Memorial Rifle Squad Annual Meeting January 10, 2026

Meeting Summary:

Keynote speaker, Marshall Murphy, the Fort Snelling National Cemetery Acting Executive Director, highlighted the construction of a columbarium in Section 19, starting in 2026, and a major construction project in 2027, costing $105 million. The cemetery conducted over 4,000 services in 2025, with 80% being cremations. The rifle squads, appointed staff, elected staff and commanders reported their activities. Financial updates showed a balance of $126,520.14. The meeting concluded with the approval of bylaws (related to rifle use) and the election of new officers.

Transcript:
Available upon request

Action Items:
• [] Record names and gather details for any complex cemetery questions presented at the meeting and follow up with answers to the requesters (member(s) responsible **Dick Middleton and/or Jay Peterson**)

• [] Tell Jason to print several hard copies of the cemetery newsletter and drop them off at the squad room each time it is published (member(s) responsible **Dick Middleton and/or Jay Peterson**)

• [] Send periodic recruitment emails to squad leaders (including requests for needed members) and follow up on responses (member(s) responsible **Dan Lawrence)**

• [] Track when candidates move from the central applicant list into a squad and notify the adjutant so the official squad rosters can be updated (member(s) responsible **Dan Lawrence and Teresa Hammarback)**

• [] Process and publish monthly FASB-certified financial statements (post results every month) (member(s) responsible **Dennis DeLong)**

• [] Fulfill uniform and supply requests: respond to submitted supply forms and restock weekly as needed(member(s) responsible **Bill Lee)** placing the completed form on the Thursday locker.

• [] Ensure squads are instructed to power on the AED before placing it on buses, maintain AED battery readiness, and continue oversight of mass-trauma triage bag placement/hooks in the new bus (member(s) responsible **Mark Monroe)**

• [] Recruit volunteers and coordinate participation for the State Fair booth and set up periodic hospital table outreach to advertise squad membership (member(s) responsible **Dan Lawrence)**

• [] Receive and process monthly membership change notifications and maintain the official adjutant roster (ensure membership changes are recorded on the 20th of each month) (member(s) responsible **Teresa Hammarback)**

Outline:

Invocation and Introductions
The Officer of the Day, **Mark Monroe** formally started the meeting with a **call to order.**
• **Mark Poston,** led the invocation, asking for peace and harmony in the city, state, country, and world. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by **Mark Monroe.**
• **Dick Middleton** introduces Marshall Murphy, the executive Acting Director of Fort Snelling National Cemetery, and thanks Jay Peterson for facilitating AL Post 1776's hosting of the 2026 MRS Annual meeting.
• **Marshall Murphy**, introduces himself, mentioning his background as a Marine Corps Veteran and his family's military service.

- Marshall outlines the meeting agenda, including updates on cemetery activities and a Q&A session.
- Marshall thanks the FSNC staff for their efforts, including the installation of a carillon at the cemetery.
- He emphasizes the positive relationship with the leadership and staff, noting the ease of decision-making and collaboration.
- Marshall appreciates the support from the community, particularly in assisting with parking during events.
- He discusses the hiring freeze and the restructuring of executive positions at the cemetery.
- **Construction and Future Plans FSNC**
- Marshall announces the construction of a columbarium in section 19, expected to start this year and finish in 2027.
- He explains the major construction project approved in the defense appropriations bill, which will begin in 2027.
- The columbarium construction is separate from the major project to ensure timely completion.

- Marshall mentions the "kidney bean" area that will undergo a major overhaul, causing temporary disruptions.
- Service Statistics and Memorial Certificates
- Marshall provides statistics on the number of services conducted in the past year, noting a decrease in cremations.
- He explains the process of issuing Presidential Memorial Certificates (PMC) and the impact of the government shutdown on their issuance.
- The PMC program will resume next Monday, with strict serialization and quality control measures in place.
- Marshall highlights the complexity of managing the PMC program and the importance of accurate documentation.
- **Hiring and Staffing Updates FSNC**
- Marshall discusses the lifting of the hiring freeze and the ability to backfill positions as they become vacant.
- He mentions the ongoing construction projects at Fargo National Cemetery and Northwoods National Cemetery.
- Marshall emphasizes the need for flexibility and adaptability in managing the cemetery's operations.
- He reassures the community that decisions will be made to benefit everyone involved.

Questions and Answers:
• MRS member asks about the construction project in 2027, and Marshall explains its details and the separation of the columbarium project.
• MRS member asks about the timing of funerals, and Marshall confirms discussions are ongoing to address scheduling issues.
• MRS member also asks about the impact of construction on the rifle squad, and Marshall assures that efforts will be made to accommodate their needs.
• MRS member request updates on construction in a newsletter, and Marshall agrees to provide hard copies for the squad room.

