



Kortlyn Berg of Mondovi, WI was a 2020 recipient of a \$1,000.00 Scholarship from the Mike Voth Memorial Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 5 – Eau Claire

REGION 6

Well, we have had a very interesting 2020 so far. Recently, I moved out of the Deputy Director position, and into the Director position. I would like to first say “Thank You” to Fran Davis for encouraging me and having the faith in me to move forward. I am steadily asking questions of many, to get my feet grounded in this position. I can only imagine that all of us have had some impressions on our lives from the virus we have been facing. I personally ended up in quarantine for two weeks after being too close to someone that tested positive. That was quite the experience to go through with constant temperature checks and contacts daily with the health department. My prayer for each of you, is that you will stay safe, as we move forward with what appears to be a health issue that is not going anywhere too soon.

I have been busy with the education of being a Director, as well as trying to do all I can for our local Veterans. We lost a Vietnam Veteran (Dwight Winberg) recently, and I worked with the CVSO to place 140 flags along the highway and into the cemetery. After getting permission from the Funeral Director, I arranged for a Chapter 5 Veteran and myself to provide honors at the service. We posted colors at the entry of the cemetery, and then continued to escort the service to the site location. With all the regulations in place, the family did not know we were going to be there, and it was heartwarming to see the reaction of the family, while we stayed posted though the entire service. Even during tough times, there are ways we can provide service to our veterans we care for.

A little over a year ago, a local veteran committed suicide. His widow has been struggling with repairs needed on her home. Again, a Chapter 5 Veteran and I have been spending time to paint and repair the home for her. It can be time consuming, but in the end, it is such a great feeling to see the smile of appreciation from someone who is truly grateful.

The start of summer has brought some activity with a Legacy Stone laying at the Highground Tribute Park in Neillsville, WI. Our Chapter has placed a "United in Service" stone on the pathway, directly in front of the Vietnam Veterans Tribute "Fragments". This was really the first time since covid-19 began that members of the Chapter were able to get together.



Another huge event for the local area was the groundbreaking of a \$2 Million dollar Chippewa Valley Veterans Tribute in Altoona, WI. This tribute will be an education pathway with bar codes on each monument that can be scanned. This scan will provide the background of the conflict and of the local veterans who served. The entire tribute could take 3-5 years for completion, but the groundbreaking is giving hope to everyone that this is a reality, for a county in Wisconsin that has not had a tribute for the many veterans who have served. On July 3, 2020, we held a flag raising ceremony for the first piece of the tribute. This flag flies upon a pole that reaches 140 feet. The flag itself measures 40' X 80' and stretches across the sky in a splendid manner. We had planned for the Blue Angels to do a flyover during the flag ceremony, but due to Covid-19 things changed. We did however, have a WWII plane do a flyover for us. As the flag extended out with the winds, the plane flew over. It was perfect timing and really created an atmosphere of joy for this accomplishment.



The 4th of July is something that I have been working on and preparing for months. I am one of four citizens in our community that heard two years ago, the business association was doing away with our July 4th parade. I started talking to a couple citizens and we decided to take on this event ourselves without any funding. We would do whatever it was going to take to ensure the community would continue to celebrate our Nations freedom, through a parade that would show respect and honor to our veterans, as well as get the citizens to unite for the independence and freedoms we have in this country. I began a new tradition last year with a Veterans gathering after the parade. During that event, I had two Vietnam Veterans who served together, but had not seen each other since, come together and it was such an honor to be witness to this reunification. This year, we had twice as many veterans attend during a day that the temps reached near 100 degrees with the heat index. I led our color guard in the parade for the community, while flying the AVVA flag. The day was hot here in Wisconsin, but all was a success, with many comments of gratitude for the day's events being held.

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