



# BADGER FOR GOD & COUNTRY AMERICAN LEGION WISCONSIN LEGIONNAIRE

& WISCONSIN VOL 102 #1 | FEB. 2025



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



## 2025 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE IS WELL-ATTENDED

The 2025 Midwinter Conference was the most attended Midwinter Conference since 2020. Thank you all who came to participate, learn and work to move the Wisconsin American Legion forward. The events began with a 2.2 Mile Be The One Walk. This event raised awareness of at-risk Veterans. There was a donation drive for two Veterans' homeless shelters in Appleton and the attendees showed up with a record number of donations.

On Friday, committees and commissions met and made decisions that will further the Wisconsin American Legion and support Veterans, their families and their communities. On Saturday, Legionnaires came from all over the state to learn about Funeral Honors, Legion Programs, Leadership positions, and more. Classes were offered more than once to allow



attendees to maximize their time and get several classes in throughout the day.

Saturday evening all gathered for the 'Celebrate Your Heritage' banquet. The evening began with a buffet meal

followed by entertainment by Boogie Time Entertainment. Attendees sang karaoke and danced the night away.

They got into the spirit by dressing up to represent their heritage.

Thank you to all who attended



Midwinter, and the Post 38 volunteers who helped with registration and heavy lifting.

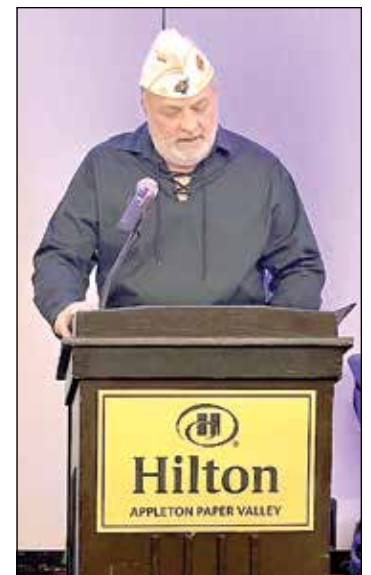
Mark your calendars for the 106th Department Convention July 16-20, 2025 at the Hyatt/KI Center in Green

Bay- where we will add some of the leadership training this year.

Also mark your calendar for the 2026 Midwinter, January 15-18, 2026 at the Oneida Green Bay Conference Center.

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“Wisconsin”

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

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

# ALL ROADS LEAD FROM BOYS STATE: REMOVING BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY

By **Zac Dickhut**

Every June, the citizens of Badger Boys State make their way to Eau Claire for a week that is sure to have a profound impact on their lives. For some, it will set a course in public policy, the military, or business. For others, they will have gained at least one close friend. In either event, the week means something significant, and the dollars are worth it for the memories they make and the course that is charted. Indeed, the paths and roads of life available to a young man leaving Boys State are far more plentiful than the physical roads they drove in on. But this roads-themed analogy places renewed concern on a problem that's a bit more ... concrete.

Now that I've added yet another dollar to my awful pun jar, I'd like to



dedicate this article to highlight our program's commitment to making sure that every eligible citizen who wants to attend Badger Boys State can do so. It is particularly important for sponsors to know this information as well. Of note is our network of buses that can bring citizens to Eau Claire from various points throughout the state. Buses depart from Beloit, Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Racine and make their way to Eau Claire at no cost to the citizens

themselves, which removes a significant barrier for many Wisconsin students, particularly in areas where mass transit is used more frequently and for families that don't own an automobile. This goes a long way in making the program more accessible to citizens throughout the state—and we're happy to see more of Wisconsin's diversity represented as a result.

Also of note is the availability of sponsorships. We are always grateful for the posts who sponsor a citizen or even a few citizens from their local schools. Badger Boys State has made it a high priority to generate additional sponsorship dollars through our Badger Boys State Alumni Association and other avenues. If you have, let's say, three boys interested in attending, but you can only spon-

sor one, let us know. We want to get every interested citizen into the 51st state. We can make that happen.

By working to remove transportation barriers for citizens, as well as prioritizing our own version of “financial aid” for any student who wants to attend, Badger Boys State is not only extending its program in raw population, but it's beginning to reach citizens who may not initially seem like the “right fit.” Interestingly—those are the types of citizens who often bring extremely valuable perspectives to our program. At a minimum, they make for a more entertaining week.

As always, we invite every Legionnaire to Eau Claire during our week of American magic. The sense of vision, mission, and purpose you'll leave with is oh so worth it.

## ORATORICAL CONTEST SLATED FOR MARCH 29

The 88th Annual High School Oratorical Regional and Finals Contest is scheduled March 29 at Ripon College in Todd Wehr Hall. Opening ceremonies begin at 9 a.m. The contests began at the post level, then advancing to the county and the district level. The district winners will participate in the Regional contest on March 29 in the morning. The winners of the regional contests will participate in the Finals contest the same day at 12:45 p.m. The contestants are competing for scholarships. The winner of the Department Finals contest will represent the state of Wisconsin at the National Oratorical contest May 16–18 at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan.

This is a great opportunity for Legion Family members to attend a great event that features talented high school students who have worked very hard to present their orations. Each contestant will present two orations. The first being and 8- to 10-minute prepared oration about the U.S. constitution. Their second oration consists of a 3- to 5-minute oration on a randomly assigned constitutional topic. There are



four assigned topics, and because they are randomly selected by the Oratorical Chair at each contest, students must be prepared to speak on all of them.

Take a trip to Ripon College on March 29 and support this great American Legion Americanism Program.

If you have questions about the Oratorical contest, please contact Sheri at Legion Headquarters, [sheri@wilegion.org](mailto:sheri@wilegion.org).

## A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL & HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

On many occasions while sitting around with other Veterans and Legion members, the conversation eventually gets around to how can we as a Post be more effective in the community? How can we let everyone know what we do? Sure, we can donate money, we can march in the parades, visit Veterans in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, we can host chili cook-offs, pancake breakfasts and fish fries. We can be available for funerals and flag disposal ceremonies, and also provide programs for the youth that attend the schools in our area. But maybe that's not enough.

Let's take it to the next level, there are things that we can do that not every American Legion post has gotten involved in, and that is to offer our services to the city or county emergency management team. They are the folks called to action in the event of a national disaster. These disasters could be a flood, a major fire, a tornado, or other weather-related events.

An American Legion Post could offer the help needed to provide the emergency management team a shelter, a command center or to accommodate citizens that have been forced out of their residences. We might also be called upon to be available to provide the meals or snacks for the citizens and the other volunteers. Possibly the Legion Post could become a warming shelter during the brutal winter cold.

Consider our Legion, Auxiliary, Sons and Legion Rider members who could also provide needed assistance in the event of a disaster.

