



BADGER & WISCONSIN LEGIONNAIRE



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

2026 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL ALL-STARS



The 2026 American Legion Baseball and Softball seasons were celebrated with the All-Star banquet on Saturday, August 8 in Milwaukee honoring the Baseball and Softball All Stars. At the banquet, Terry Russell was inducted into the Hall of Fame. BELOW LEFT: Wisconsin American Legion Baseball Commissioner Dan Lukes (left) stands with Terry as he receives his award. On Sunday, August 9 the two All-Star baseball teams, the Stars and the Stripes, played after the conclusion of the Milwaukee Brewers game at American Family Field. BELOW RIGHT: This year, The Wisconsin American Legion was honored to have American Legion National Commander Dan Wiley and his wife Sonia attend the events.



MIDWINTER 2027 IS SET FOR JANUARY 21-24

The 103rd Midwinter Conference will be held at the Madison Marriott in Middleton from January 21-24, 2027. The Midwinter Conference is full of planning, learning and fun, and is your opportunity to meet new people and network with posts from across the state.

The weekend begins on **Thursday, January 21** with move in and set up. The American Legion Foundation Meeting will be held at 5:00 p.m.

Friday, January 22 is the meeting of our Department Committees and Commissions. Ever wonder what happens in these committees or maybe are interested in being on a

committee? This is your chance to sit in and listen to them in action as they work on ways to improve the lives of veterans, their families, and their communities in Wisconsin. That evening, enjoy the many hospitality rooms and meet the future leaders of the Wisconsin American Legion.

Saturday, January 23 is the day for **ALL LEGIONNAIRES, AUXILIARY and SONS**. This is a full day of learning! Classes include some of your favorites such as Officer Courses, Funeral Honors, Service Officer training, and more.

SEE MIDWINTER, PAGE 3

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6th – Ken Flock
7th – Ben Van Horn
8th – Penny Peeters
9th – Terry Quatsoe
10th – Felicia Decker
11th – Robert Smith
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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Bonnie Dorniak, Exec. Secretary/Treasurer**

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.

FORT MCCOY TO HOST 10TH WALLECA IN JUNE



The 10th Wisconsin American Legion Law Enforcement Career Academy (WALLECA) is scheduled June 21-25, 2027, at the Wisconsin State Patrol Training Academy at Fort McCoy.

This academy is available to current high school sophomores and juniors who are interested in a career in law enforcement. The 2027 application will be made available online at wilegion.org/walleca beginning January 4, 2027. Completed applications must be submitted by March 12, 2027, to be considered. The academy is

provided at no cost to the cadet. The program is funded by our valued donors.

Cadets will experience classroom instruction, physical fitness training and hands on experiences. The academy ends with a graduation ceremony that can be attended by family and friends of the graduates.

If you would like additional information about the academy or would like to donate to support the academy, contact Programs Coordinator Sheri Hicks at Legion Headquarters at (608)745-1090.

BBS PREPARES FOR '27 SEASON

The 84th session of Badger Boys State is scheduled June 13-19, 2027, at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. Planning and preparations are already underway for next year’s session.



Sponsorship packets will be mailed out to all Wisconsin American Legion Posts and other sponsors the end of October. If you do not receive one, please contact Programs Coordinator Sheri Hicks at Legion Headquarters and she can send you one via U.S. mail or email.

It is not too early to start recruiting students to attend. Contact your local high schools to let them know about this great opportunity for current high school juniors. Also talk to your Post members, friends, neighbors, coaches, and other community members and organizations. They may know a student who would benefit from attending Badger Boys State, or they may be interested in sponsoring a student from your community to attend the session.

For more information about Badger Boys State you can access our website, badgerboysstate.org.

LEGACY DONATION AT NATIONAL CONVENTION



Wisconsin American Legion Department Commander Steven Kohnke and members of the Wisconsin Delegation at the National Convention in Louisville announced their donation of \$71,900 to the 2026 Riders Legacy Run.

VOLUNTEERS SERVE THE WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON VETERANS HOSPITAL

The Wm. S. Middleton Veterans Hospital in Madison is busy taking care of veterans with around 100 beds for inpatients and 26 beds in our CLC (Community Living Center) for longer staying veterans and those on a transplant list. We get veterans from all across the country at times for our excellent services. We also have in our CLC a Hospice area with five beds. We get high marks nationally for our hospital and last year we were considered Number 1 in patient services and patient satisfaction in the country. The hospital is blessed with 26 Volunteer

Organizations. The American Legion is the largest with 30 volunteers.

I have one Deputy and we both are considered Red Coat Ambassadors (actually Red Vests) that greet outpatients as they arrive for their appointments (which we have daily between 1000-1300) and assist those with a wheelchair if they need one for their first appointment. Other volunteer positions are Escort Services, Van Drivers and Patient Visitation. We operate on a budget through HQ and use our funds for Women’s needs, the Food Pantry, Flag Magnets, 4x6 flags

for distribution, and many other needs requested by the Volunteer Office, including Social Services and the Craft Room. Posts interested in donating to our cause can send their check to HQ with Middleton or Madison VA in the Memo section for correct depository.

We are on schedule to get a Fisher House in the area for veterans and their families. Building will start this fall with completion early next year. Fundraising is in progress.

Joe Hodgson
Hospital Representative

LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST

ACCIDENTAL DEATH PLAN

HELP PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVERED ACCIDENTS IN YOUR CAR...AT HOME... ON THE JOB...ON VACATION - ANYWHERE YOU MIGHT BE.

WWW.THELIT.COM/ACCIDENT-PROTECTION



THANK YOU FOR HARD COPY OPT OUT

We thank everyone who opted out of receiving the hard copy of the *Badger Legionnaire* after reading our communication in the September edition.

You can still opt out of receiving the hard copy of the *Badger Legionnaire* and *Wisconsin*. Just go to this link <https://wilegion.org/badger-legionnaire> to opt out of the hard copies and to read the electronic version on our website. The electronic version is available before the hard copies hit mailboxes. This link also provides information on how to submit an article for our publication.

TIME TO PREPARE FOR THE 2027 ORATORICAL CONTEST

To the “Greatest Most Important people in the whole wide world,” we never quit thinking about the oratorical program and the rewards it offers.

I am so pleased with last year’s event and congratulate Stephen Bott on his success. Stephen gave his speech at the Department Convention in Appleton and received a standing ovation - it was great.

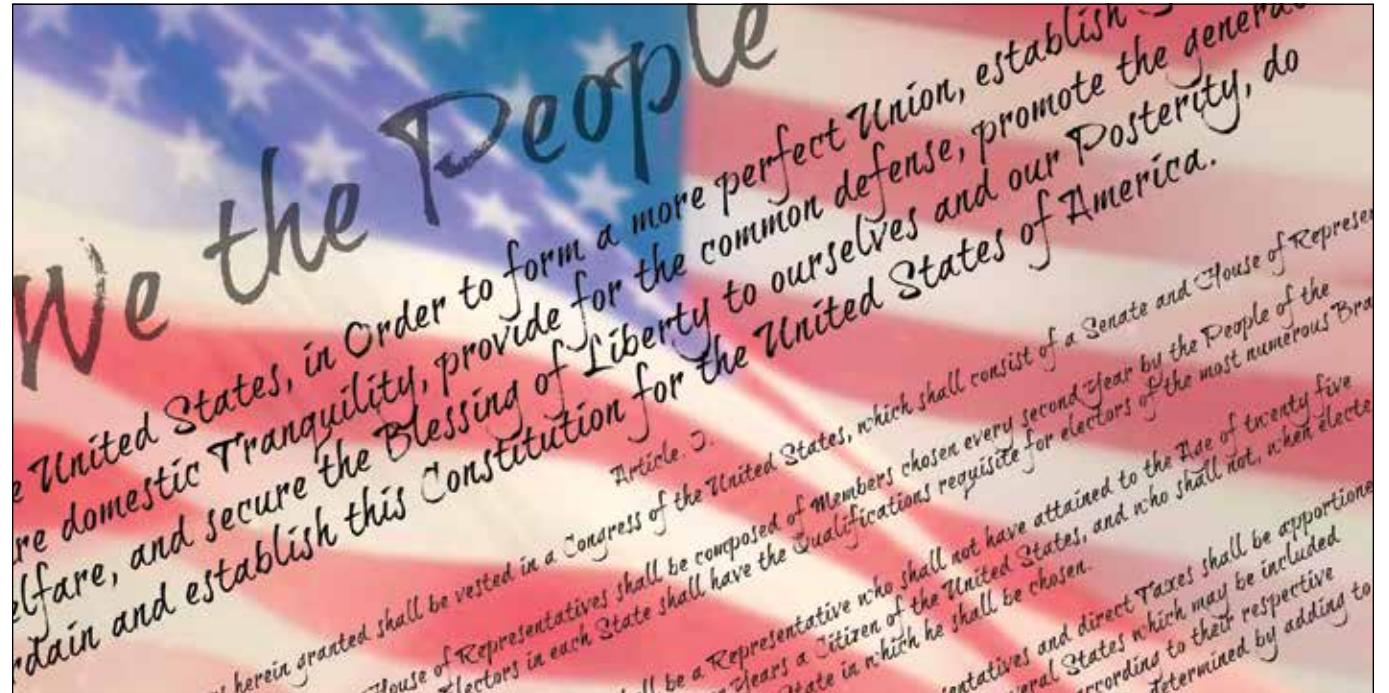
To ensure knowledge of the program and avoid the excuse, “we don’t have time to prepare” National has already selected the assigned topics for 2027.

The 2027 assigned topics are:

The Preamble – We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article VI Paragraph 2 – This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

Amendment XIV Section 3 – No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the



enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Amendment XXII Section 1 – No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. But this Article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this Article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person

who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this Article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

I can never thank our volunteers enough. Thank you again, we are accepting volunteers for next year’s program, call Sheri at Department Headquarters to get your name on the list.

It is time to advertise the program, contact your schools, remind your kids and grandkids that there are opportunities for national competition and

scholarship money for college.

It is time to schedule your Post, County, and District Contests. We will be accepting two names of contestants, a winner and a runner-up from each district. The plan is to have three regional contests with 4 contestants each and a final contest with three contestants.

If your post, county, or district has questions on how to run a contest, my contact information is telephone (715) 452-5329, I am willing to help. Just let me know.

Submitted by Oratorical Chair Robert Stone.

**AMERICAN
LEGION
—WISCONSIN—**

**2026
Celebrate
America 250
Sweepstakes!**

**Are you interested
in a chance to win some
money for Christmas?**

Here’s your chance to win one of **51 prizes** totaling **\$14,776!** Two pages of sweepstakes tickets are being included **in this edition** of the **Badger Legionnaire**.

**This drawing is right before Christmas.
Could this be YOUR Christmas gift?**

Your donation is greatly appreciated! Remember, **all proceeds** from this sweepstakes AND the ongoing raffle **benefit our programs**. Complete rules can be found on our website at <https://wilegion.org/its-happening>.

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
Nov. 5**

**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 5 November**. 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

Be the lifeline.



In Partnership With



MIDWINTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Watch the website for updates as they become available. Where else can you get that much knowledge in one day for only \$35? The American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and the Riders will also be holding sessions over the weekend.

Saturday night, we will start with the dinner, then the banquet hall will be transformed into the Copacabana where Joe Scalissi, a Dean Martin impersonator, will be entertaining us for his Happy Hour show. His blend of comedy and music will have you laughing and dancing. Dress up like you are headed to the Copacabana, a famous nightclub where Dean Martin used to play!

Sunday, January 24 – join the Chaplains for a Four Chaplains service, followed by the Department Executive Committee.

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

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



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.

PAIR MARKS 100TH BIRTHDAYS AT POST 149



Al Herwig & John Brown, both members of Post 149 in Sheboygan Falls, celebrated their 100th birthdays this year. Both served in the Navy during WWII. Al was a Machinist on Guam and John, a Medic on Iwo Jima. Both renewed their drivers licenses last year at age 99! Al and John, along with the Post's Honor Guard, participated in the America 250 Parade in Sheboygan Falls on August 2nd, commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Happy birthday, Al and John!



