

ISSUE #52 | APRIL 2021

# VETERANS VOICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS OF NEW RICHMOND / ST. CROIX COUNTY VFW MEMORIAL POST 10818



**VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.



## OUR MISSION

TO FOSTER CAMARADERIE AMONG UNITED STATES VETERANS OF OVERSEAS CONFLICTS. TO SERVE OUR VETERANS, THE MILITARY AND OUR COMMUNITIES. TO ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF ALL VETERANS.

## OUR VISION

ENSURE THAT VETERANS ARE RESPECTED FOR THEIR SERVICE, ALWAYS RECEIVE THEIR EARNED ENTITLEMENTS, AND ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THE SACRIFICES THEY AND THEIR LOVED ONES HAVE MADE ON BEHALF OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY.

The VFW is a dynamic United States combat veterans organization that serves, advocates and fosters camaraderie for ALL veterans, service members, their families and our community. The VFW harnesses its recognized authority, experience and resources to deliver comprehensive financial, educational, health and well-being programs and services at every stage of the veteran's military and civilian life.

## ADDRESS

310 W N SHORE DRIVE

NEW RICHMOND, WI 54017

PHONE: 715-246-0226

EMAIL: [ADMIN@VFWPOST10818.ORG](mailto:ADMIN@VFWPOST10818.ORG)

## PUBLICATION AWARDS

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place 2019 Wisconsin VFW Publications Contest
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place 2019 National VFW Publications Contest
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place 2018 Wisconsin VFW Publications Contest
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place 2018 National VFW Publications Contest
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place 2017 Wisconsin VFW Publications Contest
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place 2017 National VFW Publications Contest

## ALL-STATE POST

2019-2020	2013-2014	2002-2003
2018-2019	2012-2013	2000-2001
2017-2018	2011-2012	1998-1999
2015-2016	2007-2008	
2014-2015	2004-2005	

## ALL-AMERICAN POST

2018-2019	2012-2013
2015-2016	2011-2012
2014-2015	1998-1999
2013-2014	

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Every month our Post has a monthly membership meeting. This meeting is for YOU, our members, to find out the latest and greatest of what your officers are doing, volunteer opportunities, voice your concern about veterans issues, vote on new projects and ideas, and to tell us what you want out of your membership and the VFW. Share your ideas on how to improve your Post and get the most out of your membership. It is also a great opportunity to connect with friends and meet other veterans with similar goals.

**When:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month

**Time:** 6 PM - Social Hour 7 PM - Meeting starts

**Location:** New Richmond Civic Center - 156 East 1<sup>st</sup> St, New Richmond, WI 54017  
(located in the downstairs of the Civic Center)



Post 10818

VFW Veterans Voice magazine is the official publication of the VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES POST 10818

## OUR OFFICERS

<b>Commander</b> Greg Veldhouse 651-271-2177	<b>Chaplain</b> Mel Zehm 715-255-0770
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<b>Sr Vice Cmdr</b> Jeff Rusinko 651-600-7499	<b>Judge Advocate</b> Dave Green 651-247-1801
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<b>Quartermaster</b> Mitch Cline 651-492-9634	<b>Adjutant</b> Ron Ramos 715-928-3606
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**Service Officer**  
Ben Anderson  
715-245-6281

## SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the VFW Veterans Voice may be submitted online at: <https://bit.ly/3jMPqcK> no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. If pictures are included, please provide names of all in the photo.

## CONTACT THE COMMANDER

You can contact the commander by email at: [commander@vfwpost10818.org](mailto:commander@vfwpost10818.org) or by cell phone at: 651-271-2177.

## VFW OBJECTIVES

To ensure national security through maximum military strength.

To speed the rehabilitation of the nation's disabled and needy veterans.

To assist the widows and orphans and the dependents of disabled and needy veterans.

To promote Americanism through education in patriotism and constructive service to the communities in which we live.

## ADDRESS CHANGE

Whenever you move or have a change of address, please drop us a line at 715.246.0226 or shoot us an email at [admin@vfwpost10818.org](mailto:admin@vfwpost10818.org). Every time we get a Post magazine returned by the U.S. Postal Service because NO change of address was filed, the Post gets charged for the return postage. If you would prefer to receive your magazine by e-mail, let us know and we can get you on our e-mail distribution list. Please help us - we don't want to waste money.





