



BADGER LEGIONNAIRE



& WISCONSIN VOL 103 #1 | FEB. 2026



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

THE FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICE HELD AT MIDWINTER CONFERENCE



The Four Chaplains, also referred to as the Immortal Chaplains or the Dorchester Chaplains, were four chaplains who died rescuing civilian and military personnel as the American troop ship SS Dorchester sank on February 3, 1943, in what has been referred to as one of the worst sea disasters of World War II. At the Midwinter Conference, Members of the Legion Family serving as Chaplains participated in the Four Chaplains ceremony. In the front row, from left, Department Historian Morris Sadicario, 4th District Chaplain Daniel Workenaour, back row, Grant County Commander Alan McCormick, Department Chaplain Virgil Smith, Detachment Chaplain John L'Huillier, and Chair, Religious Emphasis Committee, Darrel "AJ" Feucht. (Photo by PDC Greg Eirich.)



2026 MIDWINTER SUCCESS!

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2026 Midwinter Conference! Over 500 members of the Legion family came for the camaraderie, classes and fun.

Friday held the Committee meetings. There was a lot of work being completed and we can look forward to many action items to help the Wisconsin American Legion support our veterans, their families and the community.

On Saturday, members could take as many of the classes as they could fit into their schedules. There were several new classes such as Internet Safety, Operation Namesake and Post Finances along with the other favorites like Post Adjutant, Post Commander and Generational Leadership.

The event culminated with the



Honor Your Service banquet. The food and entertainment by Boogie Time Entertainment were excellent. Legionnaires were decked out in clothing representing their service – some even had uniforms that hadn't shrunk from sitting too long in the closet!

Department Convention will be here before you know it! Save the dates of July 16-18, 2026. We will be at the Hilton Paper Valley in Appleton. This year's theme will be Honor Our Country to align with America's 250th birthday. We hope to see you there!

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Department Chaplain
Virgil Smith

Historian
Morris Sadicario

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Alternate NECman - Karl Stuvenigen
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2nd – Joe Leone
3rd – Dan O’Brien
4th – Andrew Minch
5th – Craig Ellis
6th – Ken Flock
7th – Chet Faith
8th – Penny Peeters
9th – Terry McNulty
10th – Felicia Decker
11th – Gerry Johnson
12th – Joe Roberts

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.

THE AMERICAN LEGION – WHERE EVERYONE KNOWS YOUR NAME



Curtiss S. Peck

Submitted by Curtiss S. Peck, Chair
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee
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Every time I hear the theme song from the series Cheers, I think about how the lyrics reflect the role every Legionnaire and Legion Post plays in creating positive connections to Veterans as they navigate their journey through life's challenges. I encourage you to read the abbreviated version of the full lyrics and reflect on what you can do to BE THE ONE who helps all Veterans "take a break away from all their worries."

Making your way in the world today
Takes everything you've got
Taking a break from all your worries
Sure would help a lot

Wouldn't you like to get away?

Sometimes you want to go
Where everybody knows your name
And they're always glad you came
You want to be where you can see
Our troubles are all the same
You want to be where everybody knows your name

Be glad there's one place in the world
Where everybody knows your name
And they're always glad you came
You want to go where people know
People are all the same
You want to go where everybody knows your name

Songwriters: Gary Portnoy / Judy Hart

BBS TEACHES THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL ‘SOFT SKILLS’

By Drake White-Berger

Boys who attend Badger Boys State spend their week learning by-the-books technicalities; parliamentary procedure, how to accurately conduct an election, following a strict itinerary, and following laws and legal proceedings are all important “hard skills” taught at BBS.

But Tyler Katzenberger, a 2019 BBS alumnus, found value in the interpersonal “soft skills” he learned as a citizen of the Badger Boys State.

Katzenberger — who lived in the City of Schmedeman, Mitchell County during his time at BBS — currently works as a California tech reporter for



POLITICO, covering stories related to Silicon Valley, artificial intelligence, the tech industry and the California state government. He said BBS gave him early insight into how social dynamics affect real-world government practices.

“Sociability is everything,” he said. “Being cool and fun to vibe with is

going to get you a lot of places.”

As a reporter, Katzenberger said he needs to establish strong connections with politicians, CEOs, and other important tech figures, which includes strong first impressions. Being able to make strong first impressions and quickly identify social dynamics has been crucial as he navigates the Californian political atmosphere.

“Sociability is a really good soft skill to have, and my job is all people skills,” he said. “Don’t get me wrong, I have to know a lot about policy. But to actually be good at my job, I need those strong people skills.”

Katzenberger said BBS also helped him learn to identify the dynamics of

real-world politics. He said he thinks the relationships between real-world state legislators closely resemble the relationships BBS legislators form over the course of the week.

The pressure to quickly form social bonds and establish a charismatic presence can seem daunting to citizens. But Katzenberger said those skills are crucial for navigating real-world politics.

“Badger Boys State is a really great crash course that forces you into a new society where you have to figure out how everything works in under a week. Honestly, it’s not that different from an actual state legislature where lawmakers sometimes act a bit too much like high schoolers.”

WALLECA APPLICATION PROCESS REMAINS OPEN THROUGH MARCH 31

The Wisconsin American Legion Law Enforcement Career Academy (WALLECA) application process was made available on January 2, 2026. Deadline to apply is March 31, 2026. The academy is open to current high school sophomores, juniors and seniors who are interested in a career in law enforcement. The application is available on The Wisconsin American Legion website, <https://wilegion.org/walleca>.

This year’s WALLECA will be held from July 6 - 10, 2026 at the Wisconsin State Patrol Academy at Fort McCoy. The curriculum includes Fire Arms Training, Ethics, Crime Scene Investigation, Physical Readiness Testing, and much more. The classes are instructed by current and retired law enforcement professionals. Questions regarding WALLECA can be forwarded to Sheri Hicks, Programs Coordinator, at Sheri@wilegion.org or by calling (608)745-1090.



CORRECTION

In the December edition of the Badger Legionnaire, the article submitted by Don Hildebrandt titled “Eight Minutes Could Change a Life, Save a Life” incorrectly had his title as American Legion Post 10 and 10th District Chaplain, his correct title is American Legion Post 10 and 8th District Chaplain.

Suicide Prevention is Everyone’s Responsibility

There's Plenty You Can Do to Save a Life!

Four Critical Questions

1. Do you know how to recognize the signs of distress?
2. Do you know how to initiate a conversation with someone exhibiting signs of distress or depression?
3. Would you be able to ask someone about their suicidal thoughts?
4. Do you know how to help someone who is contemplating death by suicide?

If you answered “No” to any of these questions, the free online R.A.C.E. Suicide Prevention Training is for you!

Next Series Begins
[April 14](#)

Two Time Options:
11:30 am or 6:00 pm
Central Time

NOTE: 3-Hour In-Person Training can be scheduled at your organization or company.

• Get Informed • Get Involved • Save a Life

The R.A.C.E. Suicide Prevention training is three one-hour sessions delivered on three consecutive Tuesdays starting 14 April. The training is applicable for anyone, including you! The training prepares you to **Recognize** the often subtle signs of distress. You will learn how to **Ask** the person about any suicidal thoughts, demonstrate that you **Care** and ways to offer **Hope** that can help the person to choose life versus death. The last step in the R.A.C.E. model is learning different **Escort** options so the person receives professional care. Let's work together to Save Lives – One Life at a Time!

Register Today at
www.RACESuicidePrevention.us





AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY MARKED DURING OF '26 ORATORICAL CONTEST

The 89th Annual Department Oratorical Contest is scheduled March 28 in Todd Wehr Hall on the Ripon College campus with opening ceremonies beginning at 9:00 a.m. and the regional contest begins at 10:00 a.m. 12 high school students from throughout the state will be participating to win scholarships and to move on to the finals contest beginning at 12:45 p.m. the same day. These students have already won oratorical contests at the post and county level and placed either first or second at the district level. The winners from the regional contests participate in the finals contest. The overall winner from the 3 finalists will represent the Department of Wisconsin at the National American Legion Oratorical contest in Hillsdale, Michigan scheduled May 15-17. The winner of the National Oratorical contest wins a \$25,000 scholarship.

Students will each give 2 orations, one will be a prepared 8 to 10 minute oration on some phase of the constitution. The second oration consists of a 3 to 5 minute oration on a randomly assigned constitutional topic. There are 4 assigned topics and, because they are randomly selected, students must be prepared to speak on all of them.

America's 250th birthday will be celebrated with birthday cake during the lunch break between the regional and finals contests.

The Department Oratorical contest requires over 40 volunteers. We could not provide this great opportunity to students without the dedication of our volunteers. Many of our volunteers have worked at the Department Oratorical contest for several years and their dedication is very much appreciated.

Please join us at the oratorical contest to support the contestants and the program. Everyone is welcome. If you are a spectator, you can purchase a lunch ticket on site. If you are interested in volunteering at the contest, please contact Sheri at Legion HQ.

THANK YOU FROM NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE GRADS

Rosanna Bogle and Jerry Hook are so grateful for the opportunity to attend The National American Legion College in Indianapolis in November. We were so fortunate to have such an awesome week with 54 colleagues from the other 54 Departments.

National Legion College has changed over the years to keep pace with the times. The curriculum centered around Servant Leadership. National American Legion College Dean, Mike Rohan, and National American Legion College Chancellor, Past National Commander Dan Seehafer were instrumental in making the College the best experience possible. The Dean and Chancellor brought in the best of the best as instructors. Students were involved, and engaged, even applying servant leadership characteristics serving others in the course.

Veterans Strengthening America comes from leaders in our American Legion serving others.

On behalf of myself and Rosanna Bogle I truly want to say thank you to the Department of Wisconsin for sending us to the National American Legion College.



ABOVE: NALC graduates. BELOW: Jerry Hook, Rosanna Bogle, PNC Dan Seehafer, PNC Denise Rohan, Mike Rohan.



THANKSGIVING CARDS FOR DARLINGTON VETERANS



2nd Grade Students from Darlington Elementary/Middle School made Thanksgiving Cards for the Veterans and Nurses at the VA Hospital in Middleton. This is at least the 15th year the 2nd grade students have made the cards for those at the VA Hospital. Also in the group are Darlington Post 214 Legion Members who accepted the cards on behalf of all Veterans.

KINGSTON POST 395 VETERANS DAY



Members of Kingston Post 395 participated in the Veterans Day 2025 Program at Markesan High School. ABOVE: Doug Stoll and his son Donnie. AT RIGHT: Rodney Walker from Marquette, a WWII a Korean War veteran of the U.S. Navy.



POST 501 FLAG ETIQUETTE



Oak Park Place Senior Living Community held a Veterans Day event. Members of Severson-Cairns Post 501 in Madison prepare for the flag folding and flag etiquette ceremony. Significances of the folds were explained. Veteran residents attended.



ALGOMA VETERANS DAY

American Legion Algoma Post 236, Carlton Post 358, Kewaunee Post 29 and VFW Post 3358 participated in the Annual Community Concert Band and Veterans Appreciation program November 12 in Algoma. Pictured is school band director Jennifer Massey and Post 236 Commander Mike Froelich.

Photo by Wayne Schmidt.

ONALASKA ADJUTANT SPEAKS TO LOGAN STUDENTS

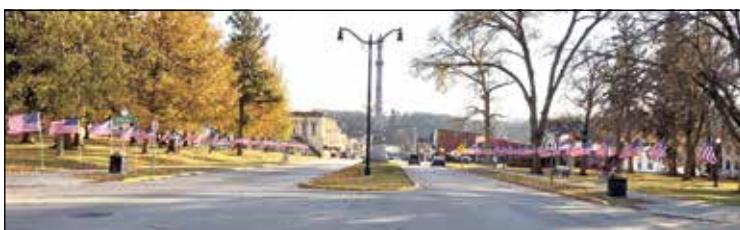


Onalaska Post 336 Adjutant Jim Binash and retired Colonel Steve Nott spoke to Logan Middle School students about what it means to be a veteran to service to country. They had their picture taken with members of the Student Council.

The following day Adjutant Jim Binash and member Howie Hormann Jr. went to Brookdale and Springbrook Assisted Living Centers to present colors and distribute pins to the veterans.

DARLINGTON PARK BY SAL

Beautiful Veterans Parks on Main Street in Darlington. This was a project the Darlington SAL has been doing for several years.





CENTENARIAN HITS MILESTONE IN MONDOVI

TOP: Dwayne "Pete" Klopp, of "The Mighty 10th District", an Air Force Veteran who served during World War II, celebrated his 100th birthday at Hillview Senior Living in Mondovi on December 8, 2025. Celebrating with him were not only friends and family but also various American Legion and VFW representatives including WDVA Secretary James Bond, Department Vice Commander Rita Rindahl, 10th District American Legion Commander Felicia Decker, and 9th District VFW Commander Krist Beseler. Mondovi Elementary School also took part with Mrs. Muehlbauer bringing her 4th grade class who presented Pete with handmade cards



POST 512 MARKS 100TH BIRTHDAY



AT LEFT: Shiocton Post 512's last remaining WWII veteran Donald Moravec celebrated his 100th birthday on November 1! Pictured with him are two of his sons Brian (Left) and Wayne (Right) who are also members of Post 512.



