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Commanders Column

Greetings Veterans:

Our sympathies to the family of Past Commander Gene Stunek who passed away recently.

A special Thank You to all the volunteers who helped with our 4th of July Celebration. We had a few showers BUT it turned out to be a successful day. The food was good, the drinks were cold, the band had people dancing or at least tapping their feet, we had treat bags for the children, the VFW Auxiliary had a bake sale. It was a good day!

The 7th District Joint Post & VFW Auxiliary meeting is at our Post on September 9th starting at 10:00 a.m.

In September we will be attending the dedication of the POW/MIA statue at the Blaine Veterans Park. We are not sure of the date (maybe the 15th) so check out our website.

The bands will start playing again in October. Again, check our website for more info.

The Gun Raffle was a success. Thank You to all who joined us.

We will be attending the Fall Conference at the Kahler-Mariott in Rochester September 21st - 24th.

Thank you to all our volunteers and to all who patronize our Post.

God Bless You. Stay Safe.
Commander Randy Monson



VFW Auxiliary Membership

Our sympathies to the family of Lifetime member Lois Hawkins who passed away August 13th.

Annual members your dues for 2023 - 2024 are due. Please send me a check in the amount of \$18.00 made out to VFW Auxiliary and send to me at 928 Constance Blvd. NE. Ham Lake, MN 55304. Call me at 763-434-6580 if you have questions. Consider going with a Life Membership and save the hassle each year.

Mary Lou Michels,
Sr. Vice President and Membership Chairman



The Sgt. John Rice VFW Auxiliary performed a ritual for Laura Carlson.

POW/MIA flag
presented to Mel Myer
is flying high.



Greetings VFW Auxiliary Members!

Hello Sisters, Brothers, and Comrades,

Hope everyone is enjoying the summer with family and friends. The Auxiliary has been very busy. We continue to visit and sponsor bingo at Park River and Benedictine Nursing Homes monthly. Park River Nursing Home in Coon Rapids is the 2nd Tuesday at 2pm and Benedictine, in New Brighton is the 4th Wednesday at 5:30pm. The Residents look forward to our visits and continue asking us to sponsor more activities. The VFW sponsors bingo at the Minneapolis Veterans Home six times a year and the Auxiliary participates by assisting the Veterans with bingo at 2pm on the 2nd Monday of the month. The Nursing Homes are monthly while the Minneapolis Veterans Home is every other month. Our next bingo at the Veterans Home will be October 9th. Please consider giving a few hours of your time as we are short of Volunteers for all facilities.

Our last Bake Sale for the summer was at the 4th of July celebration. We will resume our Sales in September. This is our main, continuous, fundraiser of the year. Thanks to all who enjoy baking. Our funds are used for supporting our Veterans programs. The funeral lunches continue. We had two in August. Eloise, JoAnn, and Ann keep busy organizing the luncheons when called upon.

We have three new Veterans Homes opening this Fall in Minnesota. Our Sewing group meets every Thursday from 1 to 4pm at the Post. They will be donating 10 quilts to the homes at Fall Conference, September 22-24th in Rochester. Always something for everyone to do even if you don't sew, you can tie quilts, cut blocks, visit and enjoy some coffee.

Sr. Vice President, Mary Lou, was kept busy this summer working with Quilts of Valor. She held several ceremonies at the Veterans Memorial Park by City Hall in Blaine. If you have a Veteran that you would like to see receive a quilt please contact her at 763-434-6580.

The calendar for 2023-2024 is done. Commander Randy, Sr. Vice President, Mary Lou, and I, President Doris, met and went over the upcoming events for the year to the best of our ability. Please check the Blaine, Sgt. John Rice website for all upcoming events.

September 16th we will be volunteering for Feed My Starving Children in Coon Rapids. Hope to see many volunteers, Post and Auxiliary, there. If you haven't signed up please contact Jeannie Engsmeier at 763-258-9093 so she can sign you up.

At this time I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our **Volunteers, Auxiliary and VFW**, for all the time you give to our Veterans, Communities, and our Post and Auxiliary. **THANK YOU.**

If you know of a member who has been ill or lost a loved one please contact Chaplain, Andrea at 612-481-3180 or President Doris at 763-370-4664.

