

## Dufault takes over county's veteran's service office

*Hurst bids farewell to longtime position.*

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**P**LATTSMOIJTH - For the first time since 1993, Cass County Commissioners were asked to confirm a new veteran's service officer.

With the news that current officer, John Hurst, will step down next year, Stacy Dufault was named to replace him.

State statute requires applications be submitted to a veteran's committee chosen from the posts in Cass County.

Representatives from Greenwood, Manley, Plattsmouth, Louisville and Cedar Creek comprised the committee, chaired by Farley Amick. It was directed by the state to oversee operations of the veteran's service office.

The committee advertised for replacements and received 24 applications.

Six were invited to be interviewed and Dufault was unanimously chosen.

"In the history of this county, it will be the first time a woman has been nominated for the position of county service

officer," Hurst said.

"All of the applicants were very well qualified," Amick said.

"This was a very, very difficult decision."

"We were required to submit certain evidence that Stacy is qualified," Hurst said. "She is a veteran of both the Marine Corps and the Navy. She has an honorable discharge for service during a wartime period. She has been a native of Nebraska for five years."

"Right now, there is a war going on and I had a veteran who had his right hand badly shot," Hurst said. "It was repaired at Walter Reed Hospital. He has a wife and two small children. I do not want the level of knowledge to drop off." Hurst added Dufault would not be able to begin training classes for state benefits until May of next year and June of next year for federal benefits. "It would be quite difficult for her, while on the job, to be trying to self-learn without some mentoring." Hurst offered to remain as a

part-time employee for 30 days with no benefits to ease the transition period.

District Five Chairman Ron Nolte was uncertain if that would be enough time.

"I don't want to impose upon you, John, but would 30 days be enough?" Nolte asked. "I want this to be as smooth a transition as it can be."

"Ron, 90 days would be more than adequate for four hours a day," Hurst said. "I don't want to take her place or look over her shoulder, but a 90-day period would bring her to the date where she begins the first school she goes to."

Dufault, a North Dakota native, and her family, has extensive military background. Her father and brothers all served their country and her sister married a military man.

She joined the Marines after high school and was a personnel clerk working with records. She served for a year in the Corps and joined the Navy three years later.

She served five years as an ammunition accountant.

Her husband was later stationed at Offutt Air Force Base with StratCom.

After leaving the service, they located in Cass County.

State statute requires the commissioners to approve Dufault's appointment.

They voted unanimously to accept her. She will begin her duties in February of next year. Hurst thanked the commissioners for their support.

"You have supported the veterans of this county 100 percent and I've made the post aware of that," Hurst said. "I'm leaving this position because there are things I want to do in my older age that I have an opportunity to do, not because of any dissatisfaction with the board. Thank you again for all these years."

There will be a retirement ceremony for Hurst Jan. 15.