

# Ex-Service Men and Congressman Volstead

## Reprint from Canby Press, at Request of Ex-Service Men

### Statement of Whitmore at Close Throws Light on Campaign of 1920

It is a well known fact that the appointment of Post Masters are not always prompted by the choice of the people but are adapted largely to political affiliations. This fact has been recently demonstrated in our own city of Canby when Otto L. Peterson did not receive the appointment. The term of the present incumbent John Stensrud, expired March 16th, 1922, at which time the ex-service men of Canby and vicinity called a mass meeting and unanimously endorsed Otto L. Peterson for the appointment of Post Master of Canby, and the chairman of that meeting was authorized to and did send a telegram to Hon. A. J. Volstead at Washington, D. C., to that effect. Apparently the Hon. A. J. Volstead did not deem that a communication from ex-service men merited a response, and in fact he did not so respond. After a week or ten days had elapsed, another similar message was sent to our veteran and able Congressman. Evidently Andy did not think well of this new aspirant to office, as he did not even deign to answer the second message.

Undaunted, these valiant ex-service men sought the assistance of Legion Posts throughout this district asking them to recommend our comrade Otto L. Peterson for the appointment. Volstead, the politician, was practically compelled to answer these messages from the several Legion Posts in self defense, as he must have and no doubt did, realize that these numerous Legion members represented as many votes, and immediately addressed a telegram to the commanders of these various Posts. A copy of the telegram received at the American Legion Post of Minnesota, Minnesota, is as follows:

59 Govt. Night Letter.  
Washington D. C. March 28th, 1922.  
A. P. Weingardner,  
American Legion,  
Minnesota, Minn.

Candidates must show that they are reasonable acceptable to the patrons, out of ten appointments, where ex-service men could have been appointed, eight ex-service men either have been appointed or their appointment arranged for, six other appointments pending several of which will be service men. No petition from Canby, situation unknown, I try to favor ex-service men wherever possible.

A. J. Volstead,  
11:43 P. M.

The substance of the above would create the impression that A. J. favored the ex-service men in such appointments but we will endeavor to prove to the satisfaction of our readers that such is not the case.

In an endeavor to make the true situation of the Canby Post Master appointment known to our able and veteran Representative, Otto L. Peterson circulated a petition recommending him for the appointment and obtained some eight hundred (800) signatures amongst the voters in Canby in less than two days time, which was immediately forwarded to A. J. together with a letter, a copy of which is as follows:

Canby, Minnesota,  
April 5th, 1922.

Hon. A. J. Volstead,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:  
A copy of your telegram to the Commander of the American Legion at Minnesota was handed to me last Thursday. In the telegram you stated in part "Candidates must show that they are reasonable acceptable to the patrons, no petition from Canby, Situation unknown, I try to favor ex-service men wherever possible."

I have tried to comply with the import of your message, and on Friday last, forwarded to you the petition that I obtained that day and therewith enclose additional names which I procured on Saturday. I wish to say that I did not go to the country folks for their endorsement, although many have already signed, because of their desire to see me obtain the office. Should have liked very much to see the farmers of this community but owing to the lack of time, it was out of the question. However, I am certain that from the numerous signers you will readily see that I stand well in the community.

Assuring you that your efforts in assisting me obtain the appointment as Postmaster of Canby will be greatly appreciated by my friends, comrades and myself, I am  
Your very truly,  
(Signed) Otto L. Peterson.

To which A. J. replied:  
House of Representatives U. S. Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, D. C.  
April 5, 1922.

Mr. Otto L. Peterson,  
Canby, Minnesota.  
Dear Mr. Peterson:

I am in receipt of your letter enclosing petition which I assure you will receive careful consideration.

Very truly yours,  
(Signed) A. J. Volstead.  
Note: Attitude of Volstead at this time—Indifference.

In the meantime Mr. John Stensrud circulated a general petition in his favor for the appointment in question, and which petition was forwarded to our veteran and able Congressman.

Knowing that his opponent was an ex-service man and in an attempt to disqualify Otto L. Peterson in the eyes of Mr. Volstead, Mr. Stensrud circulated a special petition among the ex-service men to be signed exclusively by ex-service men, and which petition was also forwarded to our able and veteran Congressman.

Immediately upon receipt of the last mentioned petition A. J. in all the elegance of his magniloquence, profusely and extensively expressed his undying gratitude in this manner:

House of Representative, U. S. Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, D. C.  
April 28, 1922.

Mr. Teddy Olson,  
Canby, Minn.

Dear Mr. Olson:  
I have your favor of the 12th inst. SIGNED BY YOU and more than a hundred other ex-service men recommending the reappointment of John S. Stensrud as postmaster at Canby, I am very glad to have your views.