COMMANDER  
GREG VELDHOUSE

Hello everyone!! I hope everything is going well for you and your families. I want to thank you all for your continued support of myself and VFW Post 10818. We can't accomplish the things we do without you.

Things are slowly, but surely, getting back to normal and I hope this trend continues. The parade and festival season is almost upon us and we are getting a steady stream of requests for our attendance at various events around the county. This includes the Woodville Syttende Mai Parade on May 15th, New Richmond Park Art Fair on June 4-5, and many others. Hopefully Covid-19 doesn't rear its ugly head and we can all enjoy a nice summer.

Speaking of Covid I recently got my vaccination at the VAMC in Minneapolis and had no ill effects other than a sore arm for a day. Many others at the post have also gotten their shot and I have heard no reports of any bad side effects. The Minneapolis VA Medical Center (VAMC) is now offering COVID-19 vaccinations to all enrolled Veterans who receive care within the Minneapolis VA Health Care System, regardless of age. If you are not enrolled with the Minneapolis VAMC, you can do so on-line at [Apply for Health Care | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#). So if you haven't gotten your shot and you would like one, give the VAMC in Minneapolis a call. Same day appointments are usually available.

At our last post meeting we discussed meeting in person once again. Our meetings are the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7pm and beginning in April we will be meeting at the post. So come join us on April 20th at the post. We will continue to have ZOOM available for those who cannot attend. Contact us for details if you would like to attend via ZOOM so we can get you the passwords.

I encourage all members to join us because there are a lot of exciting things happening especially in regards to our building project. The Army is going to finish the walking trail in Freedom Park in May and will break ground on the building in the Spring of 2022. They said they expect the building to be completed by the fall of 2022. The railroad recently made a donation of close to \$100 thousand dollars of dirt/fill for the project and the Army plans to move it onto the site this fall. We cannot thank enough the Army, railroad, and the many other individuals who have spent the last few years trying to make this happen. This building will be a great addition to the community and all your efforts will be appreciated for decades to come.

Lastly, our post is at 90% for our membership level and we need to get to 100% or better by the end of the quarter on July 1st. We have a lot of memberships that have lapsed and some of you have not renewed. Even if you don't actively engage in post activities we still greatly appreciate having you as members. The more of us there are the stronger we are, especially when it comes to securing and maintaining veteran's benefits at the Federal level, plus you get a nice magazine every month. So please, if your membership has lapsed take the time and go to [VFW.org](#) and click the RENEW link, it only takes 5 minutes of your time. Thank you everyone and God Bless.

# NO ONE DOES MORE **FOR VETERANS.**®

## LINKING ARMS TO SERVE WITH “RESURRECTION HOPE”

On July 4, 1976, an American pilot and his wife gave birth to triplets in Pago Pago, American Samoa. In honor of their American heritage, the triplets were named after three of our nation's founders, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Betsy Ross. George, Ben, and Betsy proudly bore their patriotic namesakes as they grew up in a rural Midwestern community. George and Ben both lived up to their names by enlisting in the Army National Guards. George served as a Human Resources Specialist for the 2nd Battalion 130th Field Artillery and Specialist E4 for the US Army in which he was deployed to Iraq to serve with the Operation Iraqi Freedom. Through his deployment, George was honored with the National Defense Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Army Forces Service Medal with “M” device, and the Army Service Ribbon. Unfortunately, George's experiences while serving for Operation Iraqi Freedom took its toll, and he battled with PTSD. On March 31, 2015, George's battle tragically ended in the loss of his life.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) continues to be one of the gravest concerns for our men and women in arms. In 2017, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs reported an average of 16.8 veteran suicides per day (1) and in 2019, the VFW reported an average of 20 veterans and service member suicides per day (2). The VFW has tirelessly advocated for PTSD and suicide awareness, pushing the VA to come up with tangible solutions for providing care and resources for our veterans such as accessibility to a veteran crisis line and placement of

suicide prevention coordinators at VA medical centers, and improved/expanded methods of identifying and intervening on behalf of at-risk veterans.

As we know our local veterans and men and women in arms, have also been impacted by the widespread effects of PTSD. I would like to recognize and thank our VFW POST 10818 and the VFW Auxiliary for your efforts to raise awareness and help our service members and veterans in the community. You have truly made a difference in the lives of many, and I am honored to be part of such a commendable group of men and women. James 4:14-16 says, “*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good[b] is that?*” We are truly living out this passage when we link arms to support our fellow men and women in arms.

