches and then serving them. Shirley helped with the bake sales, the blood drives, was active with the sewing group, helped with the Veterans dinners and the Childrens Christmas Party. Always found time to go out to eat with her friends, especially liked Chow Mein, butter, lefse, fresh fish, coffee, Christmas Cookies, making orange jello salad for Holiday gatherings. Shirley loved playing cards, playing bingo, and building puzzles.

I'm sure Shirley is busy buttering buns and making sandwiches in Heaven. Rest in Peace Shirley. We will miss you.

BAKE SALES

Mark your calendar

We do our bake sales the third Friday of each month starting at 4:00 p.m. Come to the Post and check out the yummy treats our Auxiliary members bake. Buy extras to bring home to enjoy later. If you have any questions, call Ann at 763-717-0641.

VETERANS COFFEE

Join us the second Monday of each month for Coffee with our Veterans. We will have treats to go with the coffee. Visit with other Veterans and share stories.

If you have questions, call Eloise at 763-755-4817.



QUILTS OF VALOR

Thirteen Veterans Receiving Their Quilts of Valor

On Saturday, November 15th, thirteen Veterans received their Quilt of Valor at the Blaine VFW. Presenters Janet and Rita, from the Anoka Chapter, Grateful Hearts Quilters of Anoka, did the honors.

Receiving their Quilt of Valor (in no particular order)

Tom Tabor Army, Jay Nordstrom Marines, Robb Nordstrom Marines, Don Olson Air Force, Paul Baker Coast Guard, Ronald Larsen Air Force, Lindsey Brotkowski, Tim Germain Navy, Roger Welch Army, Jamison Burgess Army, Earle Anderson Navy, Norman Hervia, Jr. Army. James Lawrence Army National Guard.

Thank You for serving.

If you would like to nominate a Veteran, call 763-434-658- with the Veteran's name and phone number.



CANCER GRANTS

We have a cancer grant available for Auxiliary members who are in need. Call 763-434-6580 and I will mail out a form to you.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

60 Plus Kids enjoyed their Games, Treats & Gifts and a visit from Santa.

Thank You Mary Lou for always making this event Special and all her helpers.



Old enjoyed sitting on Santa's lap at Children's VFW party



Young enjoying Santa and the Elf at the Children's VFW Christmas Party

sewing

Our sewing committee meet every Thursday afternoon at the Post from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. They work on many items for our Veterans such as Quilts, lap robes, neck pillows, wheelchair bags, etc. If you have any questions, call JoAnn at 763-757-2741.



SAVE, SAVE, SAVE

We turned in 68 pairs of eyeglasses and cases to the Ham Lake Lions Club. Continue saving. We also collect pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, cancelled stamps for Wounded Warriors, tattered flags, etc.

WHITE PINE SENIOR HOME



Commander Corky Olson and Auxiliary Americanism Chairperson Joyce Pierret visit White Pine Senior Home on Veterans Day 11/11/2025.



Caroling at White Pine Senior Home.



The Color Guard Present Arms at local school on Veterans Day

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The National Illustrating America art contest is a program for students (including home-schooled) in grades K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. They submit original two dimensional pieces of artwork by March 31 st to the Auxiliary. These can be on canvas or paper. They would be judged at the Auxiliary level, then the winner would go on to the District level and if they win there, on to the state level. The state level winner would be advanced to the National art contest. There are awards available to the winners. Entry forms and rule sheets are available from the Auxiliary. If you have a student or students who might be interested, please contact me and I will get you the instruction sheet and the entry form.

The Auxiliary continues to donate books to daycares and schools as part of the Patriotism through Literacy Program This year we have donated 18 books to four schools/daycares and one homeschool family.

Karen Jones, Youth Activities Chairman



Books donated to the Kraft family, who are homeschooled.

VETERAN'S DINNER



*Voice of Democracy
Contestant Eleanor Kraft*



*Scout of the Year -
Vincent Grammer Troop
#3518*



Cooks for Veterans Dinner

FOOD DRIVE

Sgt. John Rice VFW Patrons donated large amounts of food goods to be delivered by the Auxiliary to the needy food shelves



BLOOD DRIVES

We had a Blood Drive on December 16th.. Thank you to our dedicated donors. We appreciate all the donors and our volunteers, Joyce, Ann, JoAnn, Eloise, and Nancy.



Our next Blood Drive will be February 10th, 2026. Call 763-434-6580 to schedule a time.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Our Veterans Dinner/Membership Dinner was November 9th at the Post on November 9th. Commander Corky and Auxiliary President Doris, did a great job. More than 100 People were in attendance.

We have some people to thank. A special thank you to all who helped with set-up and then with clean-up, Ann & Rich, Joyce, JoAnn, Shirley, Nancy, Eloise, Carolyn, Mary, Karen, Dennis, Doris, Wendy, Dick, Bob, and Mary Lou. (I hope I didn't miss anyone) The food was excellent. The program was short and sweet!



The Hall was decorated for the Holidays



50 Veterans Gifts purchased by the Auxiliary

NEXT, we decorated the hall for the Holidays. Again a lot of volunteers (Oh, so wonderful) Thank you to Joyce & Carl, Ann, Karen, JoAnn, Nancy, Mary, Bev, and Mary Lou (I hope I didn't forget someone).

The Children's Christmas Party was Sunday, December 7th. Fifty plus children were in attendance. SPECIAL THANKS to Santa for taking time out of his busy schedule to listen to the children's requests, to Elf, Jilian, who assisted Santa, to Bumpy the Clown giving the children his balloon characters (always a favorite), to Ann & Rich who greeted the families at the door, to Scott, our bartender, giving pop to the families, to our youth, who were in charge of the games, Eivin, Ryan, Calvin, Conner, Agnes, Savannah, Sierra, Kylie, Brooke & Ashley, to our ladies in charge of the luncheon Eloise, JoAnn, Joyce & Carl, Nancy, Mary, Bev, and Wendy. Thank You. It takes a lot of time and planning to put on these events, BUT, our volunteers always come through and make the job so much easier. You are appreciated!

Mary Lou

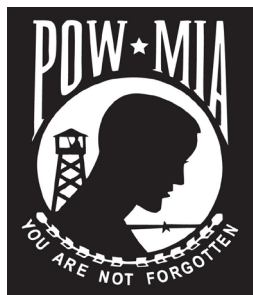


Toys donated to Toys for Joy to help needy families in Anoka County.

POW/MIA UPDATE

25 IDENTIFICATIONS AND 14 BURIALS for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from WWII and the Korean War.

Joyce Pierret
POW/MIA Chairperson



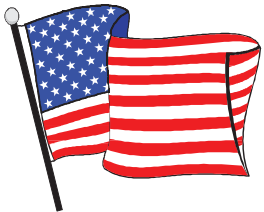
Wishing everyone A Happy New Year

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VFW Chartered November 10, 1959 • VFW Auxiliary Chartered December 14, 1969
Sgt. John Rice VFW Post 6316 Newsletter is Published Bi-Monthly with a circulation of approximately 625.



January/February 2026

SGT. JOHN RICE VFW



SGT. JOHN R. RICE
US Army World War II - Korea
Killed in Action Tabu-Dong, Korea on 6 September 1950

*A career soldier who gave his life for his country.
Denied burial in Sioux City, Iowa, because of his race.
Through the intercession of President Truman,
Sergeant John Rice was buried with honors at
Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.*