I am anxious to meet the wishes of ex-service men in any recommendation I make in these appointments and assure you that your communication will be given most careful consideration. Hope that this matter may be disposed of in the near future.

Whenever for any reason I can be of assistance to you or any other ex-service man, I trust you will feel free to write me at any time.

Thanking you for your kind interest in this matter I am  
Very truly yours,  
(Signed) A. J. Volstead.

Note: Attitude of Volstead at this time—ASSIDUOUS.

A most peculiar situation arises in view of the fact that Mr. Olson and also Mr. Hebrank who received an exact duplicate of the above letter, received such communications from Mr. Volstead, and also in view of the fact that Mr. Volstead in his several letters used the statement "signed by you," it is evident that the names of Mr. Olson and Mr. Hebrank did appear on the ex-service men's petition in favor of Mr. Stensrud. It is emphatically denied by Olson and Hebrank that they did sign said ex-service men's petition in favor of Mr. Stensrud, and as evidence of their denial, we herewith give a reproduction of two affidavits made respectively by Olson and Hebrank:

State of Minnesota,  
County of Yellow Medicine, SS.

Before me, Wm. Kankerlik, a Notary Public in and for the county of Yellow Medicine and State of Minnesota, personally came Teddy Olson, who being by me duly sworn according to law deposes and says, that he is a resident of Canby, Minnesota, and that he recently he signed a petition addressed to Representative Volstead at Washington, D. C. recommending the appointment of Otto L. Peterson of Canby, Minnesota for Post Master in this city.

Affiant further says that he did not sign any petition recommending the re-appointment of John S. Stensrud as Post Master at Canby.

Further affiant saith not.  
(Signed) Teddy Olson.  
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 8th day of May, 1922.

(Signed) Wm. Kankerlik,  
Notary Public, Yellow Medicine Co., Minn.

My commission expires March 18, 1923.

(Notarial Seal).

IN DUPLICATE  
State of Minnesota, SS.

Before me, A. F. Goblirsch, a Notary Public in and for the county of Yellow Medicine and State of Minnesota, personally came Jacob M. Hebrank, who being duly sworn according to law deposes and says, that he is a resident of Canby, Minnesota, and that he recently he signed a petition addressed to Representative Volstead at Washington D. C., recommending the appointment of Otto L. Peterson of Canby, Minnesota for Post Master in this city.

Affiant further says that he did not sign any petition recommending the re-appointment of John S. Stensrud as Post Master at Canby, Minnesota.

Further affiant saith not.  
(Signed) Jacob M. Hebrank.  
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 8th day of May, 1922.

(Signed) A. F. Goblirsch,  
Notary Public, Yellow Medicine Co., Minn.

My commission expires July 31, 1927.  
(Notary Seal)

In order to more fully explain his position and also in order to expedite action on the part of Volstead, Otto L. Peterson wrote a letter to our able and veteran Congressman, viz.:

Canby, Minnesota,  
May 11, 1922.

Hon. A. J. Volstead,

House of Representatives,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

In Re: Appointment of Post Master of Canby, Minnesota.  
As you know, I have applied for the position and in connection with my application, I sent to you a petition endorsing me for the appointment signed by approximately eight hundred of the patrons of the Canby Post Office, and you were kind enough to acknowledge receipt of this petition to me.

As you also know, the term of the present incumbent, Mr. John S. Stensrud, expired on March 15th, 1922, and so far no action seems to have been taken to make a new appointment.

Recently a matter has come to my notice which I wish to call your attention to in a frank and candid manner. Some two or three weeks ago a petition was circulated in favor of Mr. Stensrud exclusively among the ex-service men of the community, which petition was sent to you. It has also come to my notice that you have written a personal letter to some of them, in which you state you are very glad to have their views and that you are very anxious to meet the wishes of ex-service men in any recommendation that you make in the appointment, and also thank them for their kind interest in the matter.

Now in connection with this petition will say that up to this time two of these ex-service men that you have written to, as outlined above, and who you say signed the petition, have come to me with your letter, and they state that they never signed any such petition, and I have their affidavit to that effect in my possession.

Now I am making no charges against any one in connection with this matter, but I have been open and above-board in all that I have done in connection with my application, and I not only expect, but do demand, fair treatment and fair shake.

I might call your attention, Mr. Volstead, to a fact that perhaps is not so apparent and that is, that in this petition I filed, containing approximately eight hundred names, I feel safe in saying that I have a great number more ex-service men than signed the petition filed in behalf of Mr. Stensrud.