As we look forward to celebrating the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, let us reflect on the amazing works of our Savior who embodied the true meaning of service and whose shed blood was the ultimate sacrifice. My prayer is that we would be encouraged by Christ's example to grow in faith, supporting others, and providing service to our community. His sacrifice and example give us the “Resurrection Hope” we need to serve well. Blessings to my fellow comrades and your families!

## VETERANS & FAMILIES IN NEED & ON SICK CALL

- John Heulling

*If you would like a name added or removed from the list, please let me know.*



**Please remember to pray for our comrades & their families & any we may have missed.**



CHAPLAIN  
MEL ZEHRM

1: [https://onceasoldier.org/veteran-suicide-rates-by-state/?gclid=CjwKCAiAm-2BBhANEiwAe7eyFJUgFjAmwtp5mY1M\\_-j1fx3Sjpy26FXFuARnXN2cqJUyzYqEQpQpARoCCh0QAvD\\_BwE](https://onceasoldier.org/veteran-suicide-rates-by-state/?gclid=CjwKCAiAm-2BBhANEiwAe7eyFJUgFjAmwtp5mY1M_-j1fx3Sjpy26FXFuARnXN2cqJUyzYqEQpQpARoCCh0QAvD_BwE)

2: <https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service/congressional-testimony/2019/4/tragic-trends-suicide-prevention-among-veterans>





**VFW Post 10818 Auxiliary needs your help  
with getting donations to our annual,**

# **Auxiliary Garage Sale**

**April 30<sup>th</sup>- May 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Please talk with your family members,  
and fill a bag or two or more for us.  
Check your closets, drawers, cupboards  
garages, craft items, tools etc.  
(See included Garage Sale Flyer)**

**Contact: Gayle House, 651-770-6429  
or Karen Green 715-338-8035 with  
questions and drop off/ pickup  
information.**

**(We can always use volunteer help that weekend)|**



**PRESIDENT  
JEN DONAGHUE**

## VFW Post 10818 Auxiliary

Garage Sale April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>

(setup date April 29<sup>th</sup>)

at the American Legion

**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

Please check your closets, drawers, cupboards, garages. Items in demand are, tools, yard goods, vases, planters, slightly used clothes, household items, craft items, books, CD's, small pieces of furniture, the list can go on forever. We need all those items you keep but just don't use.

**Call Gayle, 651-770-6429 or Karen, 715-338-8035**

**To arrange Drop off from April 15<sup>th</sup> - April 28<sup>th</sup>**

**At**

**VFW Post 10818**

**310 North Shore Drive, New Richmond WI**



**UNWAVERING SUPPORT  
FOR UNCOMMON  
HEROES**

### OUR OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
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715-222-9868	651-270-2647

<b>Sr Vice</b>	<b>Chaplain</b>
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715-419-1036	715-338-1998

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Kathy Berends	Pat Cunningham
715-338-1998	715-246-3598

<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Conductress</b>
Kelly Pomroy	Kerri Casey
715-377-6308	715-377-6860

**Patriotic Ins.**  
To Be Appointed

### CONTACT US

You can contact us by email at:  
[auxiliaryvfw10818@gmail.com](mailto:auxiliaryvfw10818@gmail.com)

### WHAT IS THE VFW AUXILIARY?

Established 1914, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary set out to serve the veterans of this country and our communities in honor of the sacrifices and commitment of every man and woman who has served in uniform.

Through our National Programs, we assist the VFW pass or block legislation that impacts veterans and their families, provide nearly a million volunteer hours in the VA medical system, conduct patriotic programs with thousands of students and offer hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships for our nation's youth.

### MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Every month our Auxiliary holds a monthly membership meeting to inform our members what is going on with their Auxiliary. This is your time to vote on projects and make this Auxiliary your own.

**When:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month

**Time:** 6:30 PM

**Location:** New Richmond Civic Center  
156 East 1<sup>st</sup> St  
New Richmond, WI 54017  
(located in the downstairs of the Civic Center)

# House Passes Bill Allowing All Veterans, Caregivers to Get Vaccinated at VA:

As the U.S. continues its race to vaccinate as many people as possible, the House has passed a bill that would grant the Department of Veterans Affairs the authority to vaccinate all veterans and their caregivers.