So, as an agenda suggestion at one of your next post meetings, discuss how your post could help out in the event of a disaster that could happen locally. When you have established what your post could do, then contact the emergency management office in your city/town/village or at the county level and let them know of what you have to offer.

Most emergency management offices would be ecstatic to have your involvement and a team of volunteers that know how to get the job done.

When the next disaster strikes and a response from the community is needed, wouldn't it be great if the local American Legion post members were the ones leading the charge getting the community and their residences back to normal?

## 2024 WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL SCHOLARSHIP

**Region 1 Legion Baseball  
Director Mark Faanes  
presented Brogan Korger  
of Osseo with the 2024  
Wisconsin American Legion  
Baseball scholarship  
plaque.**





# NEW LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCED FOR NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

The American Legion is proud to announce the appointment of Past National Commander Dan Seehafer as Chancellor of the National American Legion College and Past National Marketing Commission Chairman Mike Rohan as Dean of the National American Legion College. Their combined expertise and dedication to servant leadership will significantly enhance the educational experience for Legion members.

These two appointments for Seehafer and Rohan follow the announcement that Past National Commander Dave Rehbein will be stepping down as Chancellor and National Staff member Ken George will be stepping down as Dean of the College.

Dan Seehafer brings over 25 years of experience as a servant leader in his church, community, and The American Legion. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Pastoral Ministry and a Master of Divinity degree. As Chancellor,



**Past National Commander Dan Seehafer (left) has been named Chancellor of the National American Legion College while Past National Marketing Commission Chairman Mike Rohan has been chosen to be Dean of the National American Legion College.**

Dan's vision will revolve around transforming the college curriculum into a servant leadership construct, fostering an environment where fu-

ture leaders can thrive and serve with purpose.

Joining him in this vital role as Dean of the College is Mike Rohan, who has a Bachelor of Science degree in Educational Administration and a Master of Science degree in Education focusing on leadership and instruction. Mike recently completed a certificate program in Servant Leadership from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As Dean, he will be responsible for developing the curriculum and overseeing the college's day-to-day operations, ensuring that it meets the evolving needs of the American Legion and its members.

Dan and Mike possess the experience and background necessary to cultivate a successful program that will empower the leaders of tomorrow. Their commitment to education and leadership development aligns with the American Legion's mission to serve Veterans and their families.

"The American Legion College is at a pivotal

moment in its history, and I am excited to work alongside Mike to develop a curriculum that educates and inspires our future leaders," said Dan Seehafer. "Our focus on servant leadership will provide a strong foundation for those who wish to serve our Veterans, their communities, and their families."

Mike Rohan added, "I am honored to take on this role and look forward to working with Dan as we begin fostering an environment of collaboration and innovation at the National American Legion College."

The American Legion welcomes these two exceptional leaders and looks forward to their positive impact on the National American Legion College and the American Legion's future.

For more information about the National American Legion College and its programs, please visit <https://www.legion.org/information-center/training/legion-college>.

## 107-YEAR-OLD VETERAN INDUCTED INTO VA HALL OF HEROES

By John Gessner  
Post 100, Sparta

Reynolds Tomter was inducted into the Tomah VA Medical Center Hall of Heroes on December 2 for his courageous service in World War II and service to his community. At 107, he is the oldest surviving member of the Merchant Marine service. The oldest WWII Veteran is 110-year-old Navy Veteran Eugene Baltes. Reynolds stood with the assistance of a walker during the induction ceremony. Stating, "No, I don't need a microphone," his voice boomed through the VA auditorium.

Reynolds, born in 1917 when America entered into World War I, was drafted in 1943. He intended to join the Navy but found that they filled their quota, so he went to the Merchant Marine recruiting office and enlisted. While stationed in Brooklyn, New York, he made five trips across the Atlantic Ocean and into



the Mediterranean Sea.

The Merchant Marines faced the same dangers as the Navy, but were more vulnerable to enemy attacks due to their lighter armored ships. They depended on Navy escorts and convoys for safety. One in 26 Merchant Marines lost their lives during the war; 11,200 were wounded in action or taken prisoner. The Merchant Marine Veterans were finally granted Veteran benefits in 1988.

Reynolds served as a Steward Mate 3rd Class, primarily as a baker in the galley. Everyone aboard the ship had a combat role, Reynolds served as a backup gunner defending his ship from German U-boats.

Following the war, Reynolds returned to his hometown of Pigeon Falls where he worked in a grocery store that he later bought. He started the local Lions Club and became a lifetime member of The American Legion.

Reynolds joins Medal of Honor recipient Kenneth Stumpf in the Tomah VA Hall of Heroes. Reynolds said,



**At the Dec. 3, 2024 Hall of Heroes event at the Tomah VA Medical Center are Rita Rindahl, 10th District Commander; Ken Schoolcraft, Tomah VAVS American Legion Representative; Reynolds Tomter, Tomah VA Hall of Heroes Inductee and lifetime member of the American Legion Hutchison-Stendahl Post 191 in Whitehall, WI; Jennifer Conzemius, Chief of Center for Development and Civic Engagement, Tomah VA Medical Center; and Willie Vehrenkamp, Past Commander Etrick Post 354.**

"Now you see what old looks like," he modestly said that he was not a hero, just a cog in the wheel making the total war machine run. Reynolds said he "lived a life well spent."

In June 2024, he was one of several hundred Veterans to visit Normandy, France for the 80th anniversary of

D-Day, describing his experience as a beautiful time with the gracious French hosts who thanked the Veterans for their freedom. Reynolds was in the front row of Veterans because of his age. He assisted in placing a wreath on the French Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Paris. His son remarked, "Dad, now the whole world will see you on TV."

**"My husband stepped out for some fresh air, then I heard a loud thud ...**

**We were rushed to the hospital where he was diagnosed with broken bones and two spinal obstructions."**

Fortunately, we had purchased the Legionnaire Emergency Assistance Plus® (EA+) plan for our travels!

We were in London, and after 2 hospitals and 39 days in a rehab facility, Michael was released to travel and EA+ coordinated our

**Don't travel another mile without learning more about how EA+ can help you. Call 1-888-293-4008 today!**



return. They provided a nurse escort to monitor Michael on the trip home, an ambulance to the airport, then to the rehabilitation facility so Michael could continue his recovery.

Thank you, EA+! You gave me the freedom to focus on Michael and the relief of not having to make all the arrangements myself.

- Julie & Michael  
North Carolina



### OMRO SCHOOL VETERANS DAY PROGRAM

Every year, the Omro School District puts on heart-touching Veterans Day programs. The high school students perform the program for the Veterans unlike at our younger schools where the Veterans host the programs.

This year, we had a few high school students read their original Veterans Day poems during the program. They pulled at the heart-strings of many. We liked them so much, that we had those students attend a Post meeting to read them to the rest of the Post members.

