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Monthly Newsletter
January 2026

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



NEXT MEETING:
DAV Headquarters at
5441 15th Street NW, Bemidji, MN
Monday, December 15 at 5:00pm

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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 Aagard
LEGISLATIVE OFFICER:	Joe Vene
HISTORIAN:	Vacant
EXEC. COMMITTEE:	Bruce Tiegen, Gary Guggenberger, Andy Staudt, Henry Hammerback, Jim Pinsonnault

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

January 1- New Year's Day

**January 19: Martin Luther King Jr
Birthday**

January 29: Chinese New Year



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COMMANDER'S CORNER

Greetings Veterans,

Well, good news, winter made it, so here we are in the cold and snow and wondering when will it end. I know for me summer flew by, but winter has always seemed to take its slow sweet time to get out of here, but as the story goes, the bugs aren't very bad at this time of year.

I hope everyone is doing well, shoveling the snow, staying warm, shoveling the snow, getting your taxes done, shoveling the snow, getting out and about and not being cooped in, and of course, shoveling the snow.

We had a Great Christmas Party, with approximately 125 people in attendance, which I believe is the most that we have ever had. It was good to see so many old friends that I have made since joining DAV and I look forward to next summer's picnic.

The Chapter is doing well, the clothing program just keeps on plugging along, 52 weeks a year, and it has been going longer than the Pony Express lasted and way longer than any one President has ever held office. The people working in the clothing program are a bunch of tough old birds, working in the rain, sleet, snow, and sometimes even the heat. We are also refurbishing some of our clothing bins, getting them sand blasted, repaired, and repainted. If we do all of them, it will be a several year project.

At the January meeting, nominations will be taken for the following positions: Commander, Sr. Vice Commander, and Jr. Vice Commander. Please get a hold of the nominating committee and get your name put in for the position that you are interested in and if elected it will be a very rewarding experience.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, just give me a call and I will do my best to answer them.

Wishing you a great 2026,

Gene Schwantes, Commander, DAV Chapter 7, and proud of it!

AUXILIARY CORNER

Dear DAV and Auxiliary Members,

Happy Holidays, we at the DAV #7 Auxiliary hope everyone had a blessed holiday and are looking forward to the new year!.

We have some exciting projects coming up in volunteer services, more information to come in our future meeting minutes. We hope that you can join us to learn more of what this new year will have to bring in 2026.

We will not be having a meeting in January or February but do look forward to our March meeting which will take place the third Monday of the month.

Happy New Year to all!

The DAV #7 Auxiliary



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THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER #7 REGULARLY CONVENED ON 17 NOVEMBER 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	Excused
Adjutant	Jeff Meyer	Present
Treasurer	Jeri Harvey	Present
Chaplain	Mike Gutz	Excused
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: 17

C. Introduction of Guests or Visitors: Lila Tenison, welcome Lila!

D. Minutes of Previous Meeting: Motion to accept previous meeting minutes as read by Steve, 2d by Dave, the motion carried.

E. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jeri read the October treasurer's report. Henry motioned to accept the report, Gary made the 2d, and the motion carried.

F. Communications:

1. DAVMN sent us a thank you for filing our financial reports on time and reminded us that we are now facing deadlines for filing our 990, SOS, and Attorney General filings by the end of November.
2. Middle River Veterans Outdoors sent us their annual donation request, thank you for previous donations, and their all-new and updated brochure highlighting their multiple outdoor programs. Please see the adjutant or visit them online at: MRVETERANSOUTDOORS.COM for more information or to participate.
3. DAVMN sent us congratulations to John Walker, Minnesota DAV Volunteer of the month. Congratulations, John!
4. Gina from DAVMN updated us that "Membership Match" will continue for the 2025-2026 membership year. She included a roster of each chapter and details of progress towards our goals.
5. DAVMN, in conjunction with celebrating their 100th anniversary, is celebrating Paul Wojahn, the nation's oldest DAV Chapter Commander, still leading with Chapter 15 in New Ulm, MN.
6. There will be a Volunteer Services Webinar hosted by Assistant National Voluntary Services Director Oscar Olguin on 19 November at 2 PM EST for those interested in volunteering and participating in the DAV Scholarships.
7. DAV National announced that they have expanded its youth scholarship program. They now offer 15 scholarships annually, totaling \$140,000 in awards. Individual scholarships range from \$2,500 to \$30,000.
8. DAV National has launched its new DAV Recruiter Rally for 2025-2026. Please see the adjutant or visit the national website for more information about this recruitment incentive.
9. We have a reminder from the state for all members to update and/or sign up for their mydav.org profiles and accounts.
10. The National Adjutant, Barry Jesinoski, has announced a new partnership with "Regiment," the nation's largest military Veteran gaming community. More details are available on the national website.
11. DAVMN sent out a thank you to all chapters for their participation as DAVMN celebrates 105 years.