It is unclear how quickly the department could distribute the vaccine, but the measure would dramatically expand the scope of who the VA can vaccinate to include all caregivers of veterans enrolled in various VA programs, and veterans living abroad who rely on the Foreign Medical Program. There are about 9 million veterans enrolled in VA care, but there are 18 million total U.S. veterans, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Yet VA would serve as another option for veterans and their civilian caregivers, as some people are still struggling to find a vaccine or are confused amid conflicting information on eligibility.

The VA Vaccine Act was unanimously passed by House members Tuesday night and now heads to the Senate, where the leaders of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee have introduced a similar measure.

Mark Takano, D-Calif., the chair of the House VA committee, said that time is precious as the nation still struggles to get the virus under control. Older generations of veterans are in a high-risk pool, he added.

"We don't have time to waste -- frankly, I'm worried that any delay in passing this legislation may force VA to turn away decorated WWII veterans," Takano said in a statement.

According to VA, the agency has fully vaccinated about 1 million veterans, employees and federal partners. VA data shows 78 percent of veterans are overweight or obese, which puts them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Veterans are sometimes ineligible for VA care because they do not have a service-connected disability or they have incomes above the department's threshold.

Yet the House bill notes that priority will be given to those enrolled in VA care. It is unclear in the legislation how those who otherwise wouldn't qualify for care would be vaccinated and added to the VA's existing distribution system.

"After such a difficult year, stories of vulnerable veterans being denied life-saving vaccines from VA are painful to hear," Mike Bost, R-Ill, the top Republican on the House VA committee, said in a statement. "The bill gives VA the authority it needs to meet this moment."

The VA may also have to work to counter vaccine skepticism, especially among younger and healthier veterans and their families who are relatively safe from the worst symptoms of the virus. Nearly one-third of U.S. troops currently serving have refused the vaccine.

In a straw poll of 810 active-duty military personnel, spouses and veterans, more than half of active-duty families, or 53%, said they did not plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine, citing safety concerns and suspicions over development. Nearly half of veteran families agreed.

The CDC on Tuesday released preliminary findings that fully vaccinated people appear less likely to carry the virus and infect others who could be vulnerable. The findings also noted that a growing vaccinated population could lead to swifter lifting of virus restrictions.

-- Steve Beynon, Military Times



**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about specific legislation or VA benefits, contact VFW's Washington Office at [vfw@vfw.org](mailto:vfw@vfw.org). A member of VFW's National Veterans Service staff will respond as soon as possible.



# This month a major battle during the Korean War – Chosin Reservoir.

After some background a brief description of operations around the reservoir and the breakout.

By mid-October 1950, after the successful landing at Inchon by the US X Corps, the Eighth Army breakout from the Pusan Perimeter and the subsequent pursuit and destruction of the Korean People's Army (KPA), the Korean War appeared to be all but over. United Nations (UN) forces advanced rapidly into North Korea with the intention of reuniting North and South Korea before the end of 1950. North Korea is divided through the center by the impassable Taebaek Mountains, which separated the UN forces into two groups. The US Eighth Army advanced north through the western coast of the Korean Peninsula, while the Republic of Korea (ROK) I Corps and the US X Corps advanced north on the eastern coast.

At the same time the People's Republic of China entered the conflict after issuing several warnings to the United Nations. On 19 October 1950, large formations of Chinese troops, dubbed the People's Volunteer Army (PVA), secretly crossed the border and into North Korea. One of the first Chinese units to reach the Chosin Reservoir area was the PVA 42nd Corps, and it was tasked with stopping the eastern UN advances. On 25 October, the advancing ROK I Corps made contact with the Chinese and halted at Funchilin Pass (40.204°N 127.3°E), south of the Chosin Reservoir.[1]:5 After the landing at Wonsan, the US 1st Marine Division of the X Corps engaged the defending PVA 124th Division on 2 November, and the ensuing battle caused heavy casualties among the Chinese. On 6 November, the PVA 42nd Corps ordered a retreat to the north with the intention of luring the UN forces into the Chosin Reservoir. By 24 November, the 1st Marine Division occupied both Sinhung-ni (40.557°N 127.27°E) on the eastern side of the reservoir and Yudami-ni (40.48°N 127.112°E) on the west side of the reservoir.

