



BADGER LEGIONNAIRE

& WISCONSIN VOL 102 #5 | OCT. 2025



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THE MISSION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN IS TO PROVIDE SERVICE TO VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

2025 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL ALL- STARS



The 2025 American Legion Baseball and Softball seasons came to an end with the All-Star banquet on Saturday, August 9, in Milwaukee honoring the baseball and softball (at left) All-Stars. At the banquet, Steve “Tex” Belich and Steve Wilmet (below right) were inducted into the Hall of Fame. Accepting the award in memory of Tex Belich was his nephew Emil Belich (below left). Department Commander Nathan Bond and Commissioner Dan Lukes presented the awards to the recipients. On Sunday, August 10, the two All-Star Baseball teams, the Stars (above left) and the Stripes (above right), played after the conclusion of the Milwaukee Brewers game at American Family Field.



MIDWINTER '26 TAKES SHAPE

Oneida Casino Hotel will host 102nd Conference, January 15–18

Join us at the Oneida Casino Hotel on January 15-18, 2026, for the 102nd Midwinter Conference. The Midwinter Conference is full of planning, learning and fun, and is your opportunity to meet new people and network with posts from across the state. The weekend begins on **Thursday, January 15**, with move in and set up. The American Legion Foundation Meeting will be held at 5:00 p.m. **Friday, January 16**, is the meeting of our Department Committees and Commissions. Ever wonder what one of these committees does or maybe are interested in being on a committee? This is your chance to sit in and listen to them in action as they work on ways to improve the lives of Veterans, their families, and their communities. That evening, enjoy the many hospitality rooms and meet the future leaders of the Wisconsin American Legion.

SEE MIDWINTER, PAGE 3

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& “Wisconsin”

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Subscribers: To report any upcoming changes of address, please ask your Post Adjutant to fill out a Membership Data Form and forward it to Wisconsin American Legion Headquarters. The change of address form that will be completed by the Post Adjutant should not be confused with the change of address card filled out at the Post Office. Department financial statements are available to Legionnaires in good standing upon written request through their District Commanders.

“Wisconsin”

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To change your address: Notify Unit Secretary
Unit Secretary: Notify Department
Headquarters on a Member Change Form

The “Wisconsin” deadline for copy is
4 weeks before publication date.

BADGER BOYS STATE

BADGERS AMONG
THE HOOSIERS

Badger Boys State Heads
to Americanism Conference

For most of the volunteers at Badger Boys State, the program requires around two weeks of time from their busy lives to prepare for and execute the program at a high level. We prepare by completing some training, orientations on any changes being implemented, and focusing in on the week ahead. Then, of course, the week itself at Eau Claire proceeds, where we work hard and play hard!

However, a select few members of the gang take on various projects in the offseason, making Badger Boys State a year-round commitment to make the program more effective. Although this does mean “more work” for some of us, it also comes with more opportunities to get together, share ideas, and have a bit of fun along the way.

Each year, representatives from Badger Boys State join folks from numerous other boys and girls state programs from around the country at Indianapolis—the National Headquarters of The American Legion—for the Americanism Conference. This gathering is a great opportunity for the programs to share ideas, work out some roadblocks, and network with other programs, too. Badger Boys State has hosted visitors in Eau



Claire representing Michigan, California, Arkansas, and North Carolina, and even Boys Nation, just to name a few.

The conference really is a microcosm of the federal system—the states trying different things and sharing the results so that we all may improve and make for a better experience. Wisconsin’s program has emerged as a leading voice at the conference in recent years, presenting on a variety of topics including how to start and use an archive, our Veterans program, and how we’re incorporating skills for healthy personal growth into professional development for Wisconsin’s young men. This year’s conference will be in late September, so maybe next time we’ll provide you with a recap.

On another note, as many of your posts are rais-

ing funds and recruiting potential citizens for the upcoming session, we thought it would be helpful to pass along an idea or two for consideration. On the recruitment side, be sure to touch base not only with counselors and teachers, but coaches as well. Often, quality candidates display admirable traits like leadership and teamwork on the field or court more so than in the classroom. If finding students is a challenge for you—this could be a great opportunity to find excellent representatives in a place you may not have looked before. On the fundraising side—consider a drink special! Either at your Legion bar or another local establishment. Imagine—if we had a dollar for every drink in Wisconsin...run it for a month or two and see what happens! Stay tuned for more from Badger Boys State!

DEPARTMENT ORATORICAL REGIONAL AND FINALS CONTEST DATE SET

The Department Oratorical Regional and Finals Contest date is set for March 28, 2026, beginning with opening ceremonies at 9:00 a.m. at Todd Wehr Hall on the Ripon College campus.

Talk to your Legion friends and schedule your post, county, and district contests. Be sure the dates of your contests are well advertised. Posts should be scheduling their contests to be held in January; the contest should be scheduled a week or two prior to the county contest. The District contests need to be held in February as the certification of their winner needs to be received at Legion Headquarters no later than March 2. Posts, counties and districts need to work together to schedule their contest dates. Posts are encouraged to recruit contestants for their contest. Contact your local high school forensics coach or guidance counselors. Students in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades are eligible. Now is the time to promote the program with schools, youth programs, and community events. One of the biggest reasons I hear for young people not participating is “I never heard of the program.” The oratorical contest is a great opportunity for students to win scholarship funds. Potential contestants can be directed to our website,

[legion.org/oratorical](https://www.legion.org/oratorical) for more information such as the 2026 assigned topics and rules. The contestants are also encouraged to go to National’s website and watch videos of those contestants who were in the National Oratorical Finals. The link to the website is: <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest>.

Now for the good stuff, we have, and we need, volunteers to ensure a

good department contest. We have the greatest Program Coordinator in the world, thank you Sheri. We also are fortunate to have a long list of people who give of their time and resources to serve and staff the program. I am here to testify these people are, “the most important people!” However, if you are interested in being one of the greatest, we can always use a few new people. Please contact Sheri at the department and

she will add your name to our list.
If you have any questions, please contact Sheri at Department Headquarters via phone 608-745-0341 or email Sheri@wilegion.org or call me at 715-456-7791 or email rpstone1227@icloud.com.
I am very excited about this year’s program and pledge myself to making it the greatest year ever!
Robert Stone
Department Oratorical Chair

COUNTY YOUTH GOVERNMENT DAY INVOLVEMENT NEEDED

County Youth Government Day is designed to teach students about the importance of their county government. Ultimately educating the youth to become better citizens creates an atmosphere for a cleaner and more effective government.

County Youth Government Day is a field day experience sponsored by The American Legion at the county courthouse that provides middle and high school students firsthand knowledge of how county government plays an important role in their daily lives.

Elected officials provide insights into their roles and duties, and give condensed lessons on how the government operates within the county. Students are encouraged to actively engage in meaningful dialog and participate in

activities with elected officials and administrative staff.

Information about County Youth Government Day is located in the Department website at <https://wilegion.org/county-youth-government>.

The American Legion posts are encouraged to work with their county to host this day to benefit our youth. If your county hosts a County Youth Government Day, please complete the County Youth Government Day report form and submit it to Legion Headquarters. If you have any questions about how to host a County Youth Government Day, please contact Tom Visintainer who is the Department County Youth Government Day chair. His email address is tvisintainersr@gmail.com.



COMMANDER AND SECRETARY MEET AND GREET

Department Commander Nathan Bond and Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs James Bond held a meet and greet on Monday, August 18 at the Secretary's office. Also present was Department Historian Morris Sadicario. This groundwork ensures continuity in mutual support of our Veterans.

MIDWINTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Saturday, January 17, is the day for ALL LEGIONNAIRES, AUXILIARIES and SONS. There will be a full day of learning. Classes include some of your favorites such as Officer Courses, Funeral Honors, Service Officer training, and more. Watch the website for updates as they become available. Where else can you get that much knowledge in one day for only \$30?

Join us on Saturday night for the *Honor Your Service* Banquet. There will be dinner, followed by live entertainment. The theme is to wear something representing your service – clothing, uniforms (if the closet hasn't shrunk them) or other items from your service. Sons

and Auxiliary should wear something representing the service of the person they are honoring.

The American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and the Riders will also be holding sessions over the weekend.

Sunday, January 18, join the Chaplains for a Four Chaplains service, followed by the Department Executive Committee.

You will leave the weekend more knowledgeable of The American Legion and its many Leadership positions and programs and be energized to go out and share this information with your fellow Veterans and communities.

Updated conference information can be found at wilegion.org/midwinter.



Waunakee Post 360 held several activities recently, including their annual installation of Post officers (at right), the presentation to Sandy Johnson of the Post 360 Legionnaire of the Year Award (above), and Waunakee Post 360 Honor Guard presented colors at the Waunakee High School graduation.

WAUNAKEE POST 360 ACTIVITIES



Orville Kerl and his wife Ruth stopped by Legion HQ to be presented with the check for winning the 2025 Summer Sweepstakes. Orville is a member of the Middleton Cross Plains Post 245, Kerl Endres Brannen Post. The Post was named after a distant cousin of Orville's.

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

2025 Summer Sweepstakes Winners
250th Anniversary of
the American Soldier Sweepstakes

PRIZE	DESCRIPTION	NAME/CITY
Grand Prize	\$10,000 Cash	Orville K./Cross Plains, WI
2nd Prize	\$5,000 Cash	Joe R./Sparta, WI
3rd Prize	\$2,500 Cash	Steven V./Hilbert, WI
4th Prize	\$1,000 Cash	Daniel C./Glenwood City, WI
5th Prize	\$500 Cash	Kennard P./Two Rivers, WI
6th Prize	\$500 Cash	Kim H./Schofield, WI
7th Prize	\$250 Cash	Richard L./Poynette, WI
8th Prize	\$250 Cash	Brian S./Lannon, WI

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From Your American Legion Department

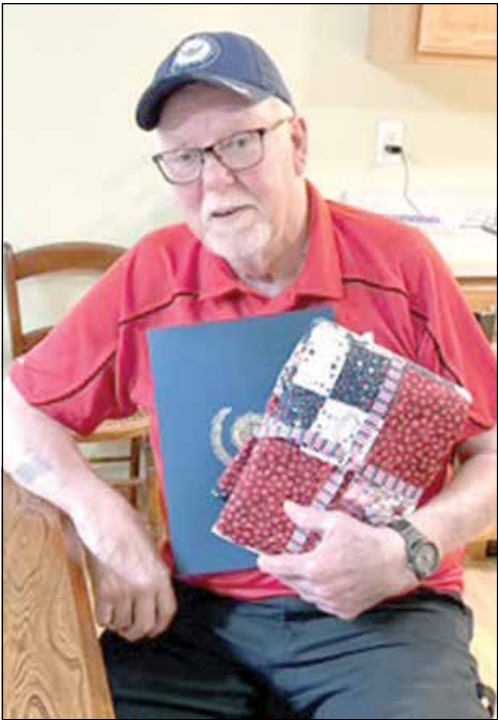


Share "In the Spotlight" stories with the Legion Family by sending them to badger@wilegion.org. Please provide high-Res JPG photos and email text or a word file. If you'd like to submit hardcopy, you may mail them to PO Box 388, Portage, WI 53901 Attn: Sheri.

SUPERIOR POST 435 GIVES OUT TWO SCHOLARSHIPS



LEFT: At the June monthly post meeting, the post awarded two Scholarship Awards. Milly Haugen from Superior Senior High School carried a 4.00 GPA and ranked in the top 20% of her class. She will be attending Lake Superior College majoring in Nursing. Milly receives her certificate and check from Post Commander Butch Liebert. RIGHT: Emma Wennersten from Northwestern High School in Maple receives her certificate from Post Commander Butch Liebert. She has been accepted to North Iowa Area Community College this fall where she will be majoring in Chemical Engineering.



POST 50 HONORS 50-YEAR MEMBER

Waunakee Post 360 member Richard Osborn was presented with a certificate for his 50 years of membership and a Quilt of Valor.

THREE GENERATIONS OF SERVICE: THE SPREEMAN LEGACY LIVES ON

By Adjutant, Post 283

Suring American Legion Post 283 proudly recognizes a remarkable legacy of service—one that spans three generations of the Spreeman family, each answering the call to serve their country and their fellow Veterans.

It began with William “Willy” Spreeman, who served in the United States Army from October 22, 1959, to July 26, 1961. Willy has remained active in his support for fellow Veterans as a proud member of The American Legion for the past 28 years.

Following in his father’s footsteps, William “Alex” Spreeman joined the United States Navy, serving from July 10, 1988, to May 14, 1992. His commitment to military service extended into civilian life with 23 years of continuous membership in The American Legion.

