



Bruce Fuhrmann held an example of the Bronze Star Marker, which Marshall American Legion members have used to honor veterans buried in Marshall cemeteries. Legion members wanted to inform the public that the metal stars will no longer be available, after they were discontinued by their manufacturer. However, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs does offer permanent medallions that can be attached to headstones or burial markers.

MARSHALL — One of the ways local American Legion members have prepared for Memorial Day is by placing star-shaped metal markers at the graves of veterans in Marshall cemeteries. But that may change starting this year, said members of Marshall American Legion Post 113.

The grave markers, which local Legion members always requested through the Lyon County Veterans Service Office, will no longer be available. The only manufacturer of the markers has discontinued their production, Lyon County VSO Heidi Fier said Friday.

“They already told us last year that we may not get them this year,” said Marshall Legion member Dale Schroeder said. For this Memorial Day, Legion members were able to get some donated markers for veterans who died over the past year, he said. “As far as I know, I think we’re pretty well covered,” he said. But the stars won’t be available moving forward.

Schroeder and fellow Legion member Bruce Fuhrmann said the Marshall Legion post wanted to let people know about the change, and to ask for patience if a grave was missing a marker.

In the past, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) offered the Bronze Star Marker program, which provided grave markers to honor veterans in Minnesota cemeteries, Fier said.

“These markers, distributed in coordination with County Veterans Service Offices, were placed by families or cemetery organizations to recognize veterans’ service, particularly on Memorial Day,” Fier said.

The program that offered the Bronze Star Markers came from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs’ discretionary funds, and did not receive dedicated funding from the state Legislature, said Steven McCarthy, assistant communications director at the MDVA.

Fier said there was only one manufacturer making the Bronze Star Markers. That manufacturer, CenTec Cast, discontinued production.

“While restarting the production line is technically possible, the cost has risen to over \$100 per marker,” Fier said in an email Friday. Getting more supplies of the stars wouldn’t be financially viable, she said. “Due to the lack of a fiscally sustainable source for these markers, the MDVA has made the difficult decision to discontinue the program.”

While the Bronze Star grave markers are no longer available, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offers permanent burial marker medallions, by request. The medallions are available in three sizes, and can be attached to an existing privately purchased headstone or burial marker.

More information on the medallions is available through the U.S. VA Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000.