Faced with the sudden attacks by Chinese forces in the Eighth Army sector, General Douglas MacArthur ordered the Eighth Army to launch the Home-by-Christmas Offensive. To support the offensive, MacArthur ordered the X Corps to attack west from the Chosin Reservoir and to cut the vital Manpojin—Kanggye—Huichon supply line. As a response, Major General Edward M. Almond, commander of the US X Corps, formulated a plan on 21 November. It called for the US 1st Marine Division to advance west through Yudami-ni, while the US 7th Infantry Division would provide a regimental combat team to protect the right flank at Sinhung-ni. The US 3rd Infantry Division would also protect the left flank while providing security in the rear area. By then the X Corps was stretched thin along a 400-mile front.

Surprised by the Marine landing at Wonsan, Chinese Communist Party chairman Mao Zedong called for the immediate destruction of the ROK Capital Division, ROK 3rd Infantry Division, US 1st Marine Division, and US 7th Infantry Division in a telegraph to Commander Song Shilun of the PVA 9th Army on 31 October. Under Mao's urgent orders, the 9th Army was rushed into North Korea on 10 November. Undetected by UN intelligence, the 9th Army quietly entered the Chosin Reservoir area on 17 November, with the 20th Corps of the 9th Army relieving the 42nd Corps near Yudami-ni.[9]:47

### Yudam-ni and Chesty Puller

Acting on Almond's (X Corps) instruction, Smith (1st MarDiv) ordered the 5th Marines to attack west toward Mupyong-ni on 27 November. The attack was soon stalled by the PVA 89th Division and forced the Marines to dig in on the ridges surrounding Yudam-ni. As night came, three Chinese regiments of the 79th Division attacked the ridges on the north and northwest of Yudam-ni, hoping to annihilate the garrison in one stroke. Close range fighting soon developed as the attackers infiltrated Marine positions, but the 5th and 7th Marines held the line while inflicting heavy casualties on the Chinese. As day broke on 28 November, the Chinese and Americans were locked in a stalemate around the Yudam-ni perimeter.

While the battle was underway at Yudam-ni, the PVA 59th Division blocked the road between Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri by attacking the defending Charlie and Fox Companies of the 7th Marines. The successful assault forced Charlie Company to retreat into Yudam-ni, which left Fox Company commanded by Captain William E. Barber isolated on a hill overlooking the Toktong Pass, a vital pass that controlled the road. On 29 November, several efforts by the 7th Marines failed to rescue Fox Company, despite inflicting heavy casualties on the Chinese. Aided by artillery from Hagaru-ri and Marine Corsair fighters, Fox Company managed to hold out for five days while enduring constant attacks by the PVA 59th Division.





After the heavy losses suffered by the PVA 79th Division at Yudam-ni, 9th Army headquarters realized that the bulk of the 1st Marine Division was stationed at Yudam-ni, with a garrison strength that was double the initial estimate. Believing that any further assaults would be futile, Song Shilun ordered the 9th Army to switch their main attacks toward Sinhung-ni and Hagaru-ri, leaving Yudam-ni alone from 28 to 30 November. At the same time, the US Eighth Army on the Korean western front was forced into full retreat at the Battle of the Ch'ongch'on River, and MacArthur ordered Almond to withdraw the US X Corps to the port of Hungnam. Acting on the instruction of Almond and Smith, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray and Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg, commanders of the 5th and 7th Marines, respectively, issued a joint order to break out from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri on 30 November. Faced with tough fighting between the blocking Chinese divisions and

the withdrawing Marines, Smith remarked: "Retreat, hell! We're not retreating, we're just advancing in a different direction."

For the breakout, the Marines formed into a convoy with a single M4A3 Sherman tank as the lead. The plan was to have 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines (3/5) as the vanguard of the convoy, with three battalions covering the rear. At the same time, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines (1/7) would attack towards Fox Company in order to open the road at Toktong Pass. To start the breakout, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (3/7) had to first attack south and capture Hills 1542 and 1419 in order to cover the road from Chinese attacks. The breakout was carried out under the air cover of the 1st Marine Air Wing.