Now carrying that torch into a new generation is William “Max” Spreeman, who began serving in the Army on June 22, 2020, and is currently deployed to Kuwait. He, too, joined The American Legion—already six years into membership—demonstrating that his commitment to country and community extends beyond his active-duty service.

While it’s not uncommon to see military service span multiple generations, it is notably rare to have three generations—all living and all actively engaged in The American Legion at the same time. The Spreeman family exemplifies this extraordinary level of commitment.

“It’s rare and inspiring to see three generations of Veterans who not only served in uniform but continue to serve through The American Legion—and even more remarkable that all three are living, active members today,” said Post 283 Commander Kevin Christensen. “The Spreeman family is a shining example of what dedication, patriotism, and community involvement look like.”

The Spreeman family reminds us that patriotism and service don’t end with a DD-214. Their continued presence in the American Legion reflects a deep lasting commitment to supporting Veterans and preserving the values of duty, honor, and sacrifice.



Willy Spreeman (seated), Alex Spreeman (left), and Max Spreeman (right).

POST 91 MAKES CAMP DONATION

Dale Saeger of Edwin L. Jones Post 91 Oconomowoc gave a check for \$3,500 to Camp American Legion at the State Convention in Green Bay on July 19.



PLYMOUTH POST 243 HONORS PIONEERS STARTING PITCHER JOHN STEINHARDT



John Steinhardt was honored at the Plymouth Post 243 Pioneer American Legion Baseball last home game for the season July 22 at Carl Loebe Field. He was presented with certificates for participation in American Legion Baseball and his military commitment by enlisting in the US Army Reserves. Certificates were presented by Sheboygan County Council American Legion Commander DuWayne Wieck. Family and friends joined John for the presentation.

POST 83 COMMEMORATES LEGION BALL, VIETNAM WAR



Prescott-Bayens Post 83 in Sheboygan commemorates the 100th anniversary of Legion Baseball and the 50th anniversary of the ending of hostilities in the Vietnam War. Sheboygan County Baseball Chairman Kerk Evans announced Legionnaire John Fields, a Vietnam War Era Veteran throwing out the first pitch in the Legion Ball Game at Wildwood Field, Sheboygan on July 7. Both are members of Sheboygan Post 83.



CRUISE FOR A CAUSE IN WAUNAKEE



Cruise for a Cause ride passed through Waunakee. They stopped at Waunakee Post 360 for a check presentation.

POST 534 MCFARLAND DONATES TO VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS

In the last year the McFarland Edwards-Foye American Legion Post 534 donated over \$39,000 to local Veterans organizations and local charities. The American Legion, Sons of the American Legion and The American Legion Auxiliary all put in numerous hours for Toys for Tots, the McFarland food bank and the VA Hospital to name a few of these charitable donations.



RHINELANDER BLOOD DRIVE

AT LEFT: Rhinelander Legion Post 7 Commander Bob Smith and Legion Larry Slowiak helping at the Community Blood Center Hodag Blood Drive.
FAR LEFT: Barb Hagen, Rhinelander Post 7 Legion member, getting ready to donate blood. Veterans from VFW Post 3143, DAV chapter 62, Legion Post 7, AMVETS Post 724, Northwoods Honor Guard, and NCO Club of the Rhinelander sponsor this blood drive to support our community.



Post 169's 80-YEAR MEMBER



Ross Smith of Amery Larson Torgerson Post 169, is celebrating 80 years as an American Legion member. He is a World War II Veteran who served in the Pacific on the USS Collingsworth, an attack transport that delivered 1,800 Marines to various islands in the Pacific. He was responsible for navigation and ships logs. He is an active member of Post 169 and is known for his decades of service and commitment to fellow Veterans. He will be celebrating his 99th birthday in October.

FREDONIA POST 410 MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE



The Fredonia Warren Kane Post 410 dedicated their Memorial Day Service to WWII Veterans. Members buried sand gathered from Omaha and Utah Beaches, and Iwo Jima Red Beach in Fredonia Veterans Park. An engraved memorial plaque was placed over the buried capsules in honor of all who fought in WWII.

NATIONAL HISTORY SHOWCASE

At the 106th American Legion National Convention in Tampa, FL. Past Department Commander Greg Eirich posed in front of the Legiontown display with American Legion National Historian Deborah Davis during the first-ever National History Showcase! PDC Greg Eirich is the Vice President of the Wisconsin Historians Association. Wisconsin's Yearbook entry was provided by Severson-Cairns Post 501, Madison. Photo taken, August 23, 2025.



BLACK EARTH POST 313 QUILT OF VALOR

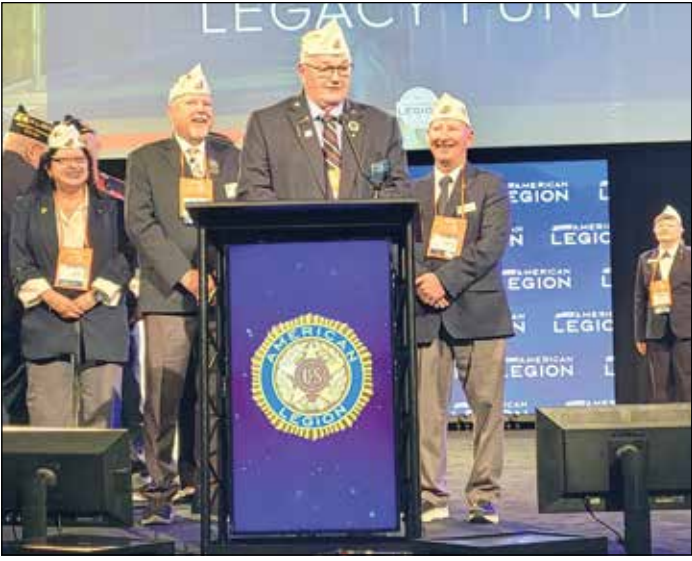


Receiving Quilts of Valor (L-R) Black Earth American Legion Post 313 members Harvey Kaufman and Kenneth Meigs.

DONATIONS AT NATIONAL CONVENTION

ABOVE: Department Vice Commanders Rita Rindahl, Larry Larson, and David Steinert presented a \$2,000 donation for the National Emergency Fund at the National Convention in Tampa, FL.

AT LEFT: Department Vice Commanders Rita Rindahl, Steve Kohnke, Larry Larson, and David Steinert presented a donation for more than \$1,000 for the Legacy Fund at the National Convention in Tampa, FL.



POST 79 HONORS BADGER BOYS, GIRLS STATE REPRESENTATIVES



The Wisconsin Badger State Boys and Girls program is a week-long civic leadership program held annually for students between their junior and senior year of high school. The Wisconsin Badger State Boys and Girls attendees were recognized at the Burlington American Legion Ross-Wilcox Post 79 meeting held on August 7. In addition to The American Legion sponsorships other local businesses sponsoring the program include, the Kiwanis Club, O'Neill Foundation, Inc., Burlington Community Fund, Catholic Financial Life, Thrivent Group, VFW Post 2823, and the Ross-Wilcox American Legion Auxiliary Unit 79.

This year's Badger Boys State attendees from the Burlington area were Brandon Piccolo, Ian Bies, Jaxon Grant, Harrison Turke, Jackson Behling, Alex James, and Brandon Hernandez. The Badger Girls State attendees were Molly Warren, Tammy Crayton, Lillian Dempkey, Allissa Gerth, Jennifer Marquez, and Joselyn Trejo.



POST 242 QUILTS OF VALOR



Three members of Post 242 in La Valle recently received the Quilt of Valor. From left: Jim Kowalczyk, Wayne Simono, and Al Exner. Submitted by Dave Gorak, Adjutant.

POST 268 FLAG DISPOSAL CEREMONY



The Earl J. Conley Post 268 in Bruce held their annual flag disposal on August 16.



POST 91 HENRY RIFLE RAFFLE



Oconomowoc Post 91 held a drawing for The American Legion edition of the Henry repeating rifle (right) at their annual meeting and meal at Shorehaven Elderly and Assisted Living facility. Jerry Wendt spear-headed this effort and was the one who started this event 4 years ago. LEFT: Jerry Wendt spins the barrel, and Kevin Ellis draws the ticket for the rifle (RIGHT).



POST 147
LEGION
BALL TEAMS

FAR RIGHT: Medford American Legion Post 147 presents their baseball team. They placed 6th in the state championship playoff tournament.

AT RIGHT: Medford American Legion Post 147 presents their softball team. They placed 2nd in the state championship game.



WAUNAKEE POST 360 COLOR GUARD



Waunakee Post 360's Color Guard presented colors at a patriotic concert in Waunakee.

SUPERIOR POST 435 HONORS MEMBER



At a recent meeting, the post honored Richard Smith for his contributions to the post. Dick became a member of the post after serving his country in Korea. He has been a member for 34 years and is still an active member at age 95. He served as Post Commander from 1996 to 1999. He also has been a member of the Honor Guard for 17 years and still attends funerals where he plays taps. Dick served as post chaplain for numerous years before giving it up this year. Dick (center) receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from Post Commander Butch Liebaert (right) while fellow member John Vaski (left) waits to present Dick a three-ring binder with pictures of Dick at different post events.

POST 382
MHVI
DONATION

Henrizi-Schneider American Legion Post 382 of Menomonee Falls donates \$6,000 to Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative. Commander Tom Branta and Dawn Mariscal of Post Auxiliary Unit 382 presenting to MHVI.



VETERANS
1ST AND
TINY HOMES

Members of the Green Bay Madelyn LaCanne Post 539, presented a check to Veterans 1st, to assist in building Tiny Homes in Green Bay.



POST 149 HAD A BUSY SUMMER



ABOVE LEFT: Members of Sheboygan Falls Post 149's Honor Guard perform a 21-gun salute during the city's Memorial Day Ceremony on May 26. Members of the guard are Charlie Dunn, Dan Kanitz, Kevin Regan, Joe Schneider, Dave Berlin, Alex Kruske, Pat Floor, Dan Riviers and Jim Sabel, with Ken Wilhite calling. Ken also gave a heartfelt speech during the indoor ceremony. ABOVE RIGHT: Sheboygan Falls Post 149's Adjutant, Marine Corps Veteran Shauna Firmiss, explains the meaning of each item that makes up a Missing Man table at a Flag Day celebration June 14. BELOW LEFT: Post 149 member and Marine Corps Veteran, Ken Wilhite, designed a parade float to commemorate the 250th Birthday of the Marine Corps. Post commander Kevin Regan drove the vehicle, and Ken, along with Post Adjutant & fellow Marine Corps Veteran, Shauna Firmiss, walked alongside the Float in the Elkhart Lake Independence Day parade July 6. BELOW RIGHT: Post 149's Scholarship Recipients chosen from 28 applicants, based on grades, community service, classes towards the degree they wish to obtain, and ability to pay for their education: Anne Devine, \$1,500; Kloae Brill, \$1,500 Kloae Brill; and Brianna Estrea-Parra, \$1,000.



POST 91 VAN DONATION

Oconomowoc Post 91 member Al Brezgel's grandson was born blind, deaf, and has been on a feeding tube. The family's disability accessible van had broken down. Post 91 worked with a local repair shop, Precision Auto of Oconomowoc, to get it running. This happened because of a \$1,000 donation from the Post. Many members donated additional funds to help out also. Post 91 Adjutant Dale Saeger, Precision Auto owner, and Post 91 1st Vice Commander Jerry Wendt.

WATERTOWN POST 189'S HISTORIC INITIATIVE

FUNDRAISING FOR MOBILE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

Watertown Pitterle-Beaudoin Post 189 of The American Legion Commander, Stephen Zillmer, is driven to see the largest midwestern replica, north of St. Louis, Vietnam Veterans Memorial installed in Marine Corps League's Aero Park. Legion, League, and other military organizations are closely collaborating, galvanized to build a place that honors the valor and histories of Vietnam era Veterans. A place where Veterans and their families may share fellowship, healing and remembering in the presence of a poignant memorial. For Zillmer, it's about serving Veterans first, the whole purpose of Post 189's efforts.

Watertown's own, Vietnam Marine Corps Veteran and Purple Heart recipient, Barry Lawrence, engraved the replica. His passion for art and illustration led to him opening his own advertising business where he began honing his engraving skills. In 2010, American Veterans Traveling Tribute enlisted his help for their first replica project. For Lawrence, its been "a tremendous honor."

While the original Washington, D.C. memorial is made of Indian black granite, this replica utilizes 320 feet of quarter



Dan and Don Bratz with Barry Lawrence (middle). They are presenting a check for \$1,000 from White-tails Unlimited.

inch anodized aluminum, with 144 panels ranging from 2 to 8 feet in height. The 80% scale replica features over 58,000 names of those classified as dead, missing, or prisoners of war. Lawrence's 2nd created replica, it's traveled to over 350 cities across the nation. Inscribed names are fashioned after the original Optima typeface. Lawrence said it was a painstaking process of aligning the names, making countless adjustments over eight months.

