



# EAGLE NEWS

The official Newsletter of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)  
Central Minnesota Chapter 115

April thru June 2011



I want to welcome new TREA members to our chapter as well as any MAL members that have transferred. Our chapter was chartered in December of

2000 and is one of only two in Minnesota. Our chapter membership is around three hundred. Most of our members are over sixty-five, which means we need the younger retirees to join in our efforts to keep what we have earned.

There are well over a hundred Legislative Bills at the Capital this year. There were several bills to tax-exempt part or all of our pensions. Minnesota is one of the five states that do not give Retirees a break. There was a bill that passed a couple of years ago, but due to the income cap, very few retirees qualified. Our chapter has represented you at the capital for many years. This year the excuse for not having an exemption is the deficit! Our exemption is in the tax omnibus bills, but until 26 May, anything can happen.

On Saturday August 27<sup>th</sup>, our chapter will again sponsor a Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) at Camp Ripley near Little Falls MN. Details will be in our July newsletter. Our chapter has been involved or sponsored this event for the past ten years. The event gives retiree like yourself the opportunity to receive the latest information on retiree issues. For many who attend it is a time to meet up with friends, who we do not get to see often enough. I would

encourage you to attend! There will be other RAD dates around the state during the summer also, Mystic Lake Casino 24 Sept, Rosemont National Guard 26 Aug and Black Bear Casino sometime in Sept (I don't have the date from them)

Our National Convention is in Reno Nevada this year (28 Sep to 1 Oct). Our chapter will pay the registration fee for any chapter member who attends. In 2012, the convention will be in Jacksonville Florida and in 2013 Colorado Springs, Colorado. I would encourage you to attend so that our chapter has a voice in TREA.

Our Plaque Fund Raiser is our way to fund the news letter, postal fees, convention registration, the AFRAD at Ripley, printing information for State Legislators, only to name a few and other activities that may come up in the future. We do not have dues in our chapter as we are not about asking you for money to run the chapter. Selling the plaques with our chapter getting a small part of the proceeds is easier than spending a weekend or two selling brats and hot dogs. So I would ask for your support in our efforts.

Finally encourage all Veterans in your communities to join their local Veteran's Organizations around the state, especially the young recently discharged veterans. Currently most of the organizations, are being mainly supported by the Viet Nam era Veterans, as we are losing too many of our older veterans each day.

Ralph Donais, President

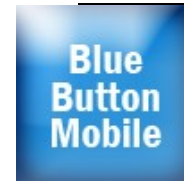
## PURPLE HEART UPDATE



The Army has announced a clarification in its guidelines for receiving a Purple Heart, with an emphasis on battlefield concussions being eligible for the medal.

Official Army guidelines have long considered combat-sustained concussions a valid injury worthy of the Purple Heart, but in practice, it has been left to doctors or battlefield commanders to decide whether a blow to the head during combat warranted the medal. With recent studies on brain trauma, however, the rules have been revised to state what constitutes a concussion, with symptoms including momentary loss of consciousness or memory, dizziness, headache, nausea or light sensitivity. Medical treatment, also required for the medal, is defined by the rules to include merely rest and Tylenol. If you are a Soldier who suffered a concussion and feel you may not have been appropriately recognized for a Purple Heart, the Army urges you to re-apply through your chain of command. Veterans can call

## VA CREATES "BLUE BUTTON" FOR VETS



The VA has stood up a new Blue Button "Web Portal" that lets vets gain access to their electronic health records on any

computer (including mobile devices). The VA214 Blue Button – allows veterans to remotely access

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MyHealtheVet personal health records from an Android or iPhone. With this smart phone application, veterans and their families are now only one click away from accessing their personal health information.

The new Blue Button App was developed by Northrup Grumman. To get the free App go to <http://www.northropgrumman.com/apps/>

## RESERVE RETIREMENT AGE



A key portion of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act reduced the age that retired Guard or Reserve members can become eligible to receive full military retirement benefits. **However, a glitch in the law's language,** which authorizes three months' retirement-age credit for each 90 days served on active duty "in any

fiscal year," is being interpreted by DoD to mean that each 90-day period must fall entirely within a single fiscal year. This would mean that a Guard or Reserve member would have to start an active duty tour on the first day of a given quarter to ensure all 90 days would count. Many Guard and Reserve retirees are not likely to notice this accounting glitch until their early retirement check doesn't arrive when they expect it. NAUS is working with numerous other military and veterans organizations to try and have DoD'

## LINKVET

The Veterans Linkage Line (LinkVet) is a toll free, one stop customer service line and website for all Minnesota veterans and their families. The service connects Veterans and their families to important services and resources.