12. Chapter 7 received the \$3,500 donation, which the DAVMN executive committee recommended in September.

G. Committee Reports:

1. Membership: Sr. Vice Darrel reported one new member this month, Lila Tenisen, to the chapter. Welcome, Lila!
2. Service Officer: NA
3. Hospital/Sickness and Distress: Tom Annonson is currently at the Minneapolis VA hospital, and reports are that he is making progress. He has regained more function in his left arm, can now eat small amounts of food, and has his cell phone with him. Tom can use the voice commands/prompts on his cell phone, so please send him well wishes via text or Facebook, or give him a call to say hi. If you are in the Twin Cities area, he would love a visit!
4. Legislative: NA
5. Entertainment: Chapter 7 Christmas Party is being held on 12/15/2025 beginning at 5 PM at the Eagles Club in Bemidji. The sign-up cutoff day is 12/5/2025, for meal headcount.
6. Publicity and Fundraising: NA
7. Medical Equipment: 26 Issues and 7 donations.

H. Executive Committee Action Items: None.

I. Old Business: NA

J. New Business: Dave C., Jeff M., and Ward S. have volunteered to be the nominating committee for this year's election of officers. Henry made the motion to approve, Darrel S. made the 2d, and the motion carried.

A veteran in need requests assistance in purchasing tires for his pickup truck. The executive committee approved up to \$700; the actual purchase was \$675.26.

Commander Gene filled in for Tom as part of the Bemidji Veterans Home spending committee. After briefing the chapter on the veterans' financial needs at the home, Gary made the motion to increase our donation (a budgeted item) to \$8,000. Dave made the second motion, and it carried.

K. Good of the Order: Jim P. reminded us that the VFW will be hosting its Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day at the Eagles Club on 12/7/2025.

L. Closing Ceremonies performed.

M. Motion to Adjourn: Motion by Steve, seconded by Darrel S. Motion carried.

- The meeting adjourned at 1914 hrs.
- Next meeting: 12/15/2025 at the Eagles Club. Social hour begins at 5:00 PM; dinner and the program start at 6:00 PM.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Last month we took a break from discussing The Book of Ephesians in order to reflect on the Pearl Harbor attack, World War II, in relation to scriptures. If we may, we would like to add a few more observations to our article last month. It is interesting to note that the very first war to ever take place was a long time ago, in a place far, far away - heaven (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, and Revelation 12). Another interesting observation is the rebirth of Israel, specifically as a Jewish nation from out of the ruins and ashes of the Holocaust described in scripture (Ezekiel 37). Granted, there are a variety of different views by people regarding these observations and the corresponding relationship to scriptures. The different views held by others are beyond the scope of this article, yet these scriptures, and the corresponding events have been a subject of past controversies.

Since this is the first article of the year, we would like to take another small break from our exploration in The Book of Ephesians and cover a popular but misunderstood verse. Yes, there are many other misunderstood verses in The Bible, yet this particular verse caught my attention this month. Allow us to mention a little something about the exploration of misunderstood Bible verses. Having questions and researching scriptures is actually a wonderful way to spend time with God. Misunderstanding scripture is a great way to start on a journey and find a little gold nugget we can keep. Allow us to give you an easy way to misunderstand an idea using common English words - NOWHERE. We know this is a typographical error, but what about that part of the story the original author was intending to write? There are two possibilities, NO WHERE or NOW HERE. As a result, the reader would need to understand the context of the passage in order to understand that particular sentence. As a result, this is where research is helpful. So, let's get started, NOWHERE is the verse (Matthew 7:1).

Many people consider this verse to simply mean we are not to judge others. This idea alone can open up our families to poor, unproductive, and in some cases dangerous relationships. Yet the context of the entire passage means something totally different. Jesus is simply stating a well known fact for anybody - not to be a hypocrite. Jesus simply wants to protect a person from being wrongfully judged, because we all know the cruelty that comes from others when judging hypocrites - nobody like to be judged in this manner.

