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Monthly Newsletter
February 2025

North Central MN Chapter #7
PO Box 564
Bemidji, MN 56619



NEXT MEETING:
DAV Headquarters at
5441 15th Street NW, Bemidji, MN
Monday, February 17 at 6:30pm

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CHAPTER OFFICERS

COMMANDER:	Gene Schwantes - (218) 556-4592
SENIOR VICE:	Darrel Baltzell
JUNIOR VICE:	Tom Annonson
ADJUTANT:	Jeff Meyer
SERVICE OFFICERS:	Tom Annonson - (218) 251-3025
TREASURER:	Jeri Harvey
CHAPLAIN:	Mike Gutz - (218) 444-5015
JUDGE ADVOCATE:	Ward Sutton
SERGEANT AT ARMS:	Bruce Tiegen
OFFICER OF THE DAY:	Glenn Agard
LEGISLATIVE OFFICER:	Joe Vene
HISTORIAN:	Vacant
EXEC. COMMITTEE:	Bruce Tiegen, Gary Guggenberger, Andy Staudt, Henry Hammerback, Jim Pinsonnault

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

Feb 2nd -- Groundhog Day	Mar 3rd -- DAV Chapter 7 Executive Committee meeting 1630 Hrs.
Feb 3rd - DAV Chapter 7 Executive Committee meeting 1630 Hrs.	Mar 4th - Mardi Gras
Feb 9th - Super Bowl Sunday	Mar 5th - Ash Wednesday
Feb 12th - Abraham Lincoln's Birthday	Mar 9th - Daylight Saving Time begins
Feb 12th - Tu Bishvat a Jewish holiday occurring on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat is also called <i>Rosh HaShanah La'Ilanot</i> , literally "New Year of the Trees", the day is celebrated as an ecological awareness day, and trees are planted in celebration.	Mar 14th - Purim(Jewish holiday that celebrates the miraculous events told in the Book of Esther.)
Feb 14th - Valentine's Day	Mar 17th - St Patrick's Day
Feb 17th - DAV Chapter 7 General Membership meeting 1830 Hrs.	Mar 19th -- The feast of St Joseph, the husband of the virgin Mary and stepfather of Jesus.
Feb 17th - Presidents Day	Mar 20th - Spring Equinox - Start of Spring
Feb 22nd - George Washington's Birthday	Mar 29th - Vietnam War Veterans Day



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COMMANDER'S CORNER

GREETINGS FROZEN VETERANS,

First things first, I must apologize to 2 of our members that have worked for many years in our clothing program picking up the donations from our green clothing bins. My plan was to publicly Thank them at the Christmas Party, and I am blaming my age because I forgot to do it. So, MY APOLOGIZES to LYLE STROUP WHO RETIRED FROM BIN PICKUPS IN MAY AT THE VERY YOUNG AGE OF 80 and BRUCE TIEGEN WHO RETIRED FROM BIN PICKUPS IN DECEMBER, so if you see either one of these two gentlemen, CONGRATULATE AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO CHAPTER 7 FOR PICKING UP THE CLOTHING BINS ALL OF THOSE YEARS!!!! By the way, they are not quitting DAV, only bin pickups, this is why we could use some new volunteers!

Now onto some mundane business, at the February Chapter Meeting we will be accepting nominations for the 3 elected Officer positions and voting to fill those positions, plan to attend and have your voice heard. VETS ON THE HILL will be held on April 9, let Tom or myself know if you plan on attending, it's a great way to let our government leaders know our Veteran priorities. The DAV State Convention will be held April 23 thru the 26, it is the DAV STATE 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY, if you are interested in going, please let the Chapter know so we can reserve you a spot. As I said "mundane", just the Commanders way of getting us members to participate, remember all of the above is for your benefit, electing competent leaders, letting the government know our Veteran priorities, and finally, finding out what DAV State and National has for plans for the coming year and to be able to voice your concerns directly to our state leaders. Like I said, just mundane stuff!!!!

At the Chapter meeting it was reported that the Chapter had helped 6 veterans in need and voted and approved to help 4 more veterans in need, along with other business that came before the Chapter.

