

LAST MAN CLUB

VIETNAM WAR ERA OF ST. PETER

APRIL 2021



Last Man Club Reaches 10th Year

350 Members Strong and Growing

After a Legion meeting ten years ago, Windy Block, Ron Haugen and John Jensen were joined by Jim Weber for a discussion about starting a Last Man Club for Vietnam Veterans. The intent was to be more of a social group that would honor and support fellow veterans and country.

An organizational meeting was held on Nov. 17, 2011 at the William R. Witty American Legion Post 37 to discuss Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, an annual banquet and other agenda items. The original membership goal was 30.

Ten years later, this Last Man Club is now 353 members strong and still growing. The Club has not only grown in membership but also in ways it supports veterans and the community.

The Club was active in supporting the St. Peter Area Veterans Memorial, participates in promoting patriotism through parades and presentations at area schools, holds an annual golf classic to raise funds for local veterans in crisis, a long with a host of other activities.

ANNUAL BANQUET & BUSINESS MEETING

The annual gathering is set for Saturday, July 17 at Morson-Ario-Strand VFW Post 950 in Mankato. Social Hour will start at 4:30pm with a Business Meeting at 6:00pm. Dinner and program to follow. Dinner will be a two-meat buffet with jumbo shrimp and chicken breast with parmesan sauce, baked potato, veggie and salad. The program speaker will be the Editor of the Minnesota Legionnaire paper, Mr. Tim Engstrom.

Due to the many uncertainties of the pandemic and the vaccination process, Banquet Chair Rick Wright selected Post 950 because there is more space to social distance. We did not want to turn members away if there were space limitations at Post 37.



3/29 William Kastens, LMC Commander, addresses crowd.

County Veterans Service Officer Nathan Tish, and recognition of the following service members from St. Peter who were killed in Vietnam:

- Pfc Frederick J. Brenke
- Sp.4 Harvey G. Enz
- Pfc Melvin A. Lurth, Jr.
- 2nd Lt. Michael J. McClellan
- Pfc Dwight D. Tollefson
- Pfc Richard R. Weise
- Pfc Steven E. Wettergren

Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony

Hundreds gather to remember those that sacrificed all and honor those that served.

More than 200 community members gathered on March 29th at the St. Peter Area Veterans Memorial for a Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony put on by the Last Man Club.

The program included posting of the colors by the St. Peter American Legion Post 37 Color Guard, singing of the National Anthem by SPHS Senior Konrad Wernsing, a short presentation by Nicollet

A bell was tolled for each fallen soldier followed up by the playing of Taps. A moment of silence was observed for all those lost in the war.

The Red Men Club in St. Peter hosted and donated an informal hot beef meal following the ceremony. Thank you, Red Men Club!



Thank you to the donors who helped pay for the wreaths at the St. Peter Area Veterans Memorial this winter.



The 6th Annual Last Man Club Golf Classic will be held on June 18, 2021 at Shoreland Country Club. The golf classic started in 2016 to raise money for the St. Peter Area Veterans Memorial and grew into the creation of the LMC Veteran Relief Fund. All proceeds from the golf classic now support the relief fund.

The tournament relies on volunteers to raise money, sell hole sponsors and acquire donated items for the raffle and silent auction. We need your help!

One of our newer hole sponsor offerings honors the service of a veteran, their unit, ship, etc. For only, \$100 you can honor a veteran and support the veteran relief fund at the same time.

HOLE SPONSORED BY:

**In Honor of
Earl "Sonny"
Meyer**

WW II / Korean War

Bruce Frey, LMC member, stated, "To me, that is one of the best \$100 I've ever spent, knowing that it will help a fellow veteran in crisis." Please consider sponsoring a hole in your honor or for a family member. Information on sponsoring a hole and the tournament can be found online at www.lmcclassic.com.

Did You Know?

You're among the last 1/3 of all U.S. Vietnam Veterans. We're growing older and we're dying too fast. They say 390 Vietnam Vets die each day. Ninety-seven percent of Vietnam Veterans were honorably discharged and now 87% of the public holds Vietnam Veterans in high esteem.



LMC Veteran Relief Fund

The helping arm of the Last Man Club

The LMC Veteran Relief Fund consists of proceeds generated by the annual Last Man Club Golf Classic and is designed to provide emergency assistance to local veterans as well as assist with unmet needs where no Federal, State or Local program exists or funds have been exhausted.