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

Doris Anderson
President

MARK YOUR CALENDAR - VETERANS DAY DINNER

We will honor our Veterans on November 5th. Social 4:00, Dinner 5:00 p.m. We will also recognize Membership and Past Commanders and VFW Auxiliary Presidents.

SANDY MAXWELL TEE IT UP FOR THE KIDS

August 9th, 2023, was the 15th Annual Charity Golf Tournament to support the MN National Guard Youth/Teen Camp. Auxiliary member, Mary Lou Michels made 24 floral table arrangements for the banquet.

AUXILIARY SPOTLIGHT

Eloise (Hanson) Beckman

Born: May 5, 1936 in Osakis, MN. Where she lived and married in 1954 to Laverne (Red) Beckman (passed away in 2009).

Both Red and Eloise joined the VFW in Osakis in 1958.

They were blessed with 5 children - Kari Lynn, Cindy, Tim, Paul and Joey (passed away in 2021).

The family moved to Blaine in 1968, they then transferred their membership to Sgt. John Rice VFW #6316.

Eloise sold real estate for 10 years after the children were school age.

She was one of a few that were instrumental in getting a kitchen started about 1970.

Offices held: president 3 years, Sr. Vice, Jr. Vice, color guard, district hospitality chairperson for 2 years.

And currently hospital chairperson and funeral luncheon director.

Other activities she participates in are sewing and bingo at the vets home, Park River and Benedictine.

She helps serve the veterans coffee and rolls the second Monday of the month at 10:00 am at the post.

Eloise received her 65 year pin last November at the veterans dinner. Congratulations on a lifelong commitment to our veterans.



VETERAN SPOTLIGHT

Tom Nielsen

Born July 6, 1950

Drafted into the U.S. Army directly out of high school at age 18. September 1969 and medically discharged September 1971. After completing basic training for infantry at Fort Bragg, N.C. and after some specialty training he was assigned a tour to Vietnam. Stationed in the delta about 25 miles from Saigon, while walking the rice paddies after being dropped off by a helicopter he and another soldier came under fire and Tom was shot in his left thigh 3 times. Fortunately they did not hit the bone. While at the hospital in Saigon he was presented with a combat injury medal "purple heart". After a 3-week stay Tom was transferred to Japan for further recuperation. From Japan to the great lakes hospital in the U.S. for another few weeks, he was able to go home on furlough for 30 days. Tacoma, WA was his next assignment with the tanker unit, obviously not healed sufficiently he reinjured his leg and while in the hospital a 4 star general approached Tom to ask if he would want a medical discharge and Tom accepted! Discharged as a PFC.

Tom returned home. Said he played for a while and then started working for Hypro Pumps in New Brighton, where he stayed for 40 years.

Tom was married and had 2 children, a boy and a girl, and now has 5 grandchildren and they all live close. Tom joined the VFW in 1993.

While interviewing Tom on "Purple Heart Day" I asked what freedom meant to him? He replied, "We have freedom due to our troops."

Thank you Tom for your bravery and service!

Joyce Pierret
Americanism Chairperson



POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

In 1979, through a proclamation from President Jimmy Carter, POW/MIA Recognition Day was first acknowledged. From then on each President has signed an annual proclamation.

"YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN" - a phrase behind the POW/MIA remembrance movement honoring America's prisoners of war, those who are still missing in action and their families.

Many of our service members suffered as prisoners of war. Some made it home, tens of thousands more never did.

POW/MIA Recognition Day is commemorated the third Friday in Sept.

During the first POW/MIA Recognition Day commemoration a ceremony was held at the National Cathedral in Washington DC, while the 1st Tactical Squadron from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia flew the missing man formation.

The point of POW/MIA Recognition Day is to ensure that Americans remember to stand behind those who serve and to make sure we do everything we can to account for those who have never returned.

The POW/MIA Flag - In 1971 Mary Hoff contacted a flag company to see whether a flag reminding people of POW's and the missing could be made. World War II pilot Newt Heisley designed the flag which was made in Black and White to represent the sorrow, anxiety and hope symbolized by the image of the gaunt man featured on it. For every POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982, the flag has flown just below the stars and stripes at the White House - the only other flag to ever do so.

