



THE CITY OF
MANCHESTER
MISSOURI

Veterans Commission

Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 5 – 6:20 pm
Manchester Justice Center, 200 Highlands Blvd. **(Zoom)**

- **Welcome & Approval of minutes (Kay) (5 mins)**
- **Representative Dave Griffith, Chair of Missouri's House Veterans Committee and Representative Trish Gunby, 99th District Representative, member of the House Veterans Committee (30 mins)**
 - Representative Gunby, overview of committee work and introduce Rep Griffith
 - Dialogue about state veteran initiatives and veteran needs.
- **Adam McBride, Executive Director of the Veterans Community Project, St. Louis (VCP).**
 - Continue the discussion from the Jan. 28 meeting with VCP leadership team. **(10 min.)**
- **Flags of Valor on Art Hill, September, 2021 (Megan and Mike) (20 min)**
 - A Manchester/regional team can support the 20th anniversary of 9/11 at Art Hill.
- **Hometown Heroes Banner program launched (Kay) (10 min)**
 - Banners honoring veterans flying on Manchester Road
- **Memorial Day, 2021 Plan live or to live stream? (Mike) (10 min)**
- **Proposal of installation at Veterans Memorial Park (Bonnie & Megan) (10 min)**
 - Option of honoring six individuals from Manchester at the Veterans Memorial
 - Parkway South High School Freedom Wall update
- **Other topics? (Kay)**
 - Add National Vietnam War Veterans Day (Mar 29) to FOV display dates

Next Veterans Commission meeting (zoom) date: Thurs, Mar 18 at 5 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83494880119?pwd=b3VmR0RTT1JRMXFVa0FZcTJpbzFFdz09>

Meeting ID: 834 9488 0119

Passcode: 64215

- **Calendar dates for 2021 Flags of Valor display:** National Vietnam War Veterans Day (March 29); Memorial Day (May 31st); D-Day (June 6th); Flag Day (June 14th); Independence Day (July 4th); Purple Heart Day (August 7th); Patriot Day (September 11); POW/MIA Recognition Day (September 17th) 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
- Freedom Memorial Wall at Parkway South High School (Wall recognizing active duty military service of staff and former students)
- 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
- Army West County Recruitment Center

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.