### Thank you

*Our Veterans are among the brave  
There is so much that they gave  
They gave their blood, their sweat, their tears  
Just to keep us safe over the years  
They gave us all those tired hours  
And proved wrong all the doubters  
From the entirety of this nation,  
We honor all in this celebration.  
The brave, the bold,  
The ones who didn't make it home  
The ones we lost, the ones we found  
The many that are heaven bound  
Every soldier's mind holds  
So many stories to be told  
Just for us to take it for granted  
All the freedoms we've been handed.  
I have no idea how they do it.  
To push and push, yet never quit.  
So thank you to all the brave men and women  
Who keep this country safe to live in.  
There are no words to express  
My gratitude for your success  
Thank you.*



## Rita Rindahl for Department Vice Commander

10th District Commander Rita Rindahl of Wisconsin proudly announces her candidacy for the High office of Department Vice Commander. Rita is a 23-year member of the Legion. I believe in promoting the values of membership in this organization and that Veterans are important to the vitality of our communities. Rita is endorsed by her Trempealeau County Council and her home Post-Osseo Carl Nelson Post 324. She also has the support of her family. I served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a cook with an honorable discharge at the rank of Corporal. I am a Lebanon/Granada era Veteran. In my years of service, I was named "Humanitarian of the year 2016" through the Ashley for the Arts Foundation of Wisconsin for my work involving the community of Osseo- Fairchild School District. Prior to that, I was 9th District VFW President, 2005- 2007. I have held positions in The American Legion as Post Adjutant and 3rd Vice Commander, County Commander and 3rd, 2nd, and 1st District Vice Commander and currently District Commander. I am a Wisconsin American Legion College graduate and an active dual member of our Auxiliary. Committees that I have served on are: Department Membership, Convention Credentials committee, DEC- Liaison for National and Homeland Security and currently Department Executive Committee. I became a Legionnaire to support all Veterans past and present who have served honorably. By promoting our Legion programs, I believe our membership can grow, thus making our communities healthier. Our Youth, our families were a part of "The Why" that I took the oath to protect our nation. So, in working with them, I believe in teaching respect for our nation's flag and telling the story of our national anthem to the younger generation. It can help them learn the value of becoming a better citizen. I respectfully request your support.



**Rita Rindahl**  
10th District Commander

## Aimee Korger for Department Sergeant-at-Arms

Hello Again, Wisconsin! Department Sergeant-at-Arms Aimee Korger is announcing my candidacy for re-election as Department Sergeant-at-Arms. I am looking forward to the next Department Convention, and I hope you all are as well. As always, we have a lot of GREAT candidates this year. With your votes, I will continue to be committed to the new Officers, Past Officers, and Headquarters Team behind the scenes. I thank you in advance for your support.



**Aimee Korger**  
Department Sergeant-at-Arms

## POST 486 JACKSON RECOGNIZES TWO MEMBERS FOR 80 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE

On Nov 11, 2024 (Veterans Day), S/Sgt Henry F. Gumm Post 486 in Jackson, WI, recognized two World War II members for 80 years of continuous service.

Wallace "Wally" Ritterbusch, our eldest member at 100 years old, served in the U.S. Navy in Europe during WWII. Wally was assigned to the operational crew for LCT-547 (Landing Craft, Tanks) that landed at Normandy, France on June 6, 1944 (D-Day). After he completed his service to our nation, he became one of our post's charter members! Following his service, Wally continued serving The American Legion while working as a Tool & Die Maker with AO Smith corporation in Milwaukee, WI.



**LEFT: Wally Ritterbusch is front and center in the chair. Standing with Wally are (L-R) Past Post Commander Janis Sierra, Membership Chair Jeff McElroy, Current Commander Brian Truss, and Chaplain John Wagie. RIGHT: Darold Hoelz is flanked by Membership Chair Jeff McElroy (left) and Current Commander Brian Truss.**



Darold Hoelz, our second 80-year member enlisted in the Navy at 17 and reported for active duty on D-Day. He served on the USS Hancock, CV-19, in the Pacific theater doing flight-deck and general duties. After the USN service length he continued serving his country in the Wisconsin Army National Guard with mobilization in the U.S. Army during the Berlin crisis. In the Guard and Army, he was an Aircraft Maintenance Officer and a rated Master Army Aviator. An award is given out annually in his name to an outstanding enlisted person in an Aviation Unit in the Wisconsin ARNG.

Post 486 is extremely proud to have both Wally and Darold as two outstanding Veterans of our post.



## POST 10 WAUSAU OPENS EXPANDED MILITARY MUSEUM AT RESTAURANT

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

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

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

Story courtesy of Bob Weller and Mike Heilmann, and photos courtesy of Mike Heilmann.



## POST 271 45 YEARS OF SERVICE

Poynette Post 271 honors Merle Ohnesorge at the annual Veterans Day Dinner for 45 continuous years of membership.

## NEW CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL MONUMENT



On October 25, 2024, Germantown American Legion Post 1 and VFW Post 9202 provided a color guard and rifle squad at Zion Church in Richfield, WI. A new monument with the names of the Civil War Veterans buried in the cemetery was unveiled.



**WALLECA IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS UNTIL MARCH 31**

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



This year's WALLECA will be held from June 23-27 at the Wisconsin State Patrol Academy at Fort McCoy. The curriculum includes Firearms Training, Ethics, Crime Scene Investigation, Physical Readiness Testing, and much more. The classes are instructed by current and retired law enforcement professionals. Questions regarding WALLECA can be forwarded to Sheri Hicks, Programs Coordinator, at [Sheri@wilegion.org](mailto:Sheri@wilegion.org) or by calling 608-745-1090.

**FREEZIN' FOR A REASON HELD IN MILWAUKEE**

By SAL Detachment Historian Mike Pook

On the night of December 6 it was a windy 24 degrees in Milwaukee. 18 men and women of all ages chose to camp outside in cardboard boxes or tents instead of sleeping in their warm beds at home. Many were American Legion family members. They came together to "Support the Cause" as Andy Werner of Lake Mills Squadron 67 puts it. "Freezin' for a Reason" events are held this time of year all over the state.

The event, sponsored by the Wisconsin American Legion, lasted for 24 hours at the Milwaukee War Memorial Eternal Flame. The 3 coordinators were Joe Leone, SAL and TAL member and Department Membership Chair, Gene Hembrook, Department Fundraising Committee Vice Chair, and Dave Hodgson SAL Detachment Vice Commander.

Tables were set up with resources for Veterans and their families during the event. Many American Legion Family members stopped by to see the "camp". Bobbie Zerfas, Assistant Program Manager of the Homeless Prevention Program at the Milwaukee VA, explained that the mission of the VA Homeless Programs is to prevent and end Veteran homelessness. They seek to empower Veterans to lead their own recovery process towards independence and a full life. The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans provides 24 hour 7 days a week staff coverage, 1-877-4AID VET. Contact your local VA for program information in your area.