Calls are answered Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm, Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm and Sunday from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. Veterans can call LinkVet at 1-888-

LinkVet (546-5838) and TTY at (800) 627-3529.

Counselors from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provide service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays, for immediate crisis intervention. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) or [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans/FAQs.aspx](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans/FAQs.aspx) for Veteran specific information.

The ([www.minnesotaveteran.org](http://www.minnesotaveteran.org)) website is a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) format allows users to enter questions or search topics based on their specific needs. Users are also able to create personalized accounts that will allow them to track topics and resources of interest. For example, if the user has questions about education benefits for Veterans, they can choose to be alerted anytime there is an update or a change related to that topic. Users also have the ability to chat online with staff and provide immediate feedback to help improve the site's usability.

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## TREA CENTRAL MINNESOTA CHAPTER 115 MEETING MINUTES – 12 FEBRUARY 2011

Call to Order by Chapter President Ralph Donais. Invocation by Dell Fuller. Pledge of Allegiance by Ralph Donais.

Treasurer Report - \$2,070.68 in Saving and \$1,150.50 in Savings. The profits on the plaques are \$8.00.

Membership Report - Mark Davidson. There are 268 members in the chapter. Sent out about 10 to 12 applications. Sent an article to the Minnesota American Legion.

Legislative Report – There are many veteran and military related bills this year. Some key legislative items are:

- HF350 – Tax exemption duration limit removed for surviving spouses of disabled veterans.
- HF276 – Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail acquisition and development funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

- HF240 – Disabled veterans homestead market value exemption eligibility extended for surviving spouses, and qualified disabled veterans' approved primary family caregivers included.
- HF226 – Fillmore County specified as one location for a new veterans cemetery.
- HF223 – Public assistance reporting information system use expanded.
- HF187 – Legislative temporary successors provided for members called into active military service, and constitutional amendment proposed.
- HF105 – Washington County; Disabled Veterans Rest Camp on Big Marine Lake matching grant funding provided to be used for improvements, and money appropriated.
- HF099 – Tax exemption provided for property owned and operated by veterans organizations.

- HF082 – Military retirement pay phased-in subtraction provided.
- HF056 – Veteran waiver of immunity provided to sue the state of Minnesota as an employer in federal or other courts for violation of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.
- HF050 – Women veteran license plate authorized, and money appropriated.
- HF017 – Montevideo; veterans home funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

The United Veterans Legislative Council (UVLC) and Military Action Group (MAG) groups are working well together. The MAG created a brochure for the year.

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The Commanders Task Force (CTF) has the same legislative items as last year.

Veterans Day on the Hill will be Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:30 am in the Capitol Rotunda. There will be a speech from the Governor. The tax bill for making military pensions non-taxable is looking good this year.

Ralph mentioned he talked to federal legislators about not trying to balance the budget on the backs of the military.

Retiree Council update from Jim Gray:

- There is a new Army Reserve Office working to get information to Gray Area members.
- Confirmed the day of the Rosemount RAD in Rosemount, MN (26 Aug).

- Talked about TRICARE for Life issues.
- There will be a DAV State Convention on 5/6/7 May.
- Parkinson's issues for Vietnam Veterans
- Congress might look at part of the VA Budget to balance the budget.

**Old Business**

Plaques – There will be a set of plaques at the location where we meet, Elk River / Rogers VFW Post 5518.

**New Business**

AFRAD 2011 – The AFRAD at Camp Ripley will be held on August 27<sup>th</sup>. There will still be an AM and PM schedule this year. Everything is setup for the event. There is a lot of new training facilities at Camp Ripley.

Convention 2011 – The convention will be held in Reno, NV this year. The Chapter will pay the registration fee for those interested in attending.

