

I am the Treasurer of Maple Sheyenne Lutheran Church. The church is immediately adjacent on the west side of the Fargo National Cemetery. I am also the "Live" Bugler for the Fargo Memorial Honor Guard. I was President of the Church when the Cemetery was constructed.

At the time the cemetery was built we were told, that in exchange for the use of our parking lot, it would be paved at no cost to the church. Covid came along, ideas changed and the paving never happened. We understand this. We were told however by management from Fort Snelling that the Fargo National Cemetery would not be using the church parking lot. The church parking lot is still being used by the cemetery. The Fargo National Cemetery says it is not the National Cemetery using the church parking lot, but rather the contractors and the members of the funeral party.

This does not necessarily make a problem for the church but it creates a problem for the those who find it necessary to park in the church parking lot and on the highway. Traffic speed is 55 mph. In the winter, due to limited parking, individuals oft times nee to walk on the highway to get to the pergola at the ceremony area. Oft times the contractors have their equipment parked on the shoulder of the highway with no markers, making an additional hazard, especially when there is snow. Then the attendees need to stop into the traffic lane to get around the equipment. This does not happen all the time but it can be observed especially during the winter. To make this cemetery safe adequate parking is needed. The plan presented by the Fargo National Cemetery provides this parking.

I am the only member on the Fargo Memorial Honor Guard that plays "Live Taps", A Real Bugle. I do it because when I joined the military, I was promised Military Honors and Taps at my funeral. A tape recording to me is a sorry substitute. Since 2009, I have played Taps for more than 1079 Funerals as a volunteer.

I don't know how many people play or have played a brass instrument. If you use a metal mouth piece when it is below 25 degrees above you can quickly become the "Christmas Story video Flagpole Kid". Your mouth can freeze to the mouthpiece. Using a plastic mouthpiece can help, but it can get so cold that the humidty from your breath freezes the mouth piece or the horn so it will not play, and I have played when it so cold the bugle refuses to sound. Try standing outside with the wind chill at -36 or more and lick a piece of steel.

I have played TAPS many times at the Military Cemetery in Mandan. I was honored to play for Dean Hildebrandts Funeral, a photo of this was published in the Bismarck Tribune. The Mandan Cemetery has parking and a building. The Funeral party and the Honor Guard can stay warm. With the building attendees can be inside when the weather is bad. The honor Guard can march outside and fire their Volley just outside the glass, Taps can be played inside or outside. In contrast, imagine trying to sit in comfort, on a folding chair, at below freezing temperature with 20+ mph winds, trying to concentrate on the loss of your loved one. Most of these people are elderly, and the situation becomes truly miserable.

Like the Military Cemetery at Manda, the Fargo Memorial Honor Guard Concept, for the Fargo National Cemetery presents a planned, well thought out concept for an honorable Military Service.

The restroom facilities at the cemetery were at best an after-thought with none in the original plan. Administration at the Cemetery initially said restrooms were not needed. Tell that to the people who drive down from Belcourt or Lakota or Grand Forks. Attempts have been made to provide restrooms after the fact, initially providing porta potties. Then a single prefab restroom. With the present design

there are times when the restroom freezes up or the door just won't open, or you stand in line. I make every effort to open the church for the use of church facilities. But it is not always possible.

I am asking that the North Dakota Legislature support bill 2256. Do Veterans buried in the Fargo National Cemetery deserve anything less honorable than those buried in the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery at Mandan. I think not.

Please do your part to support bill 2256.

Thank you for your time and consideration

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