In 1998, Congress ordered it to also be displayed on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

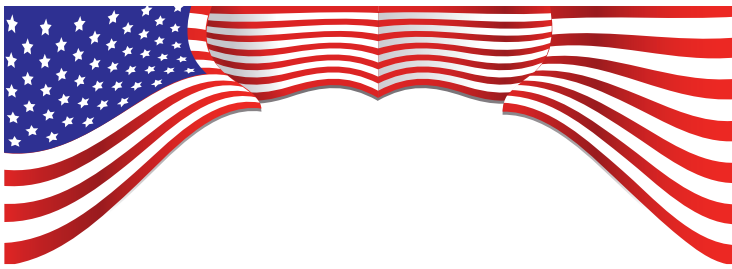
The first POW/MIA Poster, "Keeping the Promise" was made in 1999. Since then each year there is a new design. The 2023 Poster is "their sacrifice is not forgotten".



Remember the Phrase "YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN".

4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION





REMEMBERING 9/11, 2001 "NEVER FORGET" PATRIOT DAY

On September 11th we remember the sacrifices of U.S. citizens and service members on the day that is forever burned into our hearts and minds.

As the towers fell, the Pentagon burned and the ground smoldered, our nation rallied to stand arm-in-arm.

Twenty-two years later we still remember. We will "NEVER FORGET"



SAVE SAVE SAVE

Please continue saving Pop Tabs (for the Ronald McDonald House) Cancelled Stamps, Eye Glasses (turned in another 35 glasses to the Lions Club). Bring to the Post anytime.

We will take your tattered flags. Bring to the Post.



QUILTS OF VALOR

We will be doing another Quilt of Valor presentation on August 26th at 10:00 a.m.

If you would like to nominate a Veteran, call me at 763-434-6580 with their name and phone number. I will call the Veteran and get his military information and put it in the system. When the Chapter, Grateful Hearts Quilters of Anoka, has enough Quilts they will contact me and we set up a date and time for the presentation. Any Veteran who has served or is now serving is entitled to a beautiful patriotic quilt.



BLOOD DRIVES

We had a blood drive on August 15th. The American Red Cross collected 41 units. THANK YOU to all the dedicated donors and to our Volunteers.

Our next Blood Drive will be October 17th from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.



OUR BAKE SALES ARE BACK

Our Auxiliary members will be baking again for our Bake Sales which start on September 15th at 4:00 p.m. and will continue the third Friday of each month. If you have any favorite baked items, let the Auxiliary know and I am sure the item will be at the next bake sale.

If you have questions, call Ann at 763-717-0641.



CANCER GRANTS

We have cancer grant forms for any member who is in need. Please call me at 763-434-6580 with questions or if you need a form. All the information is private between you and your doctor.





FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

Join us on September 16th from 11:30 to 1:15 p.m. at the Coon Rapids location for Feed My Starving Children. Help make a difference in the lives of many, many children.

Call Jeanne Engelsmeier at 763-258-9093 with questions and directions.



MEDTRONIC HONORING OUR HEROES DECEMBER 11TH

Medtronic will again be honoring Veterans who are in need of a little help on December 11th.

If you know of a Veteran, please call me at 763-434-6580 with their name and phone number. I will forward it to Medtronic and they will contact the Veteran to get the information needed.



SEWING COMMITTEE

The sewing committee has been busy making Shawls for Virginia Piper, blankets, 60 small money bags for Benedictine, Park River and the VA Nursing Home. Also 294 felt bells as treats for the VA Nursing Home.



We meet every Thursday from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Post. Come join us if you can. If you have questions, call Marge at 763-757-1729.

VETERANS, MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Mark your calendar for the second Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. The coffee pot is on and we will serve treats. Here is a chance to visit with other Veterans, make new friends and share stories.



POW/MIA PRAYER: WING OF A PRAYER

You went to war,
For the Country you loved
Where you stood with pride.

You stood your ground
And did not run
You were there to protect.

There is a band of angels
All around you lifting you up
I hear your voices and see your faces.

My prayer to our God
Is to send his army of angels
To show us where you are.

It is past due
To bring you home
To the Country you love.

Amen

Joyce Pierret, POW/MIA Chairman



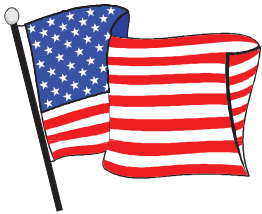
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September/October 2023

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.*