Many people believe not judging others while being inclusive is the best way to handle relationships. We saw this in the free love movement of the 1960s and we now see it in our "Woke" Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) culture. Yet we still need to protect ourselves from unwanted, cruel and controlling relationships - something we can do for our families this year. Some really good verses that can help us out are John 7:24, Proverbs 31:9, II Timothy 3, I Corinthians 5:9 - 13, and III John 9-10.

Our prayer for you this year is to enjoy good, safe and protective relationships with all your families. In the mean time, if there is something we can do for you, please call.

Take care and blessings to all of you.

Mike - DAV and Linda - Auxiliary

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MILITARY HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCE DAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

- January 1: New Years Day
- January 16: Persian Gulf War began (1991)
- January 19: Martin Luther King Jr Birthday
- January 27: Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord (1973)
- January 31: Panama Campaign Ended (1990)

MINNESOTA: 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://davmn.org/events-activities/events-for-veterans/>

March 17- March 21 Late Winter Getaway- applications close Jan 5
April 13-April 18 Grand Canyon National Park Hike and Explore, applications close Jan 23

VA: SWITCH FROM DS LOGON TO LOGIN.GOV OR ID.ME BY SEPTEMBER 30

After Sept. 30, 2025, Veterans will have two secure options to sign in to VA.gov and VA mobile apps—a Login.gov account or ID.me account. Most Veterans have already made the switch. If you're still using a DS Logon username and password, we want to make sure you're prepared when this option is discontinued by the end of September.

How to Transition

1. Visit [Creating an account for VA.gov](#) for detailed instructions on setting up your Login.gov or ID.me account.
2. Follow the step-by-step guide to create your account and verify your identity.
3. Use your new account to access VA services online as you did before.



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ADJUTANT'S CORNER

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. In lieu of our traditional minutes, the commander has requested a few words from me to give you. Our Christmas Party, held on the 15th, was a rousing success if I do say so myself. Since it is the season to celebrate our savior coming to this earth for the first time, we started the nights festivities off with an opening prayer, followed by the posting of the Colors and reading of the POW/Missing man ceremony, and singing of the national anthem which were done by our Bemidji JROTC cadets, and who did a marvelous job for us, thank you cadets.

Some key announcements for the chapter tonight, *BSU Hockey Veterans Appreciation Day, is on 1/2/2026 (woman's hockey 1/30/2026). DAV has been invited to set up a promotion table. Chapter 7 will need volunteers to man the table and our CVSO Shane Gustafson is collecting a list of names of Veterans interested in attending the game. Please see the adjutant or the commander if interested or desire more information.

Next up; *Dan, the DAV Van coordinator, is in immediate need of drivers for the Van. There is some training involved in this but if you have any interest in driving and serving other Veterans, please contact Dan at 218 583-1791.

Of special note tonight; *Will Klause has graciously donated one custom deer antlered ice fishing rod and reel combo. If you want or need one of these for your personal collection, contact "Will's Antler Creations, 828 342-9689."

I did not get the final head count for the evening, but I know it was very near 100. I personally was able to spend the evening with our four newest members of chapter 7 and their spouses, and we had a great time getting to know one another and enjoyed the delicious beef and chicken entrée' served by the always excellent staff at the Eagles club, many thanks to you folks for serving us tonight.

After dinner, our Sr. Vice Darrel Baltzell, who put the whole Christmas Party together for us, with help from our auxiliary commander Linda, gave away fifteen hundred dollars' worth of door prizes. Darrel puts together our Christmas and our summer picnics which are always full of plenty of opportunities to eat and take away some swag in the form of door prizes. Darrel's position as Senior Vice, Gene's position as commander, and Tom Annonson's position as Junior Vice are also open to nominations for new leaders this year. Please see Jeff Meyer the adjutant, Ward Sutton, or Dave Chamness if you are interested in one of these three elected positions, or one of the many offices that the new leadership will have to fill.