Dave Hodgson has experience with coordinating "Freezin' for a Reason" after helping Hubertus



**ABOVE:** The camp was frigid on a windy 24-degree night. **AT RIGHT:** Joe Leone spreads the word about the cause to the media. **BELOW:** Joe Leone receives a check from Dave Hodgson.



Squadron 522 and SAL 2nd District with their event. Many donations were collected. A \$10,000 donation from Co-Coordinator Dave Hodgson, and Kirk Grill from Watertown Post 189, 2nd District Legion Rider, VFW member and AMVET, collected donations adding up to \$2,000. Joe Martino, Operating Partner of Point Brewery, supplied beverages for the participants, Gino Fazzari, owner and chef of the Calderone Club donated pizzas. Joe Leone collected about \$27,000 in dona-

tions. Three news stations covered the event. When interviewed, Joe said, "We are sleeping in these boxes tonight to bring awareness of homeless Veterans and homeless people who sleep outside, regardless of what the elements are. It can be very brutal! We are trying to do something. We are trying to make a difference." The Milwaukee War Memorial opened up their doors for this event free of charge, their Program Director Sean Clark also participated.

The American Legion  
Americanism and Government  
Scholarship Program  
Department of Wisconsin

**Purpose:**

To promote "Americanism", love of country, knowledge of government and allegiance to the U.S. flag to our youth. Eligible students are tested on their knowledge of U.S., Wisconsin and Country Governments, the U.S. Constitution and flag etiquette.

**Who Is Eligible?**

Any student in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade in any public, private, parochial or home-schooled within the State of Wisconsin may participate. Students may only take the test 1 times per year; however, students may participate all 3 years and be eligible for the scholarships for multiple years.

**What Is It?**

The test consists of 50 questions; true/false, multiple choice, matching, and an essay question that must be answered in order to qualify for the scholarships. Students are not allowed to use outside resources for answers while taking this test.

**The test is available online  
March 3 through March 14, 2025.  
Students Register online  
when taking the test on:  
[wilegion.org/scholarships](https://wilegion.org/scholarships)  
The link is only active during  
the test window.**

**Scholarships**

Annually, 33 students throughout the State of Wisconsin are awarded scholarships selected by the Americanism Committee of The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin. The following scholarships are awarded:

- 11 students in Grade 10 receive a \$250 scholarship**
- 11 students in Grade 11 receive a \$300 scholarship**
- 11 students in Grade 12 receive a \$750 scholarship**

For more information, contact The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin 608-745-1090 or check out our website at [wilegion.org](https://wilegion.org)

**LEGION RIDERS MEET AT MONTELLO POST 351**



The Legion Riders held a meeting at Montello Post 351 on November 2. Post 351 provided the use of our hall and served a meal for them.

**VETERANS DAY OBSERVATION AT LA CROSSE GAME**

La Crosse Post 52 military honors detail firing three volleys at a UW-L observation of Veterans Day prior to the UWL-UW Whitewater football game.

Photo by James Krause, River Valley Media Group.







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



Post 477 members Matt Koch, Nancy Rivera, and Greg Schnelder with family and friends participated in the HOOAH WI Veteran Suicide Awareness Ruck March. Post members carried Be The One flags during the march.



## HOOAH RUCK MARCH BRINGS SUICIDE AWARENESS

On November 9, American Legion Post 477 – St Nazianz sponsored a team who participated in the HOOAH WI Veteran Suicide Awareness Ruck March at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay. The ruck fell directly in line with the American Legion's 'Be The One' program which raises awareness to Veteran suicides and provides a platform to destigmatize asking for mental health support.

Among the 1,200 individuals participating in the 17.5-mile ruck march were American Legion Post 477 members Matt Koch, Nancy Rivera, and Greg Schneider, along with family and friends. Team members wore Be The One T-shirts and carried Be

The One flags to raise awareness to the issue of Veteran suicide, and to show support to the Veterans and their families who battle with their mental health and for those who have lost the battle.

Each of the Post 477 team members has a connection to a Veteran who has died by suicide; a dad, a stepson, an uncle, a friend, a co-worker, fellow Soldiers, and fellow Marines.

If you have a family member, friend, business associate or another connection with a Veteran, The American Legion encourages you to Be The One to: Ask Veterans in your life how they are doing, listen to when a Veteran needs to talk and reach out when a Veteran is struggling.



## POST 10 DELIVERS OVER 210 VETERAN THANKSGIVING MEALS

Over 210 Thanksgiving meals were requested and delivered to the homes of Veterans and their families on Wednesday, November 20. The Wausau American Legion Post 10 provided the meals that were delivered by 22 volunteer drivers. The post has provided over 6,300 "Safe at Home" meals for Veterans and widows in the past 4 years. The meal

deliveries are just one of the ways that the post thanks Veterans for their service.

Many volunteers, including those from the Samuels Group, helped package the meals that included pies for delivery. The delicious meals were prepared by Bunkers Restaurant in Wausau, the pies and whipped toppings were donated by the Samuels Group.

Post 10 thanks all of the volunteers, members and nonmembers, who make it possible to provide this valuable Veterans service. The post also appreciates the support from our local businesses and community members.

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

## JEREMIAH'S CROSSING DONATION

Jeremiah's Crossing is a nonprofit therapeutic horseback-riding ranch dedicated to children and adults diagnosed with physical, cognitive, emotional and academic special needs at no cost to the riders or their families. Check presentation shows Babcock Post 322 Past Commander Greg Regalia (L) and Roger Harris of Jeremiah's Crossing.



## GREENDALE POST 416 FOOD DRIVE

It's partnerships like ours with Greendale American Legion Post 416 that make our work for Veterans in our community successful and rewarding.

A joint food drive was held during 2 of the Legion's November BINGO events. The results were many pounds of food and lots of cash! The Greendale American Legion and VFW both donated \$500 and VFW member Dan Crass, also the organizer of the drive, collected \$500 in donations from VFW members at November's meeting. So, along with the food, a total of \$1,500 was donated to the Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative.

These donations will significantly help Veterans and their families in need this holiday season!

Pictured left to right: Kiana Sanchez, MHVI Business Operations Manager; Dan Crass representing Greendale American Legion Post 416; Debbie Buchanan MHVI Executive Director; and John Ustruck representing Greendale VFW Post 10519.



## HORTONVILLE POST 55 HOST VETERANS DAY AWARDS CELEBRATION

Ray Boland, Colonel, U.S. Army retired and past Secretary of the Wisconsin Dept. of Veterans Affairs, was the honorary guest speaker at Hortonville American Legion Post 55, Auxiliary, and Sons of American Legion Veterans Day Dinner held at the Hortonville Grand View Golf Course on November 9.