KIMBERLY POST 60 VETERANS MEMORIAL



Kimberly American Legion Post 60 has proudly updated the Veteran's Memorial in Kimberly's Memorial Park to honor additional local heroes. Originally commemorating servicemen lost in World War I and II, the memorial now includes those who gave their lives in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The newly added names—Ervin S. Melcher Jr. (Korea), James Allen Corey, and Rex Alfred La Duke (Vietnam)—reflect Kimberly's enduring respect for its fallen. The plaque was installed by Post #60 members Chaplain Paul Kluge and 1st Vice Commander Bruce Siebers, continuing the community's commitment to remembrance and gratitude.

WAUNAKEE POST 360 KEEPS BUSY



Waunakee Post 360 has been very busy supporting veterans and their community. Quilts of Valor were presented (above) to Jerry Zimbrick, Pat Durden, Steele Schilling, Charles Fredricks. Also, Post 360 Commander Betsy Mulcahy giving remarks for Veteran's Day in Waunakee. Post 360 members attending a Veterans Day Pledge Program in Waunakee where all elementary schools participated. Post 360 and Auxiliary Unit 360 members participating in Food for Kidz in Waunakee, a program to prepare meals for Ukrainian refugees and Haitian orphans.

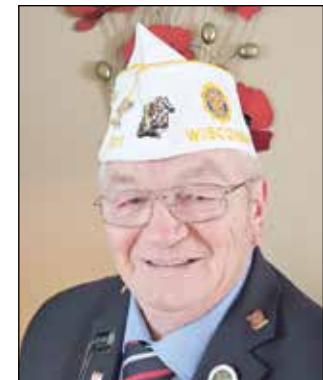


ALMA POST 224 THANKSGIVING

Alma American Legion Post 224 hosted 40 members and guests on November 8 to enjoy a Thanksgiving turkey meal with all the trimmings provided by long-time member Chuck Michaels with help from his wife, Auxiliary member Janet Michaels.

Larry Larson for Department Commander

Department Vice Commander Larry Larson has announced his candidacy for the High Office of Department Commander and humbly asks for your support. He is a Paid-Up-For-Life member of Fletcher-Pechacek Post 121, River Falls, Wisconsin. He established his eligibility through United States Army service until retirement. Larry has held multiple leadership positions within The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin, including serving as 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, and Post Commander of Post 121. 1st and 2nd Vice Commander and 10th District Commander. He has served on the Department Membership Committee and as Chair of both the Membership and Fundraising Committees. The Fundraising Committee launched a campaign that earned \$100,000 to support Department programs. Larry is a graduate of the Wisconsin American Legion College where he currently serves as an instructor. Larry is also a 2022 graduate of The National American Legion College. Larry also serves as The National Commander's representative on the Veterans Employment & Education Council. Absolutely no Veteran should have to make the choice between life and death. The "BE THE ONE" campaign is vital for Veterans and their families, and Larry strongly supports it. With the experience Larry has gained he will ensure that every Wisconsin Legionnaires voice is heard and recognized. Larry has the support of Post 121, Pierce County Council, 10th District and most importantly his family.



Larry Larson
Department Vice Commander

Jeremy Mason for Detachment Commander

Sons of The American Legion Detachment Vice Commander Jeremy Mason has announced his candidacy for Detachment Commander of the Sons of The American Legion – Department of Wisconsin.

His connection to The American Legion began long before he held office. It began when he was sponsored to attend Badger Boys State. That experience showed him firsthand what this organization stands for; leadership, service and responsibility to something larger than oneself. That early investment shaped his respect for this organization and for his continued involvement.

Jeremy is a graduate of the Wisconsin American Legion College Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Courses. He has had the honor of serving in the SAL at every level from squadron adjutant and commander of Juneau Squadron 15, District 2 Commander, and Detachment Vice Commander for Districts 2, 6, and 9. These roles have provided Jeremy with a practical, ground-level understanding of what the squadrons need and where the Detachment must improve to be effective.

His focus is straightforward: embrace traditions while creating real traction to move the team forward. Tradition matters, it is the foundation of credibility and purpose. But tradition without momentum stalls progress. If elected, Jeremy will work to ensure that the programs are not only preserved, but strengthened, visible, and producing measurable impact for the veterans and communities that we serve.

Jeremy's priorities include:

- Reliable, consistent support for squadrons across all districts.
- Membership growth and retention driven by engagement and relevance.
- Leadership development to ensure continuity and accountability.

Forward progress in veterans' service programs with clear goals and follow through.

Jeremy's commitment to the Sons of The American Legion is both a responsibility and a legacy. He proudly honors both of his grandfathers' military service by continuing the work they helped make possible – service rooted in duty, stewardship, and respect for those who served before us. Wisconsin's Detachment needs disciplined leadership that respects our past while moving decisively forward. Jeremy is prepared to provide that leadership.



Jeremy Mason
Detachment
Vice Commander

John W. Edelblute IV for Department Vice Commander

Greetings Fellow Legionnaires,

My name is John W. Edelblute IV, and I am seeking the office of Department Vice Commander for the 2026–2027 term. I would be honored to have your support.

I served honorably in the United States Army from 1984 to 1988, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, and Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany. That service laid the foundation for my life-long commitment to Veterans and to The American Legion.

There is much work to be done at both the Department and National levels. The importance of the **Four Pillars of The American Legion—Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth—**remains as vital today as ever. Equally important is membership growth and retention, the lifeblood of our organization. If elected, I am ready and committed to helping advance this mission.

I have been an active Legionnaire for 28 years, serving at every level of the organization. Currently, I serve as Adjutant and Historian of the 4th District and am an Honorary Life Member of Post 434. At the Post level, I have served as Post Commander and Vice Commander at Posts 27 (South Milwaukee) and 434 (Oak Creek). During my tenure as 1st Vice Commander and Post Commander at Post 434, we achieved 100% membership.

At the District level, I have served in every role from Sergeant-at-Arms through District Commander. I am also a Past Milwaukee County Commander and was honored as the 2008 Milwaukee County Commander of the Year.

At the Department and National levels, I currently serve as Scouting Chairman on the Americanism Committee and have previously served on the National Homeland Security, Children & Youth, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, and Legislative Committees. I am a graduate of both the Wisconsin American Legion College and the National American Legion College, Class of 2005.

Beyond The American Legion, I am a member of Voiture 1519 of the Forty & Eight. I am employed as a VAVS Representative at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center. Professionally, I am the Assistant Hospital Service Coordinator for the DAV Transportation Network, coordinating transportation for Veterans to and from the Milwaukee VA.

Community service has always been important to me. In addition to the American Legion, I have earned the rank of Eagle Scout in 1983 and continue serving through the Oak Creek Lions Club and Masonic Lake Lodge #189.

I am grateful for the support of my wife Sandra ("Sam"), my family, and my Legion family. I believe in our proud heritage and our future of service. I look forward to serving TOGETHER.

For God and Country, John W. Edelblute IV



John W. Edelblute IV
4th District
Adjutant and Historian

Scott Markle for Department Vice Commander

Past 12th District Commander Scott Markle has announced his candidacy for the high office of Department Vice Commander of The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin. Scott earned his eligibility for The American Legion by serving 20½ years of active duty in the United States Air Force. As an Air Force Officer, he served on different occasions as Flight Commander and once as Detachment Commander in Colombia, South America.

Scott has fully supported The American Legion at different levels. He has been a Member of the Richard I. Bong Post #435 in Superior, Wisconsin for over 15 years. Scott has served as Post Public Affairs Officer and Americanism Chairman including being a Member of the Post Honor Guard and Color Guard. Recently, he was elected the Douglas County Commander and assists the Douglas County Finance Officer. As 12th District Commander, Scott achieved 100% Membership Goal. Additionally, he is a Department Membership Committee Member. At the National Level, Scott was a National Security Council Member and presently a National Foreign Relations Committee Member.

Scott is a graduate of the Wisconsin American Legion College and is presently an Instructor for the College. He also has the distinction of graduating from the National American Legion College in Indianapolis, Indiana. Scott also holds Membership in ANAVICUS and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

Scott is very proud to be a Member of The American Legion and wholeheartedly advocates its Four Pillars. Most noteworthy, he is very passionate promoting its Youth Programs. Scott takes every opportunity to endorse these many programs at his Post, County and District. Without a doubt, as Department Vice Commander, he will continue to espouse these ideals throughout the Department of Wisconsin. A top priority for Scott will be to train our Members utilizing the Basic Training Course and to encourage as many Legionnaires as possible to enroll in the Wisconsin American Legion College and beyond.

On a personal level, Scott holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Education Degree in Teacher's Education. He is married to Patricia (Voigt) Markle of Grand Rapids, Minnesota for over 44 years. They have two daughters, Elizabeth and Amy and a grandson, Jordan.

With the full endorsement of his Post, Scott asks for your vote and support during his candidacy as Department Vice Commander. Together we can and will propel our awesome organization, founded 1919 in France, to even greater heights. Thank you.



Scott Markle
Past 12th District Commander

Deborah L. Thomas for Dept. Vice Commander

My name is Deborah (Debbie) L Thomas, presently serving as the 1st Vice Commander of Post 539 and a past Department Vice Commander, and I respectfully request your support in announcing my candidacy for the high office of Department Vice Commander.

My eligibility for The American Legion is from 24 years active-duty service in the United States Air Force. I am a 31- year member of The American Legion and a 15-year PUFL.

I am a member of the Madelyn LaCanne Post 539 in Green Bay, one of two all-women American Legion Posts in Wisconsin. I have served as the Post Sgt-at-Arms for two years, Post Historian for four years, and Post Adjutant from 2006-2019, assisting in the Post attaining a 100% membership from 2015-2019. I also serve as a member of the Post Color Guard.

I am a graduate of the Wisconsin American Legion College, and a recent addition to the staff of the College. I have active membership in VVA, ANAVICUS, DAV and AMVETS (Post Commander).

In the past I served as a volunteer docent of the Palm Springs Air Museum, CA, providing tours and descriptions of aircraft on display. One of my most memorable projects was developing a program on the service of women during World War II, both civilian and military. I am proud to volunteer at Unity Hospice and visit those veterans under hospice care.

While on active duty status, I never really thought much about the future and how I would fit into the future outside of the military. Since my involvement with The American Legion, my vision has changed. I believe in assisting Veterans and in training future leaders of the Legion. Not to share our knowledge is to stunt the growth of our organization.

It would be my greatest honor to serve as your Department Vice Commander, again and work for you.



Deborah L. Thomas
Past Dept. Vice Commander

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PLUS

Helps you handle almost any crisis when you're away from home.



From Your American Legion Department



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POST 234 SPREAD CHEER



The Omro American Legion Post 234 has been busy spreading holiday cheer to Veterans this week. On December 4 Post 234 member Rick Deiss presented 20 Kwik Trip gift cards worth \$1,000 in total to Del Volpel, the Winnebago County Veterans Service Officer, to be distributed to needy veterans in Winnebago County to use for gas, food, or anything else they might need that may be purchased at any local Kwik Trip. The Omro American Legion Post 234 is pleased to continue in their support of Winnebago County Veterans in need this holiday season.



CHRISTMAS CARD PROJECT

The West Bend American Legion Lt. Ray Dickop Post 36 is participating with Froedtert West Bend Hospital this holiday season to make sure every veteran admitted this month receives a get-well card and Christmas card. The goal of the project is to make sure the veterans hospitalized during the holidays are remembered. Those admitted to the Froedtert Hospital won't be the only veterans receiving Christmas cards this month. The Post distributes Christmas cards that were made by members of the public at West Bend Community Memorial Library through the Legion Christmas Card Project to area veterans.

HARTFORD CHRISTMAS PARADE



Members of Hartford Post 19 marched in the Hartford Christmas Parade on November 8.

POST 337 HEROES GOLF OUTING



The annual Heroes Golf Outing hosted by Pulaski Post 337 was held on September 13. Post Commander Richard Piechocki and many others worked diligently to make sure the outing went off without a hitch. A total of 39 teams participated in the successful and delightful event. Pictured left to right: Jim Vanlannen, Dick McDermott, Tom Abrahamson, Gary Bauman.

LAKE MILLS FOOD PANTRY



Lake Mills Post 67 Commander Steve Cabral and First Vice Commander Larry Sauer presenting a \$1,500 donation to the Lake Mills Food Pantry.

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.

EVENTS KEEP WAUNAKEE POST 360 BUSY



Waunakee Post 360 has been very busy with several events over the last few months. ABOVE LEFT: Post Eagle Scout Benedict Hellenbrand. ABOVE CENTER: Member Shirley Kubiak received the Jessel S. Whyte awards, the Copper award, McCoy Americanism awards and special Children and Youth Citation cat II awards, Past Post commander dave Barman and current post Commander Betsy Mulcahy presented the awards. ABOVE RIGHT: Post 360's Badger Boys state representatives shared their experiences at Post 360's Veterans Day dinner. BELOW: Members Shirley Kubiak and Sandy Johnson presented Citizen in Action awards at the Waunakee Intermediate School.



VIETNAM WAR ERA

American Legion Members from Post 7 in Rhinelander received 50 year anniversary Vietnam War era pins from the Daughters of the Revolution.