Leadership Reports and Squad Updates:
• **Mike Rose,** Squad Leader from the Monday squad reports on their contributions (Total Hours, 5958, total volunteer occurrences, 868/18.9, have. hours per date, 129.5), including the departure of longtime bugler.
• **Dan Fisher,** Squad Leader from the Tuesday squad, provides updates on their membership (22 total with 20 active, 434 services rendered, also several members serving in positions with the greater MRS squad), and the departure of several members. He commended Jerry Kosel (who moved to Wednesday's squad) for the "making a difference" with his many contributions.
• **Ken Tibesar** Squad Leader from the Wednesday squad reports on their squad's activities. He noted the departure/potential departure of longtime members (Jim Hogan, Bob Roth, Dave Gary) and the addition of new members. Teresa **Hammarback**, Mark Koening and

Jerry Kisel (from Tuesday Squad). Two members passed away, Bill Morris (22 yrs on MRS) and Mark Ozman.

• **Dave Fleming** Squad Leader from the Thursday squad (25 members on the squad with one new member, Jim W.) highlights the contributions of Bill Lee (Quartermaster) and Vikki VanEmmerik (Historian), and the addition of a new member.

• **Bob Selddon** speaking for **John Wallace,** Squad Leader from the Friday squad reports on squad activities and contributions. Twenty-One members (need to recruit to full strength) and one member passed away (Ken Gibson). Mike P. retired and a new member (Gary E)

Leadership Staff Updates:

Appointed Staff:

Adjutant-Teresa Hammarback (Acting) reports that she is filling in for Dan Goedken who is out on medical leave.

Historian-Mikki VanEmmerik

reports that the MRs performed 1992 services this year with a high average of 38 per month on Fridays and lows on Wednesday and Thursday at 29 per month. She is taking on responsibility for upkeep of the memorial plaque (for those who have retired or passed away). She asked that if anyone knows of anyone missing from the plaque to please let her know.

Recruiter-Dan Lawrence reports he's been working on some things with Jason at FSNC regarding sharing a booth or tent at the state fair. *Will need volunteers when the time comes. He is also going to set up a table in the flag atrium at the VAMC for recruiting. He asks that all members seek opportunities to recruit and to keep him and the Adjutant posted of comings and goings in the squads.

Medical-Mark Monroe requests that *Someone in every squad, every day of the week turn on the AED to make sure it works then turn off before putting on the bus. Hook the AED to the right at every front door of the buses. Note the mass triage trauma bag on the bus that has all the supplies needed for most incidents.

Web Site/Webmaster-Ken Tibesar reports that Mark Poston is working with him. There is a dot at the bottom of The MRS webpage that links you to the MRS only site. Check the MRS site for the daily schedule, newsletter, statistics, a Letter of Appreciation template among many of bits of information.

Chaplain-Mark Poston reported it is an honor for him to serve as our Chaplain.

Officer of the Day-Mark Monroe had nothing to report

Elected Staff:

• **Finance Officer-Dennis DeLong,** reports on the financial status of the squad, noting a significant increase in funds due to recent donations with total assets of $126,520. What to do with this money is a question to be pondered.

• **Quartermaster-Bill Lee** discusses the squad's online presence and the availability of uniforms and supplies. There is plenty, just fill out the form and he will fill your request when he comes in on Thursday.

•**Ordnance-Paul Pokorny,** reports that all the rifles looked good. He praised the Tuesday squad for their exceptional maintenance of the rifles.
• **Trustee (Lead)-Joe Starr report echoed the finance report and discussed a couple of CD coming due in the next couple months to perhaps reinvest.**

Commanders:
Vice Commander-Dick Kelso, reports that he will be moving out of state and therefore is passing the responsibilities of Vice Commander on to Jay Paterson as of today (1/10/2026). He will stay on as a member of the MRS and as a bugler and provide legal help as needed.
Jay Peterson (who is also commander of AL Post 1776) will be the new Vice Commander and serve out the year.
Commander-Dick Middleton, reports that we achieved our mission in 2025.

- Replaced informal processes which produce varying results with fixed operating procedures for consistent results
- Replaced two unidentified hanging key chains-with a key holder system
- Updated our financial system to accounting standards
- Established Memorial Day procedures
- Established rifle ownership and supporting by-laws
- Created web based online customer feedback process
- Established for updating membership roles
- Established many operational relationships with FSNC leadership

Each of these contributed to achieving our mission and supports are legacy contribution.
Thank you to the entire leadership team and their achievements-especially **Dick Kelso** as he moves on from the Vice Commander role with our gratitude.
Thank you for our continuing legacy as the longest serving rifle squad in the US.
Thank you for the opportunity to serve you one more year.

Elections and Bylaws:
• **Dick Middleton** announces the election results, with Dennis DeLong as finance officer, Bill Lee as quartermaster, Paul McCorney as ordinance officer, and Dan Hambrook as trustee.
• The bylaws (Rifle use) are approved by acclamation, and the new leadership team is announced.
• **Dick Kelso,** thanks the leadership team for their service.

Conclusion:
• The meeting concludes with a closing prayer led by **Mark Poston,** followed by lunch.