William Fischer was recognized for 50 years of consecutive membership in American Legion Post 55.

Sgt.-at-Arms, Jim Jentz, received recognition from Commander Ziegert for donating over 13 gallons of blood.

Rick Pankow received recognition from Commander Ziegert for his community service, centered on baseball, and the creation of the Hortonville American Legion Baseball program.

One of our guests, Junel, a teacher at Mt. Olive School in Appleton, a school Post 55 visits as part of Veterans events, brought handcrafted flags that her students created to give to the Veterans in thanks for their service and sacrifices. There was also a Hero Box sponsored by many area businesses for each Veteran to take home as a thank you for their service.

In total, over 80 people were in attendance, a fantastic meal was catered by Kelsey's Country Kitchen, with delicious desserts baked by Unit 55 Auxiliary. Post 55 visited Bethlehem School on November 8 and after presenting colors there was a reverent and patriotic musical salute. Post 55 Finance Officer Tom McNichols spoke to youth, he shared information about his Old Glory Honor Flight Mission 70 trip to Washington D.C.



Ray Boland (left)



William Fischer (left)



Jim Jentz (left)



Rick Prankow (left)



## POST 395: BENCHES, POW/MIA AREA, HALLOWEEN



Kingston Post 395 has a new bench dedicated to Raymond Schmidt, a Korean War POW/MIA. Post 395 thanks Jack and Irene Walker for their donation to make this happen.



Kingston Post 395 has a new POW/MIA sign & table area. The frame was made by David Pollesch.



Kingston Post 395 gave out candy on Halloween. This little trick-or-treater visited the Post.



## POST 122 BLUE STAR BANNER



Phillips Post 122 Commander Douglas Rasmussen and AMVETS Auxiliary President Dolores Gradinjan presented a Blue Star banner to Brian and Linda Skrzypczak, whose son Ted is serving in the U.S. Air Force. The Skrzypczaks support Veterans programs in Phillips.

## WWI CANNON RESTORATION



American Legion Ernest Hauke Post 236 in Algoma received a very generous \$2,000 donation. The funds will help fund the Post WWI-era cannon restoration project. Pictured l-r are Bill Vinnes, Post 236 Membership Chair, Jan Dart, Community Improvement of Algoma, and Mike Froelich, Post 236 Commander.

## DISTRICT 11 LEGION RIDERS CHRISTMAS PARTY



District 11 American Legion Riders held their Christmas meeting and party in Mercer at the Great Northern.

## MARSHFIELD VETERANS COUNCIL HONOR GUARD DUTIES



Marshfield Veterans Council, which is The American Legion Post 54, VFW Post 1866 and DAV Chapter 57, participated in Veterans Day Honor Guard duties. This was held at Veterans Park in Marshfield. A very windy day.



## MILITARY HONORS FOR 78-YEAR MEMBER

The members of Edwin L. Jones Post 91 Oconomowoc had the sad duty of performing the Military Honors for Jim Pihringer. Jim was Post 91's longest continuous serving member with 78 years as a member of Post 91.

Jim was also the oldest member at 99 years of age. Jim was transferred to Post Everlasting on November 20, 2024. He served in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II.

Jim served as Sergeant at Arms for many years at Post 91. Even in his final years he still helped Post 91 whenever asked. He would help fill bags with candy for our annual "Safe Halloween For Kids" each Halloween season and always looked forward to the job.

He is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren, his many friends, the staff at Shorehaven retirement home, and members of Post 91 that will surely miss him.

## PLAYING TAPS AT MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE IN NEW YORK



Micah Zwiefelhofer of SAL squadron 550 Brackett preparing to perform at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade in NYC. Micah also played in the band at BBS June 2024. Micah has played taps for many funerals both American Legion and VFW. The American Legion family is very proud of Micah!

In front with Clarence Zahringer (c) his son Ron (l), Diane MacDonald (r), and in the back row (l to r) Nancy Schnell-Rivera, Legion members Don Voigt, Carl Holzschuh, Dan Wheaton, Jake Pompa, and Wayne Fischer.



## OLD GLORY HONOR FLIGHT HONORS VETERAN'S SERVICE

On December 19, Old Glory Honor Flight, Inc. (OGHF) honored Clarence Zahringer of Sherwood for his distinguished service during World War II. At the remarkable age of 106, Zahringer is a Veteran of the Army Air Corps and a member of Thomas E. Kees American Legion Post 496.

The program, which included the presentation of an Old Glory Honor Flight shirt, jacket, cap, Veteran pin, and a handmade blanket, which was made by Diane MacDonald, Executive Director, with the assistance of OGHF volunteer Nancy Schnell-Rivera. American Legion members were also present to offer their respects.

## SAL SQUADRON 521 DONATION TO DCVS



Fox Lake Post 521 SAL Commander Jeff Meyer presented a \$1,000 donation to Dodge County Veteran Services.





### POST 313 QUILTS OF VALOR



Two members of the Black Earth American Legion Post 313 were awarded Quilts of Valor on January 13. L-R seated - Robert Hass 30-year member and David Barsness 51-year member.



Black Earth American Legion Post 313 awarded Bob Hass, seated, a 30-year membership certificate by Post Commander Gary Ballweg. Bob's daughter Michelle had just helped present her dad with the Quilt of Valor.

### WHEELCHAIRS FOR POST 501



American Legion Post 501 in Madison acquired two electric wheelchairs upon the passing of one of our members. The Post started a search for new owners. On January 7, Thomas, who serves as a paratransit driver for those who are wheelchair bound, saw an opportunity to help. He intends to offer the temporary use of the chair to improve transport for his clients. Many of his clients are Veterans. Thank you so much, Thomas! Thanks go to Post 501-member Stanley Wilson's relatives who donated the chairs. Post 501 maintains a small stock of rollators, walkers and manual wheelchairs intended for short-term loans, primarily for Veterans and their families.

## POST 21 SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR DISPLAY

On Veterans Day 2024, Matt Christiansen, Commander of Kenosha's Paul Herrick Post 21 and owner of Gunner Gear Militaria, created a stunning military display at the local Associated Bank branch. The exhibit featured artifacts from every major conflict the U.S. has been involved in, from the Spanish-American War to current conflicts. At the center of the display was a folded American flag, presented to Matt when he was 15, which had belonged to his grandfather, a Veteran of the 1950s. This flag had sparked Matt's interest in collecting military artifacts and inspired him to serve.



The display was on show for 10 days and received widespread acclaim from customers and staff alike. Unbeknownst to Matt, the Kenosha Associated Bank had submitted a photo of the display to their headquarters, where it was entered into a national contest among bank branches. In mid-December, the Kenosha branch was notified that they had won the award for Best Veterans Day Display, with Matt receiving a \$250 prize.