PEWAUKEE POST 71 MURAL



Pewaukee Post 71 held a mural dedication on December 7. The mural is a vibrant tribute to service members of all branches. Flo Winzenried and Sarah Winzenried were artists on the project. Submitted by John Wallenfang.

POST 185 HOSTS SANTA CLAUS



Brask-Fossum-Janke Post 185, Grantsburg, hosted Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and their helpers on Saturday, December 13. Despite temperatures of 15-below-zero, a hearty group of families showed up for breakfast and treats.

55 YEARS IN MEDFORD



Medford Post 147 honors Don Zenner for 55 continuous years. Pictured left to right - 11th District Commander Gerry Johnson, Post 147 Commander Bruce Emmerich, member Don Zenner.

FOUNDATION POURED FOR VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL



This Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Watertown was poured on Veterans Day, 11/11/25 and finished this portion about 11 a.m. It took approximately 200 yards of concrete. 140 yards was poured in one day using a pumper truck and about 16 truckloads of concrete. The Wall is about the length of a football field including the end zones. It is one of the largest mobile walls that will be permanent north of St. Louis. It's 80% the size of the one in Washington, D.C.

The anodized aluminum wall with the engraved names will be attached to the concrete this spring. That will be followed by the sidewalks, lighting, security cameras and landscaping. Lots to do before the dedication ceremony on Memorial Day in May 2026. This is a major project with a budget of \$400,000.

POST 501 TOYS FOR TOTS



Members of Madison Severson-Cairns American Legion Post 501 prepare to take their Toys for Tots donation to the Reserve Center. From left-to-right are 1VC Phil Ingwell, Post Commander Jerry Scalissi and Past Post Commander Thomas Stolarczyk

POST 363 ORATORICAL CONTEST



This year's Denmark American Legion Post 363's Oratorical Contest post-level winner, Barrett Czarneski, posing with Denmark American Legion Commander Pat Wisniewski at the conclusion of Saturday's competition.

THANKSGIVING MEALS DELIVERED TO VETERANS

The Wausau American Legion Post 10 delivered 258 meals to the homes of Veterans and their families on November 19. Volunteers packaged the meals for delivery by 27 volunteer drivers. Desserts were provided by In the Lite Electric, Merrill, the root beer was provided by Stevens Point Brewery and the Veteran thank you cards were provided by local students.

The post has provided over 7,000 "Safe at Home" meals for Veterans and widows in the past six years. The meal deliveries are just one of the ways that the post thanks Veterans for their service.

The post is always looking to help more Veterans with meal deliveries. You can call the post reservation line at 715-298-1606 to be added to the meal delivery list for their next delivery. Please call and leave a name and phone number. Families and caregivers are also encouraged to call for their veteran. The meals are free for Wausau area Veterans and widows.

Post 10 thanks all of the volunteers, members and non-members, who make it possible



to provide this valuable Veteran service. The post also appreciates the support from our local businesses and community members.

Story and photos courtesy of Mike Heilmann, Post 10 Public Relations.

THANKSGIVING TREATS FOR POST 434 VETS

Ruthie, a 9-year-old from Louisville, KY, made chocolate-covered and seasoned pretzels for Veterans in Oak Creek while visiting her grandparents, Ed and Marge Ciechanowski, over Thanksgiving. Inspired by her Grandpa, an Army Veteran and member of Oak Creek Post 434, Ruthie and Grandma packaged the treats with colorful Christmas tags. Ruthie also volunteers regularly through American Heritage Girls, which promotes service, leadership, and adventure.



POST 55 PC NAMED FVVC VETERAN OF THE YEAR

Hortonville American Legion Post 55 Past Commander Bob Ziegert attended the Fox Valley Veterans Council (FVVC) Dec. 17 meeting and attentively listened as the accolades were read off regarding the selection of the FVVC Veteran of the Year. He found it intriguing that the selectee's achievements closely matched his own from the past year. PC Bob Ziegert was surprised to be awarded the FVVC Veteran of the Year award for all he accomplished in 2025. Please join our Legion Post 55 in congratulating him for this honor.

Over 35 veteran and veteran supportive organizations are members of the Fox Valley Veteran's Council whose mission is to support, case by case, veterans in need. Those needs could be due to job loss, housing issues, transportation-vehicle support, and food sustenance to name a few. The council's work isn't "shiny penny work" but its



FVVC VP Chris Martell presents Past Commander Bob Ziegert with the Veteran of the Year Plaque.

work that has served over 5 counties and hundreds of veterans this past year. Foxvalleyveterans.org. Story by Kim Craddock, and photo by Jon Pyllypiv.

POST 363 DONATES TO DENMARK RESCUE

Frank Bradley of the Denmark American Legion Johnson-Hershman Post 363 stopped by the Denmark County Rescue headquarters with this year's donation of nearly two dozen stuffed animals. For the last several years, Denmark Legion members have donated brand new stuffed animals to the rescue squad during the holiday season that the EMTs utilize throughout the year to comfort children on their calls. Frank is with County Rescue EMTs Danny and Drew and some of this year's donation on Saturday morning.



RHINELANDER BLOOD DRIVE



Rhinelander Post 7 members volunteered at the Community Blood Drive. LEFT: Post 7 members Barb Hagen and Post 7 Honor Guard Commander Bob Dionne working at the blood drive. RIGHT: Post 7 Commander Bob Smith shuttling the donors on a golf cart after he gave his blood donation.

BUDDY CHECK AWARD



Dane County Commander Scott Klassy (r) presented Black Earth Post 313 Commander Gary Ballweg with the 3rd District 100% Buddy Check Achievement Award. Several post officers divided the names to complete this impressive achievement.

POST 147 RECOGNIZING SERVICE



Medford Post 147 presented continuous years awards. L to R Post Commander Bruce Emmerich 40 years, Chaplain Warren Behling 40 years, member Roger Neubauer 10 years, member Joe Ellis 40 years, member Steve Fischer 20 years.

RIPON QUILTS ON VETERANS DAY



The Ripon Area Veterans Quilt group presented quilts to veterans at the Brown – Parfait American Legion Post 43 Veteran's Day dinner in Ripon.



POST 224 QUILTS OF VALOR



On the morning of Tuesday November 11 at the Alma High School, including the Pepin students as well, the Alma Post 224 and the students participated with veterans in a Quilts of Valor ceremony and Veterans Day remembrance. Ten veterans received Quilts of Valor created especially for each of them. The recipients were: Wayne Leeland, Navy; Roger Moore, Navy; Mackenzie Wick, Army; David Baum, Army; John Kriesel, Army; David Schams, Army; Peggy Blank, Air Force; Dale Blank, Navy; Duane Becker, Air Force & Army; and Jonatah Inglett, Marine Corps.

PORTAGE HOLIDAY PARADE



Portage American Legion Post 47 lead the Portage Holiday Parade on November 26. Post Commander Dean Simonson and Post Vice Commander Robert Selbach are pictured preparing for the start of the parade.

CAMP AMERICAN LEGION CLEAN



Post 294 cleaned for Camp American Legion. Hartland Post 294 member Al Wilkinson delivered \$1,000 worth of cleaning supplies, bottled water and other bottled drinks donated for Camp American Legion to Legion Headquarters.

SUPERIOR POST 435 DONATES TO THE SUPERIOR VA CLINIC



During the recent Government Shut Down, Post 435 donated \$500 worth of Food Gift Certificates to the VA Clinic. Pictured is Post Member Dan Mascarenas, VA Clinic Representative Dan Couture, receiving the Gift Cards from Post Commander Butch Liebau, and Post Member Bob Patterson.

Vietnam-Era VETERAN RECOGNIZED BY WESTFIELD POST 48



On November 8, the Beloit American Legion Westfield Post 48 recognized its longest serving member, George Woods. George served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam Era and has been a member of the chapter for 43 years. It was an honor to bestow the coveted Hometown Hero award to George Woods! LEFT: George Woods above after accepting the Hometown Hero Award. RIGHT: American Legion Westfield Post 48 members, as well as members of the Young American Federation and family.

POST 537 CLOTHES DONATION



The H.A. Todd Jr. Post 537 of Milwaukee distributed winter clothing donations on Veterans Day to Manitoba School students in Milwaukee. Many of the children that attend are underprivileged and are in need. After the clothing donation, Post 537 3rd Vice Commander William Cota did a presentation to the students on the history and meaning of Veterans Day. After the presentation, Bill handed out U.S. flags and took a group picture with the students.

POST 71 POSTS COLORS



Pewaukee Post 71 posted colors at the Pewaukee Horizon Middle School's Veterans day program.

POST 234 DONATES TO OMRO PD



The Omro American Legion Post 234 has continued to spread holiday cheer to those in need in Omro this season. On December 4 Post 234 member Rita Lee presented a donation of \$500 to Omro Police Chief Joseph Schuster for the Omro community. This donation will be used for the Omro Community Christmas Food Baskets program. The Omro American Legion Post 234 is pleased to support the Omro community in this way during this holiday season.

BADGER HONOR FLIGHT



Very early Saturday morning November 8, 2025, Past Post Commander Chris Ogden (West Side Memorial Post 151) and his Guardian, Jason Mundstock, awaited their turn to board the flight to our National Mall, Washington D.C. Chris is well known in Dane County, District 3, for his tireless efforts renovating Cabin 5 at Camp American Legion.



COVP HOLDS LAST '25 MEETING

December 18 was this year's last meeting of the Council on Veterans Programs (COVP). Here, Chad Koplien (l), the Chief Legal Counsel for the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, stands with Nellie DeBaker and Paul Fisk. Both Nellie and Paul are long-time American Legion members. Paul represents The American Legion of Wisconsin and is currently the Chair of the COVP. He is also our Legislative Liaison. Nellie represents the Polish Legion of American Veterans and is currently the Secretary of the COVP. Photo by American Legion Department Historian Morris Sadicario.

15TH MILITARY, VETERANS APPRECIATION LUNCHEON



Department Historian Morris Sadicario celebrated Madison's Edgewood University's 15th Military and Veterans Appreciation Luncheon on November 10. This gathering is Edgewood's appreciation of current servicemembers, veterans, and their families. Director Matthew J. Schroeder (USMC) heads the University's Office of Military and Veteran Services. Matthew said that in the past 15 years, over 500 veterans have studied at Edgewood University.



On December 13, members of Bruce American Legion, Earl J. Conley Post 268, along with other volunteers, provided honor guard duty and placed over 900 wreaths on veterans' graves across seven cemeteries in -16° weather for Wreaths Across America.

Submitted by Post 268 Commander Rick Ensenbach.

POST 268 AND WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA



Front row: Chris Skidmore, Dennis Jaeger, Debbie Gabert, Grinch, Nancy Severson, Nancy Wallock. Back row: Jerry Gomez, Rick Wallock, Marco Musich, Gary Zaffke, John Szudrowitz, Dennis Loberger, Tom Mesalk, Sue Grosskoph, Jeanne Paproki, Jim Lee.



POST 501 AMERICANISM PROGRAM

Taking part in Madison Severson-Cairns Post 501's Americanism flag program, Past Post Commander Thomas Stolarczyk (right in photo) and Chaplain/3VC Darrel "AJ" Feucht (center) presented the proper way to fold the flag. A historic 5x9.5-ft 48-star flag was shown, and a modern 50-star 3x5-ft flag was used to demonstrate the folding. During the presentation, Department Historian Morris Sadicario (left in photo) read John J. Daly's 1917 poem, "A Toast to the Flag." A lively question-and-answer session followed the demonstration.



ST. CROIX FALLS GIFT CARDS

American Legion Post 143, Sons of the American Legion Squadron and Auxiliary Unit of St. Croix Falls donate gift cards for the Holidays.

In the spirit of giving and community support, Legion Family of Post 143, has generously donated 25 gift cards, each valued at \$50, from Marketplace Foods of SCF to the St. Croix Falls School District. These gift cards will be distributed to families within the district to help ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a Happy Holiday Season.

From Left to Right Bev Warner Aux. Treasurer, Mark Stencel Post 143 Commander, Alison Lecuyer High School Counselor and Charlene Jones Legion Aux. President.



POST 462 PARTICIPATES IN WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Members of Russell W. Mulder Post 462 organized 2 ceremonies in Adell for December 13 Wreaths Across America. They invited a bugler from Random Lake's Squadron, also Hingham Post 345, and Plymouth Post 243 and their Squadron which provided the Rifle Volley.

The combined effort was done at Emmanuel Lutheran Church and St. Patrick's Catholic Church. Despite the cold wind chills, wreaths were laid on the Veterans headstones by many from the community throughout Sheboygan County.



APPLETON POST 38 HOST ANNUAL PAST COMMANDERS DINNER

On Saturday, October 11th, the Appleton American Legion Post 38 hosted their annual Past Commanders Dinner.

It is a time when prior Post 38 Commanders get together to enjoy camaraderie only found in the American Legion. Many of these individuals have served in various positions of leadership in the past, culminating in their roles as Post 38 Commanders. Though they may no longer be commanders, they continue to provide mentoring and leadership guidance to a newer generation of Post 38 Commanders.

The dinner was attended by prior Post 38 Commanders and the commanders' significant others.

The following Commanders were in attendance: Front Row Ray Gass & Nancy Felda. Back Row Renee Kasuboski, Migeal Babino, Mark Toll, Don Traynor, Jeffery Breitzman and Karl Heinz.