POST 487 HONORS 80-YEAR MEMBERSHIP



American Legion Stokes-Liebman Post 487 of Cable was honored to present a very rare piece of paper to Robert "Bob" J. Nagel. Gary Friermood, Sgt. At Arms of Post 487, presented an 80-year Membership Certificate to Bob on July 5 at his lake home in Northern Wisconsin. Bob was thrilled to receive his certificate signed by National Commander Dan Wiley, National Adjutant Rodney Rolland and Commander of Post 487 James Kinzie. Bob is a 102-year-old WWII Army veteran who was a member of the AL Frank H. Nagel, Jr. Post 119 and the AL Stokes-Liebman Post 487. Congratulations to Bob on his 80 years of being a loyal and dedicated member of the American Legion! Photo by Julie Horn-Friermood.

POST 268 HONORS 70 YEARS OF SERVICE

On September 2, the Bruce American Legion, Earl J. Conley Post 268, had the honor and privilege of awarding Korean War Veteran Stanley Moore, with an Honorary Life Membership for his "70" years of continuous membership in the American Legion and Earl J. Conley Post 268. From left: Post 268 Chaplain Mike Newman, Rick Moore (son), Colonel Douglas Moore (son), Stanley Moore (seated), Post 268 Commander Rick Ensenbach and Post 268 Adjutant Jim Lee.



POST 382 HONORS GOLD STAR FAMILIES

Henrizi-Schneider Post 382 American Legion honored Gold Star Families locally at the Menomonee Falls Historical Society. A notable honor is the Gold Star Room located at the Steichen House at Old Falls Village Historical Park which has dedicated memorials recognizing local service mem-

bers who made the ultimate sacrifice. ABOVE: Post 382 Honor Guard for Gold Star Ceremony. BELOW LEFT: Post 382 Bugler for Gold Star Ceremony. BELOW RIGHT: Post 382 Commander with Bagpipers for Gold Star Ceremony. Submitted by Jeff Paige, Henrizi-Schneider American Legion Post 382.



FISK TESTIFIES AT WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



Department Legislative Committee Chair Paul Fisk presented the American Legion response to the Commission's review of Veterans' Benefits. This took place on Tuesday, August 25 at the Wisconsin State Capitol. The Committee intends to address benefits that have not been reviewed in decades. Some benefits will need to be updated to reflect changes in economic and military conditions. This photo was taken by Department Historian Morris Sadicario.

CRUISE FOR A CAUSE: FAMILY FIRST 2026



Milwaukee Post 537 hosted the American Legion Riders on June 26 for their “Cruise for a Cause: Family First 2026” stop for lunch. Many thanks to Mission BBQ, West Allis, for catering the event. Over 100 riders participated, and over \$92,274 was raised. This was a three-day motorcycle fundraising ride that was held on June 26-28 from Kenosha to Medford. The ride had three focuses: Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF), Operation A.L.F. and the Wisconsin Auxiliary Badger Girls State. The lead rider was Corey Doehrmann, Wisconsin American Legion Riders Association Director.



3RD DISTRICT GOLF OUTING

The 3rd District held its annual Golf Outing on Sunday July 26. Attached are a few pictures from the outing.

TOP: Participants gathered for the Pledge of Allegiance before heading out to our assigned starting positions.

BELOW: Golfers gathered at the Barneveld Post for lunch and door prizes after 18 holes. This was our largest turnout of golfers so far. A big thank you to Dennis Woods for putting the outing together and another big thank you to Barneveld Post Commander Lee Pollock and the members for use of the Post and a great meal. We also need to thank the Deer Valley Golf Course for supporting The American Legion.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

COMMANDER AT CONVENTION



Wisconsin Department Commander Steven Kohnke announced a donation of \$300 towards the National Emergency Fund on behalf of Past National Commander Denise Rohan and Past National Commander Dan Seehafer at the 107th American Legion National Convention in Louisville.

65 YEARS OF SERVICE AT POST 268

On August 25, Korean War veteran Frank “Otto” Tiegs, was awarded an Honorary Life Membership for his 65 years of continuous membership in the American Legion and Earl J. Conley Post 268 in Bruce. Pictured Left to Right, Post 268 Chaplain Mike Newman, seated Frank “Otto” Tiegs and Post 268 Commander Rick Ensenbach.



MT. CALVARY POST 454 50-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Post 454 member Larry Dikeman, SAL Commander Mike Schmitz, and Honor Guard Commander Willie Sparks (top left to right) present member Tom Schmitz (bottom) with a 50-year certificate for continuous membership with Post 454 Mount Calvary.





QUILT OF VALOR FOR BIRTHDAY 101



A “Quilt of Valor” was recently presented to Paul Donatell of Post 98 in Cumberland. The presentation took place during the Haugen Fun Days Bear Lake /Haugen Fire Department annual Pancake Breakfast. Pictured assisting Paul with the Quilt is Barron County Sheriff Jodi Kummet. Paul celebrated his 101st birthday in July. The Cumberland Legion Family would like to congratulate Paul and thank him for his service to our country.

NEW SIGN FOR WAUNAKEE POST 360



Waunakee American Legion Post 360 member Jim Steffenhagen designed and donated a new sign for the post.



Left to Right: Nathan Bond, State Commander; Sgt. Gunderson and Phil Haas, Post 437.

SERGEANT LIN GUNDERSON FROM IOWA COUNTY WINS LEGION'S LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Sgt. Lin Gunderson was awarded the Edward J. Ormsby Law and Order Award from The Wisconsin American Legion at the Department convention in Appleton on July 17. The certificate is awarded to the top police officer in Wisconsin. Sgt

Gunderson serves in the Sheriff's Department of Iowa County, living in Arena Township. Lin also served as a volunteer for the EMS and Fire Departments. He was sponsored by the Mazomanie Greening – Buelow American Legion Post 437.

MARSHALL POST 279 SWEARS IN NEW OFFICERS FOR 2026-27



The new officers for Marshall Post 279 for the term 2026-2027 are as follows, from left to right: Marlin Hensler, Robert Zickert (Members at Large), John Annen (Service Officer), Matthew Pedersen (Sergeant at Arms), James Olsen (Chaplain), Scott Relitz (First Vice), Pete Ponti (Historian), Gary Johnson (Second Vice), Jane Cree (Finance Officer), Steve Roberts (Commander), and Cindy Brosig (Swearing-In Officer).



POSTING COLORS AT THE HERO BOWL

Elkhorn American Legion Post 45 posting the colors for the National Anthem at the 2026 Elkhorn High School Football Hero Bowl. Along with Post 45 are members of VFW Post 6375 and Army Reservists. The Hero Bowl upholds the values of gratitude and patriotism as it honors active military, Veterans, and first responders.



ABOVE: Hawley-Dieckhoff American Legion Post 33 Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and Officer Joe Benoit of the Neenah Police Department. **BELOW:** 2nd Vice Commander Tom Schmidt, Adjutant Carla Reidenbach, Commander Bob Borszich and Beth Clay Vice President of Community Impact with staff members of the United Way of the Fox Cities.



POST 33 BRAT FRY BENEFITS TORNADO VICTIMS

Hawley Dieckhoff American Legion Post 33 in Neenah, WI recently participated in Neenah National Night Out with a Brat Fry. Neighboring communities, Menasha and Fox Crossing, also had National Night Out events planned, but cancelled theirs due to devastating damage to their communities. Neenah opted to continue with theirs and invited the neighboring communities to come to their event.

Hawley-Dieckhoff American Legion Post 33 still held their Brat Fry at the Neenah event, opted to absorb their costs for the event, and to only request donations for tornado

victims. The event was very well attended, with members of the Hawley-Dieckhoff Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of the Legion grilling and giving brats, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hot dogs, chips, sodas and water to attendees.

The Legion gathered donations from members prior to the event and received additional donations from attendees at the event as well as other community members totaling \$5,600.

Legion members presented a check for the full amount to The United Way of the Fox Cities on August 12.



CELEBRATING THE FOURTH



Menomonee Falls Post 382 member Retired Army Lt. Colonel Manny Devara in the Menomonee Falls Independence Day Parade.



OPERATION ALF STOP

Sons of The American Legion Operation ALF stopped by and talked with Kevin Westhuis before they started the games on day two of the 2026 AA State American Legion Baseball tournament in River Falls.

POST 501 CELEBRATES LABOR DAY WITH "PINK HOUSES"



Members of Madison American Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit 501 enjoyed celebrating Labor Day with the "Pink Houses" Band at the East Side Club. Shown, from left, are PPC Thomas, Christine, Unit President Becky, Phil, Singer Nicky, Gerry, Eldon, Virginia, Singer Jacki, PC Jerry, and Keith.

PIGGLY WIGGLY DONATION FOR POST 19

Hartford's Courtney-Carr-Milner Post 19 Commander Mary Millikin accepts Fox Brothers Piggy Wiggly Round Up Fundraiser check for June 2026 from manager Tyler Zinda.





POST 382 ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP



Annually, Menomonee Falls Henrizi-Schneider American Legion Post 382, in conjunction with the National American Legion Charter and The Four Pillars of the American Legion, offer this Post 382 Academic Scholarship for members of our Post, Post Auxiliary and Post SAL. This program is intended to assist applicants from our Post 382 Family to pursue higher education to achieve their goals. The 2026 Winner is Nora Faith Latus. Commander Tom Branta congratulates Nora Faith on her achievement.

ONE SUPERIOR DONATION FOR POST 435



Ben Anderson, Commander of the Superior Richard I. Bong Post 435, is shown on the left receiving a check for \$6820.31 from Tim Michalski, Manager of the East End, Superior, Wisconsin, Super One Grocery Store. In the past, Super One Grocery Stores have been an avid supporter of the Local Legion Family in Superior. Kudos to Post 435!



The keynote speaker for the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at Aero Park in Watertown was Daniel J. Seehafer, Past American Legion National Commander 2023-2024.

THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL DEDICATION DRAWS 3,000 IN WATERTOWN

The dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at Aero Park was a powerful and emotional occasion for Watertown, drawing more than 3,000 people to honor those whose names are etched into the Wall and to support Veterans living with the lasting effects of war. Veterans, families, and community members gathered in a shared moment of remembrance, gratitude, and healing. The keynote speaker for the event was Daniel J. Seehafer, Past American Legion National Commander 2023-2024. Many attendees reflected on the significance of the day. Vietnam Veteran Bob Braasch was impressed by the turnout, the park's setting, the speeches, and the flyover. While proud of the event and the Wall's meaningful location, he also felt a sense of sadness, wishing Veterans of his era had received similar appreciation when they returned home in 1967. Desert Storm veteran Jeremy Schmidt attended with his father, a Vietnam Veteran. Knowing the ceremony could bring up difficult emotions, Schmidt wanted to be available for his father and other Veterans who might be struggling. His Mental Health First Aid training reinforced the importance of empathy and support during such a meaningful event. For Vietnam Veteran Barry Lawrence, the Wall evokes memories that remain difficult to discuss. He described

thoughts of the war as a punch to the heart and a tightening in his throat. The emotions remain so strong that he has never participated in an Honor Flight. During the dedication, he chose instead to share a lighter story from his service. Stephen Zillmer, Commander, Watertown American Legion Post 189 reflected on the memorial's broader meaning. He noted that the Wall represents not only the 58,000 lives lost but also the grief carried by countless families and loved ones. While it symbolizes both service and the divisions of the war years, he believes it now stands as a place of healing and remembrance. The respect shown by thousands of attendees, he said, "says it ALL." The Wall's permanent home at Aero Park was made possible through the efforts of American Legion Post 189 and dedicated community members. Ryan Hepp, president of Jerry Hepp Excavating, Inc., said he was honored to help design and lead the project. Because Aero Park has long been part of his family's legacy, the memorial holds special meaning. Today, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall stands as a lasting tribute to sacrifice, service, and resilience, honoring those who never came home while offering reflection, gratitude, and healing for generations to come. Submitted by Sunny Schneider.