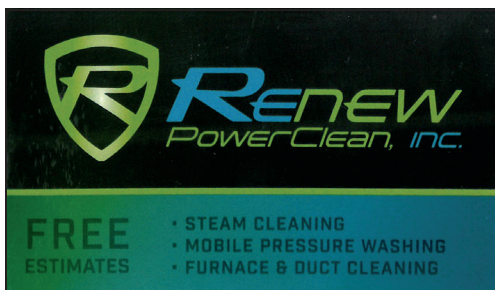
Please remember that while the Holidays are usually full of fun, family and friends, it can be a very difficult time for our Veterans and others dealing with trauma, anxiety, depression and so many other emotional difficulties. If someone you know is isolated, withdrawn, living in fear and loneliness, or if you simply have an impulse to contact a Veteran friend or family member or loved one, obey the impulse, pick up the phone and have a conversation with them. Better yet, invite them out for a breakfast, lunch or dinner, or even just a coffee and reconnect. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

God Bless

Jeff Meyer

Adjutant

DAV Chapter 7



MINNESOTA: DAV OF MN PODCAST



A monthly podcast presented by the DAV of Minnesota. Find Veterans of the North where you get your podcasts.

NATIONAL: COMMANDER'S ACTION NETWORK (CAN)

To stay informed and take action to support federal legislation and policies affecting veterans, their families and survivors, please join DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network).

To enroll, go to the DAV.org website and do a search for the "Commander's Action Network" it will direct you to a results page and there you will find the link to sign up and become an active participant in the program. Once you are enrolled you will periodically receive emails with "canned" letters to your individual representatives on legislative matters pertaining to veterans' issues that are currently before them in Congress encouraging them to act on behalf of all veterans that the proposed bill in question is addressing. Simply click the "take action" button at the bottom of the email and the letter will automatically be sent.

NATIONAL: NATIONAL LEGISLATION NEWS

Keep up with legislation at the National Level by visiting <https://www.dav.org/about-dav/legislation>

NATIONAL: NATIONAL MEMBER NEWS

The link below is to the National's web page that highlights some of the activities of Chapters and members from around the Country. The page has some interesting accounts of the various things that might spark some ideas that other Chapters might consider incorporating in their local areas of influence.

Check it out at <https://www.dav.org/news-media/member-news>

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VA: IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING YOUR VA ID CARD

As a Veteran receiving health care, one of the most crucial assets you possess is your VA ID card. It's imperative to understand why maintaining and updating your VA ID card is essential and how you can ensure it remains functional.

Identification at VA Facilities

Your VA ID card serves as your primary identification at VA facilities. Whether you're seeking medical care, accessing benefits, or attending appointments, this card is vital. It streamlines the identification process, reducing potential human errors and allowing seamless access to your personal files and medical records.

Check-in for Appointments

When you have appointments at VA facilities, your VA ID card is a necessity for check-in. It helps staff quickly verify your identity, ensuring a smooth and efficient process.

Updating Your VA ID Card

If you need to update your VA ID card, visit the enrollment office at your local VA facility. No appointment is necessary for this process. The staff at the enrollment office are there to assist you in updating your information. Don't hesitate to ask any VA employee for guidance or assistance. They are more than willing to help you navigate the process of updating or obtaining a new VA ID card.

Inspecting Your VA ID Card for Serviceability

Image Accuracy

Ensure that the photo on your card accurately reflects your current appearance. If not, it might be time for an update.

Expiration Check

Regularly check the expiration date on your VA ID card. An expired card might hinder your access to services and benefits. If your card has expired or is about to, it's crucial to visit the enrollment office for renewal.

Ensuring Barcode and Card Information Accuracy

Your VA ID card's barcode and information play a pivotal role in swiftly accessing the benefits and services you're entitled to as a veteran. Regularly inspecting and ensuring the integrity of these components is essential for a hassle-free experience when utilizing your card at VA facilities. If you notice any issues with the barcode, information accuracy, or physical wear on the card, promptly address them by seeking a replacement or an update at your nearest VA enrollment office.

Maintaining and updating your VA ID card is pivotal for ensuring a smooth experience when accessing VA services and benefits. Whether for medical care, benefit claims, or appointments, a functional and up-to-date VA ID card simplifies the process. The VA is committed to assisting veterans in this regard, providing the necessary resources and support for a hassle-free experience.

Veterans have sacrificed and served our nation, and the VA ID card is a token of appreciation and commitment to providing the care and support deserved. By keeping your VA ID card current and well-maintained, you're taking a proactive step to ensure that you receive the benefits and services you've rightfully earned through your service to the country.



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