POST 435 DONATES \$500 TO SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Butch Liebaert, Commander of the Richard I. Bong Post #435, is shown above on the right presenting a check for \$500 to Scott Markle, Douglas County Commander and President of the Bong Book Club. For several years, Post #435 has made this annual donation to the Bong Book Club supporting the Flora Oveson Scholarship Fund.

In memory of Flora Oveson, the Bong Book Club started this scholarship in collaboration with the Lake Superior College Foundation. The scholarship is given to a female aviation student from the college. Flora Oveson founded the Bong Book Club in 2004. She was an avid aviator and well known for flying across the country in a Cessna aircraft. Without a doubt, Flora Oveson was a pioneer helping to pave the way for future female aviators.

For 2025, due to the generosity of so many donors such as Post #435, the Bong Book Club was able to donate \$1,600 to the Lake Superior College Foundation. Additionally, three female aviation students from Lake Superior College were each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. Kudos to Post #435!

HONOR SQUAD TRIBUTE



Menomonee Falls Post 382 Honor Squad performed a tribute to Ray Etzel. Ray has been the Honor Squad Leader for 27 years and has retired from the position as of this year at the age of 98.

MAZOMANIE POST 437 VETERANS RECEIVE QUILTS OF VALOR



Mazomanie Post 437 veterans Lester Sander and Jim DeVoe received their Quilts of Valor. These quilts were made by members of the Quilts of Valor Foundation. Mazomanie Auxiliary Unit 437 selected the recipients.



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Greetings Legionnaires! We are now nearly two months into the new year, which marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of our nation. WDVA has been busy hosting events leading up to the official Semiquincentennial Celebration on July 4th, and Secretary James Bond graciously offered up his column space this month to me so I can tell you a bit about what we've done and what we have planned.

The whole team at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum is excited by the opportunity this 250th anniversary offers to highlight the role our military, and especially Wisconsin veterans, has played in protecting and shaping our nation since its founding. The celebration will culminate on July 4, 2026, as our nation will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

This is not just about what happened in the 13 colonies, or what happened in 1775, 1776, or the years leading to 1783. Rather, it is about the national journey that started during those years and continues to this day, as we continue to build a more perfect Union.

As Chair of the Wisconsin Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial Commission which was established by the Legislature in 2021, I have had the honor of collaborating with Wisconsinites across the state, including state, Tribal, and business leaders. We are joining hands across Wisconsin – from Superior, to Milwaukee, and everywhere in between – united in our commitment to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be part of this historic milestone.

Last year, we marked the 250th birthdays of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. These and other successful events created momentum for 2026, and we are finalizing plans for Madison and elsewhere in the state. Please stay tuned for more information, which we will share when it becomes available at wisvetsmuseum.com and wisconsinhistory.org. Additional information on the national America 250 effort can be found at america250.org.

I hope that on your next visit to downtown Madison, you can stop by the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to see our ever-changing, expanding exhibits of veteran stories. Our next special exhibit, a partnership with PBS Wisconsin, just opened and will be up all year.

As always, I am grateful to the Legion and the Auxiliary for their excellent work supporting veterans across Wisconsin.



WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION FOUNDATION, INC.

As President of the Wisconsin American Legion Foundation, Inc., I am proud to share our mission – a beacon of hope and support for veterans, youth, and communities throughout Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin American Legion Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation dedicated to promoting Americanism and enhancing the lives of those who have served our nation. Our organization operates exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, with a strong commitment to fundraising that directly benefits our veterans, their families and communities.

Empowering Change

The Foundation proudly operates as a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation, ensuring that we adhere to the highest standards of transparency and accountability. You can verify our status at <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/> using our EIN: 26-1582528.

During our recent Midwinter Foundation Board meeting, we took important steps to strengthen our governance by aligning our By-Laws with our Articles of Incorporation. We also approved the Fiscal Sponsorship Policy Manual, which will facilitate directed donations, ensuring that every contribution makes

a meaningful impact. Watch for the forms launch on our website: <https://wilegion.org/foundation>

Join Us in Making a Difference

Every contribution to the Foundation is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. If you or a local business would like to support your Post or any of our programs, please consider making a tax-deductible donation. Checks can be made payable to The Wisconsin American Legion Foundation, Inc. and sent to PO Box 827, Portage, WI 53901. Please indicate how you wish your funds to be distributed.

We are also developing an initiative to enhance the self-sufficiency of Wisconsin American Legion Programs. Watch for more details soon and our official kickoff at the Department Convention!

Our Dedicated Team

The strength of our Foundation lies in our exceptional Board members: Commander Nathan Bond, VP Bill Cosh, PDC Frank Kostka, Scott Scheife, PDC Jim Johnson, PNC Daniel Seehafer, DVC Larry Larson, and PDC Ken Rynes, with PDC Julie Muhle as our secretary/treasurer. We are here to support you as we work together to honor our veterans and uplift our communities.

Thank you for being part of this journey!

NIAGARA HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF HEROES STARTED BY POST 136



Alma American Legion Post 224 hosted 40 members and guests on November 8th to enjoy a Thanksgiving turkey meal with all the trimmings provided by long-time member Chuck Michaels with help from his wife, Auxiliary member Janet Michaels.

POST 538 QUILTS OF VALOR



The Kewaunee Post 538 hosted a Quilts of Valor ceremony. They thank the Kewaunee Artisan Center for making the quilts.

DEFOREST POST 348 RECOGNIZES PAIR OF EXEMPLARY EDUCATORS

At the DeForest Area School Board meeting on January 12, DeForest Olson-Grinde-O'Donnell Post 348 formally recognized two exemplary educators. Post Commander Jim Skelton, accompanied by members Bill Ridgely and Dick Snortum, honored Charlene Chopin as the Post's Educator of the Year. Additionally, Amy Jambor was commended for her outstanding service and dedication to American Legion programs.

Chopin serves as a music educator at DeForest's Harvest Intermediate School, where she instructs students in grades 4 through 6. Raised in a family with a distinguished military background—both parents served in the United States Armed Forces and were active members of The American Legion—she has consistently demonstrated her commitment to honoring veterans. Chopin established Veterans Day assemblies and concerts across all five school districts in which she has taught. Additionally, she has volunteered at five separate American Legion posts and has performed at a national Legion convention. She is highly regarded for her unwavering advocacy and support for veterans and their initiatives.



Bill Ridgely, Amy Jambor, Dick Snortum, Charlene Chopin, Jim Skelton.

Jambor is the social studies department chair and an English teacher at DeForest Area High School. She leads high school juniors through a semester-long, hands-on government course that challenges them with legislative simulations—much like those in Badger Boys and Girls State—which serve as a natural introduction to those programs. In addition, she played a key role in reviving the Veterans Day assembly at the school and revitalizing the post's Constitution Oratorical Scholarship program.

Both exemplary educators demonstrate a strong commitment to fostering their students' growth and development as responsible citizens, reflecting positively on the DeForest Area School. They were honored with a post challenge coin in recognition of their contributions.

ONALASKA DONATES TO FD



Onalaska American Legion Post 336 (Membership, SAL and Ladies Auxiliary), combined to have a check presentation to the Onalaska Fire Dept. The amount was \$4,750. This was the other half of the cost to secure a fire suppression unit for a UTV. The UTV can go places a larger vehicle cannot. It can also be used for rescues in the nearby bluffs.

POST 501 VETERANS DAY BRATS



On November 8 members of Madison American Legion Post 501 at our Veterans Day Event provided free brats and hot dogs for veterans in our drive-through. (l-r) Tom, Keith, Phil, Gayle, Jesse, Commander Jerry, Christine, Bill, Jerry, Morris, and Dick.

POST 435 PRESENTS AT SUPERIOR MS



Post 435 was busy during the week prior to Veteran's Day visiting schools in Superior. They spent three days presenting one hour programs to the following students, Wednesday, November 5 to the sixth grade, Thursday, November 6 to the seventh grade and Friday, November 7 to the eighth grade on the History of the Flags, Flag Etiquette, and the meaning of each fold of the Flag. Pictured after the presentation are Post Honor Guard Members: Front Row left to right, Butch Liebaert, Scott Markle, Joe Wojtoff, Lester Mattison, Jeremy Grans, Dave Krinkle, Jim White, Back Row left to right, Bill Britton, Bob Simonsen, Bob Patterson, John Vaski, Glen Erickson, Dan Mascarenas.

POST 271 45 YEARS OF SERVICE

Poynette Post 271 honors Richard "Dean" Chamberlain at the annual Veterans Day steak dinner for 45 continuous years of membership.



DARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP VETERANS IN THEIR COMMUNITY

Darlington Guidance Counselor Tom Uppena has been working with Darlington American Legion Post 214 to have the Darlington High School Students do community service for the Veterans in the area. The program started out with raking the yards for a couple of veterans and this year the students were able to go out to 24 Veterans homes and rake their yards for them. Mr. Uppena said that the students really like do this work for the veterans in the community.

POST 435 DONATES TO BONG VETERANS CENTER



Post 435 recently donated a check to the Bong Veteran's Center for \$2,500. John Gidley, Executive Director of the Museum, receives the check from Post Commander Butch Liebaert.



POST 214, DARLINGTON FFA BOXES FOR THE TROOPS

For several years the Darlington FFA has put together boxes of items for our troops serving overseas. This year they put together 8 boxes that will be shipped to the troops next week in time for a little Christmas gift to those serving our country. Darlington American Legion Post 214 is involved with this program by taking care of the shipping costs. Pictured from the left are Post 214 Member and CVSO Officer Sam Fuller, FFA students Alivia Crosby, Callie Blosch and Third District Commander Dan O'Brien. Darlington American Legion Post 214 would like to thank Darlington FFA teacher Troy Lobdell and all the FFA students for putting together the packages for the troops, especially for the Holiday season.



James Fialkowski
Department Veterans
Service Officer

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

ASSISTANCE WHEN REQUIRED

It would be magical to have the answer to everyone's problems. Sadly, this is not realistic. As a veteran or family member, having a local resource to assist or to provide directions to someone who may be able to assist is the best for which we can hope.

The main local resources would be your county veteran service office (Usually referred to as CVSO), tribal veteran service office (Usually referred to as TVSO), and local posts (Normally the duty to assist rests on the Post Service Officer).

Your county veteran service office and tribal veteran service office assist with county, state, and federal benefits. Their contact information is available at this website, <https://wicvso.org/locate-your-cvso-tvso/> or you can call their association toll free number: 1-844-WIS-CVSO (947-2876). Note - This number is not manned, but the voice-mails will be directed to appropriate person for response.

The Post Service Officer is an important piece in the foundation of The American Legion. They're a vital

link in the American Legion's nationwide network of volunteer and professional Service Officers.

Your local Post Service Officer has knowledge of these benefits as well as having access to their post's available assistance. They will provide service to you or direct you to the correct person for assistance.

A Post Service Officer's level of knowledge and effectiveness can determine how well a veteran or family member receives assistance. This is why classes are provided at each of our Midwinter Conferences. We are working on starting a new training program to enhance the Post Service Officer's knowledge of local resources. For your local post contact information, go to The American Legion website, <https://mylegion.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Find-a-Post> or call the Department Headquarters at 608-745-1090 or our Department Service Office.

Contact information for the Department Service Office. E-mail address: al.vbamiw@va.gov Phone number 414-902-7522



Julie Muhle
Department
Adjutant

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

POST DATA AND POST OFFICER REPORTS

Hello,

I just wanted to thank everyone who attended the Midwinter Conference. It was one of our larger crowds since COVID!

Now starts that new year! Here are some of the upcoming mails you can expect to receive.

- Mid-March – National will start sending out the continuous year certificates for 50, 60, 70-year members. New this year, they are also adding 75-, 80-, 85-, and 90-continuous year member.

- Post Data Reports (PDR) – the PDRs will be sent out late February or early March. It is important that you return the forms by April 1! The information on the PDR is used to update the system and if National does receive them by April 1st, updates for the post regarding dues increases, correct addresses to mail dues or other updates that are needed will not be made.

- Post and County Officer Reports – Post and County Officer Reports need to be returned to the headquarters as soon as elections have been completed. Access to [myLegion.org](https://mylegion.org) is granted based on the reports we receive. New Commanders and Adjutants will not be able to access [myLegion.org](https://mylegion.org) if we do not receive the paperwork.

Be prepared and be watching for these important documents! Thank you!

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN

THE BENEFITS OF A GRATEFUL HEART: REFLECTIONS ON PSALM 103:1-5

Psalm 103; serves as a profound "to-do list" for the heart. Rather than waiting for external circumstances to spark joy, the Psalmist David takes an active approach, commanding his own heart to "Bless the Lord." This passage is a powerful reminder that gratitude is not just a feeling, but a spiritual discipline that redirects our focus from our problems to God's character.

Waking Up our Hearts: The passage begins with an internal call to action: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" David recognizes that the heart can often become sluggish and distracted by the stresses of everyday life or the routine of daily life. By telling his heart to "not forget the benefits of God," he acknowledges a human tendency toward spiritual forgetfulness. We are quick to remember our grievances and slow to remember God's grace.

