



THE CITY OF  
**MANCHESTER**  
MISSOURI

**Veterans Commission**

Thursday, July 23, 2020, 3 – 4:15 pm  
Manchester Justice Center, 200 Highlands Blvd. **(Zoom)**

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- **Welcome & Approval of minutes (5 mins)**
- **Moving forward (10 mins)**
  - The Commission needs a Chairperson
  - Nominee to replace Susan DeWitt: Staff Sergeant Wesley Moore
- **Eric Walk's Eagle Scout Project (Veterans Memorial webpage) (15 mins)**
- **View our Veterans page in the upcoming Manchester Message (10 mins)**
- **Should we ask for 2021 funding for veterans programs/initiatives? (20 mins)**
  - How would we use it?
- **Planning for POW/MIA Recognition Day on Sept 18 (10 mins)**
- **How might we honor Manchester's Eugene Ganz? (10 mins)**  
[https://www.stltoday.com/brandavestudios/stories-of-honor/from-afghanistan-to-the-battle-of-the-bulge-meet-our-2020-stories-of-honor-recipients/article\\_3fc27448-bfbd-11ea-b2b2-d3c99ece42ab.html](https://www.stltoday.com/brandavestudios/stories-of-honor/from-afghanistan-to-the-battle-of-the-bulge-meet-our-2020-stories-of-honor-recipients/article_3fc27448-bfbd-11ea-b2b2-d3c99ece42ab.html)
- **Review City website veterans page: [www.manchestermo.gov/veterans](http://www.manchestermo.gov/veterans) (5 mins)**
- **Vision for Vets (Scott Beatty's group) here for the summer**
- **Other Manchester veterans who gave their life in service. How to memorialize?**
  - Terri Sue Fussner Field (small pocket park)
  - LCPL Matthew Pathenos (Bench in Schroeder Park)
  - Gayla Fanning **(Bonnie)**
  - CWO3 Ryan Connolly **(Bonnie)**
  - Nathan Kirkman, Jacob Fleischman and Keith Zeilmann **(Bonnie)**
- **Additional topics?**

**Next meeting date: Wed, August 19 or Thurs, Aug 20? 3 pm? (zoom continues)**

- **Calendar dates for 2020 Flags of Valor display:** Memorial Day (Fourth Monday in May); D-Day (June 6th); Flag Day (June 14th); Independence Day (July 4th); Purple Heart Day (August 7th); POW/MIA Recognition Day (September 18th) and Veterans Day (November 11th)

### **Initial Veterans Commission Goals:**

- Support the American Legion
- Recognize Memorial Day with ceremonies
- Support Greater St. Louis Honor Flight support (all year)
- Support Kaufman Fund programs for vets
- Support local veterans with city programs and awareness
- Support local veterans through enhanced, targeted police training (CIT)
- Establish a Veterans Commission in Manchester
- Identify wellness resources for veterans

### **Special veteran connections in Manchester**

- Manchester Veterans Memorial
- Twenty-six flags from “Flags of Valor: America’s Heartland Remembers” (currently flying Memorial Day, July 4, Veterans Day)
- One “Flag of Valor: America’s Heartland Remembers” honoring veterans dying from PTSD
- American Legion Post 208 (celebrating 100 years in 2019)
- Greater St. Louis Honor Flight (training and meeting here in Manchester)
- Eight veterans on city staff, including Police Officers David McArthur and Jason Gibbs, planning group members
- Holiday trees for Vets // The Kaufman Fund
- Streets & Parks: Russell Wirth Lane, Dean Reiter Avenue, SPC Matthew Walker Way; and Terry S. Fussner Field
- Recognized as a Purple Heart City on May 20, 2019
- Recognized as a POW/MIA City on May 20, 2019
- Connected with Working Warriors July, 2019
- Connected with Visions for Vets, August, 2019
- Helped a Manchester PTSD Veteran (Oct, Nov, Dec 2019)
- Veterans Commission formed 09/16/2019
- Other connections?

**Information on dedicated streets courtesy of Gary Hoferkamp's "Sold on Manchester" Facebook page. (@soldonmanchester)**

**RUSSELL WIRTH LANE:** Ever wonder about the road adjacent to Manchester ballfields? Russell Wirth Lane is 3 blocks long and named for Pvt Russell Lee Wirth - US Army. Born in 1923 in Bonhomme (an early name for this area), he enlisted in the Army in 1943, and was on board the LST-531 off the coast of England in April 1944 when torpedoed by a German boat during rehearsal for the D-Day Normandy invasion. He was listed as Missing in Action, memorialized in the Cambridge American Cemetery and awarded the Purple Heart. Russell's nephew, Melvin Koester and family were in attendance at the dedication ceremony.

**DEAN REITER AVENUE:** Intersecting with Russell Wirth Lane next to MAA is Dean Reiter Avenue, running one block long on the south end of Henry Ave and Manchester Rd. First Lieutenant Dean Wesley Reiter of the US Marine Corps was born in 1942 in Manchester. Lt Reiter was serving in South Vietnam in 1966 when he was shot down while co-piloting a Marine helicopter for a medical evacuation. The aircraft exploded and burst into flames with him and 2 other Marines on board, the bodies were not recovered.

**SPC. MATTHEW WALKER WAY:** Army Specialist Matthew H. Walker, an infantryman in the 101st Airborne who grew up in St Louis and Hillsboro, died in 2014 in Southeast Afghanistan. His mother, a St Louis police detective, reported that his vehicle was hit by a rocket propelled grenade.

Matthew was a football team captain for the Grandview Eagles in Jefferson County. He signed up for the Army while a senior in high school, and said he wanted to be on the front lines to serve his country, and graduated in 2012. His father and grandfather also served in the military. Manchester city has since re-named a two-block street near 141 and Manchester Rd off Creve Coeur Ave behind Commerce Bank in his honor, which is next to MUMC where his grandparents attend.