To date, the LMC Veteran Relief Fund has provided emergency and relief assistance to 58 LOCAL veterans experiencing a hardship ranging in age from 29 to 95 years old, across most conflict eras and branches of service, and totaling nearly \$42,000 in financial assistance. In the past 12 months, the fund has awarded \$16,440 in assistance. The relief fund serves Nicollet, Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Brown, Sibley and Waseca counties.

For more information, contact your local CVSO, Heather Tollefson (Vice Chair, Veteran Relief Fund) at (507) 995-1996 or Ron Haugen (LMC Clerk) at (507) 995-5575.

Will You Support Your Fellow Veterans?

Will you help your community?

Our Last Man Club is in need of leadership and volunteers. Lance Secretan stated, "Great leadership is about human experiences, not process. Leadership is not a formula or a program, it is human activity that comes from the heart and considers the heart of others." We need members that are willing to step up for a number of positions available within our Club. If you have an interest in one of these extremely easy positions, please contact any one of the existing officers.

As a Club, we can take great pride in knowing that we've helped so many veterans, young and old, in their time of need. We gave to our country, to our families and our communities. The club needs you, veterans need you, and our community needs to see what and who you are. Bill George stated, "Successful leadership is leading with the heart, not just the head. They possess qualities like empathy, compassion and courage."

**Thank you,
DAV Foundation!**

The LMC Veteran Relief Fund was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the DAV Foundation of MN.

Pay it Forward Program

The Pay It Forward Program allows us to support area businesses by purchasing gift cards in smaller increments and then using those gift cards to generate raffle ticket sales at the golf classic.

Thank you to the generous donors who've donated more than \$2,000 so far to make this program possible!

To donate, visit lmcclassic.com.

Are you an MVP?

The VA's Million Veteran Program is a national research study done in conjunction with Veterans Affairs. MVP is a voluntary research program to help researchers understand how genes, lifestyle and military exposures affect the health and illness of veterans and humankind. Since launching in 2011, over 825,000 veteran partners have joined one of the world's largest programs on genetics and health. Veterans who partner with MVP contribute to improving the lives of fellow veterans by helping to understand issues such as: predicting the risk of cancer, the complications of diabetes, managing mental issues like PTSD and depression, and cardiovascular disease. Currently, there is an online COVID-19 survey available to participants to learn more about how the pandemic is affecting physical and mental health. To get more information, or to sign up, go to mvp.va.gov or call 866-441-6075 (Monday-Friday, 7am-5pm).

We're Growing!

Membership Update

The Last Man Club is 353 members strong and growing! At the first annual banquet on June 16, 2012, the membership of the Club was 184. Eighty-two Vietnam era veterans and 3 WWII veterans attended the first banquet. We've lost 24 of our members to death since we organized in November of 2011. The membership continues to grow at a rate of about 9 members per year.

You Can Still Join!

Lifetime membership is only \$20 for Veterans who served 1961-1975. Recruit your fellow vets!



Face Masks for Sale!

Show your support for the Last Man Club Golf Classic by purchasing a face mask. Cost is 1 mask for \$7 or 5 masks for \$20. Contact Ron Haugen at (507) 995-5575.

Fundraiser Ideas

We're considering a number of fundraisers this year to help cover operating expenses and other items. These include a Sweet Corn Feed and Bouya Feed. Input is needed and welcomed! Please contact Ron Haugen at (507) 995-5575 with ideas.

Join Us for Lunch!

Lunch gatherings are the 3rd Monday of each month. Chow line forms at 11:30am. We've reserved Gault Park during the warmer months and will use volunteer chefs/cooks under Camp Cook Rules. Lunch Dates:

- April 19 (at Red Men Club)
- May 17
- June 21
- July 19
- August 16
- September 20
- October 18
- November 15
- December 20

GROUPS WE SHOULD BE A PART OF

AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY

A registry that all veterans who were boots on the ground or served in Southeast Asia should be a part of. Exposure to Agent Orange can affect your health, your childrens' and grandchildrens' health and 8 generations further.

MILLION VETERAN PROGRAM

Driven by the belief that together we can improve veterans' health for generations to come.

Contact your County Veterans Service Officer for information about any of these programs!

VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

The American Legion, VFW and DAV are the "big three." If you are not a member of one, please join. These organizations legislate for veteran benefits with both the state and federal government.