The Five-Fold Gift of God's Grace: In Psalm 103 the psalmist lists a sequence of "benefits", that covers every aspect of the human experience:

- **Forgiveness:** He "forgives all your iniquities." This is the starting point—the removal of the barrier between the Creator and the created.

- **Healing:** He "heals all your diseases." Whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, God is presented as the Great Physician.

- **Redemption:** He "redeems your life from destruction." This speaks of protection and being bought back from the brink of despair or spiritual death.

- **Honor:** He "crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies." We are not just rescued from our troubles; we are treated as royalty in His kingdom.

- **Satisfaction:** He "satisfies our life with good things." In the context of Psalm 103:5, the phrase "so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's" is often interpreted as a promise of spiritual and physical restoration.

A Promise of Renewal: The Psalmist concludes with the beautiful imagery of our youth being renewed. Isaiah 40:31; "But those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" This suggests that a life lived in the rhythm of praise and recognition of God's goodness results in a "second wind." When we stop carrying the weight of our own shortcomings and worries and instead "crown" ourselves with His mercies, we find the energy to soar once again.

The Psalmist invites us to look upward and inward. By intentionally recalling God's track record of faithfulness, we find that our current strength is replenished, and our hope is firmly anchored in His lovingkindness.



"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

THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR CAMP AMERICAN LEGION

While winter still has a steady grasp here at Camp American Legion, the planning for the 2026 is in full swing. The 2026 schedule is set and applications are being processed. We have had many new Wisconsin Veterans and family members apply this year and it will be another great year for Camp American Legion.

What are the requirements for staying at Camp American Legion?

There are two requirements that are needed to attend camp. The first, you have to be a Wisconsin resident. Second, you have to either be actively serving or honorably discharged veteran from one of the branches of the Armed Services. Once those requirements are met, the veteran, significant other and dependent age children can attend.

How do I apply to attend Camp American Legion?

Within the last 5 years camp has made the application process smoother and more efficient. Go to the Wisconsin American Legion website or www.campamericanlegion.org to find the Camp Schedule. Look at the schedule and find a week that you qualify for. There are some weeks that just for VA programs, Women Veterans and other organizations that not everyone would be eligible for. Then fill out

the 2026 Camp Application and send the two supporting documents (proof of WI residency and proof of service) either by regular mail or email (the email is on the bottom of the app). Once we receive it, you will get an email stating that your application was received. Then as we process the application, you will receive another email stating your confirmation that you are accepted for the week requested.

What is the timeline to apply to Camp American Legion?

Camp American Legion starts accepting applications starting on 1 November. We will publish the Camp Schedule and the new application on the website. We will accept applications all through the camp season. If you are a veteran that has never attended camp and you apply between November 1 and December 31, you will have priority and will be placed before those that have attended camp before. On January 1, we then slot all new veterans and then slot others based on date the application was received at camp.

If any veteran has problems with the application or any issues, they can call camp and we will walk through the entire process. We try to make the process as easy and fair as possible so all Wisconsin Veterans have a chance to stay at Camp American Legion.

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.

POST 214 'SALUTE TO THE VETERANS'



For over ten years now Middle School Choir Director Tina Schliem with the help of the band directors have put together a "Salute to the Veterans" at the Darlington American Legion Post 214. The program is set before the Post holds its monthly meeting and is open to the community. We have 2nd graders along with 7th/8th grade students who are a part of the band and choir play military music, recite poems and sing songs. Pictured are some of the students, community and veterans who came to the program.



POST 63 HONORS THREE

ABOVE: Clintonville Veterans Memorial Post 63 and Auxiliary honored three veterans Ron Rindt (top), Tom Swiney (middle) and Larry Stickney (bottom) with Quilts of Honor. BELOW: Larry Rindt was honored for his 40 years of membership with Post 63.



POST 279 VETERANS PROGRAM



Pete Ponti, Scott Relitz members of Marshall Wisconsin Post 279 and Sharon Burbach, President of Jefferson County Auxiliary presented this program to the 6th graders at Marshall Elementary School.

OCONOMOWOC POST 91 HELPS THE COMMUNITY



LEFT: Commander Jerry Wendt is pictured with Anthony Benevidas. Post 91 delivered and installed his lift chair. CENTER: Dale Saeger and Jerry Wendt presented a \$1,500 check to Lynn Johnson of Operation Child Smile. RIGHT: Post 91 Finance Officer Jerry Wendt presented a \$5,000 check to Post 189 Commander Steve Zillmer of Watertown to help pay for the construction of the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Wall.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY YOUTH GOVERNMENT DAY



Lafayette County held their American Legion County Youth Government Day on November 13. Approximately 140 High School Juniors from around the County participated in the program. Above, students outside the Courthouse before the program began.



MARSHALL POST 279 VETERANS PROGRAM

Marshall American Legion Post 279 held a Salute to Veterans Program at the Marshall Elementary School.

WINTER POST 303 HOLDS ORATORICAL CONTEST

Winter High School tenth grader, Ethan Rackouski, has won the American Legion Oratorical Contest held at the Winter American Legion Post 303 on November 10, 2025. He delivered a prepared oration as well as an oration on a randomly assigned constitutional topic, Article 3 of the U.S. Constitution. Ethan impressed the judges with the way his speech was presented and his knowledge of the Constitution with his speech titled *A Nation Built on Freedom*.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school



American Legion Sawyer County Commander Jim Woody, Oratorical Winner Ethan Rackouski, Winter American Legion Post 303 Commander Dave Schuck.

students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an

academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Ethan was awarded a total of \$300.00, from the Winter Post and the Sawyer County American Legion, and will go on to compete in January against winners from 6 other counties in northwestern Wisconsin for further cash prizes. This provides him an opportunity to compete for a \$25,000 scholarship at the National level.

VETERANS DAY AT LACONIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

For many years the Brandon American Legion Post 378 hosted their Veterans Day celebration at the Brandon Elementary School. That school has now closed, so the celebration was moved to the Laconia Elementary School. Jim Otto of Post 378 has been the event planner for many years. He is now 93 years young and is turning over the event planning to the local VFW Post.

This year, Lt. Governor Sara Rodriguez was the keynote speaker. Each veteran who attended the ceremony was given a gift bag. Lt. Governor Rodriguez took the left-over gift bags to the Governor's mansion to hand out to Veterans who attended a ceremony there.

There were other speakers at the ceremony to include Congressman Glenn Grothman, Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Doiron, and Specialist Josephine Parent.

The Laconia Spartan Band, the middle school choirs and band and the elementary students performed patriotic songs.

The ROTC Fox Valley Battalion posted and retired the colors.

MAZOMANIE TURKEYS

The Mazomanie American Legion Greening – Buelow Post 437 recently donated fifteen Thanksgiving turkeys to the Mazomanie Community Food Pantry. The Post has done this worthy donation for many years. Pictured with the turkeys are Post members (l-r) Phil Haas, Erland Niendorf, Paul Maier and Richard Royston.



DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP



Jerry Hook
Membership
Chair

Thank you to everyone for serving our Veterans. Thank you for working so hard to recruit and retain members in the American Legion, Department of Wisconsin.

As we continue to work on our Membership for 2026, remember that we are providing tools each week to assist Posts. Use the Best Practices; they have proven successful for Posts across the Department. If you have to modify things to make it fit your Post please do.

Please return to the Basics:

- When you see a Veteran or Service Member ask them to join our great organization.
- Buddy Checks show that we care about our members.
- Be The One for all Veterans and Service Members.
- Mission, Purpose and Relevance - Why we join and

usually why we stay.

- Retention is critical; our members joined for a reason.
- Calls, and visits to our Veterans / Service Members / Members and their families mean the world to each of them.
- Make the Membership Calls.
- Recruiting is not a one person job, we should all be able to tell people what the American Legion does at the local, Department, and National level.
- Please support our Service Members and families.
- Reach out to the 2930 Members in your local area.
- Please review the best practices and events in the Department of Wisconsin Membership Annual Plan.

Our Members / Service Members / Veterans and families deserve our best. We will continue to ask people to join and we will continue to reach out to current members to retain them.



LOKI'S CORNER

Attend the Department Oratorical Contest on March 28 at Ripon College. Opening ceremonies at 9am.

**BE
THE
ONE**



Morris Sadicario
Department
Historian

DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN

The Midwinter Convention, long known for its emphasis on training, could be thought of as "Training Saturday."

Leading up to our Training Saturday, several mini sessions had been offered. On October 6, 2025, at National Headquarters, National Historian Deborah "Deb" Davis conducted an excellent tutorial on making great yearbooks and one-year histories. Those in attendance were expected to pass on this information in turn to all Legionnaires who function as their organization's Historian. Please look at The American Legion "2025 Historian's Guide" for specific guidelines. There's a copy on the "resources" tab of the Wisconsin Historians Association website (talwha.org). Your 2025-2026 Yearbook is due to the Department by June 1, 2026, regardless of whether it is in digital or print format. At the National Conference, the National Yearbook Showcase will highlight each winning yearbook chosen by the Legion Departments. Now's the time to get cracking on your yearbook!

If you attended the Wisconsin Historians Association Training Saturday session on creating indexes and tables of contents using Microsoft® Word®, you would have learned how to ensure you get as many of the 15 points (15% of the total) available for proper and complete indexing.

Yearbooks are often the first things members bring out when welcoming potential new members. They tell our story at a glance and convey our pride in the service we provide. It's vital to compile these "welcome documents" at the end of each term.

This has also been a great year for anniversaries, such as the 250th anniversary of the service branches, for example.

If your post is continuing the traditional "cut-and-paste" method, wonderful—keep that tradition alive.

Whether your yearbooks are digital or in print, please put in your best effort.



LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN

The Legislative committee had a very active and productive Midwinter. Among the many topics of discussion during the Legislative meeting, as well as our first Midwinter legislative training class, were:

1. Wisconsin Senate Bill 617. Wisconsin is the only state or territory in the nation that does not close government offices in recognition of Veterans Day. This legislation designates November 11 a state holiday when state offices are closed.

2. Wisconsin Senate Bill 411. This legislation requires the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to provide funding for the University of Wisconsin Missing-in-Action Recovery and Identification Project. It further proposes that the state of Wisconsin provide funding for the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program, and reduce the eligibility threshold (from 100% to 80%) for some veterans and spouses under the Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit.

These programs were included in the Governor's biennium budget (2025-2027) with slight differences. The Governor's budget proposal expanded the Veterans and Surviving Spouse Property Tax Credit to 70%, provided funding for the UW MIA Recovery and Identification Project, and the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program through the State of Wisconsin. All three of these programs were removed by the finance committee before the Budget was signed into law.

3. Wisconsin Senate Bill 38. This bill exempts special group plates for gold star families from the personalized registration plate fee. This bill has passed and will take effect on June 1, 2026.

Contact your legislators and encourage them to support these initiatives. There are numerous competing bills in the state of Wisconsin, and amendments to these bills are frequently introduced. We encourage you to focus on the topic that you are advocating for. Remember to stay nonpartisan; veterans' legislation is not and should not be a partisan issue.

To find who your legislators are, go to <https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov>

Type in your address, and this will bring up your Wisconsin State representatives along with their contact information.

The Legislative Committee is working to establish a legislative chair in all 12 American Legion Districts in Wisconsin. We encourage you to contact your district if you would like to participate in the Wisconsin American Legion Legislative program.

The Last Bugle



KEY

WWI-World War I
 V-Vietnam
 G/L-Grenada/Lebanon
 P-Panama
 GWOT-Global War on Terrorism