For Lawrence, it has been a labor of personal meaning and legacy. "In the next 100 years," he said, "they won't be remembered." He views the memorial as essential to keeping society's collective memory alive. "I have seven good friends on that wall, two from Watertown," Lawrence said. He said that while working on the wall he would "get tight in the chest" thinking about his friends.

Lawrence isn't alone. Vietnam Veterans Larry Schultz, Air Force, and Richard "Red" Walter, Marine Corps, also mourn lost friends. Schultz called it a "heartbreaking" visual. Having the wall in Watertown would improve accessibility for midwestern Veterans to "pay their respects closer to home," he said. Walter called it a "worthwhile endeavor," continuing, "It's a great honor to have the wall come here."

Fundraising and support are essential to reach the \$400k goal. For more information and to donate, please visit <https://givebutter.com/99vDHX>.



3RD DISTRICT HOLDS ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

On Sunday, July 27 the 3rd District held its annual Golf Outing. A little warm, but a great day. Chairman Dennis Woods said this was the first time that they had to turn teams away and if you want to join in the fun next year, give him a call early. Chairman Dennis and Barneveld Post Commander Lee Pollock did a great job with the outing and the food and flag prizes. It takes a lot of volunteers (above) to make this event happen and thanks to all of them who donated their time. The golfers enjoying their meal at the Barneveld Post. The door prizes (top) were all donated. What a good day of camaraderie for the 3rd District.



POST 91 DONATION

Oconomowoc Post 91 was the recipient of Piggly Wiggly's round up program for the month and they received a check in the amount of \$1,236.51. Piggly Wiggly store manager donates the check to Post 91 Commander Marty McFarland.



POST 537 SUPPORTS BURN CAMP

On August 21 the Milwaukee H.A. Todd Jr. Post 537's 3rd Vice Commander Bill Cota and SAL Commander, presented checks totaling \$1,000 to the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation "Burn Camp". Accepting the checks is Tom Kocher, PFFWCF fundraising volunteer.

Post 537 Legion and SAL are proud to continue to help burn survivors attend this annual camp just outside of Elkhorn, WI.



POST 79 MEMBER MARKS 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Ross Wilcox American Legion Post 79 in Burlington presented a 70th anniversary award to member Harlan Billman. Presenting the award is Post Finance Officer Jim Schmitz, and Post Adjutant Jeff Harm.



SAL SQUADRON 33



Sons of the Legion Squadron 33 Neenah participated in the Labor Day Parade September 1. LEFT: Dave Reidenbach with his grandsons Jack and Ben Van Zeeland. Jack and Ben just joined The Sons of the Legion. RIGHT: (L-R) Leo Gruber, Ben Van Zeeland, George Schroeder, Gail Minks, Jack Van Zeeland and William Gruber.



POST 6 AT
BADGER
HONOR
FLIGHT

Lake Mills Post 67 provided the Honor Guard for the September 6 Badger Honor Flight. The Honor Guard consisted of members of Post 67, SAL Squadron 67, and Auxiliary Unit 67.



ALL VETERANS PICNIC IN BARRON COUNTY



Department Commander Nathan Bond attended the Barron County All Veterans Picnic on September 14 in Cameron, WI. Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, and families gathered to meet, greet and laugh. Commander Nathan Bond came with one reinforcement, his Department Historian, Morris Sadicario. There were three tents full of people. There was also a gun raffle, and a Pioneer Village!

From left are Past Department President Theresa Isensee, Department President Sue Hembrook, District 10 President Teresa Steinke, Department Commander Nathan Bond, Mary Townsend, Past District President, Yvonne Hill, Barron County Auxiliary President, District 10 Commander Felicia Decker, District 4 Vice Commander Gene Hembrook, Department Historian Morris Sadicario and Barron County Commander Gerald Townsend.

SUPERIOR POST 435
HONORS POST MEMBER
AT GREAT NORTHERN
CLASSIC RODEO

On August 31, Post 435 honored fellow Honor Guard member Bill Britton at the Great Northern Classic Rodeo. The Honor Guard provides a flag detail for the National Anthem at the rodeo on Sunday of this event each year. Bill was chosen for his dedication and contributions to the Post and Honor Guard throughout his 16 years as a member. Bill Britton with Nova Nordrum, one of the riders from Superior who performs at the rodeo.



DISTRICT 2 RIDERS FAMILY DAY PICNIC

On September 7, 2025, Regner Park in West Bend became a vibrant hub of camaraderie and community spirit as The American Legion Riders District 2 proudly hosted their annual Family Day Picnic for local National Guard troops and their families. With roots tracing back to 2016, this cherished event has grown in size and significance, with only a couple of hiatus years during the pandemic.

The Family Day Picnic is not just a gathering but a heartfelt celebration of the brave men and women who serve in the military and their families who support them. In a world where the demands of service can often make family connections challenging, this event reinforces bonds through shared experiences and mutual respect.

This year, the ALRA District 2 partnered with Lt. Ray Dickop Post 36 American Legion, the Lt. Ray Dickop Post 36 Auxiliary Unit, the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 36, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary of Fred A. Schaefer Post 1393 creating a powerful coalition dedicated to honoring our service members. The

collaborative effort of these groups showcases the deep-rooted tradition of Veterans supporting Veterans, and the extended family that grows from it.

Participants were treated to an array of activities designed to foster connections and create lasting memories. Families enjoyed delicious food and snacks, fun games, kids tattooing, crafts, service dog "training" and great September weather. Music was provided by the band Conceal and Carry as well.

The event's mission was simple yet profound: to create a spectacular Family Day that recognizes the sacrifices of soldiers and offers them an opportunity to relax and enjoy their loved ones. The turnout this year was extraordinary, illustrating the strength of community ties and the commitment to honoring those who serve while supporting the pillars of National Security, Americanism and Children & Youth.

The successes of the Family Day Picnic are a testament to the dedication of The American Legion Riders District #2 and its partners, who work tirelessly to honor Veterans and their families.



erans and their families.

Looking ahead, The American Legion Riders District #2 is already laying plans for next year's event, eager to continue this beloved tradition that not only entertains but also strengthens the supportive network for Veterans. It is concrete evidence that through unity, we can create meaningful experiences that celebrate our heroes and their families, ensuring their sacrifices are recognized, appreciated, and honored not just on one day, but every day.

3RD DISTRICT
AT NATIONAL
CONVENTION

3rd District Commander Dan O'Brien and Department Membership Chairman Jerry Hook closing out the 106th National Convention in Tampa, Florida.



BLACK EARTH
MEMBERSHIP
RECOGNITION

Members of Black Earth American Legion Post 313 receiving membership in American Legion awards: L-R Bill Parrell 75 years, Don Parrell 70 years, David Hosking 60 years. Presented by Post 313 Commander Gary Ballweg.



CATHEDRAL GRADE SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVE LEGION AWARD

Superior Post 435 recently gave out two American Legion Certificates along with a scholarship check to two students graduating from Cathedral Grade School in Superior, WI. Both Bailey Breeden and Julia Shamla will be attending Northwestern High School next year. Bailey hopes to become a Veterinarian or work in some sort of medical field. Julia is looking to become an author because she enjoys reading and writing. Pictured with the girls are Randy Freeman, left and John Vaske on the right after the presentations.



POST 471 SWEARING IN

Marathon County Commander Mike Bennett recently swore in the officers for the Hatley American Legion Post 471. (From left to right) Vice Commander John Christensen, Adjutant/Financial Morgan Borchardt, Commander Edward Hable and Vice Commander Randy Ostrowski.



James Fialkowski
Department Veterans
Service Officer

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

VA BENEFITS AND CHAPTER 61 RETIREES

Military disability benefits have long been a source of confusion and frustration for Veterans, particularly those medically retired with fewer than 20 years of service. While multiple programs aim to compensate for service-related injuries, laws against “double-dipping” have historically prevented many Veterans from receiving their full retired pay alongside Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation. The ongoing battle to rectify this injustice highlights the significance of Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and the proposed Major Richard Star Act. Chapter 61 retirees are service members who are medically retired due to a service-connected disability rated at 30% or greater. Unlike those who serve 20 or more years, these Veterans often have fewer than two decades of service. Before recent legislative changes, they faced a significant financial penalty: a dollar-for-dollar offset of their military retired pay for any amount received in VA disability compensation. This system effectively denied them the full benefits they earned through their sacrifice and service.

The justification for this offset was the argument that receiving both VA disability pay, and military retirement pay constituted “double-dipping” from federal funds for the same purpose. However, The American Legion has long argued that these are two separate benefits earned for different reasons—retired pay for service and VA compensation for a service-connected disability.

In response to the inequity of the offset, Congress established in Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC). This program provides tax-free payments to

eligible military retirees with disabilities designated as “combat-related”. To be eligible, Veterans must apply to their branch of service and have a combat-related disability rated at 10% or more by the VA.

For a Chapter 61 retiree, CRSC offers a way to possibly recoup some of the retired pay that is offset by their VA disability payments. The amount of CRSC cannot exceed the amount of retired pay withheld. However, CRSC has its own limitations. The benefit is calculated based on a formula that often leaves medically retired Veterans with less compensation than they would receive if they could collect both benefits without penalty.

Enter the recent legislation before congress. The Major Richard Star Act is a bipartisan legislative effort aimed at closing the gap left by CRSC. Named for Major Richard Star, a combat-wounded Veteran who advocated for disabled Veterans until his death in 2021, the act seeks to eliminate the offset for Chapter 61 retirees with combat-related disabilities. If passed, the legislation would extend full “concurrent receipt” to this group of Veterans, allowing them to receive both their full military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without reduction.

As the bill progresses through Congress, advocacy groups continue to push for its inclusion in legislation like the National Defense Authorization Act. To support the Major Richard Star Act, The American Legion has a “GRASSROOTS ACTION CENTER” page with a link to send a message to your Congressional Representatives. It only takes a few minutes to show your support.

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home>
Thanks for your continued service to our Nation and God Bless the USA.



Julie Muhle
Department
Adjutant

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT INFORMATION

The staff at headquarters have come across entirely too many errors for member records. This includes:

- Post, County and District Officer forms with the incorrect phone, email addresses or position titles
- Members calling only to have been told or to have found themselves as deceased in the Badger Legionnaire
- Post Data Forms not accurately reflecting mailing addresses or physical building locations

What problems do these issues cause?

• Incorrect phone calls hamper Buddy Check efforts. Commander Bond says he frequently runs into wrong numbers, disconnected numbers or numbers of people who have nothing to do with the Legion.

• Wrong email addresses cause communication breakdowns in the chain of command.

• Wrong position titles or not updated position titles do not get members the access needed in myLegion.org. Remember, this ONLY goes to Commanders and Adjutants. Others can get permission by approval of the Commander.

• When members are being reported or they are finding themselves deceased in the Badger Legionnaire, they lose access to the Badger Legionnaire, the Legion magazine and other Legion benefits. Going forward, any Last Bugle requests will need to be received with the accompanying obituary.

• We are charged for every piece of mail returned. Verify the address you are sending is the correct one for mail! If dues get sent to a different location, identify that as well. Identifying your physical building location or where you meet for meetings if you don't have a building, is important to let potential members know how to find you.



James Bond
WDVA
Secretary

WDVA SECRETARY

One of the most sacred commitments we hold as a nation is to honor those who wore the uniform in service to our country. For Veterans and their families, military funeral honors are a profound and lasting tribute, a final salute that reflects the gratitude of a grateful nation. The folding of the flag, the playing of “Taps,” and the presentation of the flag to a loved one are not just ceremonial acts; they are symbols of respect, dignity, and recognition of service.

These honors would not be possible without the dedication of volunteers, many of whom come from Veterans Service Organizations, especially local posts, and chapters. Across Wisconsin, Legion members stand ready to ensure no Veteran is laid to rest without the honor they earned.

In just the past two years, AL Post 171 in Union Grove has done 626 services, AL Post 449 in Brookfield 312 services, and AL Post 20 in Waterford 229 services, and that is just three of 339 posts across the state performing these services. Each time, these volunteers ensure a family is comforted and a legacy is remembered.

This shared dedication to service is something we must continue. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to partnering with the American Legion and other VSOs to ensure families know that military funeral honors are a free benefit available to every eligible Veteran.

We've redesigned our website to make it more user friendly in an effort to better communicate with the Veteran community, to do a better job of informing them of their benefits, like military funeral honors. If you haven't visited, please check it out at wisvets.com. My team and I are doing our best to get the message out, including highlighting the tireless efforts of the volunteers who make these ceremonies possible. Together we can encourage the next generation to step forward to carry this mission on.