I hope you are doing well and staying warm, any questions or concerns please give me a call.

Gene Schwantes

AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S CORNER

Hello All,

Just a reminder that there will not be a meeting this month. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting in March where we will be gathering to elect new unit officers and to get the New Year's business started!

Sarah Gast

HAPPY
Valentines
DAY



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THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER #7 REGULARLY CONVENED ON 20 JANUARY 2025 AT 1830.

OPENING CEREMONY: * OPENING PRAYER * PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. ROLL CALL of OFFICERS to determine if a quorum is present.

Commander	Gene Schwantes	Present
Senior Vice Commander	Darrell Baltzell	Present
Junior Vice Commander	Tom Annonson	Present
Adjutant	Jeff Meyer	Present
Treasurer	Jeri Harvey	Excused
Chaplain	Mike Gutz	Present
Judge Advocate	Ward Sutton	Present
Sergeant-At-Arms	Bruce Tiegen	Present
Officer of the Day	Glen Aagard	Present
Historian	Vacant	N/A

B. Members Present: 13

C. Introduction of Guests or Visitors: None

D. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

1. Motion to accept minutes as read by Tom, 2d by Mike G., the motion carried.

E. Treasurer's Report:

1. The Nov. treasurer's report was read by Gene, the motion to accept was made by Tom, 2d by Darrel, and the motion was carried.
2. The Dec. treasurer's report was read by Gene, the motion to accept was made by Henry, the 2d by Rodney, and the motion carried.

F. Communications:

1. National continues spotlighting the DAV Caregiver Support program. The new website is full of pertinent information for Veterans and their caregivers <https://www.dav.org/get-help-now/dav-caregivers-support/>
2. There is a lot of good information from DAV State as they put together their own 100-year celebration. 1st is the 100-year apparel, visit: <https://dav.trophyawards.com/>. Convention packets should be arriving approx. the third week of Jan. Of note, is Thurs. CSO/DSO training, which has been moved to open up the convention to more attendees. Thur. afternoon will feature S.A.V.E. training, which is a VA-sponsored suicide prevention/awareness program. Thurs. evening will feature guest speaker Mark Nutsch. See the website or the adjutant for a full breakdown of this spring convention's full agenda.
3. DAV National is excited to announce its partnership with Leafwell, a platform that provides personalized cannabinoid-based therapy recommendations. To celebrate the partnership, Leafwell patients nationwide can use the code "DAV" to receive 10 dollars off their medical cards. Leafwell will also donate 10% of its proceeds to the DAV mission.
4. DAV National announced the partnership with TrueCar, which has made a \$50,000 dollar donation to the DAV and provides special car-buying savings, benefits, and resources to active-duty military, Veterans, and their families, which include guides and helpful tips for military car buying.
5. DAV National announced the live stream of the Medal of Honor Award Ceremony. This has now been archived and can be viewed on the DAV National website.
6. Josh Vrtacnik updated us on the clothing program, which is going well, and is requesting a short testimonial for how the clothing program is helping the individual chapters, which we have already sent to Josh.
7. Trent Dilkes sent us an update which is too lengthy to post here. Trent is requesting everyone who is not already signed up to please sign up for MinnFluence, which is very fast and easy. Once signed in, see the list of things you, as an individual, can participate in to help Trent or simply to catch up on all the legislative actions for our Veterans that are currently in the works.
8. DAV MN sent us a beautiful Christmas card wishing us a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
9. Wesley and Susan Rolan of Fosston sent us a Christmas card wishing us a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
10. Jerry Wraa sent us a thank you card for the 100 dollars for 100 years celebration.

G. Committee Reports:

1. Membership: NA
2. Service Officer: Tom reports he has referred several Veterans to the CVSO for enrollment into the VA healthcare system.
3. Hospital/Sickness and Distress: Please keep Pat Winkler in your thoughts and prayers as he is in the hospital with West Nile Virus and Lymes disease.

4. Legislative: NA

5. Entertainment: NA

6. Publicity and Fundraising: NA

7. Medical Equipment: Gene reported we had 35 issues and 48 donations since our last session in Nov.

8. The Scholarship Committee reports that the 2025-2026 application is finished and should go out possibly as early as 1/21/2025.