In a heartwarming display of generosity, Matt requested that the check be made out to The American Legion, donating the prize money to his post. On January 3, 2025, a ceremony was held at the bank, where the check was presented to Matt and members of the post. This small but significant event has marked the beginning of a fruitful partnership between the bank and the post.

Associated Bank has a strong commitment to supporting Veterans, with several programs



in place and allowing employees to take paid time off to volunteer. The bank has challenged the post to create another display for next year's Veterans Day, which Matt has eagerly accepted.

Pictured at the check presentation ceremony are Bank Manager Nichole Dahlquist and Commander Matt Christiansen, surrounded by Associated Bank employees and American Legion Post 21 members. The event was filled with gratitude and appreciation, with both parties thanking each other for their support and partnership.



### FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICE MARKS 'SACRIFICE AT SEA'

The moving Four Chaplains Service concluded the Midwinter Conference. Please read more about this Sacrifice at Sea. This service commemorates one of the worst losses at sea of World War II (3 Feb 1943) and of four SS Dorchester chaplains who gave up their chances of rescue so soldiers could survive. The chaplains helped the other soldiers board lifeboats and gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out.[1]

Presiding was Department Chaplain Dennis Jaeger. Biographies of each of the four chaplains were read by those at the table. At the table from

left to right were 3rd District Historian Morris Sadicario (representing Reform Rabbi Lt. Alexander D Goode, PhD), Department Chaplain Virgil Smith (representing Catholic Chaplain Lt. Clark Poling), Post 501 Chaplain Darrell "AJ" Feucht (representing Methodist Chaplain George L. Fox), and Daniel Workehaour (representing Dutch Reformed Chaplain Lt. John P. Washington).

[1] Eastwood, John H. (1995). "17: A Personal Testimony". *The Wonder of Grace*. Companion Press. pp. 123–124. ISBN 1-56043-572-0.

### SAUKVILLE AMERICAN LEGION POST 470 VETERANS DAY TRIBUTE

The Landt-Thiel American Legion Post 470 in Saukville marked Veterans Day with a program that included a Post Everlasting Ceremony. Post Commander Denise Jamrozky read resolutions releasing members of the Legion Post who died in the last year to the Post Everlasting. Post Chaplain Darlene Garay then burned one copy of the resolution in a soldier's helmet while another copy was presented to the families of the deceased members, who were Robert Kerber, Harold Olson, Peter Holk, Marvin Hoffmann, Dennis Reick, Edgar Liesenberg, Philip Watry, Norbert Krautkramer and David Karraker. The observance ended with a rifle salute and taps played by bugler Tom Wieman. The Post also held an evening program and dinner.



### DISTRICT 11 RIDERS' WREATHS

District 11 American Legion Riders presented the American flags for the National Wreaths Across America Day at the National Cemetery in Harshaw, WI. The Riders Chaplain gave the prayer and address for the day. The District 11 Riders purchased the flags for the placement.



### POST 214 BALLPARK DONATION

The City of Darlington is looking for donations to upgrade the City Ballpark that was built in 1975. Joe Boll, a City Council Member and local historian, started a Fundraiser to get the necessary upgrades done. So far, the effort has raised close to \$90,000. The Darlington Post 214 Legion Family voted to help with this Children and Youth Project by donating \$5,000. Pictured from left to right are Fundraising Chairman Joe Boll, City Parks Director Wade Berget, SAL Finance Officer John Knellwolf, Auxiliary President Cindy Corley, Legion 1st Vice Commander Dave Heins, 2nd Vice Commander Jerry King, and 3rd District Commander and Post 214 member Dan O'Brien.



## POST 378 ORGANIZES BRANDON VETERANS DAY

Brandon Elementary School held their 25th annual Veterans Day program this year that was led and organized by James Otto of American Legion Post 378 in Brandon.

Each year the 2nd grade students in Lynn Alsum's class learn about what it takes to serve in the military and what it means to be a Veteran. The students write letters to the Veterans that are filled with questions and gratitude. They also include handmade gifts to go with each letter. The students eagerly look forward to meeting the Veterans that attend the program and thank them personally for their service.

This year the leftover gifts and letters were given to the keynote speaker, Wisconsin Lt. Governor Sara Rodriguez. Lt. Governor Rodriguez shared the letters and gifts with Veterans at the Veterans Day celebration held at the



**LEFT: Brandon Elementary students with Veterans. RIGHT: Lt. Gov. Rodriguez and CMSgt. Chad Workman share a moment.**

Governor's mansion that same evening. One of the recipients was CMSgt. Chad Workman, the Wisconsin Air National Guard State Command Chief who took time to write a letter back to Ms. Alsum's 2nd grade class. The students were so excited to read his letter along with all of the letters that they received back from area Veterans. James Otto and fellow Veterans Bruce Bellmer



and Willie Giese returned to the school to hand deliver the letters. The 2nd graders eagerly listened to their stories of their time in the military. Willie Giese served in the U.S. Marines, 1967-1971; Bruce Bellmer, served in the U.S. Navy, 1956-1960 and James Otto served in the Wisconsin National Guard 1950-1954 and the US Air Force, 1954-1958.



## SHEBOYGAN COUNTY ORATORICAL CONTEST



The Plymouth Ladewig-Zinkgraf Post 243 hosted the 2025 Sheboygan County Oratorical Contest. This year's contestants were Maxwell Lemus sponsored by Triple Nickel Post 555, pictured with PDC Greg Eirich, Commander in Sheboygan and Adaya Violetta sponsored by Sheboygan Post



83 pictured with Adjutant Harvey McBroom. Both students attend Sheboygan Lutheran High School. Pictured with them is Sheboygan County Commander DuWayne Wieck.

Maxwell Lemus won the contest and will advance to the 2nd District contest at the Horicon Post 157 in February.

## POST 435 VISITS COOPER ELEMENTARY

Post 435 in Superior attended Cooper Grade School in Superior on November 8 to give a presentation on "The History of the American Flag, Flag Etiquette, and the POW/MIA Table Setting Ceremony".

**AT FAR RIGHT:** Post members posed with Reese Stepihar (left) and Jordy Carlson. Both read a poem they wrote for the Post Members.

**AT RIGHT:** Fifth grader Liam Hunter made a map of the world which he presented to Post Commander Butch Liebaert. Each class member made a Thank You Card for Veterans. The Post distributed the cards to the VA Clinic, assisted living facilities, the Bong Veterans Museum, and the Elks Club to give to the Veterans on Veterans Day. The Post performed a Flag Ceremony raising that day.