As you may have heard me say before, WDVA can't do this alone. Together we are stronger. With your help, we can ensure this solemn tradition endures. Honoring our Veterans at the end of their journey is one of the most meaningful ways we uphold our duty to them and their families.

On behalf of WDVA, I extend my deep gratitude to the American Legion for your unwavering partnership in this shared mission of caring for the legacy of our Veterans and supporting vital services across Wisconsin.

“Surround yourself with good people and they will lift you up!”

OUR MISSION
Helping to Heal - those who served, continue to serve, and their families, through Wisconsin's Northwoods Experience

OUR VISION
Giving Wisconsin Veterans the pathway to quality of life

OUR VALUES
Honor and Stewardship



Jim Klement
Camp American Legion Director

CAMP AMERICAN LEGION — CAMP SEASON 2025

Camp American Legion’s summer season is coming to a close. We have had some great groups, families and Veterans attend this year. One of my favorite weeks is our Legion Riders Week. This coincides with the Tomahawk Fall Ride and gives our Legion Riders a safe place to stay and relax. We had couples that never left camp and just enjoyed fishing and feeding the chipmunks at chipmunk crossing. A majority of the riders would head out

for the day on their motorcycles and would return for a relaxing time around the campfire with the rest of the group. Saturday is when all the districts come together for a lunch and present Camp American Legion with donations. The districts and individuals formed a line that stretched across the dining room to get their turn to present their donation to camp. Once all the checks were presented, they then proceeded to live auction off items and all the proceeds went right to camp. After everything was done and counted, the grand total came to \$31,000 for Camp American Legion. All funds are going

to our storage building fund. The Legion Riders of Wisconsin are a huge part of why camp has been so successful. Their passion and generosity for Camp American Legion truly shows that they are “a group of American Legion Family Members who ride for a cause”. Thank You Legion Riders for your continued support of Camp American Legion! “Camp American Legion, Serving Wisconsin Veterans for over 100 years” Thank You,
Jim Klement, Camp Director
715-277-2510

To learn more about the mission of Camp American Legion or to get involved with answering the call, visit wilegion.org or find us on Facebook.

CABLE POST 487 DEDICATES 'LEGION TRIANGLE' VETERANS MEMORIAL

American Legion Stokes-Liebman Post 487 of Cable held a dedication ceremony for the “Legion Triangle” Veterans Memorial on July 19. In 2023, Gary Friermood, Sgt. At Arms and a 30-year member of American Legion Post 487 was given the honor of being the Legion Triangle Officer. Less than a year ago, Gary and wife Julie began making plans to update the memorial for Veterans that are no longer with us when the flag poles began to deteriorate. Area businesses, organizations and individuals stepped forward to replace the flag poles and flags. They couldn’t stop there as now the landscaping, new monuments, signage, seating and added cement work brought the memorial to life. “We wanted to make this Veterans memorial a place of honor and remembrance for the Veterans, their families and the Cable community, something unique and a reminder of our freedom,” said the Friermoods. Over 200 people attended the



dedication ceremony with a special guest from Madison, Robert Nagel, 101-year-old WWII Veteran and a Legion member for over 75 years. Retired Marine, Lt. Col. Mark Mackey of Ashland was the main speaker. Town of Cable Chairman Jamie Holly, Post

487 Commander James Kinzie, Cable Area Chamber of Commerce Director Heather Ludzack, Gary and Julie (Horn) Friermood of Cable also spoke. Family members of the Veterans that are no longer with us from the southern areas of Bayfield County were in



attendance. Family members of our Fallen Heroes and the women/nurses in the military were acknowledged as their names were announced and their pictures honorably displayed on two of the ten storyboards created by Julie. Over 450 names of deceased Veterans are displayed on the monuments. Choir members from UCC and St. Ann’s Catholic churches sang the National Anthem and America the Beautiful. This project was a community effort. Donations, volunteers, Gary and Julie’s vision and dedication made this

project possible. To complete this moment in history for the Town of Cable, two eagles flew over the memorial towards the end of the ceremony as we honored Veterans dating back to the Civil War. The “Legion Triangle” Veterans Memorial is located on County M, one block from downtown Cable. Article by Gary and Julie (Horn) Friermood. The Legion Triangle Veterans Memorial photo by Julie Friermood. The ceremony photo by James Netz Photography.



POST 268 AT BRUCE BLUE HILLS PARADE

Bruce Post 268 participated in the Bruce Blue Hills Parade on July 13.



WAUSAU POST 10 REOPENS MILITARY MUSEUM

The American Legion Post 10 has reopened the expanded Military Museum at Bunkers Restaurant and Tribute Golf in Wausau. Past Commander Bob Weller and Honor Guard Commander John Pellegrino were responsible for creating the expanded educational museum.

The museum features an extensive display of military equipment, uniforms, flags, and photos from World War I to the present day, each with a connection to central Wisconsin, and with a central Wisconsin story. Several key museum features include large displays from John “Doc” Bradley, the original flag raiser on Iwo Jima; Richard “Dick” Dudley’s memorabilia and a large handcarved eagle carved and painted by James F. McCain, founder of Eagles for Veterans from Portland, Maine.

The museum is available for viewing during Bunkers Restaurant hours when the room is not in use for other functions. You can visit the museum at the south end of the building past the Legion’s Post 10 office area. Questions about the displays can be directed to Commander Tony Nardi at commander@wausaupost10.com or Honor Guard Commander John Pellegrino at 715-581-5210.

Story courtesy of Bob Weller and Mike Heilmann. Photos courtesy of Mike Heilmann.



POST 508 DONATION TO POOL

The Hanson-Stark-Leith-Paeth Wilton American Legion Post 508 donates \$2,500 to the Village of Wilton for the Wilton Community Swimming Pool to support maintenance and operations. The Wilton Community Swimming Pool was originally constructed in 1967/1968 and funded by the Hanson-Stark-Leith-Paeth American Legion Post 508. Raymond Brandau was the Commander of Post 508, overseeing the pool construction. Wilton Post 508 Commander Daniel Dutton presents the \$2,500 check to Wilton Village President Ed Wilde.



Loki

LOKI'S CORNER

Do your Buddy Checks, remind members to renew their memberships for 2026.



DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP

**By Jerry Hook
Department Membership Chair**

I want to start by thanking each and every one of you for the work you do to support our Veterans / Service Members and their families, youth, families, our communities and our Great Nation.

Mission, Purpose, Relevance

Thank you for your continued efforts to grow our Department of Wisconsin American Legion Membership. We can and will grow our membership. Our mission is to critical to let our Service Members and Veterans down.

Our plan boils down to inspiring, guiding, leading our Districts, Counties and Posts.

We have many tools to help – <https://wilegion.org/membership-forms-%26-tools> – one of the items that may be helpful to Posts if you are looking for ideas is the Yearly Post Membership Map.

Engage

Members, Veterans, community, media, families and youth

- Buddy Checks, Relevant Activities, Recruit, Retain, PR

Partnerships

- Other Veterans Service Organizations – DAV, VFW, AMVETS, IAVA, Marine Corps League, SVA, Team Red White and Blue
- Service Organizations in our communities – Optimists, Lions, Rotary, etc., Law Enforcement, Fire Department, School(s)
- Support our Service Members and their families

We have an ambitious goal this year – retain 90% of our members who were members in 2025 for the 2026 membership year by Veterans Day. We will all have to make Buddy Checks and membership calls to meet that goal.

DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN

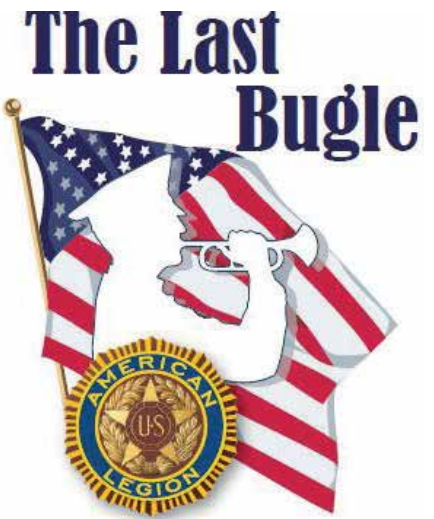


**Morris Sadicario
Department Historian**

The 106th National Convention in Tampa, Florida, was educational, entertaining and inspirational. The expected smooth transition from Commander James LaCoursiere to Commander-elect Dan K. Wiley (Kansas) can be seen starting at (Day3:2H:04M:46S).* The exceptional Convention coverage by The American Legion Media Team was remarkable and is to be applauded. Rather than take up space with links, please go to YouTube.com and search using “American Legion 106th National Convention 2025.” You can select curated videos of Days 1, 2, and 3 along with individual segments of interest, such as the address by the Chair of the America Semiquincentennial Chair, Rosie Rios. *OK, here’s just one link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/IOjJCWwgc8?si=vT06K8bcd-b8VUDA&t=7477>

Throughout the convention, several directions and goals were evident. All had to do with our members. Here are some: USA 250 Challenge, American Legion Baseball and Softball, Legion Rider events, buddy checks, relevant and informative communications, opportunities to volunteer, becoming more visible not only to our members but also to our community, and to being accountable for reports, meetings, supplying data needed to support our mission to the various legislative levels of our government. Last, but not least, we are encouraged to view what we do as good for the family and not just individuals.

The online video convention coverage is a historian’s dream: immediate reporting available to ALL members of The American Legion Family upon demand. This exceptional capability is now available to all Legion posts, units and squadrons to choose and use whatever is appropriate for their membership. Learn to develop and maintain digital yearbooks, better inform members and increase membership more efficiently. In future issues, I’ll be touching on topics relating to adoption of digital tools for posts and spotlighting success stories to jumpstart your ideas. With the cost of suitable tablets now available for under \$100, such “Communication Appliances” are within the reach of every post. Thanks to PDC Greg Eirich and PNC Denise Rohan for taking photos.



KEY	WWI-World War I	WWII-World War II
	V-Vietnam	K-Korea
	G/L-Grenada/Lebanon	
	P-Panama	PG-Persian Gulf
	GWOT-Global War on Terrorism	

1 Germantown	Conrad D. Fuerstenberg	V
Michael J. Hutchison	V	
Kenneth L. Quade	K	
3 Antigo		
Milford Leffel	K	
William J. Heinen	K	
6 Stevens Point		
Rhode Sorenson	WWII	
8 Waukesha		
Gregory R. Hansen	V	
10 Wausau		
Rodger F. Josiger	K	
Joan M. Winterhoff	V	
11 Green Bay		
Wilbert Burich	K	
Norman Polasek	K	
Lewis Anthony	V	
Robert F. Belport	V	
James W. Martin	V	
14 Iola		
Fred L. Schlicher	K	
David C. Johnson	V	
17 Arcadia		
Tom Klimek	V	
19 Hartford		
Roland G. Kolwitz	K	
Walter H. Beine	K	
Alan M. Ojala	PG	
21 Kenosha		
Thomas P. Muellenbach		
	G/L	
David Crema	V	
26 Baraboo		
Michael P. Quindt	V	
27 South Milwaukee		
William R. Moore	V	
Ruben J. Navarro	WWII	
Charles Weber	V	
Gerald Graham	WWII	
Richard Paradowski	V	
29 Kewaunee		
Karen L. Robillard	V	
31 Milwaukee		
Patrick Kiley	V	
32 Wilson		
Michael D. Ritland	K	
38 Appleton		
Robert A. Julius		
Hubert J. Rebman	K	
Duane J. Engleman	K	
David P. Mueller	V	
Kenneth C. Wanek	V	
Lonnie L. Pfaffendorf	G/L	