I also call your attention to the fact that at a meeting of ex-service men here at Canby, which was largely attended, I was unanimously endorsed for the appointment, and a telegram to that effect was sent by the chairman of that meeting to you, but no response was received and that some time later another telegram containing the same facts was sent to you by this same chairman, to which no response was ever received. It seems very peculiar to me that you should write a personal letter to each of the ex-service men who signed Mr. Stensrud's petition but that you have so little to say in reply to any communication sent to you by me or in my behalf by ex-service men.

Your reluctance in acknowledging receipt of any communications in my behalf was what called forth the twenty or more telegrams which you received from as many various soldiers organizations throughout your district.

I could file further petitions signed exclusively by ex-service men of the community if I saw it to do so. I have concluded that any such action on my part is unnecessary. I feel that you should have in your possession at this time, sufficient facts to be able to decide who is the choice, not only of the ex-service men of the Canby community, but of your district, and of the patrons of the Canby Post Office.

I also feel that this appointment should be made before the 1st of June, and feel that I am entitled to your recommendation for the appointment in view of the facts. I trust that I shall have the pleasure of hearing from you with something definite on this matter before June 1st.

Yours very truly,  
(Signed) Otto L. Peterson.  
No action and no reply. Then Mr. Peterson follows the above letter as per:

Canby, Minnesota,  
June 27, 1922.

Hon. A. J. Volstead,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

May I not receive a reply to my letter of May 11, 1922 regarding the appointment of Postmaster at Canby, Minnesota?

Yours very truly,  
Otto L. Peterson.

To which the Hon. A. J. replies:  
House of Representatives U. S. Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, D. C.  
July 1, 1922.

Mr. Otto L. Peterson,  
Canby, Minnesota.

Dear Mr. Peterson:

I have your favor of the 27th ult. asking for an answer to a letter written me some time ago. I did not find anything in that letter that really seemed to me to require an answer. However, I am glad to acknowledge receipt of it.

I expect to be home in the near future and shall then try to learn what the GOOD PEOPLE OF CANBY desire to have me do in regard to the appointment of a postmaster.

Very truly yours,  
A. J. Volstead.

Copy of The Soldiers Preference Act In Favor of Otto L. Peterson U. S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.  
Oct. 3, 1921.

Statement of Horace C. Whitmore Mitchell called on me at my room at the St. Regis Hotel, Minneapolis, in January 1921. He asked me as a former State Adjutant of the American Legion for my endorsement of his prospective appointment as prohibition enforcement agent.

I suggested that his chances of appointment would be very poor on account of his having run against Volstead on a wine and beer platform. He replied that Volstead was under obligations to him and had given him a strong letter of endorsement, and that Senator Nelson told him he should be taken care of and should have something good, perhaps a consulship.

I said, "Why should they be so grateful to you?" and he replied, "In the last campaign they sent a man to me, who suggested that I come out on a wine and beer platform, and that I dress up in uniform, travel through the district, appear at soldiers gatherings so as to attract the soldier vote, which I did. I got over 5,000 votes. Volstead was only elected by 1,500 majority and I elected him."

Mr. Mitchell was not appointed Prohibition Enforcement Officer, or given a Consulship. In spite of the fact that he never was abroad he was given vocational training. He did not ask for this through the Legion, and must have got it by political manipulation.

The professional politicians behind Volstead do not scruple to use the American uniform to further their political mechanisms. Volstead will favor his private friends before he would an ex-service man. His friends get the post offices (political plums), they rent their buildings to the United States Government, the best tenant on earth, and the ex-service man, who fought for the flag, which floats over the building gets left. The honor and pride which the ex-service take in their uniform demands that at election time they walk out as one man and rebuke Volstead and his gang of professional politicians who place themselves above the American uniform, the flag and America.—Canby Press.

Now you have the situation of the post office predicament in Canby. A year ago, Otto L. Peterson passed the examination required for the position in question and received the average mark of 72 and notice was sent to him from Washington to that effect. And yet the matter lies undisturbed in so far as Andy is concerned. But he states in one of his epistles that he wishes to learn what the GOOD PEOPLE OF CANBY desire him to do in the matter of appointing a postmaster. Who are the GOOD PEOPLE OF CANBY? Are they the professional politicians whose interests Volstead has at heart? The present State Adjutant of the American Legion was in Washington at one time and he asked Volstead if he would show preference to the men who had fought for all the people rather than those who served a few and Volstead's reply was "If I have any preference I will show it to my friends" and as a parting shot Volstead added "The trouble with the American Legion is that you don't know what you want and no one will pay any attention to you until you do." That, kind readers, was the civil and courteous treatment accorded Stafford King, State Adjutant, on a visit to Washington in behalf of the ex-service men of the state.

