

Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum Announces Grand Opening Weekend, September 11–13, 2026

Three-day celebration features the 25th anniversary of 9/11, historic warbird flyovers, family activities and the opening of Minnesota's new military museum

LITTLE FALLS, Minn. — The Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum will officially open its new 40,000-square-foot facility during a three-day Grand Opening Weekend, September 11–13, 2026.

The celebration will feature statewide commemorations marking the 25th anniversary of September 11; remarks by retired U.S. Army Gen. Paul M. Nakasone; veteran-guided land, sea and air experiences; narrated historic warbird flyovers; family activities; historical reenactors; concerts; military vehicles; and programs honoring veterans from every generation of service.

Located on a 32-acre campus just outside the gates of Camp Ripley, the new museum will provide visitors with an expansive exploration of Minnesota's military history. Through immersive exhibits, restored military vehicles and aircraft, interactive galleries, archival collections and more than 25,000 artifacts, the museum tells the stories of Minnesotans who have served from the Civil War through today.

"This museum belongs to every Minnesotan," said Randal Dietrich, executive director of the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum. "For 50 years, we have preserved the stories of Minnesota citizens who answered our nation's call. Our new museum ensures those stories will remain accessible to generations of visitors while honoring the service and sacrifice of every veteran and military family."

Grand Opening Weekend will also contribute to Minnesota's commemoration of America's 250th anniversary.

Outdoor Activities Are Free; Museum Gallery Admission Requires Timed Reservations

Because of anticipated demand and limited gallery capacity, admission to the museum's interior exhibits will be offered through advance timed-entry reservations.

All outdoor activities—including ceremonies, concerts, military vehicles, historical reenactors, youth activities, veterans resource exhibits, food vendors and guided outdoor experiences—are free and open to the public, rain or shine. No reservation is required to participate in outdoor programming.

Admission to the museum galleries requires an advance timed-entry reservation.

Ticket Release Schedule

August 1–7: Member Presale

Current museum members receive complimentary admission as part of their membership but must reserve a timed-entry slot during the member presale.

Individuals who are not currently members may purchase a membership between August 1 and August 7 and immediately receive access to the member presale and complimentary admission benefits.

Purchase museum membership at www.mnvetmuseum.org/membership.

Beginning August 8: Public Ticket Sales

Beginning August 8, timed-entry reservations for the museum galleries will be available to the general public. Reservation details for nonmembers will be announced at 5:00 p.m. on August 8.

Museum gallery admission:

- Adults: \$5
- Youth ages 6–17: \$2
- Children age 5 and younger: Free
- Currently-serving military personnel: Free

Event Schedule

Friday, September 11

Honoring the 25th Anniversary of September 11

Beginning at 1:00 p.m., visitors are invited to honor those who lost their lives during the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, while recognizing the military personnel, first responders and families who answered the nation's call during the Global War on Terrorism.

Visitors will experience the *September 11th Minnesota Voices Theater*, featuring firsthand accounts from Minnesotans.

At 7:00 p.m., the museum will screen a new documentary, *RESOLUTE: Minnesota Stories from the Post-9/11 Homefront*.

The evening will conclude at 8:00 p.m. with the museum's participation in the national Tribute in Light initiative. Sponsored by Minnesota Power, the museum will be illuminated in blue as a symbol of remembrance and unity.

Friday Schedule

1:00 p.m.

Doors open to the public; *September 11th Minnesota Voices Theater* opens

7:00 p.m.

Documentary screening: *RESOLUTE: Minnesota Stories from the Post-9/11 Homefront*

8:00 p.m.

Tribute in Light, sponsored by Minnesota Power

Saturday, September 12

Grand Opening Community Celebration

Saturday will feature the museum's official public Grand Opening Community Celebration.

Visitors can enjoy a full day of military vehicle displays, living-history demonstrations, family activities, food vendors, guided experiences, veteran resource organizations, historical reenactors, outdoor exhibits and live entertainment.

Highlights will include veteran-led talks at the museum's air, land and sea displays; recognition of Minnesota veterans; a National Service Resource Fair; and the official Grand Opening Ceremony, featuring a keynote address by retired U.S. Army Gen. Paul M. Nakasone, former commander of U.S. Cyber Command and director of the National Security Agency.

The afternoon will conclude with narrated historic warbird flyovers, followed by performances from Minnesota country band Mason Dixon Line.

Saturday Schedule

All day

National Service Resource Fair, military vehicle displays and veteran-led talks at tanks, aircraft and the submarine display

10:00 a.m.

Ribbon Cutting and Parade of Flags

12:00 p.m.

Beer tent and food trucks open

1:00 p.m.

Veteran-led talks at aircraft, tanks and the *USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul* submarine display

2:00 p.m.

Veterans Recognition, honoring all eras of military service

3:00 p.m.

Mason Dixon Line — Live Music

4:00 p.m.

Official Welcome and Grand Opening Ceremony, featuring keynote remarks by retired U.S. Army Gen. Paul M. Nakasone

4:30 p.m.

Narrated Historic Warbird Flyovers

5:00 p.m.

Mason Dixon Line — Final Performance

Complimentary shuttle service from downtown Little Falls will operate throughout the day for visitors attending both the museum celebration and the annual Little Falls Arts & Crafts Fair.

Sunday, September 13

Honoring Minnesota's Global War on Terrorism Veterans

Grand Opening Weekend will conclude with programming dedicated to Minnesota's post-9/11 veterans and their families.

Special guest Rod Rodriguez, president and CEO of the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation, will deliver two presentations during a day of reflection honoring those who answered the nation's call following September 11, 2001.

Visitors can also participate in guided museum experiences, family activities, historical displays and community programming focused on Minnesota's Global War on Terrorism veterans and their families.

Complimentary shuttle service from downtown Little Falls will again be available throughout the day.

Sunday Schedule

All day

National Service Resource Fair, military vehicle displays and veteran-led talks at tanks, aircraft and the submarine display

11:00 a.m.

Minnesota and Our National War Memorials

Presentation by Rod Rodriguez, president and CEO of the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation

1:00 p.m.

Minnesota and Our National War Memorials

Presentation by Rod Rodriguez, president and CEO of the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation

Afternoon

Freedom Flight Hot Air Balloon

Fast Facts

Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum

- Grand Opening Weekend: September 11–13, 2026
- Location: 21702 Haven Road, Little Falls, Minnesota
- Facility: 40,000 square feet
- Campus: 32 acres
- Collections: More than 25,000 artifacts and extensive archival collections
- Outdoor activities: Free and open to the public
- Museum galleries: Advance timed-entry reservations required

· Tickets and information: www.mnvetmuseum.org

Media Invitation

Members of the news media are invited to preview the museum before it opens to the public.

Preview tours, interviews with museum leadership, and access to high-resolution photographs, logos, B-roll video and fact sheets are available by appointment.

Media resources are available at www.mnvetmuseum.org/media-kit.

To schedule a media visit, contact Kevin Olson at kolson@mnmilitarymuseum.org or 651-212-0573.

About the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum

Founded in 1976, the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum preserves and shares the stories of Minnesota citizens who served in the nation's defense. Through exhibits, artifacts, educational programming, archival collections and personal stories, the museum connects visitors with Minnesota military history and honors the service and sacrifice of those who defended our nation.

For complete event schedules, ticket reservations, memberships and additional information, visit www.mnvetmuseum.org.