Elmer C. Nehring	K	
66 Silver Cliff		
Theodore R. Mattson	V	
Donald D. Gray	V	
Gerald J. Petrzalka	V	
69 Mayville		
James F. Schaefer	V	
William G. Seitz	V	
Darryl Keller	V	
70 Oshkosh		
Betty M. Sinclair	WWII	
Gary E. Lemay	V	
71 Milwaukee		
John H. Weber Jr.	K	
72 Sturgeon Bay		
William M. Brungraber	V	
Gary R. Everson		
73 Neillville		
Terry L. Holub	V	
75 Fond du Lac		
David Nummerdor	V	
John Berlowski	V	
77 Chippewa Falls		
Larry Werner	V	
79 Burlington		
Donald C. Meister		
Robert Zelenski	K	
80 New Richmond		
Paul S. Kittel	V	
Robert J. Willert	V	
81 Mauston		
Larry Purvis	V	
82 Port Washington		
William C. Ziemer Jr.	K	
83 Sheboygan		
Ralph G. Arenz	K	
84 Monroe		
Robert L. Schuetz	K	
85 Muscoda		
Harvey F. Riley	V	
88 Manitowoc		
Paul R. Neuser	K	
Clifford E. Troullier		
Vernon Trotter	K	
89 Minocqua		
Donald L. Szatkiewicz	K	
Thomas H. Patterson	K	
90 Ashland		
Rich Granahan	V	
91 Oconomowoc		
Peter R. Behrend	V	
Thomas O. Jahnke	V	
Kenneth R. Hintz	V	
John Debbink	K	
96 Webster		
Dale Larson	K	
100 Sparta		
Larry G. Isensee	V	
102 Walworth		
Kathy Woods	V	
106 Seymour		
Russell B. Metoxen	K	
James E. Robak	V	
Edmund A. Miller	V	
110 New Lisbon		
Douglas Rurup	G/L	
111 Somerset		
Robert A. Neuenfeldt	V	
113 Mount Horeb		
Raymond R. Leigh	V	
Robert G. Ferwerda	G/L	
Arlen R. Spaanem	V	
116 Coon Valley		
Charles Johnson	K	
Verlin L. Ihle	K	
117 Shawano		
Thomas C. Weniger	K	
118 Thorp		
Richard H. Mentink	K	

121 River Falls		
Richard Bjerstedt	K	
Charles R. Oconnell	V	
Jerome Solum	V	
Walter I. Vanblaircom	V	
William Sazama		
Mark Skordahl	V	
John D. Bailey	G/L	
Margaret A. McKintosh	V	
132 Siren		
Robert G. Lee	K	
Ronald A. Yourchuck		
134 Boscobel		
John E. Ducharme	K	
Raymond N. Peer	K	
138 Viroqua		
Allen R. Munson	K	
139 Pewaukee		
Charles Stoxen	WWII	
144 Albany		
Michael H. Brown	V	
148 Bloomington		
Calvin Horsfall	K	
153 Pittsville		
Gerald C. Rapp	V	
Lynn R. Moeller	V	
Kenneth Dallman	V	
Donald G. Rasmussen	V	
157 Horicon		
A.C. Weisensel	V	
160 Brooklyn		
Stan Jerdee	V	
164 Jefferson		
William R. Gross	V	
169 Amery		
David L. Boll	V	
171 Union Grove		
Charles L. Fancher	K	
172 North Freedom		
Ronald D. Bell	V	
175 Loyal		
Marvin Miller	V	
179 Chetek		
Roderick Zachary	K	
181 Durand		
Danny Louis Standifer		
182 Park Falls		
Peter G. Bushman	V	
185 Grantsburg		
Vernon C. Bistram Jr.	V	
186 Independence		
William J. Myers	K	
Linus Waldera	V	
187 Wisconsin Dells		
James W. Reidelbach	WWII	

216 Lodi		
Paul Munz	V	
217 Bonduel		
Reynold O. Schmidt	K	
230 De Pere		
David M. Stroupe	K	
233 Waterloo		
Marvin L. Kelch	WWII	
234 Omro		
Richard C. Boettner	V	
Gordon Cady	V	
Lonny E. Hanson	V	
237 Footville		
Norbert D. Trescher	K	
238 Greenwood		
Gerald Bizjak	V	
239 Tigerton		
John B. Bazile	V	
John Rettkowski	K	
240 Baldwin		
Ralph H. Freitag	K	
Russell Serier	WWII	
245 Cross Plains		
Carl E. Shumaker	V	
David F. Kies	V	
251 Argyle		
Roger Isely	K	
Darold Dowling	V	
John Svendsen	V	
258 Little Chute		
Mark G. Hietpas	K	
261 Greenbush		
George A. Miller	K	
262 Luxemburg		
Norman A. Peters		
277 Necedah		
Kenneth D. Eggleston	K	
280 Pound		
Frank A. Woulf	V	
Richard A. Gulczynski	K	
Gerald P. Schmidt Sr.	V	
David Rohde	V	
283 Suring		
Val D. Johnson	V	
Rod Sleeter	V	
284 Holmen		
James F. Binstock	V	
288 Cedarburg		
Robert L. Myler	K	
James Armstrong	V	
Jay T. Horn	V	
Louis Hefle	K	
294 Hartland		
Donald L. Molter	K	
Peter Purvis	V	
295 Bloomer		
Bert F. Tozer	V	
Theodore L. Derks	V	
296 Brookfield		
Darrell Foell	V	
300 Cecil		
Jerry Druckrey	V	
301 Woodville		
Dennis E. Preston	V	
305 Johnson Creek		
Robert L. Burns	V	
Gerald Ninmann		
309 Kendall		
James E. Thompson	K	
John J. Collins	K	
314 Boyceville		
Garry G. Hoag	K	
317 Wautoma		
David F. Helfers	V	
James Schallock	V	
325 Goodman		
Gerald W. Timm	V	
Dane Rodman	V	
329 Briggsville		
Myron H. Byers	V	

332 Black Creek		
Jerry L. Olson	V	
333 Sun Prairie		
Glen A. Schiltz	V	
336 Onalaska		
Jerome R. Runice	V	
Ronald D. Sherman	K	
John E. Netwal		
Gary D. Skogen	V	
Francis E. Stanek	K	
341 Birnamwood		
Wallace Wadzinski	K	
Ruben J. Kolpack	WWII	
347 Lomira		
Melvin M. Miller	V	
348 DeForest		
David Ihland		
350 Reedsburg		
Robert L. McWilliams	K	
353 Cornell		
Mark A. Beaulieu	PG	
355 Grafton		
Elmer F. Paegelow	V	
Richard C. Marshall		
James R. Niswonger		
357 Bay City		
Keith E. Hase		
Robert Stroupe		
Douglas Carleton	G/L	
360 Waunakee		
Robert L. Fleiner	G/L	
368 Hixton		
Dennis M. Eberhardt	V	
Royal I. Peterson	K	
370 Wild Rose		
Marvin W. Jacobson	K	
371 Saxon		
Dale S. Akers	V	
375 Mukwonago		
Thomas V. Spenner Sr.	K	
Neil Schoeve	V	
376 Fall Creek		
Louis H. Hoel	V	
379 Birchwood		
Bobbie G. Brawner	K	
382 Menomonee Falls		
Ronald M. Hepner	V	
383 Lone Rock		
Ronald R. Rott	K	
384 Kewaskum		
Dennis J. Bingen	K	
385 Verona		
Wilbert A. Schmid	V	
387 Plymouth		
Thomas P. Ehrenberg	V	
391 Fremont		
Harold Bartel Jr.	K	
Lewis McGowan	V	
398 Plain		
Marvin Wallsch	K	
399 Okauchee		
Richard J. Morris	V	
406 Milwaukee		
Orville R. Jacobson	WWII	

413 Crivitz		
Richard J. Vanschyndel	K	
416 Greendale		
Kenneth J. Wankowski	K	
Ervin Kuglitsch	WWII	
Gary L. Shaffer	V	
Francis McAllister	K	
Ernest C. Johnson	WWII	
Louis C. Messler	WWII	
Edwin M. Kalisz	WWII	
Leslie Moore	K	
Joseph Lengyel	WWII	
Norman Antoniewicz	K	
Joseph Marek	WWII	
Florian Franecki	WWII	
417 La Crosse		
Jimmy R. Berekvam		
Marlin P. Ghelfi	V	
426 Muskego		
Dean Thomas	V	
Stanley E. Olson	K	
427 Greenfield		
Norman L. Schultz		
428 Amberg		
Robert L. Derricks	V	
434 Oak Creek		
Robert T. Adlam		
436 Wrightstown		
James G. Hoffman	K	
440 Clinton		
Arden W. Seach	V	
449 Brookfield		
Elmer J. Zimmerman	K	
Julian R. Plaster	WWII	
451 Boulder Junction		
Thomas B. Swanson	V	
452 Brantwood		
James D. Koontz	K	
454 Fond du Lac		
James P. Duley	K	
Don J. Gehl	V	
455 Milwaukee		
Gotry Thomas	K	
459 Elewa		
Wayne Austin	V	
465 Minong		
Gerald E. Hanson	K	
469 Marathon		
Joseph A. Breaman	V	
Gerald E. Wagner	V	
473 Potosi		
James C. Zenz	K	
Gary L. Koeller	V	
481 Waunakee		
Charles W. Hill	V	
Lamonte N. Johnston	V	
486 Jackson		
Kenneth Herman	K	
488 New Berlin		
Alfred H. Kirsch	K	
James P. Saxon	K	
Thomas N. Johnson Sr.	V	
Robert W. Brotz	K	
489 Milwaukee		
Thomas J. Ciszewski	K	
Paul M. Morton	V	

490 Milwaukee		
Lester Staples	V	
492 Rothschild		
Harold L. Lyon	K	
Norman Frank Peterson	V	
494 Caledonia		
Dennis Long	V	
495 Sussex		
Roland S. Brandt	V	
496 Sherwood		
Ronald K. Rhode	V	
499 Gordon		
Robert M. Smith	V	
501 Madison		
William G. Reeve	V	
Louis R. Molnar	K	
Vern F. Landsness	V	
Donald N. Schaefer	V	
Sol Blumenfeld	WWII	
John E. Clarke		
503 Dane		
Duane R. Lokken	K	
508 Wilton		
Daniel J. Dutton	G/L	
G. Richard Ogara	V	
509 Rosholt		
Gregory A. Esker	V	
510 Hollandale		
Charlie A. Sigg	K	
Daniel Schutte	P	
517 Dorchester		
Robert J. Morrow	V	
Gary M. Schaffer	V	
521 Fox Lake		
John J. Nemitz	K	
Gale A. Dahlke	V	
Joseph P. Kluz Sr.	V	
534 McFarland		
John L. Reed	WWII	
535 Eagle		
Jesse Kawatski	V	
537 Milwaukee		
Michael A. Wischer	V	
538 Two Rivers		
Donald N. LeCaptain	K	
541 Northfield		
Fredrick G. Gee	V	
543 Plover		
John D. Hanson	K	
Norbert R. Sankey	K	
Dennis Lepper	V	
552 Somers		
Lester C. Perugini	K	
2930 Portage		
Benjamin O. Bordelon Jr.	PG	
Howard L. Lecander	K	
John P. Lehmann	V	
Jack C. Campbell	V	
Emery Peterson	V	
Robert Bogdanovic	V	
Douglas Glaspie	K	
Gerald W. Timm	V	
Loren Small	K	
Edwin Gutermann		





MEMBERSHIP

By Christina Petranovich
Department Chairman

Growth and Retention are very important to the membership of The American Legion Auxiliary. It is needed for both sustainability and the success of our organization. We need growth in our organization to further our reach in Congress.

The Wisconsin Membership team has been hard at work, putting on over 2,300 miles since department convention to visit units and posts throughout the state. Here are some of my findings from those visits.

- The size of your unit does not matter. If you are passionate about the programs that your unit is working, great things happen!

- Have a welcoming atmosphere. I recently attended a unit meeting where a new member attended. The entire membership allowed her to have a voice and speak. They listened and cared about what she had to say. They valued her opinions and encouraged her input.

- This same unit allowed every member to participate in the meeting. Seating was arranged with a few tables together so that everyone faced each other. The President kept the meeting going, stuck to the agenda, and gently guided the members to stay on task with the business on hand.

- By personally visiting, members were able to ask questions, whether it was about eligibility of membership, programs, or even reporting. Did you know, if your granddaughter is eligible but doesn't live in your unit's town or state, she can still be a member of your auxiliary unit? We gained two new junior members who would not have been members if we hadn't made a personal visit and listened to the questions of our members.



- Recognize your members for the hard work they do in your units – everyone likes to be appreciated and to know that their time is as valuable to the organization as it is to themselves.

Following these examples will not only

get you new members, but you will be able to retain the members you currently have.

The photos correlate with the article – a member being awarded for years of service and meeting in a circular manner was a great atmosphere for every member to participate during the meeting.

IN MEMORIAM: BERNE BAER



PDP Bernadine "Berne" Baer

Past Department President Bernadine "Berne" Baer passed away August 29, 2025 at the age of 94 years. Per her wishes, there was no funeral service or Celebration of Life.

Berne gained her eligibility to The American Legion Auxiliary through the 20 years of service of her husband Sanford "Sandy" Baer, a U.S. Navy Veteran during World War II and Korea, and also through her two sons who served in the United States Air Force. Berne was cremated and her ashes will be spread at sea to join her husband, Sandy.