H. Executive Committee Action Items: No actions were brought forward.

I. Old Business:

1. The nominating committee of Henry, Gary, and Rodney presented their nominations of Gene Schwantes for Commander, Darrel Baltzell for Sr. Vice, and Tom Annonson for Jr. Vice.
2. State convention attendees (Spring Convention) so far are Gene, Tom, and Mike G. Let the commander or adjutant know if you are interested in attending the Spring Conference to be held on 23-26 April 2025.

J. New Business:

1. A Veteran in need was requested by Shane, who needed help with groceries. The amount was \$376.32, approved by Gene.
2. A Veteran in need was requested by Darren, who needed help with propane. The amount was \$540.00, approved by Gene.
3. A Veteran in need was requested by Shane, who needed help with his Elec. (\$307.48) and gas (\$110.74). The Veteran has previously received \$ help from DAV in the amount of \$2007.50. The request was for \$418.22 and was approved by Gene.
4. A Veteran in need was requested by Luke, who needed help with groceries (\$237.69) and gas (\$39.06). Both were approved by Gene.
5. A Veteran in need was requested by Shane, who needed help buying winter clothes after a house fire destroyed it all. The amount was \$441.96, approved by Gene.
6. A Veteran in need was requested by Luke, who needed help with propane. The amount was \$498.96, approved by Gene.
7. A Veteran in need was requested by Luke and presented to the general meeting, who needed help with truck repairs. The amount requested was \$935.60, and a motion to approve was made by Dean, 2d, by Rodney, and the motion was approved.
8. A Veteran in need was requested by Logan (Bagley) and presented to the general meeting, who needed help with paying for dentures. The total amount of the dentures is \$6000.00; Mike made the motion to pay \$1500.00 towards the bill, 2d was made by Glen, and the motion was approved.
9. A Veteran in need was requested by Darren and presented to the general meeting, who needed help with vehicle repairs. The amount requested was \$2189.85, and Mike made a motion to approve, 2d by Tom, and the motion was approved.
10. A Veteran in need was requested by Darren and presented to the general meeting, who needed help with his electric bill. The amount requested was \$1332.62, and Dean made the motion to approve, 2d by Glen, and the motion was approved.

K. Good of the Order:

1. Tom reported that Veterans Home has budgeted \$15,000.00 for its entertainment and events funds for the next six months. Thank you, Tom.
2. Tom also reported that the "Man Up North" conference, featuring several guest speakers including Mike Huckabee and Kevin Sorbo, is fast approaching. Tickets and additional information can be found by calling the Sanford Center.
3. Received late, a donation has been made to the chapter by Bill Dappen's spouse in the amount of \$750.00. Thank you very much for your generous donation.
4. Mike reported that a Veteran with only a 70% disability rating is eligible for residence in the Veterans home. Once on the list, you will move up as rooms become available, and once you are at the top, you can report that you are not ready, and your name will be put back to the bottom of the list, and the process will be repeated.

L. Closing Ceremonies performed.

M. Motion to Adjourn:

- Motion by Mike and second by Tom. Motion carried.
- The meeting adjourned at 2025hrs.
- The next meeting is 2/17/2025 at 1830 hrs.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Greetings to all you chapter and unit members of North Central Minnesota. As we begin to look at our next spiritual temperament, there is another scriptural verse that comes to mind, which is about the riches of His kindness toward us. His kindness is intended to lead us to run away from anything that displeases dishonors or in any other way disrespects God. His kindness is His gift to us through Christ and draws us closer to Him by giving us the desire to change the way we think. This happens when we honor Him and plan our lives around the things He wants us to accomplish in life, instead of the things we want to accomplish. Our gratitude for all the sacrifices God has done for us through Christ's work and suffering on the cross satisfies God's justice for our wickedness, which leads us to thank, celebrate and worship Him. Some examples of this may be to keep doing our volunteer activities for the DAV, such as medical equipment, clothing, or running for office. Another example may be to seek employment with a United States government position, or any number of activities resulting in a sense of commitment, contentment and purpose.