MAG Support – The next meeting of the group will be February 22 in the State Office Building at the Capitol starting at 9:30 am.

Membership Issues - There are a lot of local MALS in the listings. Everyone is encouraged to convert the MALS to Chapter members. Work is being done to recruit in the MN National Guard.

Benediction by Dell Fuller. Motion to adjourn by Dennis, second by David. Passed. Next meeting is May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted, David Hammer



Are you a Veteran who is facing foreclosure on your home? The Minnesota Home Ownership Center can help. Visit [www.hocmn.org](http://www.hocmn.org) for more information. The following link provides specific agencies within each county of Minn. that can provide counseling. <http://hocmn.org/en/foreclosurePreventionmap.cfm>. This is a free service

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**Web sites**

Chapter 115:  
[www.trea115.org](http://www.trea115.org)

National HQ:  
[www.trea.org](http://www.trea.org)

**Eagle News** is an unofficial publication of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), Central Minnesota Chapter 115, located at 906 Lookout Place, Elk River, MN 55330.

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promote the well-being of military retirees and/or the community in general; credit must be given to TREA, Chapter 115.

TREA Chapter 115 is a nonprofit organization, nonunion, nonpartisan and nonsectarian. Views expressed in this publication are not the official views of TREA, Chapter 115, or any governmental agency.

The editor reserves the right to revise or reject any article due to length or opinion, and no articles discriminating based on race, sex, political stance, religion or age will be accepted for publication.

The absolute deadline for articles is the 5th of January, April, July & October to [dennisvictoria@usfamily.net](mailto:dennisvictoria@usfamily.net)

**FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE**

Saturday, May 14 2011  
August 27, 2011 at Camp Ripley after the Saturday AFRAD  
Saturday, November 12, 2011  
Saturday, February 11, 2012

Central Minnesota Chapter 115  
The Retired Enlisted Association  
906 Lookout Place  
Elk River, MN 55330

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

All meetings begin at 11:00 am and are held at the VFW Sports Complex 7350 Quaday, Otsego, MN 55330. Phone 763-241-5225. Spouses and guests are always invited to attend.

From I-94 in Rogers: Go north on highway 101 towards Elk River to CR 42/River Road. Turn Left at the light. Second road on the Left is Quaday Ave NE. Turn Left. Follow Quaday until you see several brown buildings, which is the VFW Sport Complex on your Left.

From Highway 10 in Elk River: From Elk River take Hwy 101 South towards Rogers, exit on CR 42/River Road, turn right at the light onto River Road. The next road on the left will be Quaday Ave NE. Turn Left. Follow Quaday until you see several brown buildings, which is the VFW Sport complex on your Left.

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**DOD TO DROP SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS FROM ID CARDS**

WASHINGTON -- Beginning June 1, Social Security numbers on military identification cards will begin to disappear, said Air Force Maj. Monica M. Matoush, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

The effort is part of a larger plan to protect service members and other DOD identification card holders from identity theft, officials said.

Criminals use Social Security numbers to steal identities, allowing them to pillage resources, establish credit or to hijack credit cards, bank accounts or debit cards.

Currently, the Social Security number is printed on the back of common

access cards, and on the front of cards issued to dependents and retirees. Beginning in June, when current cards expire, they will be replaced with new cards having a DOD identification number replacing the Social Security number, officials said. The DOD identification number is a unique 10-digit number that is assigned to every person with a direct relationship with the department. The new number also will be the service member's Geneva Convention identification number.

An 11-digit DOD benefits number also will appear on the cards of those people eligible for DOD benefits. The first nine digits are common to a sponsor, the official said, and the last

two digits will identify a specific person within the sponsor's family.

Social Security numbers embedded in the bar codes on the back of identification cards will remain there for the time being, and will be phased out beginning in 2012.

The department will replace identification cards as they expire.

"Because cards will be replaced upon expiration, it will be approximately four years until all cards are replaced with the DOD ID number," Matoush said.

IF your mailing label contains incorrect information, or if you are not receiving the Chapter e-mail announcements, notify Mark Davidson at [ldavidson77@msn.com](mailto:ldavidson77@msn.com)