Berne fulfilled many roles at the unit, county, district and department levels. She was a chairman of several department committees and was involved with American Legion Auxiliary Badger Girls State for over 18 years as a County Counselor, member of the ALABGS Committee, Chairman for two years, and Assistant Executive Director for one year.

Berne was Department President during the 2005-2006 administrative year. Her theme was *Embrace Our Veterans* and her special project was to help families of deployed soldiers. Her pin was a bear holding the state of Wisconsin, the Auxiliary emblem, with the years 05 and 06 on his paws.

Her Department Commander was Theodore Duckworth. President Baer and Commander Duckworth formed an alliance as he agreed to be her "Teddy" Bear and to work together on membership for the entire Legion family. "Embrace a Veteran, give him a hug, and tell him thank you," was Berne's message as she started her year. ALA members will continue to honor Berne Baer's memory through continued service to our Veterans, military and their families.

2026 ALA DAILY SWEEPSTAKES

2026 sweepstakes forms were mailed to current ALA members in mid-August. Unfortunately, only one sweepstakes entry form was included in each envelope. The printer sent a second mailing at their expense in mid-September. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused, but it was the most cost-effective way to resolve the issue.

Please contact Department Headquarters at 608-745-0124 if you would like more entry forms. Entries must be returned by December 31 to be eligible for the drawings.

Although a donation is not required, the money raised allows the ALA to maintain programs that benefit our Veterans, the military, their families, and our communities so donations are greatly appreciated.

**THANK YOU TO THOSE
WHO ALREADY DONATED –
EITHER ONCE, TWICE (OR THREE TIMES)!
WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!**

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP TEAM

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Andrea Stoltz
Membership
Program Coordinator
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608-745-0124

**Membership
Totals
– 27.38%
(as of 9/17/2025)**

District	Goal %
5	37.50%
4	34.47%
3	34.25%
9	33.40%
6	32.85%
2	27.87%
7	26.76%
12	24.54%
1	23.73%
10	22.10%
8	20.88%
11	18.70%

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Sandy Mack
Department Chaplain/Music Chairman
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As the crisp air rolls in, it is a time of gathering strength for the coming winter, with a focus on spiritual growth and preparing for what's next.

On October 26, the National Day of the Deployed is observed to honor and recognize the sacrifices of U.S. military personnel serving worldwide. It also serves to acknowledge the hardships endured by their families who remain at home. Let us please keep the men and women that have and will be deployed in the near future, along with their families, in our hearts and prayers. Let us pray.

Dear God,
We ask that you provide protection, guidance, courage, and strength for service members and their families, seeking their safe return and a lasting peace. Keep them safe from any harm and give spiritual comfort to the families during difficult times. We pray this in your name. Amen



Let us not forget November 11, Veterans Day. Let us pray for our Veterans.

Dear God,
You know how deep a warrior's wounds go, the loss that many of our Veterans have in body and soul, those memories that may haunt them and the scars that many of them continue to carry. Please bring healing to those who are still hurting. We honor our worthy men and women who gave their best when they were called upon to serve and protect their country. We pray that you will bless them for their unselfish service in the continual struggle to preserve our freedom, our safety and our country's heritage, for all of us. In your name we pray. Amen

Mission Statement: In the spirit of Service, Not Self, the mission of The American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for Veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and security.

Always remember: Together We Can Make a Difference. God Bless America.



GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Bonnie Dorniak
Executive Secretary/Treasurer
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www.amlegionauxwi.org

The 2025 American Legion Auxiliary National Convention was held in Tampa, Florida. Wisconsin members received several national awards as listed on page A5. Congratulations to the award winners and thanks for making Wisconsin proud!

Pam Ray of Illinois was installed as National President for 2025-2026. Her theme for the year is *Mission Driven, Family Focused*. Her special project is the ALA National Spirit of Youth Scholarship fund, which grants awards to junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary. Donations may be made through department headquarters using a Miscellaneous Payment form located on the department

website and designating Spirit of Youth Scholarship. Dan K. Wiley of Kansas was elected national commander of The American Legion and Bill Clancy III of New York was elected Sons of The American Legion national commander.

National Headquarters mailed membership renewal notices in mid-September. You may have received a renewal notice even though you recently paid your dues. National pulled the mailing list in early August so things may have crossed in the mail. If you believe you received a notice in error, please contact your unit membership chairman to confirm your dues were forwarded to department headquarters for processing.

Members may pay their dues through their unit, online at www.ALAForVeterans.org, or over the phone to the national organization. You can easily pay for multiple family members at one time or for lapsed membership years by calling national headquarters at 317-569-4570, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm (Central Time). Thank you to everyone who already renewed their 2026 dues!

BUCHANAN OF WEST VIRGINIA ELECTED 2025-2026 CDNVP

2025-2026 Central Division National Vice President Ann Buchanan has been a member of the ALA for 39 years and belongs to Unit 16 in the Department of West Virginia. She is eligible for membership through her husband Fred B. Buchanan, who was a U.S. Navy Corpsman. Ann and Fred have been married for 59 years and had two children together, Scott (U.S. Navy) and Shelly, who sadly lost her life in an automobile

accident in November 2006. Shelly is survived by two daughters and Scott also has two daughters. The whole family are members of The American Legion Family.

Ann retired from the Cabell County Board of Education as a mathematics teacher after 35 years. She is active in the Madison Avenue Christian Church and volunteers at the Huntington Veterans Affairs Medical Center.



Ann Buchanan

VA&R – HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS

Bonnie Jakubczyk
Director of Hospital Volunteers
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A huge thank you to all our Hospital Representatives, Deputies and other volunteers that give their time and talent to support our Veterans. They truly make a difference for those Veterans by working our mission of service not self. We have nine VA facilities so please check the one closest to you if you are interested in becoming a volunteer. Making items for the Veterans is always appreciated from tray favors to other items. Check with the facility to make sure they can accept the items.

You can also help by providing hospital wish list items. Watch for the wish lists to go out in the unit mailing or as posted on our department website. If you are interested in collecting or purchasing any items, please contact the ALA Hospital Representative from that facility to be sure they can still use that item. Contact information for each facility is listed in the department Red Book, which is available on our department website.

All monetary donations should go through department headquarters using the Poppy Fund Suggested Donation form, specifying which facility you want the donation applied to. Monetary donations are always appreciated and if they are not earmarked for a specific item they will be used for the wish list items or activities as needed.

Our Veterans truly appreciate all that you do for them, whether through your time, talent, gifts, or monetary donations. Thank you for helping our Veterans.

VA&R – HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS

Chrys Porter
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Thank you, thank you, thank you for all your financial support in the past and please let's keep this program going with this year's donations. It may seem that we ask a lot of you for your donations but believe me it goes for a good cause. We are currently working on a few revisions on the guidelines as lessons learned. We want to be able to help those who meet the criteria and have an urgent need to put them in a better position.

With each application we receive we take a close look at the whole picture for the help needed by this group of Veterans. Trust me, the needs are real, and each one has its own set of issues. We look at all of this and try to make the best decision we can. If something is not clear, we ask questions.

Many of the Veterans are reaching out to us in their time of need because something had gone wrong and they just didn't have the money to spare to fix the issues at hand. We have been there to help them get back on their feet financially. In today's economy, we are all struggling but are thankful organizations like ours are there to help those who have kept us safe.

If your unit is planning something special for helping homeless women Veterans and/or special programs for female Veterans, please share this information with me. Please send pictures of your events along with a description of the activities. I am always looking for more ideas of how we can help within our communities. If you have questions about the program, please don't hesitate to ask.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT PAM RAY INSTALLED AT 2025 CONVENTION

Pam Ray was installed as National President of The American Legion Auxiliary during the 2025 National Convention in Tampa.

"Thank you all so much for the trust you have shown today by electing and installing me as your National President," Ray said from the convention stage. "I promise to do my very best to respect that trust and protect our mission and our organization." Her theme for the year is *Mission Driven, Family Focused*.

Before being elected to the ALA's highest volunteer office, Pam Ray held numerous leadership positions in the organization at the unit, district, department, and national levels. At the national level, she served as chair of several programs, including VA&R, Children & Youth, ALA Girls Nation, Junior Activities, National Security, Membership, and Constitution & Bylaws. She also served on the National Executive Committee and ALA Strategic Planning Committee.

Pam is a member of Urbana Unit 71 in Illinois. She is eligible for membership through her late father, Clay Lofton, who served during the



Pam Ray
National President

Korean War and World War II.

In her professional life, Ray was a nurse for 47 years and loved caring for people who needed help. As a nurse, she worked in the burn center, pediatrics, neurosurgery, and spent much of her career caring for head and neck cancer patients and their families.

Pam Ray's own family is an integral part of her life. She has been married to Harl "Butch" Ray for 46 years. They have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Kathy Grom
Department Chairman
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The time-honored Poppy is something that has been revered as our symbol of the blood shed during battle for over 100 years. It is so ingrained in our American lives and culture that sometimes I find myself awestruck when I see an example of it. For instance, I recently attended a quilt show where a contest was held that centered on using the poppy in this art form. The results were amazing. I've included a photo of some of the incredible work completed by everyday Americans.

As your Department Poppy Chair, I hope I can inspire you to get involved and be active in the distribution and support of our poppy program. Poppy distribution is such an integral part of our ALA lives and is important in raising money for Veterans, active duty service members, and their families. I know that many of our units have effective ways of distributing poppies and I hope you continue with your success.

We can be proud of our beautiful Veteran-made crepe paper poppies and we should share that pride with everyone within our reach. Promoting the poppy program can include wearing a poppy



to promote interest, organizing a poppy drive or contacting local businesses and asking permission to set up a poppy display. Offering to speak at local civic engagements about the significance of the poppy and about how we spend our poppy funds is another way to keep the community engaged in what we do.

In an effort to open people's hearts and inspire them to donate to our cause, I would like to suggest you create an elevator pitch. If you haven't heard this term, an elevator pitch is a persuasive speech designed to spark interest in an idea in less than 60 seconds, about the same amount of time you would spend riding in an elevator. I plan on writing up my elevator pitch and sharing it with the unit presidents and district poppy chairs very soon.

Involving children in promoting the poppy message is another great way to not only inspire poppy donations, it can stimulate patriotism in our next generation. I encourage you to promote the ALA Poppy Poster Contest in local schools and promote the Little Miss Poppy Contest to Junior ALA members in your unit. This year the due dates for these contests have changed. All entries must be received by May 1, 2026. That date offers contestants a little more time to work on their entries. After all, we all win when our children become as passionate about our programs as we are!

Please see the ALA Department website for this year's Program Engagement Plan (PEP) or feel free to contact me with any questions. If you would like to share some of your ideas and successes I am happy to hear from you all.

HISTORIAN

Dr. Christine Johnsen
Department Historian
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As the United States of America marks the 250th year since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the nation reflects on a history both triumphant and turbulent, while looking forward with hope and ambition. For members of The American Legion Auxiliary, this milestone is especially significant, inviting us to honor the enduring principles of liberty and service that have guided our nation since its founding. We are all historians, charged to preserve memories and inspire future generations.

We honor our Veterans, members, and the community by recording our history, reflecting on who we are, our accomplishments and challenges, and providing motivation for those who come after us. This can be done in many ways beyond documenting a written unit narrative. Through the *Veterans History Project*, first-hand accounts of Veterans' experiences in the military can include videos, interviews, journals, or photographs, to preserve the memories and incidents throughout all military actions. Participating in the Members Remember video history project can be a launching pad for public relations and membership programs, too! Record short videos of Auxiliary members sharing their experiences with a special project, highlights of a membership year, or their "why" for continued involvement in The American Legion Auxiliary. With permission, post these videos to YouTube, Instagram, or other social media sites. It is essential that we share our story beyond The American Legion Family!

There will be several new department awards this year to recognize your efforts to record our history. Along with encouraging all units and districts to record a narrative history and submit a History Book for competition, new for this year we will have a Department Award for Best Unit Scrapbook. This is your opportunity to highlight all the wonderful activities the unit is promoting for the American Legion Family, military, youth, and the community, WITH PICTURES! More information on awards, scoring, deadlines, and new opportunities to honor and support our Veterans, coming soon in unit mailings and on the department website.

ALABGS ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ISA KILLIAN

The following excerpts are from a report by Isa Killian, a delegate at the 2025 ALABGS session, to her sponsors in Cross Plains.

Hello, my name is Isa Killian and I'm super excited to share my experience at ALA Badger Girls State.

In the beginning, it seemed like most of the people who thrived were the outgoing kind who gained energy from social interaction and could connect with their peers in a single conversation. Although I see myself as a leader in many rooms, and I feel comfortable voicing my opinion to a crowd, I'm not ashamed to admit that making fast friends through small talk is a skill I'm still working on. In a room with hundreds of strangers, it's easy to feel lonely at first, and I started to wonder if there wasn't a place for me.