On the morning of 1 December, 3/7 Marines engaged the PVA 175th Regiment of the 59th Division at Hills 1542 (40.435°N 127.107°E) and 1419 (40.428°N 127.135°E). The Chinese defenders soon forced the Marines to dig in on the slopes between the road and the peaks when the convoy passed 3/7's position by the afternoon. With Hagaru-ri still not captured, the PVA High Command scrambled the 79th Division to resume attacks on Yudam-ni, while the 89th Division rushed south towards Kot'o-ri. The Chinese struck at night, and the ferocity of the fighting forced the rear covering forces to call in night fighters to suppress the attacks. The fighting lasted well into the morning of 2 December until all the Marines had managed to withdraw from Yudam-ni.

At the same time, 1/7 Marines also tried to break the Chinese blockade at Hill 1419 on 1 December. Despite being badly reduced by combat, hunger and frostbite, the PVA 59th Division sent in its last five platoons and refused to yield. As night approached, 1/7 finally captured the peak and started to march through the hills on the east side of the road. Relying on the element of surprise, they managed to destroy several Chinese positions along the road. On the morning of 2 December, a joint attack by Fox Company and 1/7 secured the Toktong Pass, thus opening the road between Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri.

Although the road had been opened between Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri, the convoy still had to fight through the numerous Chinese positions on the hills overlooking the road. On the first night of the retreat, the Chinese struck the convoy in force and inflicted heavy casualties on 3/5 Marines. Although strong air cover suppressed most of the Chinese forces for the rest of the march, the cold weather, harassing fire, raiding parties, and roadblocks slowed the retreat to a crawl, while inflicting numerous casualties. Despite those difficulties, the convoy reached Hagaru-ri in an orderly fashion on the afternoon of 3 December, with the withdrawal completed on 4 December.

(Source: Wikipedia)

As we slowly emerge from isolation, please consider volunteering for one of the events highlighted in the calendar. It's good for your community and the Post.

### FREEDOM PARK CENTER CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE:

For those of you who have lost track of the building project it may be time to reconnect. What looked like a real long shot project seven years ago, will soon be a reality. In January of last year we had our first meeting with the 372<sup>nd</sup> Engineering Brigade out of Ft. Snelling MN. Since that meeting we have been working on an ongoing basis to assign individual military units to complete construction. Our “points of contact” (POC) include SFC Jesse Bleed and Major Michael Dyrdaahl (pronounced Deer Doll). Last week we met with our designer, Mr. Scott Counter, our general contractor, Mr. Mark Johnson, and Major Dyrdaahl. The end product of that meeting was a detailed schedule of construction referred to in the trades as a Gantt Chart. That schedule identifies all key steps in the implementation of the construction of Freedom Park Center. For those of you who may be interested, a copy of the Gantt Chart is posted in the post meeting room.

With the generous donation of roughly 15,000 cu yards of fill and topsoil from the Canadian Railroad spur line, we are ready to elevate the building site to the level required to accommodate construction, in spring of 2022. This is a full year earlier than initially projected and is driven by the military’s training cycle.

We have coordinated our building plans with the assistance of the two military units the post “adopted” several years ago. The 652<sup>nd</sup> Engineers out of Hammond WI. has been active with several construction efforts in Freedom Park including the entrance road off of Wall Street and most recently the completion of the walking trail on the northern border of the park. These preliminary building projects assisted us in learning the military approval and implementation process and were very valuable in preparing for the complexity of the \$4 million Freedom Park Center effort. The assistance of Bravo Co. of the 128<sup>th</sup> Inf. included offering storage space for construction equipment, along with shower and bathroom facilities to support the military units working in the park. The convenience of the Armory, across Wall Street from the park, makes the collaborative efforts of involved military units a real plus for this project.

While we still have some approval processes remaining to complete in conjunction with the City of New Richmond, the projected implementation date for ground breaking is spring of 2022. As the Gantt Chart indicates, substantial completion is projected to be September 2022. Thanks to all members of VFW Post 10818 and our Auxiliary for their support of a unique effort to provide a first class facility to enhance the amenities available to the community of New Richmond. Thanks also to Derricks Building Solutions, Simon Electric and Countryside Plumbing and Heating for their assistance in offering technical support for portions of the construction project requiring skilled trainers to educate the soldiers, as well as hands on efforts requiring licensed tradesmen to facilitate the completion of the building.

By Ken House



### WISHING THE PANDEMIC AWAY:

What can VFW Post 10818 do, or not do, to assist with the battle against COVID 19.

