

## DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

MINNESOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

VETERANS SERVICE BUILDING

STATE OF MINNESOTA

20 WEST 12TH STREET

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155-2098

January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016

The Adjutant General

Honorable Richard Cohen  
Senate Finance Committee  
Senate Office Building, Room 3235

Honorable Sarah Anderson  
House State Government Finance  
Committee  
583 State Office Building

Honorable Michelle L. Fischbach  
Senate Finance Committee  
State Office Building, Room 15

Honorable Sheldon Johnson  
House State Government Finance  
Committee  
259 State Office Building

Honorable Tom Saxhaug  
Senate State Departments  
and Veterans Division  
Senate Office Building, Room 2111

Honorable Bob Dettmer  
House Veterans Affairs Division  
565 State Office Building

Honorable Roger C. Chamberlain  
Senate State Departments  
and Veterans Division  
129 State Office Building

Honorable John Persell  
House Veterans Affairs Division  
359 State Office Building

### Re: Annual Report on Support Our Troops (SOT) Account Grants

1. This annual report is submitted to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over military and veterans' affairs pursuant to Minnesota Statute 190.19, Subdivision 3.
2. The statute authorizes the use of SOT funds for four purposes:
  - (a.) Grants directly to eligible individuals.
  - (b.) Grants to one or more eligible foundations for the purpose of making grants to eligible individuals.
  - (c.) Veterans' services.
  - (d.) Grants to family readiness groups chartered by the Adjutant General.
3. No grants were made in 2015 pursuant to purpose 2.(a.) above.
4. The Adjutant General entered into a no-fee grant agreement with the Minnesota Military Family Foundation (MMFF) to administer funds pursuant to purpose 2.(b.) above. \$100,000.00 was disbursed to MMFF, who further disbursed grants totaling \$62,173.00 to 34 eligible individuals during 2015. The balance remains available to MMFF to disburse in 2016.
  - (a.) The MMFF received a total 114 grant requests for financial assistance to individuals during calendar year 2015. Of the 114 requests, 34 met the requirements of the statute and the grant agreement.

(b.) The total requested for these 34 eligible grants was \$75,641.00 but after applying the \$2,000 cap, \$62,173.00 in Support Our Troops money was distributed. \$13,468.00 was paid using funds from private donations to MMFF.

(c.) Each request for assistance was validated by the Minnesota National Guard Family Assistance Centers and was approved by board action at the MMFF. Requests generally are directed to the foundation once the local assistance mechanisms have been exhausted.

(d.) Many of the requests cover multiple needs. The requests are categorized by the most serious need. For example, mortgage payments also often include utility payments requests. Those are categorized as mortgage requests. Some requests are for bills while undergoing medical treatment. The grants were used for such emergency purposes as:

Mortgage/Rent	25
Vehicle Repair	1
Emergency Home/Appliance	2
<u>General Bill Paying/Special Needs</u>	<u>6</u>
Total Grants	34

(e.) For comparison, 52 grants totaling \$95,627.000 were made in 2014. In 2013, 65 grants totaling \$119,942.00 were made. 82 grants were made in 2012 totaling \$149,043.00. In 2011, 75 grants were made totaling \$127,577.00. In 2010, 54 grants were made totaling \$90,286.00.

5. Pursuant to purpose 2.(c.) above:

(a.) Funds totaling \$148,330.58 were expended for wages, fringe, and miscellaneous costs for two licensed alcohol and drug counselors to meet a critical need for these services for service members and their families that is otherwise unsupported.

(b.) A grant in the amount of \$24,286.77 was disbursed to the Armed Services center at Minneapolis/St Paul International Airport to provide food to travelling military members.

(c.) Grants in the amount of \$69,000.00 were disbursed to the Minnesota Military Museum to fund a World War I exhibit for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to partially fund an archivist and curators, and to update hardware and software and fund a part-time library consultant to provide increased access and availability to resources in the museum library for serving military members, veterans, teachers, students, librarians and military history researchers from around the state.

(d.) A grant in the amount of \$16,000.00 was disbursed to the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Charity to fund operating costs for six approved flyovers by privately owned, World War II era aircraft at Veteran events.

(e.) An additional grant in the amount of \$50,000.00 was disbursed to the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Charity to fund a portion of the cost of two of the Honor Flight iterations carrying World War II veterans to Washington, D.C. to honor their service.

(f.) A grant in the amount of \$50,000.00 was disbursed to Minnesota National Guard Youth Camp to support camp participation by Minnesota National Guard family members.

(g.) A grant in the amount of \$40,000.00 was disbursed to Minnesota Military Radio Hour to support outreach and expanded coverage in Minnesota to further reach veterans and citizens of Minnesota with service member and veteran-oriented programming.

(h.) A grant in the amount of \$919.80 was disbursed to the Little Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau to fund printing costs associated with providing services to military retirees and their families.

(i.) A grant in the amount of \$25,000.00 was disbursed to Defending the Blue Line to provide 50 scholarships for hockey equipment, tickets, and hockey camps for children of military families.

(j.) A grant in the amount of \$30,000.00 was disbursed to the Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation to fund a contract with a museum collections manager to inventory and catalogue museum artifacts and archives.

6. Eleven grants of \$1,000.00 each were made pursuant to purpose 2.(d.) above.

7. The point of contact for this report is the Executive Director of the Department of Military Affairs, Don Kerr at [donald.j.kerr2.nfg@mail.mil](mailto:donald.j.kerr2.nfg@mail.mil) or (651) 268-8913.

Sincerely,



Richard C. Nash  
Major General, Minnesota Army  
National Guard  
The Adjutant General