POST 20 PRESENTS THE COLORS AT WATERFORD FOOTBALL



Members of Waterford Essman-Schroeder American Legion Post 20 present the colors prior to the first football game of the 2026 season held August 21 at Waterford High School.

HONORING AN ACTIVE POST 21 MEMBER



Post 21 Kenosha honored Ronnie Dulin who passed away on July 23, 2026. Ronnie was a lifetime member of America Legion Post 21, a member of the Kenosha Area Honor Guard, newly elected Sgt. At Arms for Post 21, Kenosha County Council and the First District. He graduated from the Wisconsin American Legion College and the National Basic training for The American Legion. He was also a member of The Sons of The American Legion Sons of The American Legion Squadron 21 where he was elected 1st Vice Commander and a member of the 40&8 Voiture 410 Kenosha.



GERMANTOWN HELPS NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIER

American flag flown in combat and certificate presented by Germantown Post 1 Member, SSG Kurt Degner, 127-2 INF, WI National Guard, to Post 1 Commander Bonnell, in appreciation for the financial support given, enabling a guard member to return home for an emergency, during the unit's 2025-2026 deployment.



WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION FOUNDATION, INC.

As I begin this article, I want to express my sincere appreciation for the work of PNC Denise Rohan. Through her leadership, the Foundation was able to regain its 501(c)(3) status and strengthen the guiding documents that will help position the Foundation for future success. If you haven't already heard, the Foundation is open for business!

Our mission is "To provide support for charitable and educational purposes, making distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt under the Internal Revenue Code."

I encourage you to visit wilegion.org and look under the "Resources" tab to learn more about the Foundation and the opportunities available to support the programs and projects of The American Legion Family. You can also use the QR code to the right to access the page.

The Foundation webpage provides information on how you can donate to a specific project or program or contribute to the Foundation's general fund. It also explains how to apply for Fiscal Sponsorships. This financial tool can be especially valuable to Posts, Counties, and Districts seeking to fund capital improvement projects.

Our newest opportunity is **The 250 Club**, a permanent endowment established to support American Legion

programs for generations to come.

When you contribute to The 250 Club, your donation is invested in the future of our programs. Our goal is to raise \$1.5 million over the next three years. The principal of your contribution will remain invested, while the earnings generated by the endowment will be used to support American Legion programs.

Our vision is to have 2,000 members of the American Legion Family contribute \$250 annually for the next three years. However, we understand that \$250 may not be possible for everyone. That's why we simply ask you to consider becoming part of this legacy at an amount that is comfortable for you.

Every contribution, regardless of size, helps us build a stronger future for The American Legion and the programs that serve our veterans, their families, and our communities.

This is more than making a donation, it's about investing in our future and leaving a legacy.

I encourage you to become part of The 250 Club and help ensure that the programs we value today will continue to serve generations of veterans tomorrow.

Jim Johnson, President
Wisconsin American Legion Foundation, Inc



DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT



Julie Muhle
Department
Adjutant

Hello!

I want to talk about AI (Artificial Intelligence) today and how it can help and how it becomes a problem for The American Legion.

How does it help? Two quick things. You can basically describe a flyer you want to create and it can do it all for you. Yep. That easy. The creativity for the flyer is only limited by

what you tell it. I have seen some pretty amazing and creative flyers!

You can use it to take minutes of your meeting. Rather than using a recorder and then having to retype everything, you can purchase a notetaker from Amazon for a reasonable price so it takes the minutes, then it will give you the transcripts of the meeting and a summary. If you choose to pay for services, some will give you highlights and insights.

Where the problem comes in is when AI is used to put The American Legion emblem on the flyers or other types of promotions. First, if you are using the emblem or brandmark, you need to have permission to do so. On anything you create. Why? These are trademarked and there are specific colors, letter styles, and rules to apply when using them.

The National Judge Advocate issued a statement regarding this matter – *Generative AI may NOT be used to create, recreate, upscale, alter, stylize, or modify any official Legion symbol or brandmark – including the Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, Riders, Legion Family, Baseball, Be The One, Boys/Girls State and Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, Legion charities, and any sub-branding, down to any Department, District, Post, Squadron, or program. Even a 1% variance in color, proportion, or font weight violates the Legion's legal ownership of the marks.*

Official approved files can be found at legion.org/brand. The permission for emblem use can be found on our website at <https://wilegion.org/membership-forms-%26-tools>. This takes you to the electronic version. You can also download the pdf and send it to julie.muhle@wilegion.org. To avoid delays, fill the form out completely.



James Bond
WDVA
Secretary

WDVA SECRETARY

Greetings, Legionnaires! Congratulations to your newly elected State Commander, Steve Kohnke. Steve visited me at WDVA's offices in August, and we had a chance to talk about our shared military experiences, families, and department priorities. We discussed working together to serve Wisconsin veterans and ways we can strengthen the relationship between WDVA and the Legion and Auxiliary.

Thank you for once again inviting me to speak at your state convention in Appleton this past July. I appreciate the opportunity to share updates with you, to keep the lines of communication open. I can't tell you how much I value the feedback I get from veterans one-on-one. Over the last three and half years since I was appointed Secretary, I've come to rely on your honesty about the challenges facing veterans, even when it isn't the easy thing to say. It takes courage to tell me what things aren't working, or what we need to improve on. Thank you for being direct. It is a big part of why we've been able to improve the services that WDVA offers on behalf of veterans. Holding us accountable to our mission helps us and we're all better for it.

One area I'd like to highlight is the great work and improvements within our teams at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes in Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove. The last couple of years, starting with COVID, have been hard on our homes. The nursing home industry is facing unprecedented challenges and WDVA is not immune from those challenges. We've faced rising costs, staffing shortages, changes in federal reimbursement rates and coverage, and it all took its toll.

Unlike most regular nursing homes, we are overseen by both CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) and by the Federal VA. We are surveyed by both, and some of those surveys were tough to take. But they showed us where we needed to make changes. The level and quality of care for our residents wasn't the issue, most of the problems were administrative. But we took each and every negative survey as a challenge to do better.

Tammy Servatius, who many of you know from her time as Commandant at King, is now leading our entire Division of Veterans Homes, and we've brought in new Commandants at King and Union Grove as well. Their enthusiasm and commitment to providing top notch care to our members are evident in everything they do. Our most recent surveys reflect that commitment to improving the quality of care. And for the first time in years, the census at our homes in both King and Union Grove are growing.

I'm proud of the care and attention that the veterans and their spouses receive at all three locations. For those who haven't, please consider visiting. See for yourself how special these places are. And if you can't make the trip, check out our Homes social media pages on Facebook. Seeing is believing.

On behalf of everyone at WDVA, thank you for being our partners to honor our promises to Wisconsin's veterans.



Jerry Lauby
PDVC, Chair
Americanism
Committee

AMERICANISM

As the Department Americanism Chairman, and as a delegate to the 107th National American Legion Convention, I wish to share with you my most recent experience while attending the Convention in Louisville KY. 46 other delegates attended the Americanism Convention Committee meeting on Sunday August 30, 2026. Mark Avis (MA) was elected Chairman and Mike Donnelly (NC) was elected Secretary.

There were four (4) resolutions that came before this committee for review and consideration.

- **Resolution #5** Department of South Dakota; American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year Eligibility Referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism
- **Resolution #9** Department of Arizona Voter identification for Federal Elections Approved with amendment. Referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism
- **Resolution #23** Department of New York Operation Enduring Freedom Day Initially rejected, but discussion led to amendment Referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism
- **Resolution #26** Department of Wisconsin American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year Eligibility Referred to the Standing Commission on Americanism

Resolution #5 (SD) and Resolution #26 (WI) may possibly be merged into one approved resolution, as the elements of the aforementioned resolutions look good for favorable action by the Commission in either of the fall meetings, or possible spring of 2027.

In addition to attending the Americanism Convention Committee meeting, I also attended the Americanism Commission meeting, and along with other items of business, our committee watched videos of the American Legion Americanism Youth Champions. These talented teenagers were selected in National competition are rightfully the best of class, or best of the best! They were on center stage Tuesday of the convention to receive their respective awards.

- The American Legion Youth Champions are:**
- Tylar Hanley – Export, Pennsylvania, 2025 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain
 - Alexis McCullough – Bourbonnais, Illinois, 2026 Eagle Scout of the Year
 - Juliet Hetzel – Colorado Springs, Colorado, 2026 National Oratorical Contest Champion
 - Alexandra Orr – West Virginia, 2026 Shooting Sports, Sporter Champion
 - Maggie Palfrey – West Virginia, 2026 Shooting Sports, Precision Champion
 - Sawyer Ray – Arkansas Boys Nation President

Our American Legion Family must continue to support our youth programs not only through our Department Americanism Programs, but also at the Post, County, and District level. I ask that you reach out to any of our Americanism program Chairmen and Women as you will likely offer various forms of support. In addition to the aforementioned National Americanism programs, the Department Americanism Committee also include the following programs; County Youth Government Day, Badger Boys State, WALLECA, American Legion Girls Softball, A&G Testing and Schneider Emanuel Scholarship competition. In addition, the Legion Riders Association and the SAL assigned to the Americanism Committee are simply an amazing and awesome group within the American Legion Family. They are an incredible group of volunteers!

NEW OFFICERS FOR DARLINGTON POST 214



Darlington American Legion Post 214 Officers for the 2026/2027 year. Pictured from the left are Sgt-At-Arms Bill Weinbrenner, Chaplain Tim Stover, 2nd Vice Kurt Jasinski, 1st Vice Mike Bach, past Historian Don Davis, Post Commander Dave Gough and Adjutant Dan O'Brien. Absent for the photo is our Service Officer Sam Fuller.

1ST DISTRICT COMMANDER



Tom Visintainer Sr. was installed as the new 1st District Commander.

MONDOVI POST 154 AND AUXILIARY UNIT 154 AT 2026 COUNTY FAIR

Mondovi's American Legion Post 154 and Auxiliary Unit 154 thank all who supported raffle and bicycle drawings at the 2026 Buffalo County Fair in affiliation with Pepin County!

It was outstanding to gather important interest in both Legion and Auxiliary membership, plus support for Coffee & Donuts with Vets the first Monday of each month. Of our ongoing goals, we addressed many: Children & Youth, Fundraising, Membership, & Veteran Affairs! Thank you!

Bicycle drawings were conducted each weekend day of the fair and each name selected won a bicycle and bicycle helmet. Participation for kids was free.

Winners from Ettrick, WI; Farmington, MN; and Durand, WI are pictured with Bill Rockwell, Post 154 member; Cindy Giese, Unit 154 Vice President; Galen Aase, Post 154 Commander; or Karen Lier, Unit 154 Treasurer; not pictured is Laurie Nichols, Unit 154 President.

Raffle Gift Certificates were drawn from \$5 tickets purchased. Ten winners were awarded \$150, \$100, \$75, \$50, or 6 winners for \$25 in Gunderson Foods purchases.

Sincere thanks to all for ongoing and generous support of Mondovi's Legion Post 154 and Auxiliary Unit 154 activities honoring veterans and their families. Thank a veteran every day!



Bike winners were chosen on Friday (above), Saturday (below left) and Sunday (below right) of the fair. Each won a bicycle and bicycle helmet.



QUILTS OF VALOR IN BLACK EARTH

Three Black Earth American Legion Post 313 members were honored at the August 10 monthly meeting with Quilts of Valor. Receiving quilts L-R are Raymond "Jay" Droessler, Francis Jelle and Roger Runk. Family members holding quilts.

POST 33 AT APPLETON'S FLAG DAY PARADE



ABOVE: George Schroeder, Adjutant for SAL Squadron 33 Hawley-Dieckhoff American Legion, plays Taps. **AT LEFT:** Members of the Neenah-Menasha Honor Guard participated in the 75th Annual Flag Day Parade in Appleton.

Photos provided with courtesy and full permission from Dan Powers/USA TODAY Network-Wisconsin.



VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

CONTINUED SERVICE

James Fialkowski
Department Veterans
Service Officer

As we enter this holiday season of giving, family, friends, and remembrance, I wanted to thank our American Legion Family Members. It is your continued service that allows us to accomplish so many things in Wisconsin. From our invaluable programs throughout the posts in the state, to the incredible healing done at Camp, to what we do at the Service Office, we are all still serving.

Here in the service office, we are proud to assist many veterans, and their families get their due benefits. The types of benefit include but are not limited to compensation for service-connected disabilities, wartime veteran's pension for those in need, death pension, dependent indemnity compensation, home adaptation, automobile allowance, burial allowance, education, and Veteran Readiness and Employment benefits.

We also help families to obtain: Temporary Financial Assistance through National level Children and Youth, Temporary Financial Assistance program, our Department Troop and Family Support Fund, headstones for veterans, apply for discharge upgrades, assisted military retirees with applications for Combat Related Special Compensation, and apply for lost awards and decorations. Additionally, we staff Veteran's Benefit Supermarkets and other Veteran Events around the state.

We continue to represent veterans in Board of Veterans' Appeals Hearings before the Judge by video and video/in-person hearings for the local VA Regional Office. We continue to provide ancillary benefits assistance to those who qualify (example, state property tax credit). We Attended VA Regional Office Service Officer and VA Hospital Meetings. The Service Office does ongoing professional training for all employees. I am part of Reclaiming Your Path as a veteran partner and mentor, and we are currently working on a "Be The One" Mental Health Navigator project. There will be more about this project in the future.

According to the numbers provided by the Veterans Affairs data report, Wisconsin American Legion representatives assisted in the receipt of over \$80 Million in one month of federal veteran benefits into the state of Wisconsin. We are on track for the total benefits received in the year 2026 to be \$960 million. I want to thank all involved for their invaluable work efforts.

When you consider the activities of The Wisconsin American Legion Family, the service office, along with the number of veterans our hospital volunteer's assist, those veterans that attend Camp American Legion, and those laid to rest under our unclaimed remains program, the number of people we assist is impressive to say the least.

You can certainly appreciate that this Department of Wisconsin American Legion takes Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation very seriously. Our devotion to continued service is a credit to our legacy to our community and nation. I am proud of our family, your devotion to mutual helpfulness, and the support you provide for the Camp and our Service Office. You are all to be commended. Thank you and bountiful blessings, this holiday season.

KINGSTON POST 395 STAYS ENGAGED



ABOVE: Post 395 Commander Derek Kohn presents member Thomas Medick with a certificate for his 42 years of membership. **BELOW:** 6th District SAL Detachment Commander Shawn McCrary made a visit to Kingston Post 395 to discuss Sons of The American Legion. **BOTTOM:** Three silhouettes of soldiers were gifted to Post 395 by Robert and Janet Burdick. Robert made the silhouettes.



WAUNAKEE POST 360 PARTICIPATED IN WAUNAFEST PARADE



Waunakee Post 360 participated in the WaunaFest parade on July 26. ABOVE LEFT: Riding in the WaunaFest parade are Post 360 Legionnaire of the Year, Jim Steffenhagen, and member Jim Spahn. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Boy Scout Troop 46 float in the WaunaFest parade. **BELOW:** Legion Riders in the WaunaFest parade. **BOTTOM:** Post 360 Honor Guard leads the WaunaFest parade.





“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

CAMP AMERICAN LEGION

HOW DOES THE NORTHWOODS HELP HEALING?



Jim Klement
Camp American Legion Director

Camp American Legion can have a surprisingly powerful healing effect because it combines several things that support physical, emotional, and mental well-being: time outdoors, movement, community, rest, and a break from everyday pressures.

Mental and emotional healing
Being surrounded by trees, water, fresh air, and natural sounds can help calm the nervous system. Time in nature is associated with lower stress, improved mood, and reduced mental fatigue. Without the constant demands of phones, work, and routines, people often have more space to think, process emotions, and simply breathe.

A reset for the mind
Nature gives the brain a different kind of stimulation. Instead of constantly consuming information, you notice birds, wind, sunlight, plants, trails, and changing weather. This can encourage mindfulness and presence and give the mind a chance to recover from overstimulation.

Connection and belonging
Camp American Legion can be especially healing when people share meals, stories, activities, and challenges together. Healthy social connection can reduce loneliness and create a sense of belonging. For some people, being part of a supportive camp community can be as important as the natural setting itself.

Physical healing
Camp naturally encourages movement—walking, hiking, swimming, paddling, stretching, or simply exploring. Physical activity can improve sleep, circulation, energy, and overall health. Exposure to daylight also helps regulate the body's sleep-wake rhythm.

Perspective and reflection
There's something about being away from ordinary surroundings that can make life's problems feel different. A few days under the stars or beside a lake can create room to ask, *What really matters to me? What do I need to let go of? What do I want to change?*

The deeper healing
Perhaps the greatest power of nature with Camp American Legion is that it can help people reconnect—with themselves, with other people, and with the natural world.

It isn't a replacement for medical or psychological treatment when someone needs professional care, but it can be a meaningful complement to it. And the healing doesn't necessarily require an elaborate camp: even regular time walking in a forest, sitting beside water, gardening, or spending an evening outdoors can provide some of these benefits.

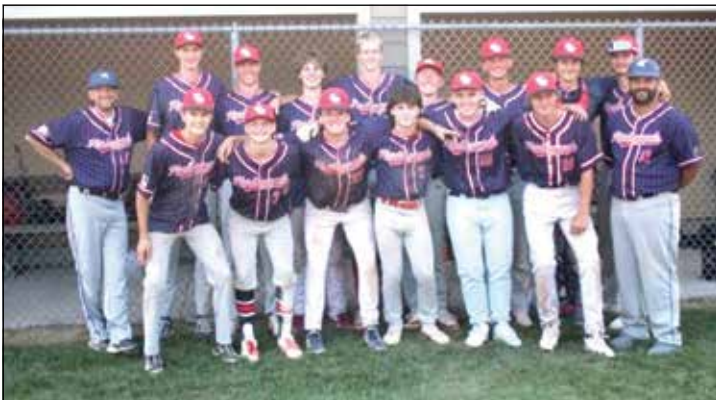
Jim Klement
Camp Director

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.



DIVISION ONE SOFTBALL

Medford Post 147 proudly presents our American Legion Girls Softball Team State championship, Division One Champions on August 2.



REGIONAL BASEBALL

Three Lakes American Legion Post 431 announces the Three Lakes Northwoods Legion Baseball Team is the regional champion and advanced to the state tournament in River Falls.

Photo Credit of the Honor Guard and the season's games goes to @shootingmemoriesupnorth.



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

NATIONAL NEWS

The Wisconsin delegation has returned from the 2026 National Convention, held this year in Louisville, KY. Great information and presentations were shared with us, in addition to the usual fun activities that surround a National convention.

John W. “Jay” Bowen (CO) was elected our National Commander. He is a PUFL member of Neal Thomas, Jr. – Centennial Post 209 in Colorado Springs. A staunch supporter of The Legion’s “BE THE ONE” mission, Commander Bowen’s theme for the year is “BPOTS” meaning “*Be Part Of The Solution*”. You may remember, Commander Bowen last visited Wisconsin as the Following Candidate at the 2025 Department Convention in Green Bay. You can read more about the new Commander and other convention activities at: <https://www.legion.org/information-center>.

The National Vice Commander responsible for the Department of Wisconsin is Roy E. Smith (IL).

The delegates passed a number of resolutions pertaining to The American Legion’s positions on a wide range of issues covering VA services, National Defense, Americanism, VA&R and other matters falling under the 4 Pillars. The list of resolutions is quite voluminous, so please contact me if you have specific questions or want more information on a particular issue that is important to you.

One resolution (Res. 26) authored and approved by Wisconsin’s Department convention was referred to the standing committee on Americanism, which is the next step in the process. This is the resolution requesting that the Eagle Scout of the Year eligibility requirements be changed to allow more scouts to be eligible to compete for this award.

Wisconsin received a number of awards recognizing the hard work done by our Posts and Legionnaires. In addition, we delivered nearly \$100,000 in donations to the Veterans and Children’s Fund, National Emergency Fund and the Child Well-being Foundation, and the Department was installed as the newest member of the *1919 Society*. The delegation proudly looked on as Asst. Chief Melissa Wiesner of the Two Rivers Police Department received the national Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award. It was also announced that Wisconsin’s selectee to attend the 2026 National American Legion College is Nancy Rivera of Post 477 in St. Nazianz.

Looking ahead, we have scheduled visits by Leading Candidate Matt Shuman (AZ) at our fall meetings, Following Candidate Linden Dixon (VA) at Mid-winter, NVC Roy Smith in November and again in April, and we will have National Commander Jay Bowen at the 2027 Department Convention in Middleton/Madison.

GRAND MARSHAL IN GERMANTOWN FOR THE FOURTH



Germantown American Legion Post 1 member and chaplain, Mary Brown, was chosen to be the Grand Marshall for the 2026 Germantown July 4th parade. In 1970, she joined the Women's Army Corps and the Army's "Stripes for Skills" program, serving as a nurse at Lyster Army Hospital in Fort Rucker, Alabama,



BIG BIKE AT THE 2ND ANNUAL ALGOMA MOTORCYCLE SHOW



Algoma Legion Post 236 held their 2nd Annual Motorcycle Show on July 25. Pictured (l-r) on the custom built 24 1/2 ft bike is owner Steve 'Doc' Hopkins, Post Commander Mike Froelich, Legion members Jeff Ferris, Bob Lohrey, Rick Delveaux, Swede Erickson, Vince Palazzo, Bobbie Jo Scholz, Mando Cassas and SAL John Sharp.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN

"HE WEPT" JOHN 11:35



Dan Workenaour
Department
Chaplain

Do you know why Jesus wept? He wept when he arrived at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Although Jesus knew he would soon raise Lazarus from the dead, he was moved by deep empathy and shared in the grief, pain, and tears of Mary, Martha, and the other mourners.

This verse is considered the shortest verse in the Bible and was used to give away a Family Bible at the State Convention back in July. We handed out forty tickets given to those who guessed the passage correctly or gave a donation to Camp American Legion or both (to get two tickets). I am pleased to announce that Mary Kohnke was our winner.

Most, if not all, of our posts, county, and districts have Chaplains. They are there to support you, our Legionnaire, and your family. However, it is hard to help those who need emotional or spiritual guidance when your Chaplain does not know how to help you if he or she is not informed. Communication is crucial no matter what position you have in the Legion. Having Invocations, benedictions, meal prayers, and sending out cards are nice

but are only a part of our job as your Chaplain. There is so much more your Chaplain can do.

As a reminder, "An American Legion Chaplain provides spiritual leadership, moral guidance, and compassionate support to local post members, veterans, and their families. Operating in a non-denominational and non-sectarian role, the chaplain ensures that service and comfort are open to all faiths and backgrounds". (American Legion website on Chaplains).

Post, Counties, and District Commanders, lend me your ears. If your Chaplain has performed well in his or her position, there is an award you can write up and send it to the Department for review. If your Chaplain meets the criteria, it will be reviewed and a Chaplain will be recognized for their work. Only one award is given at the time of the State Convention held in July. It is called the Martha Marlow Chaplain Award. This award is often overlooked, and there are little to no submissions for it. Have your Chaplain keep a record of everything they do and all events they are involved in will make it easier for them to submit their application. Include photos as well. Peace be with you.

LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN



Paul Fisk
Legislative
Chairman

There is less than a month until mid-term elections. This is your opportunity to influence the policy direction the state of Wisconsin takes for the next two years.

Many say that the government closest to you has the greatest effect on your life. This is especially true with this election. On January 4, 2027 we will inaugurate a new Governor and seat in a new legislature.

Governor Evers is retiring after eight years in office. Tom Tiffany (R-Little Rice) and Dave Crowley (D-Milwaukee) are competing to replace him. One candidate from the largest urban center in the state and the other from a rural town.

The legislature will experience major changes. Speaker Voss (R-Burlington) is leaving the Assembly as is Senate Majority Leader LeMahieu (R-Oostburg). The chair and vice chair of the Senate veterans committee are also departing.

