



# NEWSLETTER

February, 2026

The AV BTYR continues to do what we have a passion for – assisting military personnel who are currently serving, Veterans, and their families. Your help and support have made this possible – making a difference for many Military connected folks.

## Latest News

### **EVENT RECAP**

The Annual Chili Cook-off and Silent Auction, held on January 25 at Bogarts, was a huge success! People enjoyed 18 very tasty chili's as they bid on donated items and purchased raffle tickets. Monies raised, that go to help Veterans in need, totaled approximately \$3,000.



### **SPECIAL THANKS**

Recently we assisted several Air National Guard men and women and their families with a fuel card and groceries.

### **NEWS FROM THE MDVA**



#### **Resident Spotlight: Kevin Renneke, Montevideo Veterans Home**

Who among us hasn't heard the saying, "It's better to give than to receive?" For Kevin Renneke, Resident at the Minnesota Veterans Homes in Montevideo, it's more than just a saying. It's been a way to live each and every day.

This past December, encouraged by a strong holiday spirit, Kevin withdrew twenty \$50 bills from his personal bank account, donned an elf hat and other Christmas apparel, traveled to the Walmart Supercenter in Montevideo and gave away \$1,000 to surprised, and lucky, shoppers.

The generous effort allowed him to spread kindness in his community; calling this experience something from his own life's "bucket list" and saying this was exactly how he wanted to spend Christmas. Kevin made the holiday season extra special for local shoppers.

Full article: <https://mn.gov/mdva/blog/?id=1066-720168>

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## Upcoming Events

- Thu., February 5, 6:00 p.m. - Monthly Board / Member Meeting at the Apple Valley American Legion
- Thu., February 19, 5:30 p.m. - Military Appreciation Dinner  
Join us for a delicious 'FREE' dinner meatloaf, mashed potatoes with gravy and corn.

Doors open at 5:15 p.m.

If you plan to attend the dinner, please RSVP the total number in your group by **FRIDAY, February 13.**

## Contact Us

To get needed services such as groceries, yard work, house repairs, snow removal, etc., we want to help. We have resources to connect you to the assistance you need.

Direct Line:  
952-923-5014  
Please leave a message

Email:  
[yellowribbonav@gmail.com](mailto:yellowribbonav@gmail.com)

County Veteran Service Office:  
651-554-5631

American Legion:  
952-406-0737

## **NEWS FROM THE MDVA - CONTINUED**

### **New Veterans Homes Mark Two-Year Anniversary**

Two years ago, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) did what no other state has ever done: opened three new Veterans Homes at the same time. Located in Bemidji, Montevideo and Preston, the three Homes have established themselves in their local communities as desired skilled nursing facilities for Veterans and worthwhile recipients of support from volunteers and donors during these first two years.

We have created strong community partnerships with local Veteran Service Organizations such as American Legion posts and VFW posts and others, as well as community organizations such as Chambers of Commerce. Our on-site events attract many local community members who help out and create fun times for the Residents.

Full article: <https://mn.gov/mdva/blog/?id=1066-719560>



### **Community Volunteers Enhance the Sacred Grounds at Minnesota's State Veterans Cemeteries**

For many Veterans, burial benefits are often the only VA benefit they utilize, making the care of these sacred grounds deeply meaningful for the families and friends who visit. Loved ones come to these cemeteries seeking quiet moments of remembrance, and the condition of the landscape directly shapes their experience.

The Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries - Duluth, one of four state Veterans cemeteries operated by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), spans 104 acres and serves as a final resting place for more than 1,000 Veterans, spouses and dependents. In Fiscal Year 2025 alone, 228 individuals were laid to rest there.

The daily operation and maintenance of such an expansive space falls to the dedicated MDVA staff of eight but is supported annually by companies who volunteer with the nonprofit, Saluting Branches. "Throughout the year our team is responsible for this important work and Saluting Branches allows our team to collaborate with our community in a meaningful way," said Duluth Cemetery Administrator Cory Johnson.

Full article: <https://mn.gov/mdva/blog/?id=1066-720176>

### **Taking Resident Care to the Next Level**

Caring for Veterans provides a unique opportunity to identify any and all service-connected health issues. Minnesota Veterans Homes' Residents are benefiting from a collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) Healthcare and Programs & Services Divisions.

For example, a recent Resident of the Silver Bay Veterans Home had battled a health condition for many years, but the condition had not been recognized as service related. After learning more about the Resident's situation, the MDVA team worked with the Federal VA to establish the connection between the health issue and the Resident's military service. They were successful and the Resident was grateful to have the Federal VA recognize the service connection.

Full article: <https://mn.gov/mdva/blog/?id=1066-719556>