Halfway through the week, I was sitting in the cafeteria and feeling a little discouraged. I regretted spending my first day slowly processing the system rather than seizing an opportunity, and I worried I'd lost my chance to make an impact.

I sometimes spend too long ruminating on time I could've used differently, but as I ate my lunch I decided I wasn't going to let my hesitation limit my potential when I was experiencing such a special opportunity. I visited every table in the dining hall and polled hundreds



of delegates about the meal selections for a newsletter article. Although the effect was infinitesimal compared to inspiring an entire generation of Wisconsin youth or winning an election by a landslide, it gave me a role and a reason to be there. In just hours, the way I fit into the state of Badger transformed and the only thing that had changed was me.

And when Badger Girls proved to me that my voice did in fact matter, I became truly invested. I listened to the contrasting ways my peers viewed the world. I watched how American Legion Family members treated the U.S. flag and I absorbed the air of respect that surrounded it. I was even selected

as one of ten acts among 500 delegates in the end-of-week talent show. By Friday, I felt like I'd experienced months of growth as a leader and a person in just six days.

After coming home, I expected my life to completely return to normal. Instead, as I told people about my experience, I was shocked to hear so many of them share that they, too, were Boys or Girls State alumni. My voice teacher, family friend, and even great-grandpa had each participated in a similar week during different summers decades earlier, and when I discovered this, I felt like I shared a unique secret with them — a connection that transcends generations.

Two months ago, I learned that change begins with caring. And a grand, daunting gesture toward thousands of people doesn't need to be the first step. Start by looking around and asking yourself, "What can I do to make this room better? This classroom? This office?"

I'm honored to carry on the Badger Girls State legacy as a brand-new alum, and I am incredibly grateful for the lessons I learned, the people I saw shine, and the long-standing program that I can proudly say I contributed to just a little. Thank you so much for sponsoring me this summer and thank you all for your investment in my generation.

VA&R – CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOP

Diana Sirovina
Supervisor
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What do you know about the ALA Christmas Gift Shop program? Do you know that it is one of the oldest continuous programs we have? Do you know how important this program is to the Veterans in our VA long-term care facilities?

Since 1928, The American Legion Auxiliary has sponsored Christmas Gift Shops in VA facilities throughout the country. Here in Wisconsin, this wonderful tradition dates back many years.

Through this program, Veterans in long-term care facilities can select Christmas gifts for their loved ones at absolutely no cost to them. The cost of gifts, wrapping and shipping are all totally covered by generous donations from units all over our state.

Our program this year, as usual, will involve a great deal of advance planning to ensure that we can provide the best experience for our Veterans and their families. Gifts will be pre-selected on Amazon for people of all ages, from the young to the young at heart. A colorful catalog will be prepared for the Veterans to view. Orders from our heroes will be taken either by our volunteers

or with the help of VA staff members. Gifts will be wrapped with great care and shipped to those special family members.

Over the years, we have had the opportunity to visit the Wisconsin Veterans Homes at Union Grove and King, as well as the Zablocki VAMC to assist the members there in selecting gifts for their loved ones. As we visited with the Veterans we could tell by the smiles on their faces that this program means so much to them. Some shared stories about their loved ones, while others were just happy to have someone visit with them for a little while.

Many times, we receive cards and notes from family members telling us how excited they were to receive a gift chosen by their loved one. Family members are pleasantly surprised to receive their beautifully wrapped gifts, knowing their Veteran was able to select it especially for them. These personal notes are a wonderful reminder of how important this program is to so many.

Now that you have read about our amazing Christmas Gift Shop, will you continue to support this program with your generous donations? Donations may be made using a Poppy Fund suggested donation sheet and selecting Christmas Gift Shop, or by noting Christmas Gift Shop in the memo portion of your check.

VA&R – REHABILITATION

Michelle Adams
Department Chair
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Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a dual member of the American Legion Post 375 in Mukwonago and an Auxiliary member of Unit 415 in Milwaukee. I have three children. Two are serving in the military and one just started college, pursuing a career in law enforcement.

As your VA&R Chair, I have received comprehensive training in ALA operations in Wisconsin, and have represented our department for the National pre-convention committee meeting and the first quarter meeting. The quarterly meeting had breakout sessions, combining Central and Northwest Divisions. Central Division consists of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

President Hembrook's focus is Camp American Legion, as well as the Be The One initiative, including Buddy Checks and SAVE training/implementation. Additionally, national areas of in-

terest for the ALA for the upcoming year include: Volunteering at VA facilities, Veterans events, military cemeteries, Wreaths Across America, Honor Flight, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), Quilts of Valor (QOV), HUGS (bears for Veterans) and the American Red Cross.

Units in our Central Division reported their unique areas of interest. These include female Veterans, creative arts festivals, specialty meals along with access to a gift shop, service dogs, baby showers, food banks and clothing access, cookies, shoveling, Cornell training for suicide prevention, purchasing gravestones for unmarked Veterans' graves, program information fairs, legacy program for new members, and roundtable gatherings for members. A VAVS 101 Webinar is coming soon, either in September or October. In conclusion, as a relative newcomer, I was immediately struck by the level of organization, openness, attention to detail, and enthusiasm of The American Legion Auxiliary. It is truly amazing! We are a Legion Family, yes, but you are a beacon of light that is inspiring to the Legion, SAL, and Riders. It is an absolute pleasure to be amongst your ranks. I look forward to working with and for you.

POPPY REMINDER!

Poppies can be distributed **all year long**. Veterans Day is a great time to do a distribution.

2026 Poppy Orders are due by December 15, 2025.
Orders received after December 15 will be charged an additional processing fee and only accepted if poppies are available.



**ORDER TODAY
– DON'T DELAY!**

LEGISLATIVE

Becky Mueller
Department Chairman
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The purpose of the Legislative Committee is to provide information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion. Every Auxiliary member can participate in this important program. We can all express our opinions and influence our elected policy makers. Working with The American Legion we can use their materials and resources to make our voices heard. Accessing wilegion.org will link us to the priorities set for the greatest impact on our Veterans, military, and our communities. Policies that make a difference in our lives every day.

Please remember that YES, we engage in politics, we take stands on issues, we have a personal stake in the laws and regulations that affect our daily lives. HOWEVER, we are not a partisan organization. We collaborate with all officials no matter what their party affilia-

tion. This makes our impact so much greater. We must remain focused on our causes, not a particular candidate or party. (This is where our reporting and impact numbers are so valuable. We put our money, time, and effort where our mouth is!)

This year, in conjunction with American Legion Family USA250 Challenge, I have set up a challenge for the Wisconsin Legislative team to record 250 contacts for each district quarterly – emails, letters, phone calls to answer the challenge. More details will be available on the website and via emails to legislative chairs on all levels. Please send me your email to be included in future updates and other opportunities to directly impact The American Legion Family agenda and priorities on the local, state, and national levels. Elections are approaching fast.

I look forward to working alongside each of you as we make our voices heard to honor the freedom our Veterans and military fought for us to have. We will not let their sacrifices go unnoticed and unappreciated. Join me in making a difference – together we make a difference.

LEADERSHIP

Betty Stone
Department Chairman
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Leadership is not about being in charge. It's about taking care of those in your charge.
~ Simon Sinek

As the Department Leadership Chairman, I am challenging you to mentor a member in your unit, county, district, or department level to greater service as a leader. What does that look like? A true leader is not just holding a position – it's about creating positive influence through your actions and words.

Officers – look for one of your members who:

- Is **Knowledgeable**, or knows where to get

the answers

- Is **Passionate** about the programs or one program
- Is an **Active Learner** who will listen and put things into practice
- Has a **Positive Attitude** and serves as a source of inspiration for others
- Has **Integrity** when they deal with people.

Lead these members by example. Create a climate of goodwill and respect towards them. Compliment them often and encourage them to try new things. This is mentoring another member. Be encouraging always.

When you fill out the end-of-the-year reports write about the experience and the outcome of your adventure. We want to share in your experience.

VA&R – SERVICE TO VETERANS

Teresa Steinke
Department Chairman
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One of the core programs of The American Legion Auxiliary is our service to Veterans – but what does that mean, and how can you participate? Service to Veterans is anything you do to enhance the lives of our Veterans who are not in a VA medical center!

Do you know a Veteran who needs a helping hand to remain independent? Helping a Veteran with housework, yard work, taking a Veteran to an appointment, taking a Veteran out to eat, or just visiting a Veteran and bringing them cheer, qualifies as Service to Veterans. Many Veterans, especially those who find it more difficult to get out of their homes due to age or physical limitations, really appreciate visits from others. Taking the time to visit a vulnerable Veteran can have a very positive effect on that person's spirit. I have known many elderly Veterans who

feel abandoned and depressed so they begin to contemplate suicide as a way to end their emotional suffering. Imagine the profound effect that you could have on that Veteran if you would just show up and ask, "How can I help you?"

Do you know a caregiver of a Veteran who needs someone to stay with their Veteran while they go grocery shopping or have a doctor's appointment of their own? This time also qualifies as Service to Veterans. Family caregivers are also able to report Service to Veterans hours for time spent providing care and assistance to Veterans within their families if they do not receive compensation for doing so. Ten hours per week can be reported if you live with the Veteran and up to five hours per week can be reported if you do not live with the Veteran. Hour pins/bars can be earned by reporting those hours on the Service to Veterans Award form. This is a separate form to be used only by those people who wish to receive these pins/bars.

For more information on how and where your hours should be reported, please see the program information on the department website.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Natalia Genovesi-King
Department Chair
kinggenovesi@gmail.com
414-839-0454

Powerful PR Strategies to Amp Up Your American Legion Auxiliary Unit!

1. Impactful Storytelling and Human Connection
- **Be Personable:** Highlight the real-life experiences of individuals and communities benefiting from your work, creating an emotional bond with your audience.
 - **Be Transparent:** Let your community know both successes and setbacks to build trust and authenticity.
 - **Be Diverse:** Use a mix of written stories, videos, photos, and social media to reach different audiences and help to amplify your unit’s message.
2. Vision and Execution
- **Your Focus:** Pinpoint where your unit can make the greatest impact, ensuring your efforts are purposeful and concentrated.
 - **Online Presence:** Go beyond just existing online—“speak” to your audience regularly with updates, stories, and interactive content.
 - **Local Connections:** Participate in community outreach and PR to strengthen your unit’s presence within your local area.
 - **Holidays:** Align campaigns with holidays or national awareness campaigns to create timely and relevant content that resonates with your unit’s audience.
3. Content and Audience Engagement
- **A Captive Audience:** Create material that not only educates but also keeps your audience interested in what you do. They will keep coming back for more!
 - **Consistency:** Use a calendar to maintain a regular flow of fresh content/ideas.
 - **Visual Storytelling:** Use photos and videos to engage audiences. A picture is worth a thousand words!
4. Media Relations and Outreach
- **Media Relationships:** Build lasting connections with journalists and the local media. They are key to helping share your stories!
 - **Utilize Press Releases/Kits:** Use these tools to inform the media about important updates and events. (www.amlegionaux-wi.org/publicrelations)
 - **Monitor Progress:** Track how the PR for the event is being received to understand your impact and identify areas for improvement.
5. Measuring Success and How to Improve
- **Define Your Unit’s Goals:** Set specific, actionable objectives to guide your efforts and measure progress.
 - **Track Performance:** Keep an eye on important stats to see how well your event PR campaign is doing.
 - **Adapt and Improve:** Stay flexible and adjust your PR strategies based on feedback and the results.

By integrating these strategies, you’re not just doing PR—you’re helping your unit build stronger connections, sharing meaningful stories, and making an even bigger impact in your community. Let’s make the work we do together truly shine!