Otto L. Peterson is a married man and has been for several years. During the war he ENLISTED and served on the battle fields of France. An ex-service man, applying for the position as post master, subject to the soldiers preference act, and Volstead spurs for time until after election. Evidently the GOOD PEOPLE OF Canby are not desirous of having Mr. Peterson as their post master or he would have been appointed ere this.

Volstead sums up the situation in his statement to Stafford King when he said, "If I have any preference, I will show it to my friends." That is exactly what he would like to do in this case but he doesn't dare to it until after election. He professes great interest in the ex-service men. That is political bunk. If he favored them in the least he would have appointed Mr. Peterson immediately after passing the examination.

Volstead, as chairman of the judiciary committee, postponed the impeachment charges against Attorney General Daugherty until after election because the investigation would spell defeat for the old gang. He also voted to sustain the pocket veto of the Woodruff-Johnson Bill which meant the same thing, and he delays the appointment of post master in Canby until after election.

relates to preference in employment of honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, and marines, be amended to read as follows: "That hereafter in making appointments to clerical and other positions in the executive branch of the Government in the District of Columbia or elsewhere preference shall be given to honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, and marines, and widows of such, and to the wives of injured soldiers, sailors, and marines who themselves are not qualified but whose wives are qualified to hold such positions." (Third Deficiency Appropriation Act, approved July 11, 1919.) Name of applicant.

As it is shown by the records that the person named is an honorably discharged soldier, the claim is allowed. Failure in examination as well as lack of physical qualifications may prevent any benefit under the act. Examination for which he applied. PPM 9-27-21

Retain this notice and file it with any future application for examination; otherwise it will be necessary to again submit verification of military record.

U. S. Civil Service Commission.

If the name of the preference claimant as it appears on this notice is not identical with the name as it appears on the application for examination this office should be notified immediately.

Otto L. Peterson,  
Canby, Minn.

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Brave boy, Andy, brave boy! But this doesn't sound natural!

Congressman A. J. Volstead speaks with contempt of the congressional backbone or lack of backbone. Many of them he asserts, lack the courage to vote straight. "Why," he said the other day, "I have seen the house scared to death because Samuel Gompers happened to be seated in the gallery. It must be an awful feeling, to be congressman, a representative of the sovereign people, and feel that way. Some of us would prefer not to be congressmen if we had to live in terror of Sam Gompers."—Canby News.

Volstead is not afraid of Samuel Gompers or the working men. He is not afraid of his fellow congressman or he would not speak of them with contempt. But he is afraid of the EX-SERVICE MEN and their vote. He claims the credit for helping to frame and pass the act incorporating the American Legion. Is there a valid reason why the men who fought for the Nation should not be allowed to associate together upon their return from the war? Volstead is certainly not entitled to any credit for that. It was his duty as an American citizen.

To further demonstrate his deception to the ex-service men of this district and the use of the American uniform for personal gain we publish the following statement made by Horace C. Whitmore:

Statement of Horace C. Whitmore Mitchell called on me at my room at the St. Regis Hotel, Minneapolis, in January 1921. He asked me as a former State Adjutant of the American Legion for my endorsement of his prospective appointment as prohibition enforcement agent.

I suggested that his chances of appointment would be very poor on account of his having run against Volstead on a wine and beer platform. He replied that Volstead was under obligations to him and had given him a strong letter of endorsement, and that Senator Nelson told him he should be taken care of and should have something good, perhaps a consulship.

I said, "Why should they be so grateful to you?" and he replied, "In the last campaign they sent a man to me, who suggested that I come out on a wine and beer platform, and that I dress up in uniform, travel through the district, appear at soldiers gatherings so as to attract the soldier vote, which I did. I got over 5,000 votes. Volstead was only elected by 1,500 majority and I elected him."

Mr. Mitchell was not appointed Prohibition Enforcement Officer, or given a Consulship. In spite of the fact that he never was abroad he was given vocational training. He did not ask for this through the Legion, and must have got it by political manipulation.

The professional politicians behind Volstead do not scruple to use the American uniform to further their political mechanisms. Volstead will favor his private friends before he would an ex-service man. His friends get the post offices (political plums), they rent their buildings to the United States Government, the best tenant on earth, and the ex-service man, who fought for the flag, which floats over the building gets left. The honor and pride which the ex-service take in their uniform demands that at election time they walk out as one man and rebuke Volstead and his gang of professional politicians who place themselves above the American uniform, the flag and America.—Canby Press.

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