## POST 360 HONOR GUARD



Members of Waunakee American Legion Post 360 present funeral honors for 54-year Legion member, Richard J. Murphy.

## POST 85 DONATES TO FIRE VICTIMS



Muscoda American Legion Post 85 presented a check for \$500 to Amy and Kloe Franklin after a devastating Christmas Eve fire that gutted their home. Left to right: Chief Bill Schram, Doug Froh, Jim Williams, Kloe Franklin, Commander Tom Nondorf, Amy Franklin, Tom McNamer, Treasurer Tony Broadbent. Not pictured: Matt Franklin.

## POST 527 'ACTING COMMANDER'



Bill Becker presented Tom Kowalski with a plaque for serving several years as Commander of Post 527 in Sister Bay. Bill Becker is now "Acting Commander" as a Past Commander to keep the northern Door County Post active.



Chippewa Falls Post 77 assembled Christmas goodie bags to give to post members that reside at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in Chippewa Falls. (L-R) Eugene Utecht, an Honorary Life Member; Harry P. Bauer, Past Department Vice Commander; and Ron Bauer, a PUF.

## POST 372 QUILT DONATION



Forestville American Legion Post 372 met with Peninsula Piece Makers to make a donation for the quilt shown. The donation will hopefully fund more quilts for local Veterans. Pictured is recent recipient Richard Kinnard, who is presenting the check to Janice Englebert, next to Janice is Carolyn Melland and Misty Witt. Pictured behind Richard Kinnard is William Karas, one of the first recipients of a quilt, and Arnie Johnsrud, Post 372 Commander.

## POST 534 TOYS FOR TOTS FUNDS



McFarland American Legion Post 534 thanks the McFarland residents and neighbors who helped raise \$16,025 for Toys for Tots. Commander Cory Gessler and Chaplain Dale Sankey pictured.

## POST 534 HOST GOLF OUTING



On August 10, McFarland American Legion Post 534 held their annual golf outing. This year we supported Operation Veteran Smiles, an organization that helps Veterans receive free dental care because the VA does not give dental care to all Veterans, only those that are 100% disabled. In September, Post 534 presented the check to OVS. Pictured L-R: Jim Sommers, Kyle Arneson, Cory Gessler.

## HIGHGROUND SERVICE STONE



Members of the Hatley American Legion Post 471 recently laid a service stone at The Highground Memorial.



## MANITOWOC COUNTY VETERAN OF THE YEAR

American Legion Post 477 member, Nancy Schnell Rivera, was recently recognized as the 2024 Manitowoc County Veteran of the Year. Nancy is a U.S. Army Veteran and retired after 30 years of military service, which included a deployment to Afghanistan. She is well-known as an enthusiastic volunteer and advocate of the Veteran community.

Nancy is an active volunteer with Old Glory Honor Flight (OGHF) working tirelessly to ensure that Veterans have the opportunity to fly with their very own honor flight. As a result of her dedication to the cause, in 2024, 60 Manitowoc County Veterans flew to DC with OGHF! She was honored to fly as a Guardian to DC and in that role, she helped ensure the safety and the best possible experience for the WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Veterans involved.



**Tom Hoffman, President of the Manitowoc County Unified Veterans Council, recognizes Nancy Schnell Rivera, 2024 County Veteran of the Year.**

Nancy is certified to participate as a We Honor Veterans volunteer through the Sharon S. Richardson Community Hospice. The program recognizes Veterans who are in the final stages of their lives through a pinning and final salute ceremony. She estimates that she has participated in 25 of these ceremonies thus far in 2024.

Nancy is best known as a member of American Legion Post 477 – St Nazianz and is referred to as “The Legion Lady.” Her contributions include participation in the Post’s Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities, conduct of Military Honors at the funerals of local Veterans, marching in local parades and school sporting events. Nancy is a resolute leader on post projects to include the annual Tee It Up Fore Troops golf outing and Christmas With The Veterans. A few personal highlights, Nancy was a co-coordinator of the NE Wisconsin I Am Not Invisible photo project, which highlighted local women Veterans. Nancy was also a member of the Post 477 team, which participated in the HOOAH WI Veteran Suicide Awareness Ruck March in November. She participated in the first “Freedom to Liberty: A Mission of Healing” Flight of Honor to New York City which honored Veterans who served during the Global War on Terror and because of her passion for serving fellow Veterans, she was asked to be a Mission Ambassador for the 2025 event.

## KEWAUNEE COUNTY VETERANS ATTEND CONCERT



Veterans of Kewaunee County attended a Veterans Day concert at an Algoma school celebrating and honoring local Veterans. Present were members of American Legion Post 236 of Algoma, Post 29 of Kewaunee, Post 262 of Luxemburg, Post 538 of Carlton and VFW Post 3392 of Kewaunee.

## LAFAYETTE COUNTY HOLDS COUNTY YOUTH GOVERNMENT DAY

On November 13, The American Legion of Lafayette County held its annual County Youth Government Day. We had an excellent showing of schools and students with 6 out of the 7 schools in Lafayette County participating with a total of 170 Junior Students. The Finance Department, HR Department, County Health Services and the Resource Development agents spoke to the students explaining their jobs and the opportunities that are here in Lafayette County. The students then were split into groups and were able to visit all of the departments in the courthouse and the department heads explained the workings of their offices. A history tour of the courthouse was given, and it was explained that the Lafayette County Courthouse is the only one that we know of in the United States that was built by the donations of one



person. The money came from the donor’s estate when he passed away. The students were also given a tour of the Lafayette County Jail, which always seems to be the highlight. The students then traveled to Darlington American Legion Post 214 where the Auxiliary Unit had lunch ready for them. After lunch, a County Board

member and fellow Veteran explained the functions of the County Board. A pocket size book on the U.S. Constitution was given to each student compliments of the Lafayette County American Legion. It was a good day for all of the students.

*Story submitted by Dan O'Brien, Third District Commander.*



**Paul Fisk  
Legislative  
Chairman**

### LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN

The new legislature has been sworn in and has started work. While there are many new members, several past members remain who have assisted us in realizing our legislative goals.

It is not too early to begin the process of recognizing them for supporting our four pillars.

Each district should start now. Which legislator in the state legislature or member of Congress from Wisconsin has demonstrated support for the legislative agenda of the Legion Family? Was the individual a first or second author on a bill, did they co-sponsor a bill? Did they provide assistance to Veterans in the community by helping them access needed government services?

In the last two sessions of the legislature much has been accomplished, such as:

1. Increasing the state grant to the Veterans Service Offices
2. Increasing the grants to the county Veteran Services Offices
3. Eliminating the requirement that County Veteran Service officers take a civil Service exam for the County to receive the grant

4. Excluding certain Military Allowances in determining gross income for the purposes of child support

5. Exempting Military Income received by active-duty Military members of the U.S. Armed forces from the Wisconsin Income Tax.