Currently the republicans hold the majority in the Senate 18-15. The Democrats need to win to two additional seats to gain control of the body. There are 17 seats up for election this year (the odd numbered districts). There are only ten of these incumbents running for re-election. Two of the open seats will remain Republican, therefore the Democrats need to win at least two of the remaining seats to gain control of the body.

Why is the majority so critical? The majority party sets the agenda for the body. Each committee will consist of more members from the majority party than the minority. The Chair will be a member of the majority party. On joint committees like the powerful Committee on Joint Finance, the majority party in each body has six seats while the minority has two. If the Democrats control one body and the Republicans the other, the committee will be split 8-8. The Co-Chairs would come from the majority party of each body. In the 2009-2011 session the Democrats controlled the Assembly while the Republicans controlled the Senate. Since then, the Republicans have been in control of both houses. This would dramatically change the budget making process. Compromise would become the rule of the day.

Today the Republicans hold a 54-45 advantage in the Assembly. In this election their majority could be reduced, without losing control of the body.

With a new Governor and new leadership throughout the legislature the next two years will be very interesting.

DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN



Morris Sadicario
Department
Historian

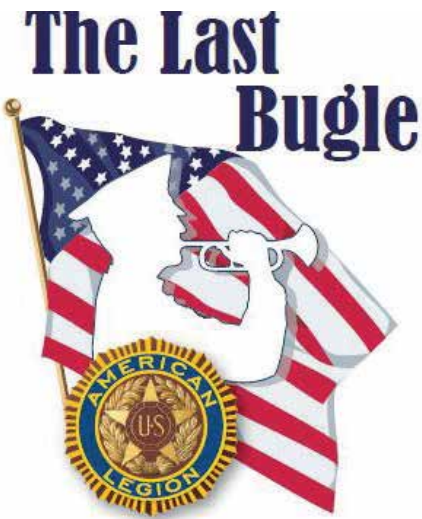
At the concluding sessions of the 107th Department Convention in Appleton, the Department Executive Committee approved Resolution 5.2026, which expanded the Department Historian's Yearbook scoring duties and resources. It also authorized the historian to request information from Legionnaires at all levels for use in the performance of their duties.

I take this to mean that if your post participates in a worthwhile activity, say, the "Cruise for a Cause-Family First '26," I can request that information. Also, if you need help formatting and uploading the article to the *Badger Legionnaire*, or "Legiontown," I can help. I'm thinking now of the "Cruise" stop at West Allis-Milwaukee Post 537, where their local Mission BBQ hosted the luncheon. Post 537 Historian Jim Strande reached out to me for help with submitting his article, which appears elsewhere in this issue. It also appears on "Legiontown.org." To find his online article, go to "Legiontown.org" and navigate down to the "Search Legiontown U.S.A." box. Then, type "West Allis."

Technology is appearing at all Legion levels. In fact, this year's Yearbook and History National Showcases are mostly digital! The benefits of 'going digital' are varied and are likely to benefit everyone in some way. One major benefit is the ability to retrieve historic data. Like, "When did member "A" visit the post?" "What did we discuss about "B" at the Executive Meeting two years ago?" Digital methods can also operate in reverse. You can enhance communications with your members by sending out a weekly newsletter, for example. You can document your buddy checks better. And more.

The hardcopy Department of Wisconsin Yearbook was distributed at the Convention to Commander Nathan Bond, Department Vice-Commanders Larry Larson, Steven Kohnke, David Steinert, and Rita Rindahl. Department Chaplain Virgil Smith and Religious Emphasis Chair Darrel Feucht also received hard copies. The digital version can be viewed at this link: <https://talhistory.org/wisconsin-department-yearbook-2025-2026/>

Wisconsin Legion Historians were recognized at the 107th National Convention in Louisville, KY. The Department of Wisconsin Yearbook earned a place in the top 10 Department Yearbooks. The National Historian's "Choice for Best Digital Showcase" went to Daughtery-Hamilton Post #234 (Omro, WI), by David Schuhart. Congratulations to all who participated. Start now to compile your 2026-2027 Yearbooks!

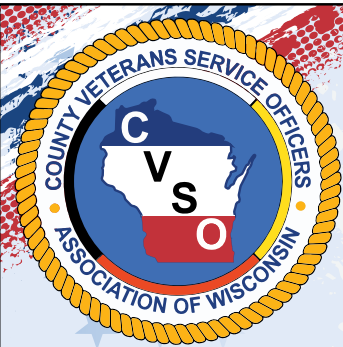


KEY	WWI-World War I		WWII-World War II	
	V-Vietnam		K-Korea	
	G/L-Grenada/Lebanon			
	P-Panama		PG-Persian Gulf	
	GWOT-Global War on Terrorism			
1 Germantown		Norman H. Heberer	K	
Claude J. Bernard	V	47 Portage		
Richard V. Griesse	V	Buck D Zunker	K	
3 Antigo		James M. Filiatrault	V	
Luanne E. Christenson	V	48 Beloit		
Arthur J. Strasser	K	Alan V. Wilson	K	
8 Waukesha		49 Bayfield		
Milt L. Hagerstrand	K	Gregory J. Gabrys	V	
Walter E. Hahn	K	52 La Crosse		
9 Wisconsin Rapids		Ronald J. Phelps	K	
Jerome L. Strack	K	53 Eau Claire		
10 Wausau		Daniel F. Johnson	V	
Floyd D. Redeen	WWII	54 Marshfield		
11 Green Bay		Donald Tremelling	K	
Richard W. Fleury	V	59 Stoughton		
12 Spooner		Gordon J. Nelson	K	
Delbert W. Zimpel	K	Ronald L. Buss	V	
13 Richland Center		James G. Hanson	V	
Louis E. Williams	WWII	Dean W. Silbaugh	V	
Philip M. Brown	V	Richard W. McCown	K	
14 Iola		John C. Troegner	V	
Kenneth Blanchard	PG	62 Columbus		
20 Waterford		Eugene H. Beier	V	
Vernon L. Stuve	V	Jeffrey W. Krakow	V	
21 Kenosha		Timothy Bacon	V	
Randolph W Strickland Sr.	V	66 Silver Cliff		
Ronnie Edwin Dulin Sr.	PG	Curtis R. Burch	K	
26 Baraboo		67 Lake Mills		
Philip J. Wedekind	V	Ronald D. Niedfeldt	V	
29 Kewaunee		Franklin Pavwoski	K	
John Reinke		Boyd Forest	V	
36 West Bend		70 Oshkosh		
Hilda Rasmussen	K	James F. Felda	V	
38 Appleton		72 Sturgeon Bay		
Richard H. Benz	V	Cal Holvenstot	K	
44 Wabeno		73 Neillsville		
Allen K. Houle	K	Robert E. Hopfer	V	

George A. Mohr	V	150 Wausaukee		
75 Fond du Lac		Gregory M. Polomis	V	
Daniel D. White	V	Dale G. Kahara	V	
77 Chippewa Falls		151 Madison		
Dennis R. Metzdorf	V	Dale S. Arey	V	
80 New Richmond		Keith A. Parman		
James A. Drill	V	153 Pittsville		
82 Port Washington		Peter Multerer	K	
Clarence D. Flisakowski	K	157 Horicon		
83 Sheboygan		Harris Wilke	WWII	
Konrad C. Testwuide III	K	160 Brooklyn		
93 Tomahawk		Keith N. Schoville	WWII	
Michael M. Bozich	V	161 King		
Joseph Sherman		Jon Decaluwe	V	
96 Webster		Herbert L. Warax	V	
Ervin Pardun	WWII	170 Mineral Point		
James B. Nymen	K	Edward Bendik	V	
98 Cumberland		Robert L. Davies	K	
Robert Borglund		173 Whitewater		
Kenneth R. Bowen	V	Milo R. Brown	V	
Jerald Solum		175 Loyal		
100 Sparta		Lawrence Weyer	V	
Terry L. Loper	V	179 Chetek		
Duane E. Miller	V	George Vlcek	K	
Byron Schmitz	V	180 Milwaukee		
103 Galesville		Andre R. Belanger	V	
Gordon Deeren	WWII	187 Wisconsin Dells		
106 Seymour		George C. Field	V	
Lyle L. Weyers	V	196 Delafield		
112 Stanley		Robert R Punjak	V	
Gary W. Moulster	V	Berry A. Kerwin	V	
113 Mount Horeb		198 Marion		
Edward T. Straus	V	William F. Mengert	V	
117 Shawano		William Radtke	V	
Donald Anker	K	199 Reedsville		
Lawrence J. Romuald	V	Joseph Lorrigan	V	
121 River Falls		200 Black River Falls		
Lloyd T. Okeefe	V	Clifford T. Gomer	V	
James J. Filkins	V	William M. Wood	V	
Glenn Hoberg	WWII	201 Tomah		
Vernon L. Rasmussen	K	Ronald L. Watson	V	
Charles E. White	K	Larry Hubert	WWII	
Paul E. Schwebach	V	Junior H. Noyes	K	
Eugene D. Webster	V	208 Rio		
Frank Holter	V	William A. Johnson	G/L	
Richard Muenich	V	210 Waupun		
125 Chilton		Donald L. Mertens	K	
Harold L. Steffen		214 Darlington		
126 Brillion		Russell H. Elzen	V	
Joel Ott	PG	Roger Gorgas	V	
130 Sharon		217 Bonduel		
Charles V. Whitcher	V	William H. Kuhnke	K	
David A. Ottum	V	218 Hayward		
131 Colfax		Gary D. Briggs		
Gustave J. Fehr	V	229 Mount Hope		
Allen E. Stai	WWII	William D. Johnson	V	
Beverly M. Michels	GWOT	231 Blair		
133 Camp Douglas		Donald L. Johnson	V	
James J. Olson	V	Idell J. Martinez	K	
Michael G. Knutson	V	234 Omro		
George H. Sackmaster	V	Green G. Wagner	V	
134 Boscobel		Richard Schallert		
Elizabeth A. Welsh	V	237 Footville		
143 Saint Croix Falls		Lawrence P. McGuire	P	
Larry Hobbs	K			

238 Greenwood		Dean Bohlman	V	
Lester E. Elmer	K	Daniel F. Wood	V	
244 Westfield		Francis E. Fischer	K	
Lee H. Acker	V	342 Coleman		
245 Cross Plains		Elmer Ragen	K	
Donald Vanaman	K	347 Lomira		
250 Adams		Alexander G. Iloncaie	V	
Daniel L. Reger	V	David Schmitt	V	
251 Argyle		348 DeForest		
Arnold Lien	K	Raymond J. Lavallee Jr.	V	
Robert W. Slocum	K	353 Cornell		
252 Eastman		Steve Nitek	V	
James J. Roach		355 Grafton		
254 Milltown		Arthur L. Albers		
Allan E. Dewolf	K	358 Colby		
255 Luck		Dennis Decker		
Ronald E. Hanson	V	360 Waunakee		
Merril D. Trone	V	Charles D. Peterson	G/L	
256 Monticello		John G. Fabie	V	
Kenneth A. Johnson	K	361 Silver Lake		
260 Deerfield		Donald Uhen	WWII	
Arvid O. Bakken	V	379 Birchwood		
263 New London		Jerry W. Ferr	V	
Larry H. Schlueter	V	382 Menomonee Falls		
268 Bruce		Delmer J. Pirlot	K	
Arthur Ryall	K	George R. Olwell Jr.	V	
269 Cushing		Phil V. Goodrich	V	
John Hahn	V	Frederik E Reinke	V	
274 Rib Lake		Mark J. Wolf	V	
Daniel C. Mathias	WWII	383 Lone Rock		
282 Markesan		Judy E. Dutka	V	
Philip L. Duschek	V	385 Verona		
Herbert E. Davis	V	Beecher Daniels	V	
283 Suring		390 Gresham		
Arnold R. Derks	K	Bert A. Moede Sr.	V	
286 Oostburg		391 Fremont		
Ellsworth Brill	K	Ronald O. Anunson	V	
288 Cedarburg		396 Frederic		
Raymond W. Fischer	K	Gary A. Jensen	K	
294 Hartland		Walter R. Hibbs	V	
David C. Lamerand	V	403 Danbury		
Michael J. Hasslinger	V	Keith R. Crosby	V	
295 Bloomer		415 Milwaukee		
Charles Rumphol	V	Mark Galaszewski	V	
300 Cecil		Ronald A. Koepke	V	
Clayton Smith	K	416 Greendale		
306 Green Lake		A.F. Montezon Jr.	WWII	
William E. Gregory	V	Kenneth B. Musche	WWII	
313 Black Earth		Bernard Nowak	WWII	
David J. Dybdahl	K	Thomas Tamsett	V	
314 Boyceville		Thomas Ciezki	K	
Gerald E. Retz	V	John E. Dobogai	V	
Thomas J. Stansbury	V	420 Hustisford		
315 Stoddard		Melvin A. Grulke	V	
Ronald Marohl	V	422 Highland		
318 Lake Tomahawk		Fredric G. Deines	V	
Thomas J. Petzko	K	423 Neshkoro		
Harold R. Hanson Jr.	V	Gustav Ponto		
Eric Sorenson	V	Duwayne Standke	V	
David Smiezek	V	432 Hammond		
John McConaghy	V	William S. Cave	K	
John Syverson	K	Frank G. Griffin	V	
341 Birnamwood		435 Superior		
Raymond Eckardt	V	Edward H. Javenkoski	V	

