

VFW Post Tries Something Different for Its Community

A Nebraska Post hosted an endurance event to get young adults involved in community activities and attract new members, raising funds for an Honor Flight program and veteran scholarships

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Members of VFW Post 1375 in Chadron, Neb., held the first-ever Grey Eagle Warrior Challenge last September. Participants included local athletes, law enforcement officers and members of Chadron State College's ROTC. They tested their toughness and strength on a rugged obstacle course in Chadron.

"We wanted to do something in the community to get young people involved," said Brandon Yetter, an organizer of the event and member of Post 1375. "The spaghetti suppers and those kinds of things were not working for us. We weren't getting the attendance we wanted. So, we decided to do something bigger and try something different."

Much like the popular, military-inspired obstacle races Tough Mudder and Spartan Race, the Grey Eagle Warrior Challenge had its participants run a lap around a motocross track, then run to a nearby rodeo arena, where there was an obstacle course. Teams of four participants had to traverse ropes, crawl through mud and climb a wall to finish the challenge, which was a more than two miles long.

"In our feedback, we were told that we could have made the race longer and with more obstacles," said Yetter, an Iraq War veteran who serves in the Nebraska Army National Guard. "That's something we are looking into for this year."

Each team paid a \$120 entry fee to participate in the challenge. Participants also received a T-shirt and a meal at the end of the race. Proceeds went toward Post scholarships for student veterans at Chadron State College and a local Honor Flight program, which honors veterans by transporting them to their respective war memorials in Washington, D.C.

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Yetter, who served in Iraq from 2006-07 with the 264th Support Battalion and from 2009-10 with the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, said the biggest organizing obstacle to overcome was finding a company to insure the event.

“We talked to people at the Chadron Area Chamber of Commerce because they host events in the community,” Yetter said. “They pointed us in the direction of a couple of places, but they would only insure 5K runs and things like that. We eventually found a place that would insure us.”

Yetter advises anyone interested in organizing a race like the Grey Eagle Warrior Challenge to first find a company to insure it.

“It seemed like our initial plans were changed to align with what the insurance company would and would not let us do,” Yetter said. “I think people would save themselves from a lot of pain if they can get that part of organizing the event finished first.”

Yetter said this year he hopes to expand the obstacle course to make it more challenging and wants more participation from the community. He also hopes to get more Post volunteers to make the Grey Eagle Warrior Challenge bigger and better in the future.

“We are trying to make this an annual event in Chadron,” Yetter said. “Other than the honor guard and participating in flag ceremonies, the Post isn’t as active in the community as it could be. This event is a way we can get more members involved in the community.”

This article is featured in the 2018 May issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Dave Spiva](#), senior writer, VFW magazine. Photo courtesy of Brandon Yetter.