2024-2025 NATIONAL AWARDS

American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin received the following awards or acknowledgements for the 2024-2025 administrative year during the 2025 National Convention:

AMERICANISM

Best Department Americanism Program in the Central Division
Department of Wisconsin
Diane Burkhalter, Department Chairman

Dorothy Pearl Most Outstanding Americanism Program by a Unit in the Central Division
Van Ells-Schanen Unit 82
Port Washington, District 2

Americanism Essay Contest, Class I (Grades 3 & 4)
Best Americanism Essay in the Central Division
Mila Elbe
Sponsored by Plum City Unit 365, District 10

Americanism Essay Contest, Class III (Grades 7 & 8)
Best Americanism Essay in the Central Division
Ethan Andresen
Sponsored by Twin Lakes Unit 544, District 1

Americanism Essay Contest, Class VI
Best Americanism Essay in the Central Division
Carson Gooding
Sponsored by Shiocton Unit 512, District 9

AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND

ALA Department Contributing the Largest AEF Donated Amount
Department of Wisconsin
Becky Mueller, Department President

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Most Outstanding Children & Youth Program by a Unit in the Central Division
Van Ells-Schanen Unit 82
Port Washington, District 2

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Most Outstanding Community Service Program by a Unit in the Central Division
Peter Wollner, Unit 288
Cedarburg, District 2

EDUCATION

Best Department Education Program in the Central Division
Department of Wisconsin
Diane Weggen, Department Chairman

LEADERSHIP

Unit Member of the Year for Significant Contributions to the Unit
Stephanie Benson
Meuli-Kelean-Kramer-Dannenberg Unit 77
Chippewa Falls, District 10

LEGISLATIVE

Best Department Legislative Program in the Central Division
Department of Wisconsin
Maggie Geiger, Department Chairman

MEMBERSHIP

Department Goal Award for Achieving 85% of the 2025 Goal by 3/15/2025
Department of Wisconsin
Amy Luft, Department Chairman

New Unit Award for New or Re-chartered Units for 2025 Year by July 31, 2025

- Frank E. Malone Unit 113, Mount Horeb, District 3
- Weiske-Farrell Unit 351, Montello, District 6
- Zach Holmes Unit 403, Webb Lake, District 12

Recruit/Rejoin 10 Award for Recruiting/Rejoining 10 Members by 6/6/2025:

- Jerry Hook
- Wendy Metcalf
- Amy Luft
- Cynthia Saylor

100% Unit Award for Units that reached 100% of their 2025 membership goal by 1/31/2025:

Unit 0001 – Milwaukee	Unit 0013 – Richland Center
Unit 0021 – Kenosha	Unit 0025 – Odanah
Unit 0029 – Kewaunee	Unit 0040 – Bangor
Unit 0059 – Stoughton	Unit 0065 – Rome
Unit 0074 – Oconto	Unit 0077 – Chippewa Falls
Unit 0082 – Port Washington	Unit 0083 – Sheboygan
Unit 0087 – Rice Lake	Unit 0102 – Walworth
Unit 0107 – Mosinee	Unit 0108 – Clear Lake
Unit 0113 – Montello	Unit 0123 – Owen
Unit 0126 – Brillion	Unit 0128 – Stockbridge
Unit 0129 – Black River Falls	Unit 0142 – Blanchardville
Unit 0165 – Two Rivers	Unit 0188 – East Troy
Unit 0208 – Rio	Unit 0224 – Alma
Unit 0227 – Spring Valley	Unit 0229 – Mount Hope
Unit 0233 – Waterloo	Unit 0234 – Omro

Unit 0237 – Footville	Unit 0248 – Cottage Grove
Unit 0305 – Johnson Creek	Unit 0309 – Kendall
Unit 0320 – Humbird	Unit 0340 – Berlin
Unit 0346 – Centuria	Unit 0348 – DeForest
Unit 0351 – Mount Horeb	Unit 0353 – Cornell
Unit 0362 – Kennan	Unit 0372 – Forestville
Unit 0399 – Okauchee	Unit 0401 – Cambria
Unit 0402 – Washington Isl.	Unit 0410 – Fredonia
Unit 0415 – Milwaukee	Unit 0424 – Mercer
Unit 0432 – Hammond	Unit 0433 – Barneveld
Unit 0440 – Clinton	Unit 0451 – Boulder Junction
Unit 0454 – Mount Calvary	Unit 0455 – Milwaukee
Unit 0459 – Eleva	Unit 0464 – Land O Lakes
Unit 0476 – Loomis	Unit 0477 – St. Nazianz
Unit 0478 – St. Cloud	Unit 0482 – Bagley
Unit 0483 – Allenton	Unit 0503 – Dane
Unit 0520 – Vesper	Unit 0532 – Ffield
Unit 0534 – McFarland	Unit 0537 – Milwaukee
Unit 0543 – Plover	Unit 0547 – Lublin
Unit 0550 – Brackett	

POPPY

Poppy Poster Contest, Class II (Grades 4 & 5)
Best Poppy Poster in Central Division
Jessa Riemer
Sponsored by Shiocton Unit 512 ~ District 9

Poppy Poster Contest, Class III (Grades 6 & 7)
Best Poppy Poster in Central Division
Alana Schmidt
Sponsored by Shiocton Unit 512 ~ District 9

Poppy Poster Contest, Class V (Grades 10 & 11)
Best Poppy Poster in Central Division
Serena Love
Sponsored by Athelstane-Silver Cliff Unit 66 ~ District 9

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Best Department Public Relations Program in the Central Division
Department of Wisconsin
Bob Shappell, Department Chairman

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION/AVS

2024-2025 VAVS Meetings
Perfect Attendance Award
Department of Wisconsin

- Sheila Frye, Hospital Representative
Middleton Memorial VAMC
- Helene Stein, Hospital Representative
Tomah VAMC
- Pat Flanders, Hospital Deputy
Tomah VAMC

ALA IN THE KNOW

The department officers attended ALA In The Know in Cumberland on September 20, 2025. Pictured (L-R): Betty Stone, Christina Petranovich, Amy Luft, Sandy Mack, Christine Johnsen, and President Sue Hembrook (seated).



2025-2026 National Appointments

Diane Duscheck:
American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Vice President

Maggie Geiger
National Executive Committee person

Becky Mueller
Alternate National Executive Committee person

April Kollmorgen
National Security Committee Central Division Chairman

Amy Luft:
Community Service Committee Vice Chairman

Diana Sirovina
Americanism Committee Chairman



Nathan Bond
Department
Commander

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

LEGACY FORWARD: EMBRACING
FAMILY FIRST IN THE LEGION FAMILY

A key component of forwarding our legacy in The American Legion lies in the principle of “Family First.” National Commander Dan Wiley’s moto, “Better Together!” (#BetterTogether), encapsulates this vision perfectly. Our collective strength as the Local Legion Family — encompassing Post, Unit, and Squadron — far surpasses what we can achieve individually.

Consider our American Legion Riders as a prime example. These dedicated members, drawn from the entire Legion Family, unite with shared objectives. By pooling their diverse knowledge, skills, and abilities, they achieve remarkable success, embodying the true spirit of collaboration.

Like many families, some Local Legion

Families have historical challenges to address. It’s crucial to transform past lessons into opportunities for future growth. We owe it to future generations to impart lessons of forgiveness, trust, healing, and overcoming adversity.

Taking the first step forward is vital. The legacy of the Legion Family transcends individual ambitions. Leaders, it’s your role to initiate this forward movement. Be the first to forgive or to seek forgiveness. The greatest leaders are not only confident but also humble. If someone seeks your forgiveness, be gracious enough to extend it. This doesn’t mean accepting bullying or disrespect — boundaries and mutual respect are essential. However, grace and mercy are vital for the Family’s growth.

Here’s how you can take steps forward today:

- Initiate Dialogue: Start conversations within your Local Legion Family to address past issues and build trust.
- Model Forgiveness: Show others the power of forgiveness through your actions.
- Set Boundaries: Establish clear boundaries to maintain respect and understanding.
- Promote Unity: Encourage collaboration across the entire Local Legion Family to achieve common goals. Try a small joint project/event that you plan together, coordinate together, conduct together, and learn from together.

Let’s ensure our legacy is one of unity and progress. Please let me know how your Department can support you in being “Better Together.”



Sue Hembrook
Department
President

PRESIDENT’S
MESSAGE

First and foremost, I wish to thank everyone for their support in this transition. President Becky left a legacy for us to follow and her guidance will remain with us for a very long time. Members, you are to be congratulated on your dedication to our mission. Your support of our programs is tremendous, so thank you.

Commander Nathan, Commander Chris and I are truly placing an emphasis on “Family First” which is being promoted by all in our organization. Striving to work together as a family is our goal for this term.

The Legion, SAL and Auxiliary will all be working on the same project — our beloved Camp American Legion, which is nestled in the forest and lakes of our beautiful northern Wisconsin. Camp celebrated its 100th Birthday this past June and we want to rejoice in this by soliciting funds for some much-needed projects. Camp desperately needs a large storage shed which would be used to store equipment during our harsh winter season. As you are all probably aware, things need upgrades and normal maintenance and Camp American Legion is no exception. Being 100 years old it is in great shape due to the diligence of our Legion family. However, as with anything, we must keep at it. We all are aware of how much everything costs now and maintaining Camp is no exception. The Camp wish list is long; however, your generosity has always shone through. Let us make this a profitable year to fulfill the items needed to maintain our Camp.

However, that being said, we cannot abandon our other programs that are in need of funding. Let us make this a profitable year for all of our projects, with a united effort to make our beloved Camp American Legion shine. Your generosity has always been overwhelming, whether it be monetary or items such as paper goods, linens or wish list items for the Veterans in our hospitals and nursing homes. Your generosity has always come through. Thank you and I know we will have a great year of working together as a family to support our programs, Veterans, military and their families.



Christopher Dannenmann
SAL Detachment
Commander

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER

Greetings to you our dedicated membership. This is a big shoutout to all of you that volunteer their time and efforts to our special events: the installation dinners, bingo nights, fish fries, raffles, conferences, and DEC’s to the picnics, open houses and deployments with ALF Dogs.

Your contributions make a difference! Let’s make sure our Consolidated Squadron Reports tell the whole story of our impact. So, let’s all keep track of our time and efforts and report them every month to your adjutant. Doing it monthly while it’s top of mind will be easier for you and, at year end, will make it easier for the adjutants to pull it all together at the end of the year.

Our Linked Calendars Joint Project should make scheduling, information sharing and recordkeeping easier. All members of The American

Legion Family will be able to go out to their individual Family home calendar page and find out what’s going on, anywhere in the state. Thanks to the great team who is working hard to get it done.

We are just short of reaching PDC Allan Watry’s goal of “5 in 25” — 5,000 Wisconsin SAL members by the end of 2025. Let’s keep our momentum rolling forward to get there by Midwinter (we want to see you there, so register now). With new squadrons being formed and your strong “recruit the next you” efforts — we CAN get there.

Finally, I’d love to see you at the Detachment Executive Committee meeting (DEC) on October 25 at Headquarters in Portage. Details will be posted on the website (wisal.org) shortly. The Executive Committee wants to hear your thoughts and ideas. We want to see you there. Let’s continue to build our Family and strengthen our brotherhood. God bless you and yours. God bless America.



Corey Doehrmann
State Director
American Legion
Riders Association

LEGION RIDERS DIRECTOR

This past week was the annual Legion Rider week at Camp American Legion. Riders are able to stay at camp all week and take advantage of all the healing benefits that camp offers. The weather didn’t cooperate early in the week, but it turned around late in the week. There were campfires enjoyed with many tall tales told, but there was also the ‘Name Game’ which is going around the fire and introducing yourself for those that don’t know you. This makes for greater connections across the organization and will encourage participation. Many got to

enjoy the freedom of 2 or 3 wheels and some of the best scenery available in Wisconsin. Others got to enjoy a pontoon boat ride, which is fitting given the project the Legion Riders are raising money for this year. On Saturday morning Legion Riders from across the state gathered at Bronsted-Searl-Ingman American Legion Post 93 in Tomahawk. Our purpose was to attract attention as we left town with a police escort. We want to attract attention so that people might ask what we were up to. Once at Camp we had lunch and presented donations. Just over \$31,000 was raised to go with other funds for building a storage shed that can hold the pontoon boats in the winter.

In other Legion Rider news, we approved two

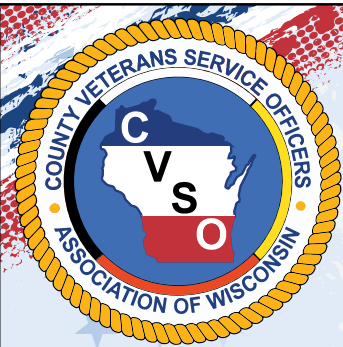
resolutions late in August. One is to align our membership year with the rest of the American Legion family (January – December). The other resolution was to create a Junior Riders membership for minor Auxiliary & Sons members that are children/grandchildren of current Legion Riders. More information will be coming out to Legion Riders about how these changes will be implemented in the coming months.

If you have any questions about the Wisconsin Legion Riders don’t hesitate to contact me: Corey Doehrmann/State Director by phone at 262-305-0305 or email at alrawi.director@gmail.com. Our next meeting after this publication is our November 1 meeting at Department headquarters in Portage.

Veterans
Crisis Line



DIAL 988
then PRESS 1



County Veterans Service Officers Association
of Wisconsin

EVERY COUNTY AND TRIBE IN WISCONSIN STANDS READY
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