436 Wrightstown		John Singer	V	
Ralph Staeven		493 Linden		
438 Norwalk		Martin H. Lenz	V	
Joe Rivers	V	494 Caledonia		
439 Melrose		Lowell L. Treffert	K	
Robroy Z. Roberts	K	501 Madison		
Ralph E. Zabel	V	Donald R. Nicholls	V	
Mike Sacia	V	503 Dane		
Dennis Schaller	V	Douglas Hegge	V	
445 Cashton		509 Rosholt		
John C. Kast	V	Chester J. Burclaw	V	
447 Viola		511 Ridgeland		
Raymond J. Bass	V	Clare Waldenberger	WWII	
Lyall Barnes	K	Theo L. Benseid	K	
449 Brookfield		513 Madison		
David E Myers	V	Theodore E. Krauss	K	
453 Belmont		518 Green Bay		
Daniel J. Speth	V	Thomas J. La Combe	V	
456 Caroline		519 Medford		
Dennis Schoen	V	Peter G. Paulson	V	
David Henselin	V	521 Fox Lake		
457 Mequon		Adrian R. Kurth	V	
Wilson E. Anderson	V	522 Hubertus		
467 Ontario		John Fogl	K	
Dave Calhoun	V	Robert Wieting	V	
469 Marathon		526 Hazel Green		
James N. Bombach	V	Dennis G. Biddick	V	
473 Potosi		John Lovell	V	
William R. Goforth	G/L	537 Milwaukee		
476 Crivitz		Robert J. Borkowski	V	
Richard J. Swiatnicki	K	544 Twin Lakes		
Gerald N. Leisner	V	Raymond N. Ward	V	
478 Saint Cloud		547 Withee		
Henry L. Schneider	K	Jerry W. Bogard	V	
483 Allenton		Kalvin Stuner	V	
Darrell E. Jutz	V	550 Mondovi		
485 Wisconsin Rapids		James I. Pire	V	
William C. Cahak	K	2930 Portage		
489 Milwaukee		Robert M. Jones	K	
Thomas F. Gengler	WWII	James A. Bieser	V	
Peter H. Kamoske	V	James E. Moore		
492 Rothschild		Earl W. Ruffner		



County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin

EVERY COUNTY AND TRIBE IN WISCONSIN STANDS READY TO SERVE ALL THOSE WHO SERVED AT NO COST TO YOU.

Your local Veteran Advocates, serving you since 1935





MEMBERSHIP

Betty Stone
Department Chairman
bstonewiala@gmail.com
608-738-9542

Our plane is at the gate ready to board! Your boarding pass is your 2027 membership card saying you have paid your 2027 American Legion Auxiliary dues. This is a special flight – the only one this year. Are you going to be on it or be left behind? We will leave the gate at midnight December 31, 2026. Now is the best time to get your boarding pass and be ready to go.

NEW ELIGIBILITY RESOLUTION EXPANDS ALA MEMBERSHIP

At the 2026 American Legion National Convention delegates adopted new membership eligibility language for the American Legion Auxiliary – expanding eligibility and allowing more family members to join the ALA. This chart shows the updated gender-neutral language to help simplify the language.

MEMBERS

Pay your dues and then talk to your Legionaries as to who is eligible and invite them to join our great American Legion Auxiliary.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT DR. CORAL MAY GROUT

Dr. Coral May Grout was elected national president of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) during the organization's 105th National Convention in Louisville.

"As we take these department and national offices, we accept not only a title, but a trust — to lead with honor, serve with humility, and strengthen the legacy placed in our hands, in support of our veterans, military, children, and our communities," Grout said from the convention stage.

Before being elected to the ALA's highest volunteer office, Grout held numerous leadership positions in the organization at the unit, district, department, and national levels. At the national level, she served as chair of several programs: Children & Youth, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Education (twice), Americanism, Constitution & Bylaws, Public Relations, Legislative, Leadership, Community Service, and Junior Activities committees. She also served on the National Executive Committee, and as national secretary, national historian, and national vice president.

Grout is a member of Eugene M. Connor Unit 193 in Massachusetts. She is eligible for membership through her late father, Charles E. Grout, who served in the U.S. Air Force in the Philippines and Australia during World War II.

In her professional life, Grout was in education for over 50 years in positions ranging from an English teacher to a superintendent.



NEW ALA MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

At the 2026 American Legion National Convention, delegates adopted new membership eligibility language for the American Legion Auxiliary, expanding eligibility and allowing more family members to join the ALA. The American Legion has authority over the ALA's membership eligibility and this language change allows more people into our organization — strengthening our ability to better serve our veterans, military, and their families.

Following is the text from The American Legion that reflects the updated eligibility provisions for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary:

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:

Section 2. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to:

- (1) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of members of The American Legion; and
- (2) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and any time after December 7, 1941, who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments

associated with the United States during either eligibility period and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;

- (3) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941, who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility period and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and
- (4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.

The revisions to the ALA's eligibility mentioned above allow individuals the potential to be members of both the Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. The Legion's national judge advocate has confirmed that this dual membership does not constitute a conflict of interest with The American Legion.

The eligibility changes are effective immediately and allow grandfathers, fathers, brothers, sons and grandsons of a veteran to join the ALA. Updated membership applications, brochures, and additional membership resources are available on the department website.



OPT OUT OF NEWSPAPER

**Do you receive too many papers in your mail?
Would you like to help Department save money?**

If so, opt out of receiving the hard copy of the *Badger Legionnaire/Wisconsin* at <https://wilegion.org/badger-legionnaire>. The electronic version of the newspaper is posted on the department website before hard copies are mailed.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Donna Jensen
Department Chaplain
Djensen20@gmail.com
414-303-6186

Dear Heavenly Father, we pray for your blessings for all the military, veterans, their families and communities. Please impart your wisdom and grace on all as we strive to serve you and each other.

1 Chronicles 17:16-17

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And this was a small thing in your eyes, O God. You have also spoken of your servant's house for a great while to come, and have shown me future generations, O Lord God!"

The fall season is here, and it is a time for reaping and thanksgiving for everything that has blossomed and grown during the past season. It is also a time for reflection on what is yet to come.

Hope and optimism are not always easy as we face life's many challenges and the unknowns in the future. With God's help we can gain the strength and patience to conquer much more than we even know. Working together, along with our God, whoever that is, can inspire us to new heights as we soar into the future together.

Request

I am asking **ALL** Legion Family members to send prayers, poems and inspirational pieces for Auxiliary President Amy Luft's Prayer Book. They can be original or from another source and anything that moves you. Please give the name of the author and the Unit/Post/Squadron and District number and send to me by email (**djensen20@gmail.com**) or mail to: Donna Jensen, 6936 N 86th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53224.

Music:

Amazing Grace by John Newton
(Written 1772 – published 1779)
Lyrics inspired by the New Testament

Amazing grace how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

Bonnie Dorniak
Executive Secretary/Treasurer
608-745-0124
Email: **deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org**
Website: **www.amlegionauxwi.org**

The 2026 American Legion Auxiliary National Convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky. Wisconsin members received several national awards as listed on Page A4. Congratulations to the award winners and thank you for making Wisconsin proud!

Coral May Grout of Massachusetts was installed as National President. Her emphasis is on education and celebrating the 20th anniversary of Give 10 to Education by introducing Give 20 to Education this year.

The Spirit of Youth (SOY) scholarship is her fundraising focus, highlighting two new \$10,000 scholarships for military spouses. These two

scholarships are in addition to the scholarships that are already part of SOY. There are three separate scholarship opportunities for participants in ALA programs including ALA Junior members, Junior Members of the Year, and participants in the ALA Girls Nation program.

Jay Bowen of Colorado was elected national commander of The American Legion and Thom Skelley of Texas was elected national commander of the Sons of The American Legion.

Several changes were recently approved that affect ALA membership. Unit officers may now sign new member applications after confirming the veteran status of the person through whom the applicant is eligible to join. Additionally, at The American Legion's national convention, eligibility for ALA membership was expanded to include grandfathers, fathers, brothers, sons and grandsons of a veteran. The official language regarding this eligibility change is listed on page A1.

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

Members may pay their dues through their unit, online at www.ALAforVeterans.org, or by phone. When paying by phone, you can easily pay for multiple family members at one time or pay for lapsed membership years. Please call national headquarters at 317-569-4570, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm (Central Time) to pay by phone. Thank you to everyone who already renewed their 2027 membership!

LEGISLATIVE

Sue Hembrook
Department Chairman
genesuehem@wi.rr.com
262-945-9791

Congratulations, Wisconsin! Wisconsin ranked third in the nation in VoterVoice actions. It is important that everyone is supporting veteran issues. If you have not already done so, please sign up for the Grass Roots notifications by going to wilegion.org, pick the resources tab and choose the legislation drop down. You will find the Grass Roots section and be able to sign up for alerts. It is so very easy, you can write your own message or the preprinted messages that are already prepared. Our Mission Statement states that we make a meaningful impact for veterans, military and their families and this is an easy way to do so. Please sign up today.

As stated above, Wisconsin was third in the nation for on line actions. The more voices that are heard by your Senators and Representatives will let them know that the American Legion Family supports our veterans and military. They will realize how devoted we are to enhancing their lives. The grassroots communicate alerts us to the issues at hand, so you will not miss an important agenda on their dockets. So, I urge you to sign up, open up those alerts, and make your voice count. Our veterans and military are counting on our support.

Let us make Wisconsin number one in the Nation!

HISTORY

Sandy Mack
Department Historian
Smack0555@gmail.com

Thank you for the opportunity to serve 2026-2027 as your Department Historian. If you attended the past department convention, I held up an empty frame and stated that as a department, we all need to share part of your unit/county/district events. "Let's fill the frame." Someone must be providing a report on your fundraisers/community events. Share those events with pictures for the 2026-2027 ALA History Book. Submit a request to have President Amy visit your unit or event and send me a brief description of the event and photos. Let me share history from a past county meeting. I hope it shows how important your history is to future generations:

Date April 26, 1950
*The fifth regular meeting of the ***** County Council American Legion Auxiliary at 8:00 pm.*
*Located in *****.*
The minutes were read and approved.
Treasurer gave the following report:
Disbursements:
*\$2.00 gift for Mrs. Wm. *****
\$10.00 Child Welfare
\$10.00 Christmas Cheer Fund
Leaving a balance of \$26.18
The president thanked the hosting unit and meeting was adjourned.
The following program presented was "Piano Accordion Selections."
*Talk Demonstration, "This is our Problem," presented by Carl ***. This topic dealt with the problem of communism.*
Vocal Duet...
These are only bits and pieces of their minutes.
Have you started your history book yet?
Visit www.amlegionauxwi.org, under programs you will find helpful tips.



POPPY REMINDER!