WWII-World War II
 K-Korea
 PG-Persian Gulf

4 Athens	35 Evansville	K	90 Ashland	V	165 Two Rivers	V	243 Plymouth	V	348 DeForest	V	440 Clinton
Bernard Nowacki	John P. Petterson	V	Marvin Fait	K	Chris Daoust	V	Donald L. Kuchenbecker	V	Edward Denman	V	David Vanderkooi
6 Stevens Point	36 West Bend	V	55 Hortonville	V	91 Oconomowoc	V	Bruce R. Grossheim	V	355 Grafton	V	Floyd N. Johnson Jr.
Larry D. Field	Ronald C. Cegley	V	Thomas P. Verhasselt	V	Richard R. Hanson	K	Eugene G. Pribnow	WWII	John C. Chenery	V	449 Brookfield
Paul P. Drefcinski	Jan P. Dengel	V	56 Fountain City	V	William Baum	K	Roman Ripp	K	Ken J. Gundrum	V	Robert L. Meganck
Raymond Raflik	38 Appleton	K	59 Stoughton	V	93 Tomahawk	V	Kenneth T. Goss	WWII	Timothy L. Hertel	V	Orville S. Krieg
7 Rhinelander	Donald G. Hawkins	K	Gene C. Grytenholm	V	Robert A. Pinter	V	Jerome P. Piotrowski	V	Martin Keller	V	David Lansen
Thomas Vanney	Richard B. Shimek	K	Robert F. Kocovsky	V	Richard F. Johnson	K	Kenneth Nehring	K	247 Glidden	V	William Kolander
Michael R. Freund	Ray Vandenboogaart	V	Robert Grady	V	Frank A. Beda	V	P. Wood Jr.	V	360 Waunakee	V	452 Brantwood
9 Wisconsin Rapids	Ronald W. Tank	V	60 Kimberly	V	Ralph Basile	K	Duane Stutte	K	Ronald B. Byrnes	V	August Luedke
Joseph E. Austin	39 Marinette	K	Ronald K. Weyenberg	V	P. Wood Jr.	V	175 Loyal	K	Ronald E. Lange	V	WWII
Clifford W. Isaacson	Richard A. Spangenberg	K	Ronald W. Krebs	V	Peter G. Huston	V	176 Weyauwega	V	363 Denmark	V	457 Mequon
Carl Weinfurter	40 Bangor	K	62 Columbus	V	97 Dodgeville	V	Joseph F. Paider	V	Marvin Kostka	K	Martin Goldsmith
Edward R. Rivera	Gerard C. Elsen	V	63 Clintonville	V	Robert G. Jacobson	K	Roger Bottlemey	WWII	Donald E. Dickrell	V	458 Wauzeka
Daniel F. Reichl	Ronald Rasmussen	V	73 Neillsville	V	98 Cumberland	K	185 Grantsburg	V	Jeffrey Buhr	V	Herbert F. Hauser
Gene E. Sorenson	Christian Christensen	V	74 Oconto	V	Robert R. Schaghy	V	Raymond G. Gonsior	K	366 Princeton	V	467 Ontario
John S. Kukowski Sr.	42 Platteville	V	75 Fond du Lac	V	100 Sparta	V	Richard G. Chatterton	K	Dennis D. Novak	V	470 Saukville
James Erdman	Joseph Klein	K	77 Chippewa Falls	V	102 Walworth	V	Anthony C. Johaneck	V	James Crubaugh	V	Edward R. Friede
11 Green Bay	Scott F. Gratton	V	79 Burlington	V	103 Galesville	V	188 East Troy	V	David Gray	V	Richard H. Strand
Vernon M. Krawczyk	44 Wabeno	K	80 Wausau	V	104 Keweenaw	V	Douglas D. Odell	PG	367 Milton	V	473 Potosi
Gary E. Spooner	Vincent M. McCabe	K	81 Mauston	V	105 Marinette	V	277 Necedah	V	Richard E. Fry	V	Mark Alan Nelson
13 Richland Center	45 Elkhorn	K	82 Monroe	V	106 Menomonie	V	189 Watertown	V	370 Wild Rose	V	PG
Cletus Bauer	Charles A. Jansky	V	83 Sheboygan	V	107 Oconto	V	Frank Gaudes	V	477 Saint Nazianz	V	477 Saint Nazianz
16 Greenfield	46 Portage	V	84 Monroe	V	108 Shawano	V	190 Beloit	V	Gary Schmitz	V	Gary Schmitz
John Murphy	Charles Paske	V	85 Shawano	V	109 Marinette	V	191 Whitehall	V	481 Waunakee	V	481 Waunakee
Russell Kucharski	51 West Salem	V	86 Menomonie	V	110 Marinette	V	192 New Berlin	V	Robert W. Unterseher	V	487 Cable
19 Hartford	Allen J. Johnson	V	87 Rice Lake	V	111 Menomonie	V	289 Watertown	V	492 Beloit	V	Michael W. Wells
John H. Steinmetz	John Trussoni	V	88 Manitowoc	V	112 Menomonie	V	193 Beloit	V	494 Caledonia	V	Mike Radtke
24 Lake Geneva	52 La Crosse	V	89 Minocqua	V	113 Menomonie	V	194 Cameron	V	495 Sussex	V	Ralph J. Lewandowski
Robert W. Flemming	Michael L. Schoen	V	90 Minocqua	V	114 Menomonie	V	195 Beloit	V	496 Beloit	V	496 Beloit
Terry B. Moore	David E. Sanding	V	91 Oconomowoc	V	115 Menomonie	V	196 Beloit	V	497 Beloit	V	497 Beloit
27 South Milwaukee	Richard H. Pengra	V	92 Oconomowoc	V	116 Menomonie	V	197 Beloit	V	498 Beloit	V	498 Beloit
Kenneth Schoenike	53 Eau Claire	K	93 Tomahawk	V	117 Menomonie	V	198 Beloit	V	499 Beloit	V	499 Beloit
30 Edgerton	Willard A. Young	V	94 Wausau	V	118 Menomonie	V	199 Beloit	V	500 Beloit	V	500 Beloit
Helen E. Knudsen	Wayne Zogleman	V	95 Wausau	V	119 Menomonie	V	200 Beloit	V	501 Madison	V	501 Madison
33 Neenah	Donald Stuttgen	V	96 Webster	V	120 Menomonie	V	201 Beloit	V	B.T. Disalvo	V	B.T. Disalvo
Paul A. Taylor	54 Marshfield	V	97 Wausau	V	121 River Falls	V	202 Beloit	V	Wm. Buelow	V	Wm. Buelow
Randolph A. McCarry Jr. K	Ronald C. Miller	V	98 Wausau	V	122 Chilton	V	203 Beloit	V	502 Iron River	V	502 Iron River
			99 Wausau	V	123 Chilton	V	204 Beloit	V	Richard L. Stephens	V	Richard L. Stephens
			100 Wausau	V	124 Chilton	V	205 Beloit	V	516 Grand View	V	516 Grand View
			101 Wausau	V	125 Chilton	V	206 Beloit	V	Chris Melland	V	Chris Melland
			102 Wausau	V	126 Chilton	V	207 Beloit	V	518 Green Bay	V	518 Green Bay
			103 Wausau	V	127 Chilton	V	208 Beloit	V	John W. Scharer	V	John W. Scharer
			104 Wausau	V	128 Chilton	V	209 Beloit	V	Don Frye	V	Don Frye
			105 Wausau	V	129 Chilton	V	210 Beloit	V	E. David Larsen	V	E. David Larsen
			106 Wausau	V	130 Chilton	V	211 Beloit	V	Mathew Mitchell	V	Mathew Mitchell
			107 Wausau	V	131 Chilton	V	212 Beloit	V	Gary Woolever	V	Gary Woolever
			108 Wausau	V	132 Chilton	V	213 Beloit	V	398 Plain	V	398 Plain
			109 Wausau	V	133 Chilton	V	214 Beloit	V	401 Cambria	V	401 Cambria
			110 Wausau	V	134 Chilton	V	215 Beloit	V	405 Dousman	V	405 Dousman
			111 Wausau	V	135 Chilton	V	216 Beloit	V	415 Milwaukee	V	415 Milwaukee
			112 Wausau	V	136 Chilton	V	217 Beloit	V	416 Greendale	V	416 Greendale
			113 Wausau	V	137 Chilton	V	218 Beloit	V	444 Twin Lakes	V	444 Twin Lakes
			114 Wausau	V	138 Chilton	V	219 Beloit	V	Mary C. Weil	V	Mary C. Weil
			115 Wausau	V	139 Chilton	V	220 Beloit	V	552 Somers	V	552 Somers
			116 Wausau	V	140 Chilton	V	221 Beloit	V	553 Bancroft	V	553 Bancroft
			117 Wausau	V	141 Chilton	V	222 Beloit	V	Richard D. Beggs Jr.	V	Richard D. Beggs Jr.
			118 Wausau	V	142 Chilton	V	223 Beloit	V	554 Twin Lakes	V	554 Twin Lakes
			119 Wausau	V	143 Chilton	V	224 Beloit	V	Mark T. Andersen	V	Mark T. Andersen
			120 Wausau	V	144 Chilton	V	225 Beloit	V	Paul A. Capelli	V	Paul A. Capelli
			121 Wausau	V	145 Chilton	V	226 Beloit	V	Richard Krahembuhl	V	Richard Krahembuhl
			122 Wausau	V	146 Chilton	V	227 Beloit	V	555 Sheboygan	V	555 Sheboygan
			123 Wausau	V	147 Chilton	V	228 Beloit	V	Gerald Chopp	V	Gerald Chopp
			124 Wausau	V	148 Chilton	V	229 Beloit	V	2930 Portage	V	2930 Portage
			125 Wausau	V	149 Chilton	V	230 Beloit	V	Robert D. Long	V	Robert D. Long
			126 Wausau	V	150 Chilton	V	231 Beloit	V	Trevor A. Harder	V	Trevor A. Harder
			127 Wausau	V	151 Chilton	V	232 Beloit	V	Richard H. Rost	V	Richard H. Rost
			128 Wausau	V	152 Chilton	V	233 Beloit	V	Jerald H. Solum	G/L	Jerald H. Solum
			129 Wausau	V	153 Chilton	V	234 Beloit	V	James J. Jagmin	V	James J. Jagmin
			130 Wausau	V	154 Chilton	V	235 Beloit	V	Cecil E. Boyd	V	Cecil E. Boyd
			131 Wausau	V	155 Chilton	V	236 Beloit	V	Mike Bogan	V	Mike Bogan
			132 Wausau	V	156 Chilton	V	237 Beloit	V	Raymond Eggers	V	Raymond Eggers
			133 Wausau	V	157 Chilton	V	238 Beloit	V			
			134 Wausau	V	158 Chilton	V	239 Beloit	V			
			135 Wausau	V	159 Chilton	V	240 Beloit	V			
			136 Wausau	V	160 Chilton	V	241 Beloit	V			
			137 Wausau	V	161 Chilton	V	242 Beloit	V			
			138 Wausau	V	162 Chilton	V	243 Beloit	V			
			139 Wausau	V	163 Chilton	V	244 Beloit	V			
			140 Wausau	V	164 Chilton	V	245 Beloit	V			
			141 Wausau	V	165 Chilton	V	246 Beloit	V			
			142 Wausau	V	166 Chilton	V	247 Beloit	V			
			143 Wausau	V	167 Chilton	V	248 Beloit	V			
			144 Wausau	V	168 Chilton	V	249 Beloit	V			
			145 Wausau	V	169 Chilton	V	250 Beloit	V			
			146 Wausau	V	170 Chilton	V	251 Beloit	V			
			147 Wausau	V	171 Chilton	V	252 Beloit	V			
			148 Wausau	V	172 Chilton	V	253 Beloit	V			
			149 Wausau	V	173 Chilton	V	254 Beloit	V			
			150 Wausau	V	174 Chilton	V	255 Beloit	V			
			151 Wausau	V	175 Chilton	V	256 Beloit	V			
			152 Wausau	V	176 Chilton	V	257 Beloit	V			
			153 Wausau	V	177 Chilton	V	258 Beloit	V			
			154 Wausau	V	178 Chilton	V	259 Beloit	V			
			155 Wausau	V	179 Chilton	V	260 Beloit	V			
			156 Wausau	V	180 Chilton	V	261 Beloit	V			
			157 Wausau	V	181 Chilton	V	262 Beloit	V			
			158 Wausau	V	182 Chilton	V	263 Beloit	V			
			159 Wausau	V	183 Chilton	V	264 Beloit	V			
			160 Wausau	V	184 Chilton	V	265 Beloit	V			
			161 Wausau	V	185 Chilton	V	266 Beloit	V			
			162 Wausau	V	186 Chilton	V	267 Beloit	V			
			163 Wausau	V	187 Chilton	V	268 Beloit	V			
			164 Wausau	V	188 Chilton	V	269 Beloit	V			
			165 Wausau	V	189 Chilton	V	270 Beloit	V			
			166 Wausau	V	190 Chilton	V	271 Beloit	V			
			167 Wausau	V	191 Chilton	V	272 Beloit	V			

WISCONSIN



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MEMBERSHIP

LET'S TALK HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Honorary Life Membership (HLM) is a way for units to honor members who have given outstanding service to your American Legion Auxiliary unit. HLMs are paid by the unit and the members are often elderly or nursing home bound. Your unit sets the parameters. It could be any member aged 85 or older; it could be any member who lives in a nursing home. HLMs may have been very active members before their health or age prevented them from attending meetings or working the programs. HLMs are not transferable between units, nor do they receive membership renewal notices. The unit is responsible for paying the dues annually for HLMs.

How can your unit raise money to pay for these memberships? Set aside a percentage of your earnings from your fundraisers to pay for HLMs or host a fundraiser to raise money strictly for HLM memberships. Maybe have your juniors host a bake sale where the funds are used to pay for these memberships.

It is a kind and beautiful way to honor members who have given so much to your unit in the past.

Wisconsin Membership

As of January 21, 2026, Central Division is in first place in membership. Wisconsin holds second place within the Division, and

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP TEAM

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Diane Burkhalter
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Claudia Osero
Committee Member
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Andrea Stoltz
Membership
Program Coordinator
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608-745-0124

**Membership Totals – 82.71%
(as of 1/28/2026)**

District	Goal %
4	91.49%
11	89.14%
3	87.12%
6	86.22%
2	85.08%
9	83.72%
12	83.33%
7	81.51%
10	80.58%
1	80.49%
8	79.38%
5	66.18%

is in seventh place in the nation with 12,903 paid members and a goal of 15,860 (81.36%). Iowa is leading Central Division at 82.85%. Wisconsin is in fourth place for retention at 79.83% with 386 new members.

Reach out to your members with a personal phone call if they have not yet renewed for the 2026 membership year. Let's get Wisconsin to 85% in the next few weeks!

2025 CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOP: IT'S A WRAP!



Department President Sue Hembrook, National President Pam Ray, Christmas Gift Shop Supervisor Diana Sirovina.

