



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
20 - 12TH STREET WEST
SAINT PAUL, MN 55155-2004

May 15, 2019

Adjutant General

Awards Committee
National Guard Association of the United States
One Massachusetts Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Committee Members:

It is with great pleasure that I endorse Meg Louwagie, Staff Assistant to Congressman Collin Peterson of Minnesota's Seventh Congressional District, for the Patrick Henry Award for exceptional service. Meg has distinguished herself by providing selfless and dedicated service to the Minnesota National Guard and the United States by working long and tireless hours representing the members of the National Guard. Her wholehearted commitment and effective legislative staff work on behalf of service members, veterans and their families while serving have significantly contributed to successful and meaningful legislation advanced by Congressman Peterson on behalf of the members of the National Guard. Her dedicated service has been in keeping with the finest traditions of the National Guard Association of the United States.

I strongly support this nomination for Ms. Louwagie who is most deserving of the honor. My point of contact for additional questions or requirements is Lieutenant Colonel Brian Winter at (651) 268-8855 or email to brian.c.winter3.mil@mail.mil

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon A. Jensen", written over a faint circular stamp.

Jon A. Jensen
Major General, Minnesota Army
National Guard
Adjutant General

Award Nominated to Receive: The Patrick Henry Award

NGAUS Individual Award Nomination: Meg Louwagie, Staff Assistant, Office of Congressman Collin Peterson

Nominated by: Maj. Gen. Jon Jensen

Justification for Award: Meg Louwagie has served MN's 7th District as a member of Congressman Collin Peterson's staff for 17 years. Throughout that time, she has been a mainstay of the Congressman's Constituent Services and Outreach operations, helping the constituents of the 7th District communicate with their the representative and resolve their issues with federal agencies. A dedicated public servant seeking only to help others, Meg is extremely humble and getting her to share any one of her countless successes can be a Herculean task. Aside from serving as the Congressman's lead military and veterans' issues caseworker, she also facilitates the District 7's Congressional Art Competition and helps handle cases relating IRS, Social Security, passport, immigration, and employee compensation.

- Working on roughly 25-30 cases at a time, Meg Louwagie has closed several thousand cases over her tenure. She is the primary staff member for all military and veterans' casework for Congressman Peterson. Any constituent in the 7th District that has a military or veteran-related issue concerning a federal agency, including anything falling under the jurisdiction of the Departments of Defense or Veterans Affairs, can call on Meg to be their advocate and mediator, improving lines of communication.
- She has helped mediate issues between veterans and VA hospitals/clinics, recovered missing service records, and ensured veterans receive their duly earned benefits. Meg says that veterans' cases are often unique, wide ranging in the scope with no two alike. Recently, she dealt with resolving issues that have stemmed from glitches in the VA's computer system. Several veterans were unable to receive their GI Bill benefits due to this computer error, and Meg was able to help them get them restored. In another recent case, the VA had denied dental care necessitated by a car accident because of missing medical records, and Meg helped the veteran locate those records so he could receive the much needed care.
- She assists Veteran Service Officers with research and information requests. Meg has helped research and present several service medals, helping veterans and their families ensure that they receive all of the recognition they are eligible for.
- Outside of casework, Meg also relays legislative/policy proposals and ideas that she hears from constituents and organizations to legislative staffers in DC.
- Service Academies: Over the past 4 years especially, Meg has taken on the lead role in the Congressman's Service Academy responsibilities. She organizes Service Academy nights to provide information to interested students. In hope of expanding the service academy program, she is organizing additional informational nights this year and partnering with surrounding congressional offices to pull in more students. Finalists are interviewed by a panel of service academy graduates, who make recommendations to the Congressman. Outside this process, she also works with students and academy liaison officers to help students through the process. This past year, Congressman Peterson made 3 nominations to the Service Academies through Meg's management, and all three were appointed – including two best friends from Willmar.

- Townhalls & Events: Just since February, Meg has organized 6+ town halls on military and veterans issues all across the district (e.g. Alexandria, Marshall, Hutchinson, Willmar), with more likely to happen throughout the year. She works closely with the National Guard, the VA, and Veterans groups, regularly attending events they put on to include: providing legislative updates at the monthly Twin Cities United Veterans Legislative Council meetings, making regular trips to all area VA Health Care Systems (Fargo, Minneapolis, Sioux Falls, St. Cloud), visits with County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs), and Quarterly National Guard Breakfast Briefings to receive updates from the Minnesota National Guard.

Adjutant General Endorsement: YES NO

Proposed Citation:

Meg Louwagie has distinguished herself by providing selfless and dedicated service to the Minnesota National Guard and the United States, by working long and tireless hours representing the members of the National Guard. Her steadfast professionalism, knowledge of Minnesota National Guard priorities, outreach efforts, and casework management have significantly contributed to successful and meaningful legislation advanced by Congressman Peterson on behalf of the men and women of the National Guard. Her dedicated service as a member of the Congressman's Field and Constituent Services team is in keeping with the finest traditions of the National Guard Association of the United States.