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

2027 Poppy Orders are due
by December 15, 2026.

Orders received after December 15 will
be charged an additional processing fee
and only accepted if poppies are available.

ORDER TODAY – DON'T DELAY!



Teri Miller
Central Division National Vice President

CENTRAL DIVISION NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT TERI MILLER

Teri Miller of Peoria Unit 2 in Illinois was elected Central Division National VP at the 2026 national convention. She is eligible for membership in the ALA through the service of her father, Leonard R. Krapp, Sr., U.S. Army Air Corps WWII.

Teri has held several positions at all levels of the organization, including 2004-2005 Department President, Central Division VA&R Chair, Central Division Education Committee Chair, National Education Committee Vice Chair for three years, and National Poppy Committee Vice Chair.

Teri is married to George Miller for 25 years. She retired in October 2025 after working 40+ years for Peoria Public Library, 35 of those years as the manager of Outreach Services. She attended Western Illinois University with a bachelor's degree in library science with a K-12 teaching degree. She has two sisters and one brother, along with many nieces and nephews.

Patti Westpfahl
Department Chairman
pjw1975@ymail.com
920-263-8003

The red poppies are not just flowers; they are so much more to our American Legion Family and those we serve, support and remember. They symbolize the sacrifice of U.S. service-members killed while protecting our nation and we wear these little red flowers to honor those fallen heroes and in support of our military, veterans and their families.

During WWI, the poppy flourished on the battlefields of Flanders Fields. Like the blood which was shed, its brilliant red bloom became a sign of hope and renewal. It is a perpetual memorial to their bravery.

*Such sacrifice through valor made,
A debt too deep to be repaid,
From their courage Freedom born,
To remember them the poppy worn.*

I hope you have already placed your poppy order and are working hard on your poppy program. Here are a few reminders as you prepare for a successful poppy program.

- Select a committee – remember they are only the leaders and are not expected to do all of the work – it takes a team effort!
- Arrange for distributions of poppies
- Contact distribution locations to receive permission to distribute on their properties
- Contact City Hall for a proclamation
- Arrange for Poppy Proclamation to be published in local papers
- Create a display for the library or city hall
- Write articles announcing distribution days
- Get photos into the local paper

Develop an elevator pitch to help open people's hearts and minds of the reason why it is important to support the Poppy distribution and who the monies support, noting that all of our poppies are veteran-made with pride.

Contact your local schools, youth centers or any other youth group with information about the Poppy Poster contest. This will

POPPY PROGRAM



not only stimulate poppy donations, but it can also help build patriotism in our next generation. All entries must be received by May 1, 2027. Remember we all win when our youth become involved and are as excited about our programs as we are! Two Wisconsin students, Hadley Richards and Lady First, recently won national awards for their Poppy Posters.

Poppy Program Engagement Plan and poppy information and worksheets are available on the department website (www.amlegionauxwi.org/poppyprogram) or you can contact me for any information you may need to make your poppy program a success. Review the deadlines dates.

Reporting is essential to achieve our mission of quality support for our veterans. Let me know the creative ways you promote the Poppy Program. Photos and newspaper articles are greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing from all of you.



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Kristy Wakeman
Department Chair
Kareuter19@gmail.com
920-210-2356

Public Relations plays an important role in helping our organization establish and maintain a positive public image. Through consistent branding, meaningful communication, and active community visibility, ALA members can help inform the public about the mission of the organization and the value of the work we do.

At its heart, Public Relations is about communication. Strong communication helps build awareness, strengthen relationships, and prepare organizations to respond clearly and effectively in a variety of situations. The following are seven key areas of Public Relations:

- **Media Relations:** Forming relationships with media outlets, broadcasters, journalists, and bloggers to share accurate and timely information.
- **Community Relations:** Building strong

connections between the organization and the local community.

- **Crisis Communication:** Preparing for and responding to crisis situations with clear, responsible messaging.

- **Public Affairs:** Helping ensure the organization's views and actions align with the public interest.

- **Social Media:** Using social media platforms to engage audiences and share the organization's message.

- **Internal Communications:** Communicating with members and employees in a timely and effective manner.

- **Strategic Public Relations Communications:** Developing and carrying out communication plans that support the organization's goals and objectives.

By understanding and using these areas of Public Relations, members can help strengthen the organization's visibility, credibility, and connection with the communities we serve.

2027 ALA DAILY SWEEPSTAKES

2027 sweepstakes forms were mailed
to current ALA members in August.

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

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

**THANK YOU
TO THOSE WHO
HAVE ALREADY DONATED.
WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!**

VETERAN AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION (VA&R)

PJ Stephens
Department Chairman
pj_deptauxwi@yahoo.com

WHAT IS VA&R? This is a question I ask myself all the time.

Per last year’s reporting, units aided in fund-raising and donations to Camp American Legion, Christmas Gift Shop, Homeless Women Veterans Grant Fund, Fisher House, VA medical facilities and Wisconsin Veterans Homes. They also donated to Quilts of Valor. The amount of donations reported exceeded \$154,330 from across the department. Service to Veterans reported across all districts was in excess of 51,252 hours.

Then there are the veteran grants that the department distributes based on the eligibility criteria outlined on the applications. Everyday some veteran gets into a financial bind. They turn to family, friends, loans and, as a last resort, they turn to the County Veteran Service Office who contacts department headquarters. ALA-Wisconsin offers one-time grants that are paid directly to the veteran’s creditor, never to the veteran. During the last fiscal year, five veterans received \$6,296 in grants through

the Veterans & Family Emergency Grant and nine veterans were awarded grants totaling \$12,575.70 through the Homeless Women Veterans Grant.

One of the grants became was a bit complicated since the Veteran’s home was in an unincorporated area that relied on electricity only. While they were on the electric company’s payment plan during the wintertime, a substantially much needed car repair was paid and they had to take custody of two grandchildren. The veteran decided to make a partial payment instead of the full payment on the electric bill plan that was due without letting the power company know ahead of time. This process was playing out during the end of spring and the start of the heat of the summer. The 100% disabled veteran was terrified when a shut-off notice and a bill that exceeded \$3,000 more than usual was received. The short story is that it took several months of negotiation with the electric company and a grant from ALA-Wisconsin. This veteran stayed in their home, received federally funded perks from the electric company, and now has a more manageable electric bill.

The gratitude from that veteran was priceless. I could picture a happy dance. This is how you help veterans – by contributing to these grants.

VA&R – CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOP

Diana Sirovina
Department Chairman
dsirovina@icloud.com
414-881-9581

It’s October! The weather is warm and Christmas is probably the last thing on most people’s mind. For those of us who are involved in the Christmas Gift Shop program, Christmas season has already begun!

For anyone not familiar with Christmas Gift Shop, this program allows veterans in long-term care facilities at Zablocki VAMC and the Wisconsin Veteran’s Homes at King and Union Grove to select gifts to send to their loved ones at Christmas time at no cost to them. The program has changed a lot over the years, but there is one thing that will never change, and that is our commitment to caring for our veterans and their families.

Bringing Christmas Gift Shop to our veterans does take some time and preparation. Many hours are spent browsing Amazon.com for the perfect gifts that can be selected for family members of all ages. Once our selection of available gifts is

complete, a catalog is created for the veteran to view and select their gifts. Veterans make their selections and items are ordered, sorted, and readied for our annual wrapping day. A group of dedicated Legion Family members gathers to wrap and pack the gifts, ensuring they reach veterans’ family members in time for Christmas.

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

The cost of gifts, wrapping and shipping are all totally covered by your generous donations. Our Christmas Gift Shop program may only last a couple of months each year, but your unit can make it a year-round project by sending in your financial donations, earmarked for Christmas Gift Shop, whenever you have funds available. Thank you for supporting this great program!

VA&R – HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

Maggie Geiger
Department Chair
maggieg4ala@gmail.com

The Homeless Women Veterans (HWV) Grant Program provides financial assistance to women veterans and military members facing unexpected hardships. Since its launch in 2010, this program has awarded grants totaling \$380,776.59 to 345 women veterans in need.

- Here are the key program details:
- Grants are designed to address immediate financial emergencies, not accumulated debt.
 - Grant money can only be used for assistance paid directly to the landlord, utility company, or other approved creditor, not to the applicant or applicant’s family.
 - Veterans submit applications through a spon-

sor – County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO), VA Benefit Representative, Case Worker, or similar advocate.

- All applications must include documentation detailing the specific request and circumstances.
- DD214 showing honorable discharge or proof of current service is required.
- Applications can be found on the Programs tab on the department website under Homeless Women Veterans.

This program makes a real difference in the lives of our most vulnerable veterans and is sustained entirely through generous donations from members and units. To contribute, please use the Poppy Fund Suggested Donation form and select option #4456-Homeless Women Veterans Grant Fund.

For more information about this program and others, visit the department website and click Programs.

2025-2026 NATIONAL AWARDS

American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin received the following awards or acknowledgements for the 2025-2026 administrative year during the 2026 National Convention:

MERIT MEDALLION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Department of Wisconsin
Sue Hembrook, Department President

NATIONAL PRESIDENT’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Harvey K. Funk Unit 494, District 1
Crystal Shaw, Unit President

ALA FOUNDATION

Veteran Grant Champion Award
for Receiving the Most Veteran
Project Grants in a Department (3 grants)
Department of Wisconsin

AMERICANISM

Americanism Essay Contest,
Class I (Grades 3 & 4)
Best Americanism Essay in the Central Division
Lucas Mercer
Sponsored by Port Washington Unit 82, District 2

Americanism Essay Contest, Class VI

Best Americanism Essay in the Central Division
Traigh Bowlin
Sponsored by Menomonee Falls Unit 382, District 1

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Best Department Children & Youth Program
in the Central Division
Department of Wisconsin
Mary Petrie, Department Chairman

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

Best Department Junior Activities Program
in the Central Division
Department of Wisconsin
Christine Johnsen, Department Chairman

LEADERSHIP

Unit Member of the Year
for Significant Contributions to the Unit
Christine Van Ryzin
Appleton Unit 38, District 9

MEMBERSHIP

Department Goal Award for Achieving:
• 25% of the 2026 Goal by 9/15/2025
• 60% of the 2026 Goal by 11/10/2025
• 85% of the 2026 Goal by 3/15/2026
Department of Wisconsin
Christina Petranovich, Department Chairman

New Unit Award for New or Re-Chartered Units for 2026 by July 31, 2026:

- Henry G Mallin Unit 221, Osceola, District 12
- Temperly-Duncan, Inc. Unit 526, Hazel Green, District 3

Recruit/Rejoin 10 Award for Recruiting/ Rejoining 10 Members by 6/6/2026:

- Diane Burkhalter
- Christina Petranovich

Family 3 Award for Recruiting 3 New Legion + 3 New Auxiliary + 3 New SAL Members by 6/6/2026:

- Diane Burkhalter
- Christina Petranovich

68 Wisconsin units received awards for reaching 100% of their 2026 membership goal by 1/31/2026.

POPPY

Poppy Poster Contest, Class I (Grades 2 & 3)
Best Poppy Poster in Central Division
Hadley Richards
Sponsored by Mazomanie Unit 437 ~ District 3

Poppy Poster Contest, Class II (Grades 4 & 5)

Best Poppy Poster in Central Division
Lady First
Sponsored by Milwaukee Unit 537 ~ District 4

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Best Department Public Relations
Program in the Central Division
Department of Wisconsin
Natalia Genovesi-King, Department Chairman

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION/VAVS

2025-2026 VAVS Meetings – Perfect Attendance Award

- Department of Wisconsin
- Sheila Frye, Hospital Representative
Middleton Memorial VAMC
 - Helene Stein, Hospital Representative
Tomah VAMC

Volunteer Recruitment & Service Award

- Ann Wender, Associate Hospital Representative
Oscar G. Johnson VAMC

2026-2027 National Appointments

Joanie Dickerson	Girls Nation Committee Central Division Chairman
Diane Duscheck	American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Elected Director
Maggie Geiger	National Executive Committeeperson
Sue Hembrook	Alternate National Executive Committeeperson
Christine Johnsen	Education Committee Central Division Chairman
April Kollmorgen	Poppy Committee Central Division Chairman
Diana Sirovina	AEF Committee Chairman

2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION AWARD RECIPIENTS

LEADERSHIP

Bob Shappell
Department Chairman
bobshap@aol.com
414-899-4067

The purpose of the ALA Leadership program is to develop and prepare knowledgeable and capable leaders to carry on the growth and success of the Auxiliary by promoting activities and resources that educate, motivate and mentor members of all ages and at all levels of the organization. Lofty words, but I prefer to look at what we really need for successful and collaborative units.