The scriptural verse we are referring to is Romans 2:4, which leads to gratitude that expresses thankfulness. Now granted, Romans 2:4 was written by Paul in a different context, as one may easily see, however Paul is applying our above discussion to the overall context found in Romans 2. Therefore, "...Guard and keep yourselves in the love of God; expect and patiently wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) - [which will bring you] unto life eternal. And refute [so as to] convict some who dispute with you, and on some, have mercy who waiver, and doubt. [Strive to] save others, snatching [them] out of [the] fire; on others take pity [but] with fear loathing even the garment spotted by the flesh and polluted by their sensuality. [Zech3:2-4]..." (Jude 21-23: The Amplified Bible, (c) 1987). All of this, as you will soon see, leads us into, and is related to our discussion about spiritual temperament. Although this temperament is active in nature and addresses a very large / small audience, it is actually a form of personal worship - activist. The questions for this temperament are:

- I feel closest to God when I am cooperating with Him in standing up for His justice (which leads to mercy): writing letters to government officials and newspaper editors, picketing but not harassing at a place of injustice (ex: Abortion Clinics), urging people to vote or become involved about current issues (See Chaplain Corner November 2024)
- I get very frustrated if I see apathetic Christians who don't become active
- The terms courageous, confrontation and social activism are very appealing to me
- Activities such as confronting a social evil, attending public meetings of state legislative or local school board meetings to challenge new laws or curriculum, or participating in the political process
- I would rather spend an hour in the rain to confront an evil than to pray at home, walk in the woods, or read quietly for an hour.

A prayer:

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head (Psalm 139:1-5, (New Living Translation).

Mike and Julie Gutz

VETERAN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS

The following is a list of Organizations that cater to taking Veterans on outdoor events, usually at no cost to Veterans and some offer events that are also available to your family members as well. If you are interested in participating in any of these events and don't have access to a computer have a family member help you get in contact with them. Their contact info is listed on their home pages.

American Heroes Outdoor TV

<https://www.americanheroesoutdoors.com/applications/>

Band of Brothers Outdoors

<https://www.bandofbrothersoutdoors.com/>

Brady Oberg Legacy Foundation

<https://bradyoberglegacyfoundation.org/>

Fishing With Vets

<https://fishingwithvets.org/>

Mandatory Fun Outdoors

<https://mandatoryfunoutdoors.org/>

Middle River Veterans Outdoors

<https://mrveteransoutdoors.com/>

Minnesota Veterans Outdoors

<https://www.mnvetsoutdoors.org/>

Warriors and Walleyes

<https://warriorsandwalleyes.org/>

Wounded Warrior Guide Service

<https://wwgsmn.org/>

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VETERANS DAY ON THE HILL 2025

The Veterans on the Hill Day has been officially announced to be held on the 9th of April this year!

Once again, we will be using the Bemidji Bus Lines to charter the trip to the Capitol in St Paul. The bus will comfortably seat 50 people, and seating will fill up quickly, so sign up early to get your seat(s) reserved!

Please Text or Email me your information prior to the 28th of March so that I can add your names to my list. Your information must contain the following:

- Name(s) of everyone planning to join us.
- Cell phone number of each participating individual, we don't want anyone to be left behind.
- Which pick up point you want to meet the bus at, plan to be at your pick-up point 20–30 minutes prior to the arrival times as these times may vary depending on road conditions and traffic:
 - Bemidji Walmart parking lot, promptly departing at 0600 Hrs.
 - Former Akeley VFW, arriving approx. 0640 Hrs., departing 10 minutes later.
 - Bricks Travel Center, Motley, MN, arriving approx. 0750 Hrs. Departing 15 minutes after arrival.
 - Copper Lantern Restaurant in St Cloud, arriving approx. 0905 Hrs. Departing 10 minutes after arrival.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call / text me at (218) 251-3025 or Email at torgor@lightspeed.net.

Thank you for supporting our Veterans!

Sincerely,
Tom Annonson
Trip coordinator



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NEW BENEFIT ALERT - 100% DISABLED VETERANS



Vehicle Registration, Title Fees, Driver's License Fees, etc..

