

Testimony by Jim Graalum

Fargo Memorial Honor Guard

As a veteran, former member of the Minnesota National Guard, and current Fargo Memorial Honor Guard member, I am presenting this testimony to provide detailed information regarding the Fargo National Cemetery and the Veterans Memorial Center.

Since the opening of the Fargo National Cemetery in the fall of 2019, the absence of a building has emerged as a primary concern that requires attention. Despite adverse weather conditions, the Fargo Memorial Honor Guard performs the Final Military Honors throughout the year. Whether rain, snow, heat, or cold, the Fargo Memorial Honor Guard consistently supports the deceased veteran's family with their dedicated presence.

The Fargo National Cemetery provides services to North Dakota, Western Minnesota, and Northeast South Dakota. It is the sole Federal Cemetery between Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Black Hills National Cemetery in South Dakota, and Yellowstone National Cemetery in Montana.

We have received 251 donations from businesses, service organizations, social clubs, fraternal groups, and individuals from western Minnesota, including Alexandria, Middle River, Bemidji, and Warroad. These donors recognize the significance of the Veterans Memorial Center project, which will provide a serene and welcoming environment for families and friends to honor and remember our fallen comrades.

This project aims to enhance the Fargo National Cemetery by constructing facilities that include shelter from the weather, a chapel, a gathering space, a gallery, restrooms, and a parking lot.

For these reasons, I am requesting assistance from the Minnesota State Legislators in securing funding to support the construction of the Veterans Memorial Center at the Fargo National Cemetery. Although this building will be in North Dakota, it is for all veterans from the Northwest part of the Great State of Minnesota.

Thank you for considering funding this important project for the Veterans and their families.