Diana Sirovina Gift Shop Supervisor

As the beautiful Irving Berlin song says, "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas." Such a beautiful, memorable song, my all-time favorite! A white Christmas is something many people actually enjoy. Unfortunately, it is not something we look forward to for Christmas Gift Shop wrapping day!

Wrapping day brings together a group of very dedicated members to take on the task of wrapping the numerous gifts our veterans in long-term care facilities selected for their loved ones. This year's wrapping day had its fair share of interesting things happening. First, there was the date change from Sunday to Monday, due to scheduling conflicts. Next, there was the snow! That beautiful, idyllic, fluffy gift from Mother Nature proved to create a challenge for those talented people who drove many miles to participate.

As is typical of our dedicated members, twelve inches of snow did not deter them from creating another memorable wrapping day! We were privileged to host a special guest this year. National President Pam Ray managed to navigate her way from Illinois with her husband, SAL Past National Vice Commander Harl Ray. Pam helped us wrap the nearly 600 gifts and had a great time doing it.

Although the end of the program this year didn't necessarily go according to plan, our Christmas Gift Shop program, once again, was very successful. As we visited with the veterans when we helped them select their gifts, we could tell by the smiles on their faces that this program means so much to them.



National President Pam Ray.

Each year we receive letters and notes from family members expressing their thanks – not only for the gifts they receive but to our organization for making this program available to their veteran in the care facility. Many tell us the gifts were very unexpected. Others say receiving the gifts bring back wonderful memories of times when their families were all together for the holidays.

As we conclude the Christmas Gift Shop program for the year, it is important that we acknowledge the tremendous financial support the program receives from our members. Without that generosity, the program and its impact would not be possible. Thank you for your continuing support of this great program!



The American Legion Family 2026 TESTIMONIAL DINNER

SATURDAY APRIL 11, 2026

STRAWBERRY CREEK
14810 72nd St.
Kenosha, WI 53142

Please check The American Legion
or Auxiliary websites for details coming soon!!!

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Sandy Mack
Department Chaplain/Music Chairman
Smack0555@gmail.com
262-388-9816

When you call the meeting to order, what is the first item on your agenda? *It should be your prayer then the Pledge of Allegiance. Why? Because it is God before Country.*

Do you include music in your meetings? You do not have to be a great singer, usually it only takes one person to start, and the rest will follow. It is also an effective way to involve more people in the program and add some FUN! You can switch the songs up. Here are a few suggestions: The Star-Spangled Banner, America the Beautiful, and God Bless America. For something a little more modern, include Born in the U.S.A. by Bruce Springsteen or God Bless the U.S.A. by Lee Greenwood.

"God Bless the U.S.A."
by Lee Greenwood:

If tomorrow all the things were gone I worked for all my life

And I had to start again with just my children and my wife.

I thank my lucky stars to be living here today

'Cause the flag still stands for freedom and they can't take that away.

And I'm proud to be an American where at least I know I'm free.

And I won't forget the men who died who gave that right to me.

And I'd gladly stand up next to you and defend Her still today

'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land. God Bless the U.S.A.

Let us Pray.

Lord, teach us to be generous with what we have, help us to give with a joyful heart and to trust that You will provide for us in return. May our generosity reflect Your love and grace. Amen.

Special Request:

Please help me make an incredibly special Prayer Book for President Sue Hembrook by sending me prayers, poems, and inspirational pieces. They can be original or from another source; something that touches or inspires you. Please identify the author, person sending and their Unit and District. They can be sent to me by email **smack0555@gmail.com** or mail to Sandy Mack, 1204 Wisconsin St, Adell, WI 53001.

Sweepstakes winners are posted at amlegionauxwi.org under the "More" tab.

GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS



UPCOMING EVENTS & DEADLINES:

Events

March-April	District Spring Conferences (check with District President for details)
April 11	Legion Family Testimonial (Strawberry Creek Club, Kenosha)
April 11-12	ALA State Bowling Tournament (Weston, WI)
April 25	Legion Family Day
May 15-17	Junior Spring Conference (at Camp American Legion)
June 21-26	ALA Badger Girls State (UW-Oshkosh)
July 16-19	Department Convention (Hilton Paper Valley, Appleton)
Aug 28-Sep 3	National Convention (Louisville, Kentucky)

Deadlines

March 1	2026-2027 Department Committee Applications
March 1	Scholarship Applications
March 15	ALA State Bowling Tournament Entry Forms
April 1	Online ALA Badger Girls State Registrations for Delegates and Alternates
April 15	Unit Year-End Impact and Program Reports
May 1	Unit Member of the Year Nominations to Leadership Chairman
May 15	Mentor of the Year Nominations to PPP Chairman
June 1	Online Salute to Servicemembers Nominations to NHQ
June 1	Department Resolutions
June 1	District Nominations for Alternates to National Convention

EDUCATION

Delores Woolf
Department Chairman
deloreswoolf@gmail.com
608-348-7403

New Year's greetings to all ALA units in Wisconsin. Following our summer and fall activities in communicating with local school needs and promoting scholarships at the local, department and national levels of the ALA, it is time to continue working our Education program. Look ahead to the March 1, 2026 deadline for the national scholarships: Children of Warriors, Spirit of Youth, Non-Traditional Student, and Member Loyalty. These scholarships have online applications with information for eligibility requirements, completion details, and how to submit the applications to the national organization.

Department scholarship applications are online with a pdf to download, complete and submit to the local ALA unit for the president or secretary to sign. These are due from students to the unit by March 1, 2026 and to the Department Education Chairman by March 15, 2026. The turnaround time is quick so it is best to get it done earlier. Have applicants read directions carefully and if they have questions, please feel free to contact me. All of these

applications are available at www.amlegionauxwi.org/education-mlw. The beauty of the department scholarship form is that the applicant completes the personal information page and indicates which scholarship opportunities apply to them.

The M. Louise Wilson Loan Fund application is online as well. This is an interest-free loan for students who are ALA members and requires a co-signer. The loan is paid back in workable installments after graduation or if the student leaves school. Thank you to all units who have made monetary donations to the M. Louise Wilson Loan Fund.

Units should download the Give 10 to Education suggested donation and track monies and materials given for their Education program. This includes unit scholarships and other activities that support education in the community. Be sure to partner with community organizations, encourage word of mouth referrals, use social media platforms, and advertise in local media (tv, radio, newspaper).

Other important times for the Education program are Purple Up! Day for military children on April 15, 2026 and Teacher Appreciation Week from May 4-8, 2026. Above all, complete your annual reports on time so information can be incorporated in the department reports. Let's all be part of the village to raise the child by promoting our ALA programs.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Lynda Tryczak
Department Chairman
tryczak.l@gmail.com
715-212-7515

HAPPY NEW YEAR! At this time of year everyone is setting goals for the start of the new year. What about setting a goal for your unit? One idea is to participate and sign up for the **AMERICAN LEGION USA 250 CHALLENGE**.

This challenge provides several opportunities in Physical Fitness, Wellness and, of course, COMMUNITY SERVICE. Here are some ideas that your unit can participate in:

- Gather 250 food donations for a food pantry.
- Provide 250 clothing items to a homeless shelter.
- Write 250 cards to nursing home residents.

To register for the challenge, visit <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/community-programs/usa250/challenge>. You can also register as an individual which doubles the impact.

Here's to a successful new year working Community Service.

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

Christine Johnsen
Department Chairman
cmj102@aol.com
715-203-2015

Morgan Johnsen
Vice-Chairman

Thank you to everyone who supported the Juniors at the Midwinter Conference by purchasing KwikTrip cards and honor buttons! Your support is greatly appreciated as we work toward our goal of purchasing four kayaks for Camp American Legion. You can continue to purchase Kwik Trip cards and personalized honor buttons through the form or Zeffy link available on the Junior Activities program page on the department website.

Once again, we will hold our **Department of Wisconsin Junior Activities Spring Conference at Camp American Legion**! It will be held on the weekend of May 15-17, 2026. Hopefully it will be a little warmer and drier this year so we can do more outdoor activities. The official business meeting will be on Saturday, May 15, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm in the main lodge. This will include the business meeting, election and installation of Honorary Department Junior officers, lunch, and a Camp

American Legion service activity.

We can also stay overnight at Camp for the weekend! All campers will sleep indoors in a cabin or the main lodge. The weather will determine our activities, but we anticipate several veteran service projects and Patch activities during the day and campfires at night. You can choose to stay one or both nights or only attend the Saturday business meeting. Please indicate these details on the registration form. Overnight campers should arrive no earlier than 5:00 pm on Friday, May 15, and everyone must depart Camp by 12:00 noon on Sunday, May 17. Registration for the conference and lunch on Saturday is \$10. There is an additional \$5 per night fee to help defray the cost of meals/snacks for those staying overnight. Meals will be served from the evening meal on Friday through breakfast on Sunday.

Registration forms must be received by **April 15, 2026**. Additional information, including what to bring, will be sent to all registrants by email, and will be available on the ALA Wisconsin website at <https://www.amlegionauxwi.org/junioractivities>, in May. As we work to Honor and Support Our Veterans, we look forward to seeing many Juniors at the Department of Wisconsin Junior Activities Spring Conference!

AMERICANISM

Deanna Farley
Department Chairman
farleyofsc@gmail.com
920-810-2664

The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship. We all should make ourselves and our community knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette, and proper disposal methods. We need to visibly practice and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to our organization for information.

Respecting our American flag is an activity that has been taught to us for many years. The proper promotion of our flag may be difficult if there are no activities in place. You can distribute *Proper Flag Etiquette* pamphlets or have them available in strategic places in your community. If possible, have a specific location in your community to have American flags available to purchase. If allowable, have a sign on their bulletin board with details of the cost of a flag, how to properly attach flag to a pole, building, etc. If possible, advertise in your local media the availability of where flags can be purchased. This may involve some follow-up or long-term involvement to keep the program in place. Ask your Americanism committee to volunteer to help with this project. An important part of Americanism is promoting our flag!

A large part of our ALA Americanism Program is the Americanism Essay Contest. This year's topic is "Celebrating America's 250th Birthday and the Veterans who Fought for Our Freedom." The information for the essay contest should have been distributed to your local schools already. On the Department of Wisconsin website, go to the Americanism Program. There are three bullet points about the essay contest. The first bullet point has all of the information you need, including the cover sheet which must accompany each essay contest entry. Each unit's winning essays must be submitted to me by March 15, 2026. My mailing address is listed on the submission form.

There is a wealth of information available on Americanism on both the ALA Department of Wisconsin website and the ALA National website. For answers to specific questions, you may email national staff at americanism@alaforveterans.org.

2026 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

DUE JUNE 1, 2026

Resolutions presented by an individual member must be approved by the unit or district to which the member belongs and submitted to Department by June 1.

See Department Bylaws, Article II, Section 1(d) for details.

WANTED:

ALA Department Finance Committee Member

Any American Legion Auxiliary member with appropriate experience may serve on the Department Finance Committee. **Candidates need to have experience in accounting, finance, budgeting, auditing or other relevant background to be considered.**

Resumes are due to deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org by April 10, 2026.

Upon receipt of all resumes, candidates will be contacted by the Department Senior Vice President for a telephone interview. The successful candidate will be appointed to serve a 3-year term (July 2026-July 2029).



DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN SPRING JUNIOR CONFERENCE

Camp American Legion
8529 County D
Lake Tomahawk, WI 54539



Friday, May 15, 2026, 5:00 pm – Sunday, May 17, 2026, 12:00 noon

The 2026 Junior Spring Conference main event will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at Camp American Legion. This will include the business meeting, election and installation of Honorary Department Junior Officers, lunch, and a Camp American Legion service activity.

As we work in the spirit to *Honor and Support Our Veterans*, we also have the opportunity to stay overnight at Camp for the weekend, to participate in additional veteran service projects, Patch projects, games, campfires, and so much more!

Registration for the conference and lunch on Saturday is \$10. There is an additional \$5 per night fee to help defray the cost of meals/snacks for those staying overnight. Meals will be served from the evening meal on Friday through breakfast on Sunday. Additional information will be sent by email to registrants in early May and will be available on the ALA Wisconsin website at www.amlegionauxwi.org/junioractivities.

Please call/text Christine Johnsen at 715-203-2015, or email at cmj102@aol.com, with any questions.

2026 JUNIOR AUXILIARY SPRING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Registration must be received by **Wednesday, April 15, 2026**.

Form submitted by (please print clearly):

Name: _____ District #: _____ Unit #: _____

Phone #: (_____) Email: _____

NAME / UNIT #	Grade	First time attendee? (Yes/No)	Junior Member	Senior Member	Overnight Friday (Yes/No) (\$5)	Attending Saturday Meeting Only (Yes/No) (\$10)	Overnight Saturday (Yes/No) (\$5)	Total for Registration & Meals
Totals								\$

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Please send registration form with check payable to American Legion Auxiliary to:
Christine Johnsen, 159991 Granite Rd., Wausau, WI 54403

Scholarship Applications

DUE: MARCH 1, 2026

The American Legion Auxiliary offers more than \$25,000 in scholarships at the state and national levels.

Encourage eligible students to apply **by March 1!**

Applications and rules are posted on the department website.

Questions? Contact Education Chairman Delores Woolf at deloreswoolf@gmail.com or 608-778-1936.



