



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM: Leighann Dunn, an Iraq veteran and SD/ND outreach coordinator of the Student Veterans of America spoke to the audience gathered to honor the nation's war dead during Memorial Day services sponsored by the Vermillion VFW Clay Post 3061.

Daniel Bellis and Paul Granaas sing the National Anthem at the beginning of Monday's Memorial Day service in Vermillion.

Monday's Memorial Day service ended with a rifle salute to honor the dead by the VFW Honor Guard, and the playing of "Taps."

Marcy and Bob Lund, and Leota and Joe Conroy recite the Pledge of Allegiance with audience members at the Clay County Veterans Memorial Monday morning.

(Photos by David Lias)

Dunn: Honor the fallen through service



By David Lias

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An audience made up of people of all ages, including veterans, sat under the rows of flagpoles that make up the Clay County Veterans Memorial Monday morning, May 28.

A strong breeze made the American flag and the banners representing the various branches of the U.S. armed forces snap to attention as Leighann Dunn, an Iraq veteran and SD/ND outreach coordinator of the Student Veterans of America spoke to the audience that gathered to honor the nation's war dead during Memorial Day services sponsored by the Vermillion VFW Clay Post 3061.

"Today is about the lives of the men and women who fought in America's battles, and who have served their country in support of the military," Dunn said. "They have made a significant sacrifice in fighting for the freedom and liberty that we enjoy today."

Dunn said Americans often too easily fail to remember the sacrifices of life and limb made by members of the nation's military.

"But there are many who remember vividly, as the lives affected were sons, daughters, friends, spouses, co-workers and neighbors," she said. "Their unselfish sacrifice was made with the assurance that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness required the ultimate service to their nation."

Memorial Day, Dunn said, is a celebration of the memory of all who have fought and defended our right to freedom.

"Memorial Day is one day out of the year for the nation to get together and remember, reflect and honor those who have given all in service to their country," she said.

Dunn shared personal reflections about Sylvester Cook and Travis Manion. She and a few of her fellow USD students found Cook's grave in a country cemetery near Newcastle, NE.

Cook, who died in 1907, served with the 12th Iowa

Infantry 116 GAR. "We were able to trace not a whole lot about his military service or career, but about his family. We found that his family dates back to 1772, when his relatives arrived in Connecticut," Dunn said. "We may never know much about Sylvester's service, but I can still honor him every year on Memorial Day."

Dunn also spoke of Manion, a 1st lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps from Doylestown, PA, who served two tours in Iraq.

During his final patrol mission in April 2007, Manion was killed by enemy sniper fire while fighting to defend against an enemy ambush.

The Iraqis named their operating base Combat Outpost (COB) Manion, one of only a few Iraqi facilities named for an American service member. Manion was awarded the Silver Star and the Bronze Star with Valor for his actions in Iraq.

After hearing Manion's widow speak at a conference recently, Dunn decided to become involved in the Travis Manion Foundation, which is dedicated to provide "challenge grants" to survivors of fallen American heroes, active duty troops, veterans, and military family members. Grants are given for service projects, furthering education, physical challenges, and other needs. Grant recipients are challenged to keep the spirit of service and love of country alive for every fallen hero.

"The foundation attests to Travis' life motto: 'If not me, then who?' The foundation honors the fallen by challenging the living," Dunn said. "The challenge is to continue your service to your community in memory of those who have fallen."

Monday's observance included music by the vocal duo of Paul Granaas and Daniel Bellis, the reading of General John Logan's Orders, the honor roll call, and the placing of wreaths by members of American Legion Post 1 and its auxiliary, and VFW Post 3061 and its auxiliary.

The service ended with a rifle salute to honor the dead by the VFW Honor Guard, and the playing of "Taps."

DAKOTA SENIOR MEALS

Served at the Main Street Center and Town Square, "Meals on Wheels." Please call before 9 a.m. to schedule or cancel a meal at 624-7868. Menus listed below are for the week of June 5-11.

Menus are subject to change without notice. All menus are served with whole grain bread and 1% milk, unless otherwise noted.

Tuesday - Swiss Steak,

Baked Potato, Oriental Blend, Banana

Wednesday - Lasagna, French Bread, Tossed Romaine, Mixed Fruit

Thursday - Chicken & Noodles, Peas, Coleslaw, Apricots

Friday - Taco Salad, Cheese, Salsa, Tomato, Strawberry Apple Sauce

Monday - Sloppy Joe on a Bun, Potato, Apple

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