First, focus on our most important stakeholders – our own members – by making sure the unit is an inviting, friendly, and well-focused group with a solid reputation in the community. Second, understand why people join organizations such as ours. There are three basic reasons: a *self-serving drive*, such as networking, learning more about the community, and seeking potential social activities; a *relational drive*, where they already know someone in the unit and finally “give in” and join; and a *belief drive*, where they know some of the great things we do, believe in our causes and want to be part of them.

We as leaders must find out WHY people join and then follow up regularly to find out WHY they stayed. Once we know that, we can focus on perhaps the most important aspect of our leadership challenge – turning “members” into “volunteers.” Volunteers stay in an organization because they see meaningful goals and they feel appreciated and respected. This is best achieved through relationship building. That is, understanding why members joined, what their expectations are, and building trust among all members. Servant leadership provides the values and skills to make these things happen, focusing on listening actively, empowering our members, and building strong relationships.

A recent survey shows that 65% of Americans would prefer a better boss to a pay raise. In our organization, where there are no pay raises (or pay), it is critical that leadership is trusted, respected, and part of the large team known as the unit. Your Leadership Committee is available to present workshops tailored to your specific needs and time requirements, not just to talk leadership, but to share ideas from other units as well.



Wisconsin was one of twelve ALA departments recognized as a Department Merit Medallion Award winner at the 2026 National Convention in Louisville. Requirements for the award include membership, department impact reporting, governance excellence, financial fiduciary responsibilities, mission investment donations, and must have received a Veteran Projects Fund grant from the ALA Foundation.

“These departments are examples of excellence,” said 2025-2026 ALA National President Pam Ray. “They are truly our mission in action.” 2025-2026 Department President Sue Hembrook is pictured on the far left receiving the award.



Crystal Shaw accepted a National President’s Award for Excellence on behalf of Harvey K. Funk Unit 494 in Caledonia, District 1. Central Division National Vice President Ann Buchanan announced, “This unit exemplifies the traditions of the American Legion Auxiliary through compassionate service, meaningful partnerships, and unwavering commitment to making a difference in the lives of veterans, military families, and children.” Past Department President Sue Hembrook met with unit members to thank them for their accomplishment.



“The American Legion Auxiliary’s Unit Members of the Year are nominated by their peers as the perfect example of a passionate, dedicated grassroots member who significantly impacts unit programs and embodies the organization’s values,” said 2025-2026 National Leadership Committee Chair Donna Dillard. Wisconsin was proudly represented by our Unit Member of the Year, Christine Van Ryzin of Unit 38 in Appleton (pictured far left).

For a complete list of Wisconsin’s national awards, please see page A4.



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



Steven Kohnke
Department
Commander

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

LET'S ALL 'BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!'

"Be Part of the Solution!" Those words from National Commander John W. "Jay" Bowen are more than a motto. They are a challenge to every member of The American Legion Family. The question is not, **"What can someone else do?"** The question is, **"What can I do?"**

Our American Legion Family is strongest when we stop working as individuals and start working as one. Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, and Sons of The American Legion members—Posts, Units, and Squadrons—working together can accomplish far more than any of us can accomplish alone.

If you want to see what being part of the solution looks like, look no further than our American Legion Riders.

Across Wisconsin and throughout the nation, our Riders continue to answer the call. They ride for our veterans. They support our military families. They remember our fallen. They raise money for important programs. And, most importantly, they bring members of the entire Legion Family together for a common purpose.

Once again this year, American Legion Riders from across the country came together for the National Legacy Run and raised more than \$1 million for the Veterans & Children Foundation.

Think about that for a moment.

More than one million dollars—because people came together and decided to make a difference.

That is what being part of the solution looks like. But the responsibility doesn't stop with our Riders. It belongs to every one of us. As we begin this Legion year, it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Start working on your **Consolidated Post Report**. Don't wait until the end of the year to try to remember everything your Post accomplished. Every veteran helped, every program conducted, every dollar donated, every volunteer hour given, and every community project completed tells the story of The American Legion's impact.

If we don't report it, the story may never be told.

Conduct at least **four Buddy Checks** this year. Not four phone calls just to check a box. Four opportunities to reach out to a fellow veteran or Legion Family member and simply ask, **"How are you doing?"** Sometimes a Buddy Check brings a member back to the Post. Sometimes it strengthens a friendship. And sometimes that simple phone call can make a difference in someone's life when they need it most.

Support the **250 Club**.

Help sell **Cash Paradise raffle tickets**.

These aren't simply fundraising activities. They help provide the resources our Department needs to continue delivering programs and services that make a difference in the lives of veterans,

their families, and our communities.

And let's remember something important: **The money doesn't raise itself. The programs don't run themselves. The membership doesn't grow by itself.**

We make it happen.

Every Legionnaire who makes a Buddy Check matters. Every Auxiliary member who volunteers matters. Every SAL member who supports a project matters. Every Rider who participates matters. Every Post that records its accomplishments matters. Every person who sells a raffle ticket matters.

You matter. We don't need everyone to do everything. **But we do need everyone to do something.** That is how we become stronger. That is how we grow. That is how we continue the legacy of those who came before us. And that is how we fulfill the mission entrusted to The American Legion Family.

As your Department Commander, I don't expect one person, one Post, or one organization to solve every challenge we face. But I do believe that if each of us accepts responsibility for doing our part, we can accomplish things we never thought possible. My challenge to you this year is simple:

Don't wait for someone else to be part of the solution. Be part of the solution yourself.

If you see something that needs to be done, step forward. If a fellow member needs help, make the call. If your Post needs volunteers, raise your hand. If there is a veteran who needs assistance, find a way to help. If there is a program that needs support, get involved.

Leadership isn't always about having the title. Sometimes leadership is simply being the person who says, **"I'll help."** That is the kind of Legion Family I want us to be in Wisconsin. One that doesn't ask, **"Why isn't someone doing something?"** Instead, we ask, **"What can I do?"** And then we get to work.

So, as we move forward this year, I ask each of you to look in the mirror and ask yourself one simple question: **"What am I going to do to be part of the solution?"** Don't wait for someone else. Don't assume someone else will take care of it. **Step up. Get involved. Make the call. Volunteer. Report your accomplishments. Support our programs. Bring someone back. Bring someone new in.**

Because when we all do our part, something incredible happens. We become more than Posts, Units, Squadrons, and Departments.

We become one Legion Family. And together, there is no doubt what we can accomplish.

Let's Be Part of the Solution!

Let's Get to Work!

Let's Make a Difference!



President
Amy Luft
2026-2027

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our wheels are up! Members are working hard to carry out our programs and mission. The national membership slogan this year is BPOTS—**Be Part of the Solution**. Renewing your membership and recruiting new members is a great start.

Mission Accomplished... July brought us together in Appleton for our Department Convention. It was exciting to reconnect with old friends, make new ones, and share our many accomplishments. A heartfelt thank you and congratulations to Past Department President Sue Hembrook for an outstanding year of leadership and service.

In August, Wisconsin was well represented at the National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. We celebrated when National President Pam Ray recognized Wisconsin as one of twelve departments to receive the Merit Medallion Award.

Within Central Division, the following programs were awarded:

- Best Department Junior Activities Program
– Christine Johnsen, Chair.
- Best Department Children & Youth Program
– Mary Petrie, Chair.
- Best Overall Department Public Relations Program
– Natalia Genovesi-King, Chair.

Wisconsin had a very special moment when Harvey Funk Unit 494 received the National President's Award for Excellence! Congratulations everyone!

We welcomed our new National President, Coral May Grout of Massachusetts and the ALA Public Spirit Award was presented to Earl Morse, founder of Honor Flight—a particularly meaningful recognition as we begin our own journey of supporting Honor Flight this year.

Flying Toward Our Goal... Our goal this year—supporting Honor Flight—is twofold. First, raise funds for Wisconsin Honor Flight hubs allowing more of our veterans the opportunity for a flight. Your donations should be sent to Headquarters using the Poppy Fund Suggested Donation Form. Or, simply send your check payable to ALA—Dept. of WI with "Honor Flight" noted in the memo line. All donations will be split equally among the Wisconsin Honor Flight hubs.

Secondly, find the veterans who have not yet taken a flight and assist them with applying. Veterans who served honorably, beyond basic training, in any branch of the military, and in any capacity, between December 1941 and June 1975, including active duty, National Guard, and Reserve service, are eligible.

The journey has begun, Wisconsin... **Let's Fly!**



Jeremy Mason
SAL Detachment
Commander

SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER

As we approach Veterans Day, I find myself reflecting on what this day truly means not just as your Detachment Commander, but as a grandson of two men who gave their service to this nation.

My grandfathers, two men, different branches, different theaters, one shared commitment as to why I wear this emblem. Every Veterans Day, I think of them. I think of the millions of Americans like them who answered the call, asked for nothing in return, and simply came home and got to work. Veterans Day is not just a holiday. For the Sons of The American Legion, it is a reminder of our mission and a call to action. The 109,949 volunteer hours our members contributed last year and the \$4,408,920 in total impact delivered to veterans and communities across Wisconsin that is what Veterans Day looks like in practice for this organization. This is the heart of **Tradition and Traction**. Our tradition is honoring those who served through ceremonies, Color Guards, the flags we present, and the hospitals we visit. Our traction is making sure that honor is backed by real, sustained action. I challenge every squadron this season to find a young man in your community a student, an Eagle Scout, a veteran's grandson and begin the conversation about joining the Sons of the American Legion. That investment is how we ensure the next generation understands what this day means and our mission going forward. To every veteran reading this: thank you. You are the reason why we serve.

For God and Country,

Jeremy L. Mason
Detachment Commander
Sons of The American Legion
Detachment of Wisconsin



Corey Doebrmann
State Director
American Legion
Riders Association

LEGION RIDERS DIRECTOR

It's September already, where did this summer go? I know for many Legion Riders like me it went by on a two-lane road somewhere throughout this great country of ours. Wisconsin Legion Riders participated in the Sojourn250 to escort a flag from Pittsburgh to Washington D.C. over the 4th of July weekend as well as the 2026 National Legacy Run that just finished a few weeks ago. This was my first year on the National Legacy Run and it was an experience. Good, bad and otherwise, when you put 240ish motorcycles in one group and travel across 6 or so states. Donations from the run and during the National Convention totaled over \$1M toward the Veterans & Children Foundation.

As I write this article we are one week out from our annual Fall Rider Week at Camp American Legion. Camp will be busting at the seams with Legion Riders who are able to stay at Camp. The week culminates on Saturday morning when Legion Riders from across the state will gather at Bronsted-Searl-Ingman

American Legion Post 93 in Tomahawk. Our purpose is to attract attention as we leave town with a police escort. Our hope is people might ask what we were up to. Our project this year was to refinish the concrete lodge floor. This is co-sponsored with the Wisconsin Legion Auxiliary. Donation amount not known at publish of this article, stay tuned.

Other activities in September were District 7's annual Legacy Ride and District 2's annual support of the West Bend Armory Family Day. These both occur on the second weekend of the month. That weekend also is the 25th anniversary of the events of 9/11. My hope is that many of you will be able to attend ceremonies and remembrances to keep these events in our history & memory

The State Executive Committee will convene on October 11 to discuss business to be brought before the November 7 State Quarterly Membership meeting in Fremont, WI.

If you have any questions about the Wisconsin Legion Riders don't hesitate to contact me: Corey Doebrmann/State Director, cell 262-305-0305 or email at alrawi.director@gmail.com.