We are all very tired of quarantining at home, wearing masks, and staying 6 feet away from our loved ones and everyone else for that matter. We are also tired of confusing advice, misinformation, and outright lies when we are trying to protect ourselves, our families and our community against a deadly virus that has managed to kill more Americans than most of the wars we have been involved in for the last 60 years.

So, what do we actually know about this virus that would assist us in being responsible and safe as we wait for a shot to prevent the disease and a cure for those of us who are unfortunate enough to become infected? We have learned that this virus “rides on human beings”, is spread by droplets that we all expel when we talk, breath, cough, or sing, and that wearing a mask offers some protection from droplet spread along with maintaining 6 feet of social distance so we don’t spray each other with virus filled spit as we interact. We also know that the virus can easily spread from people who have absolutely no symptoms so we are vulnerable to infection every time we are in crowds. We know that those who are infected can be human incubators for creating new versions of the virus that can more easily be passed among us and may evolve in such a way that it can get around the vaccines we have struggled to develop to prevent infection and the development of disease. We know that there is such a thing as “herd immunity” that can beat this virus and that herd immunity happens when about 80% of the population develops immunity.

With the above noted information in mind how do we, as a VFW Post, adjust our behavior to protect ourselves, our families and our community from COVID infection? First of all, let’s be realistic enough to acknowledge that we will not totally agree on anything that requires us to change our behavior. The best we can expect is that we can develop a set of expectations that we are all willing to live with short term. To reach that goal I would like to suggest some specific interventions:

- When it is your turn to get the vaccine, get any version of the vaccine available to you. This is not my idea, it comes from Dr. Fauci and he knows more about this disease and how to protect the community than we do.
- In May of this year we are expecting that there will be enough vaccine available to inoculate anyone that wants to receive the vaccine. Let’s wait to get involved in participating in events that encourage large gatherings until mid to late summer when herd immunity is possible.
- Go ahead and open the post to small groups if everyone in the group has been vaccinated and allowing for the 14 days to develop antibodies that will protect them from infection. If this criteria is not met by all in the group let’s require masks and social distance out of respect for protecting our brothers and sisters in the post and their families.

I have already taken the liberty of calling the WI. Dept. to ask if there were guidelines that the state would be willing to require of all Posts in Wisconsin or nationally. There are not. Ultimately, I was told that each post is on its own to develop procedures to protect their membership and their community. That assumes that every VFW post has an expert in infectious diseases to help develop guidelines and that the expert would be followed by all members. (Good luck with that one) I was also told that each one of us is responsible for our own health and the health of our families and community. Based on that concept of individual responsibility, we should not put ourselves in a situation in which we feel at risk of infection.

With all of the above information in mind I would suggest that our post adopt the suggestions contained above. I know a little about pandemics and hope you consider the advice that I am sharing with you. In the event that you chose another standard of behavior, please know that I do not intend to attempt to impose my personal standards on all of you. I will, however, protect myself and my family. If we can’t agree on protective standards, I will not be attending post events until the pandemic is under control. That does not mean I will not continue to work on all of the initiatives I have committed to support, including the building project and honor guard. I will do my job but I will not engage in “spreader events”. It is not a matter of “politics” for me. It is a matter of personal ethics and attention to my health and the health of my family. Hope to see you all safely and soon.

By Ken House



## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- ✦ **April 10 - District Conference:** VFW District 9 Spring Meeting; **Time:** April 10, 2021, 0900 Central Time. Meeting will be held over Webex. Contact Bruce Sorensen for access codes and meeting information.
- ✦ **April 15 - Finance Committee:** Finance meeting starts at 6PM. The management meeting will begin shortly after the closing of the finance meeting. The management meeting will **only** consist of the Post Officers unless invited by an Officer.
- ✦ **April 20 - Post & Auxiliary Meeting:** Social hour begins at 6:00PM. Auxiliary meeting starts at 6:30PM. Post meeting promptly begins at 7:00PM. Every month at our Post Meeting, we have a drawing for some very neat prizes. ***Post meetings will take place in the downstairs of the New Richmond Civic Center, 156 East First Street (across from the Fire Department). See Facebook page for Zoom information.—***
- ✦ **May 15 - Woodville Syttende Mai Parade**
- ✦ **June 6-7 - Park Art Fair, New Richmond**

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