ALA Badger Girls State Counselors, and Staff are still needed!

Friday, June 19 – Friday, June 26
UW-Oshkosh Campus

If you can volunteer the whole week or just a couple days, please review the opportunities available and submit an online application (www.ALABGS.org > About ALABGS > ALABGS Volunteer Info)

Questions?
Contact ALABGS Chairman Danyelle Thompson at alabgs.chairman@gmail.com

WHO WAS ON SANTA'S NICE LIST?



ABOVE: Linda Kaufman, member of Gordon ALA Unit 499, enlisted the help of new friends and neighbors in her apartment building. The volunteers used their time and resources to decorate Christmas stockings and sent gifts and handmade cards to an active duty military platoon to brighten their holidays.

TOP RIGHT: ALA Unit 154 has helped families in Mondovi and the surrounding area for more than 70 years, evolving from homecooked meals to toys to wishes requested by children needing extra care at the holidays. Pictured are volunteers who helped in the gift distribution. Twenty-eight families with 74 children were served through tags selected and paid for by community shoppers.

AT RIGHT: Members of the Wisconsin American Legion Family from Post 133 in Camp Douglas participated in Wreaths Across America. Volunteers placed over 400 wreaths on veterans' graves in five area cemeteries.

BELOW AND BOTTOM RIGHT: Joyce Hafemann of ALA Unit 372 in Forestville organized the town's first Wreaths Across America ceremony in honor of its local veterans. Community members honored veterans buried at Saint Peter's Lutheran Cemetery and the Forestville Town Cemetery. Photos courtesy of Dave Melancon.



Thank you to all the volunteers who made donations or helped place wreaths on graves throughout Wisconsin.

MAZOMANIE LEGION FAMILY HONORS MILITARY FAMILIES

Mazomanie Post/Unit 437 recently presented Blue Star Banners to recognize families with members serving in the military.



Mike and Dee Bass received a Blue Star Banner in recognition of their son, Sergeant Terrence Bass, currently serving with the US Army. Sergeant Bass enlisted in the Army on April 3, 2008, and has been deployed three times.



Shelley Drager and Phil Haas presented Amy and Jared Holcomb with a Blue Star Banner in honor of their son, Corporal Jonathon Holcomb. Corporal Holcomb's service in the US Marine Corps the past several years has focused primarily on embassy duties as a Marine Security Guard in both Tunisia and Kosovo.

POPPY MAKING WORKSHOP



The Auxiliary hosted a workshop at the 2026 Mid-winter Conference for veterans interested in learning to make poppies for the ALA Poppy Shop. Brenda Tryba of Post 179 conducted the training for eight veterans. Pictured: Brenda Tryba and Post Commander Jeremy M. Carolfi of Brookfield Post 298.

Wisconsin is one of the few states that distributes traditional crepe paper poppies **made by Veterans**. Veterans interested in becoming a Poppy Maker for the Poppy Shop should contact Bonnie Jakubczyk at wipoppyshop@yahoo.com. Veteran poppy makers earn \$100 per completed poppy kit. All materials are provided by Department.

POPPIES

Thank you to everyone who submitted poppy orders by December 15. Poppies are sold out but current orders will be filled in the order received.

New orders will not be accepted until August 2026.



QUILTS OF VALOR



QUILTS OF VALOR: ALA UNIT 189

Elizabeth Brennecke and Mary Rollert, members of ALA Unit 189 and Quilters on the Rock, presented a Quilt of Valor to John H. Himrich on his 90th birthday.



QUILTS OF VALOR: ALA UNIT 437

ALA Unit 437 in Mazomanie recently honored two veterans, Les Sander and Jim DeVoe, with Quilts of Valor. These Valor Quilts were presented by Mera O'Connell and Connie Handel from the Mazomanie Material Girls. Photo courtesy of Suzi Mickelson.

POPPY POSTER CONTEST

Kathy Grom
Department Chairman
kathy.grom@gmail.com
414-331-0302

Students in grades 2–12 are invited to participate in this year's ALA Poppy Poster Contest. This annual event encourages students to honor U.S. veterans by creating original artwork featuring the red remembrance poppy. Posters must include a hand drawn red poppy, a slogan of no more than ten words, and the words "American Legion Auxiliary." All artwork must be original and created by a single student. Grade level categories range from grades 2 through 12, with a separate category for students with special needs. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to express creativity while learning the significance of the poppy as a symbol of military sacrifice.

Timeline:

- February–March: Local contests announced in schools by the units.
- March–April: Posters due to local ALA units.
- April–May: District and department judging. The deadline for each unit to get their choices to Department is May 1.

CANDIDATES FOR DEPARTMENT & NATIONAL OFFICES

Candidates for department or national offices must email their announcement (300–350 words) with head/shoulder photo to deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org by Monday, March 16, 2026 for publication in the April issue of the *Wisconsin*.



Nathan Bond
Department Commander

In sports history, very few individuals have successfully transitioned from being outstanding players to becoming excellent coaches. Fewer still have performed both roles at the same time with much success. Even one of the most noteworthy exceptions, Boston Celtics Coach Bill Russell, eventually traded his high-tops for dress shoes only.

In our Wisconsin American Legion Family, we don't really have a choice. Our leaders must make the transition from player to coach—from Commander to Past Commander. The health and future of our organization demand it. The American Legion has survived for over 100 years because we have, by and large, done this well. Our most successful Posts, Units, Squadrons, and Chapters are those where past officeholders actively work to make current officeholders—and therefore the Local Legion Family—successful. These leaders don't simply dump responsibilities on the next person, but they also don't try to rule from behind the scenes. They coach, mentor, and support.

The most important thing a leader does is develop future leaders. If, as the elected leader of your Local Legion Family (Post, Unit, Squadron, or Chapter), there is no one prepared to take charge after you, then you are not fully accomplishing the mission. Past Department Commander Karl Stuvengen's motto was,

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

LEGACY FORWARD: FROM BEING A PLAYER ON THE COURT TO BEING A COACH ON THE SIDELINES

"Recruit the Next You!" He didn't mean just to sign up a new member. He meant to identify, encourage, and train members to take on leadership responsibilities. None of us will live forever, but the legacy of The American Legion must live on after us. To accomplish that mission, each of us needs to take a closer look at how we are—or are not—developing leaders.

That closer look must begin in the mirror. As a commander or president, am I trying to do it all myself? Am I delegating responsibilities to others? Am I allowing people to do things their own way, or insisting they do them my way? Am I open to new ideas, or do I think, "We've never done that before," and quietly quash the creativity of others? These are tough questions, and the honest answers are not always flattering. But they are necessary if we hope to see our Posts and Units thrive in the next generation.

I can already hear the objection: "But nobody else wants the job. If I don't do it, it won't get done." Developing new leaders is not just a science; it is also an art. Building people up takes time, patience, and intentional effort. Start people out with small tasks and help them grow into major roles and responsibilities. Leadership is rarely assumed overnight; it is usually cultivated over time.

And yes, it takes time and effort. Seeds don't grow unless they are planted. Relationships are the soil in which leaders grow, and no one grows into leadership without being coached. The best

coaches have genuine relationships with their players. They know their players' strengths and weaknesses. They know the challenges their players face both on and off the court. In the same way, the most "expensive" part of being a Legion leader ought to be your coffee or beer tab. Conversations with promising future leaders over a cup of coffee or a beer are vital to keeping the legacy of your Local Legion Family—and the legacy of The American Legion—alive.

So what do we do with this?

For every Legion Family leader reading this, I ask you to do the following:

- (1) Ask yourself those tough questions—and make changes if you don't like your answers.
- (2) Identify members with potential, even if they don't see it in themselves yet.
- (3) Find a place that serves a good cup of coffee (or your social beverage of choice).
- (4) Invite that promising future leader out for a conversation.
- (5) Give or create opportunities for those future leaders to try, fail, learn, and succeed.
- (6) Help them find their own way toward success, not just your way.
- (7) Repeat steps 1 through 6.

If we commit to moving from being players on the court to being coaches on the sidelines, we will ensure that our Posts, Units, Squadrons, and Chapters remain vibrant and strong—not just today, but for generations to come.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Sue Hembrook
Department President

Midwinter Conference has wrapped up as this article is being written. It proved to be a huge success. Attendance was the largest it has been since COVID and everyone there was engaged and ready to experience all that the conference had to offer. The interactions of the Family were highlighted in many of the classes and everyone added to the discussions on various ways the posts, units and squadrons can and are successfully working together for a common cause. Focus on the "mission" is the key to getting things done successfully.

The Auxiliary session was also very well attended. This session focused on the new online reporting method. Members were eager to learn of this new way of doing reporting online. It was amazing to see how this new process will make it so very much easier for units to submit their year end reports. More information will be available when it gets closer to reporting time. However, those in attendance realized the ease of this new process. Your department officers are ready, willing and able to answer any questions when it comes time to complete the forms.

Hospital tours are also happening at this time. It is so very rewarding to see the excellent care our veterans receive at our VA's and State Homes. Wisconsin is very fortunate to have so many facilities that serve our veterans and make care very accessible. The outpatient clinics around the state also provide services that help to make it easier and more affordable for our veterans to receive the health care services they require. Our facilities are staffed by exceptional health care workers and volunteers. It is truly amazing how compassionate and caring these dedicated people are that serve our veterans. It is almost as if they are caring for their own family members and that is evident in each and every one of our facilities.

Your generosity in providing material and financial donations to assist our volunteers and staff is phenomenal. Donations provide our veterans with the extras that make their stay more comfortable and enjoyable and are so very much appreciated. At Midwinter we had asked for cash donations for these "extras" and again you excelled. Approximately \$2,500 was collected to provide the extra toiletries, etc. that make our veterans more comfortable. Thank you, so very much! We will distribute these funds to each facility.

"It's amazing what can be done when nobody cares who gets the credit," Harry S. Truman.



Christopher Dannenmann
SAL Detachment Commander

Welcome aboard to all of our newest members and squadrons throughout the state. We currently have 7 new squadrons that have been chartered so far this year. Thank you for choosing the Sons of The American Legion to honor your family members who have served. Special thanks to all of the Post, District, Detachment, Blue cappers and dual members. Your selflessness dedication to The American Legion Family, its heritage and legacy shines because of YOU.

'It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.'

— Harry S. Truman

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER

Welcome to National Commander Bill Clancy to Wisconsin! As we enter into the coldest part of the year, Operation Comfort Warrior is in high gear all across the state. Whether you call it OCW, Operation Homeless Vets, Freez'in for a Reason or something else, our help is needed. Stop by a Squadron or Post and lend a hand to your comrades for those in need. This is also when Blood Banks and Food Banks are stretched to their limits. Our combined efforts can ease the burden of need and provide support to these vital organizations.

The ALF Dogs continue to be a favorite with each event we attend. We recently had three events scheduled in three different locations on the same day. Then, it snowed... a lot. Two of the events went well, handing out over 400 ALF Dogs. The third event in Milwaukee was not so lucky. Mother

Nature snowed-in our trailer and the plows ran behind schedule. It's Wisconsin- it happens.

Thanks to everyone that attended our Mid-Winter Conference and National Vice Commander Frank Meraz, Jr., for his knowledge, leadership and thoughtful words of inspiration. A special thank you to Leonard from Squadron 33 Neenah for his role as Assistant Chaplain.

You all have accomplished SO much- let's keep track of the difference we are making. Whether its Operation Comfort Warrior, Badger Boys State, Child Well-Being Fund, or a Blood Drive. Report all of your Squadron activities on your CSR's. Please send them into Detachment by June 1 so Congress can see what the Sons of The American Legion do to strengthen the Four Pillars of The American Legion.

Where there is a need, there is a Son.



Todd Nofsinger
Asst. State Director
American Legion
Riders Association

Greetings to my fellow Legionnaires and fellow Legion Riders. My name is Todd "Noffy" Nofsinger. I retired from the Army Reserve 1 July 2024 after spending 40 years in the Armed services of Army National Guard, Air National Guard and retiring from the Army Reserve. I have been in the Wisconsin American Legion since 2005 and a member of the Legion Riders since 2006.

I was nominated and then voted in by my fellow Legion Riders to assume the role of Assistant State Director working along side our state Director Corey Doehrmann as well as all other state officers. My biggest role in the Legion Riders to date has been planning and contacting the local Legion Posts to coordinate the stops for our state ride. I am also the membership chairman for the District 3 Riders. I have participated in 8 of

the American Legion National Legacy Rides, being the tail gunner in the "M trailer trash flight". I have also participated in all 10 of the state rides, except for 2017 when I was mobilized in Texas for the Army Reserve.

One of my missions for the upcoming year is to visit each District for one of their Legion Rider meetings to spread the word of the importance of participation in events at their respective posts as well as activities within their communities.

We will be having another state ride this year, with a safety meeting at Kenosha Post 21 on 25 June and the ride taking place 26-28 June, ending at Post 147 in Medford.

I look forward to serving my fellow Legionnaires and Riders in the upcoming year. Thank you all for your support.

If you have questions regarding The American Legion Riders please feel free to contact me at: widistrict3alra@gmail.com.

LEGION RIDERS DIRECTOR

Veterans Crisis Line



DIAL 988
then **PRESS 1**