Jan. 1, 2024 changes to veteran benefits

Veterans with a total service-connected disability will be eligible for new benefits from DVS starting Jan. 1, 2024.

What you need to know

- 100% disabled veterans will be exempt from registration fees (including filing fees) for two vehicles of their choosing. This includes passenger vehicles, non-commercial 1-ton pick-ups, motorcycles and RVs.
- Does not include personalized plate fee, annual contributions for special plates, reinstatement fees or impound fees.
- 100% disabled veterans will be exempt from title fees (including filing fees) for vehicles purchased on or after Jan. 1, 2024.
- Does not include salvage inspections or fast track fees.
- Early renewal/titling (before Jan. 1) is not an option for veterans who would like to take advantage of these benefits.
- 100% disabled veterans will be exempt from driver's license and identification card fees for all types of cards: Standard, REAL and Enhanced.
- Starting July. 1, 2024 100% disabled veterans will also be exempt from paying motor vehicle sales taxes for vehicles purchased on or after that date.

To utilize these benefits bring your award letter or statement of benefits with you to show proof of 100% Service Connection

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MINNFLUENCE

Our voices are louder together. For this reason, DAV of Minnesota innovated an effective platform for Veterans, their families and concerned citizens. MinnFluence is a free, one-of-a-kind tool to ensure Veteran advocates can keep up with current legislative issues and swiftly engage with state lawmakers. “MinnFluencers” will receive updates on progress of legislation for Veterans, their families, and survivors. When important issues arise that could impact DAV of Minnesota arise, subscribers will receive ready-to-send emails to engage their respective elected officials. MinnFluence also allows Minnesotans to easily track how their elected state representatives voted on key Veterans issues. You do not need to be a Veteran to sign up; Veterans, families and the community are invited to join. Together we can build a stronger, louder voice to support the men and women who have served.

To sign up go to <https://davn.org/about-us/minnfluence/>

VETERANS BENEFITS INCREASE 2.5% IN 2025

On Oct. 9, 2024, the Social Security Administration announced a 2.5% boost in the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), the smallest in the last three years.

The Department of Labor determines the annual COLA by measuring the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI is based on a broad sampling of the costs of consumer goods and expenses.

Veterans, families and dependents eligible for VA benefits saw the new amount reflected in their monthly checks effective Jan. 1. The increase affects everything from Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation to clothing allowances to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and survivors benefits.

“Many veterans and their families rely on their VA benefits to help cover essential expenses like food, housing and utilities,” said DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese. “The rising costs of consumer goods and other expenses the last several years have put a significant strain on veterans and their families, and the cost-of-living adjustment is intended to help counteract the impact inflation has on veterans’ benefits.”

The 2.5% increase for 2025 is well below the 3.2% in 2023, 8.7% in 2022 and 5.9% in 2021. However, this boost is still close to the average increase of about 2.6% for the past decade.

The 2025 adjustment means VA disability checks will go up about \$4.28 per month for those with a 10% rating and \$93.45 for those rated at 100% who don’t have dependents.

Learn more about VA disability ratings with our VA compensation calculator at dav.org/disability-calculator.

MILITARY HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCE DAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

- Feb. 3 – Four Chaplains Day – A Day to remember the four U.S. Army chaplains who made the ultimate sacrifice when the USAT Dorchester sank during World War II.
- Feb. 19 – Coast Guard Reserve Birthday

UPCOMING DAV MN OUTDOOR EVENTS

The Minnesota DAV Department’s Outdoor program has scheduled their upcoming events and posted them on their website. Check them out at: <https://davn.org/events-activities/events-for-veterans/>



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FREE RIDES To All Veterans and Caregiver (if needed)!

Northwest Transportation MN DAV Bemidji-Fargo Trips • Pick-up Points:

Bemidji National Guard Armory • Solway in front of bar • Shevlin in front of bar • Bagley Cenex Station west end of town
Fosston at LePier's on the east end of town • Mahnomen northside of town • Ada Country Store • Mainstreet Leonard & Clearbrook

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