The current session will be very busy, and as usual, we will be dependent on members of the legislature to be successful. The Disabled Veterans and Surviving Spouse Property Tax Bill needs to get across the finish line. We need to do more to bring home the Wisconsinites who are missing in action. Military families stationed in Wisconsin need access to quality child care.

The process is laid out in the Department Administrative Manual along with the nomination forms. Nominations are due at Department Headquarters no later than May 1, 2025. The date is hard and fast as the nominations have to be processed and delivered to the Legislative Committee for selection for the Department award at the Spring Meetings.

The Department Legislator of the Year will be recognized at the Department Convention in July. The other nominees need to be formally recognized by the nominating district after the convention.



**Dennis Jaeger  
Department  
Chaplain**

### DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN

## A LONG-STANDING HABIT CONTINUED

*“To the faithful you show yourself faithful; to those with integrity you show integrity.”*

—2 Samuel 22:26

What is character, or integrity? It is who you are when you’re all alone, when there is no one around to impress. It has been said that the measure of real character is how someone would behave if they knew they never would be found out.

We could apply that principle to a lot of things in life. Why do we not do this, or why do we not do that? It’s usually because we don’t want to get caught doing something wrong.

For instance, why do people observe the speed limit? It’s because they don’t want to get pulled over by the police, evidenced by the fact that when the highway patrol shows up, everyone slows down. We obey the law for fear of repercussions.

That is where integrity comes in. It picks up where the fear of being caught leaves off. Fear is a fine deterrent, and it has its place. But a better deterrent—or a better motive if you will—is wanting to do what is right.

D. L. Moody defined *character* as “what we are in the dark.” What do you think about the most

when you’re all alone? What shows do you watch? What websites do you visit? What would they tell people about you?

What makes you sad? What makes you mad? And what makes you laugh? An old German proverb says, “A man shows his character by what he laughs at.” Everyone has character of some kind.

When we’re young, we lay a foundation that we will build on for the rest of our lives. If you are doing the right thing now, you will likely do it right later. And if you are not doing the right thing now, chances are you won’t do it right later, either.

In other words, if you cheat in practice, you will cheat in the game. If you cheat on the test, you will cheat later with the résumé. If you cheat on your boyfriend or girlfriend, then you probably will cheat on your husband or wife later. You see, what you are doing now will only be magnified tomorrow.

Character is simply a long habit continued. When you’re young, you develop habits that will continue throughout your life. You are setting your course. You’re making big decisions, but you’re also developing patterns for the way you live and what you do.

HAPPY NEW YEAR American Legion Family!



## POST 360: PLEDGE PROGRAM, PACKAGES, VETERANS DAY



**AT RIGHT:** Waunakee American Legion Post 360 members who attended the Pledge Program for all 1st graders in Waunakee. There are five elementary schools in Waunakee. Legion members visit the first graders at the schools and present a program on Veterans Day.

**ABOVE:** Waunakee American Legion Post 360 members and Auxiliary members packaged meals for refugees in the Waunakee area. This is called Food for Kidz and the Post participates each October.

**BELOW:** Waunakee American Legion Post 360 members conducted a Veterans Day program at Waunakee Manor Nursing Home.  
*Submitted by Sandy Johnson of Post 360.*



## POST 242 GETS AN UPGRADE

Members of American Legion Post 242 in La Valle and two local businesses recently upgraded the external front of the post building at 116 W. Main St.

Shrubbery and soil were removed by member Larry Weisert and replaced by concrete provided by Allied Redi-Mix in Plain and poured by Baraboo-based Weber Construction. The project included a widening of the front stoop. An existing memorial bench was moved and flanked by replicas of 105mm artillery shells.

The shell casings were donated by member Tom Miller, and the solid steel projectiles were manufactured by local resident Chuck Askren in his Iowa shop. Member Kerry Garber powder-coated both in his Illinois metal shop; the process ensures a long-lasting protective coating.

Handicap access signs also were attached to the building, and new hand rails will soon be added to the front entrance. Member Andy Mears and his niece repainted the former U.S. Mailbox used to collect old and damaged American flags that are disposed in accordance with the rules of a formal flag disposal ceremony.

## POST 7 HONOR GUARD



**Northwoods Honor Guard from American Legion Post 7 Rhinelander visited King Veterans Home for Veterans Day. Standing left to right are: Tony Schoone Post 7 Chaplain, Cal Lanser Post 7 member, and Bob Smith Commander of Post 7. Veteran Tom Vanney is seated center.**

## POST 122 BLUE STAR PARENTS



**Phillips American Legion Post 122 Commander Douglas Rasmussen (right) presented a Blue Star banner to the parents of Petty Officer 2nd Class Megan Schultz — Seabee builder, Matt and Naomi McCall.**

## DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT



**Julie Muhle**  
*Department Adjutant*

What a great Midwinter! I am not sure about you, but I look forward to Midwinter and Department Convention. It is wonderful to see and meet our members! I go away from each very tired yet re-energized. There were over 540 members registered this year, which is a high attendance since COVID. Bob Shappell took attendance from the sign-in sheets at the training and there were over 300 sign ins. I know many were duplicate attendees but it was good to see so many people attending the classes.

We are trialing a change with the Post Adjutant course to hold it every other month. Due to our ability to run reports, we can target the new (or recycled) adjutants and invite them to the course. This will help to give those members a resource to call with questions as well as a chance to get some training to them early on. We hope to spread this out to the Post Commander course in the near future.

March will start the free month of classes from the Wisconsin American Legion. Some of the classes will be Post Commander, Post Adjutant, CPR, Generational Leadership, marketing and the Basic Course. We try to offer the courses once during the week and once on the weekend to reach as many of our members as possible. Currently, all courses are offered via Zoom.

The upcoming class schedule can be found at [wilegion.org/legion-college](http://wilegion.org/legion-college).

## VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER



**James Fialkowski**  
*Department Veterans Service Officer*

## SECURE YOUR BENEFITS AND VA HOME LOANS

Before I talk VA home loans, I want to emphasize the importance of getting your benefits now. Many VA benefits have changed over the years. There are more changes pending VA implementation in the very near future.

Two important changes coming are to the rating schedule. Tinnitus will no longer rate the 10% compensable rating that the current regulation allows. Instead, tinnitus will be rated along with the medically determined underlying cause. This could result in a non-compensable rating of zero percent. This is significant, as a compensable rating qualifies a Veteran as a priority group three in the VA Hospital system. Another noteworthy change to the rating schedule is concerning sleep apnea. Sleep apnea treated with certain breathing assistance devices currently rate a 50% compensable rating. The change will rate sleep apnea for residuals after treatment. If the treatment works well to alleviate symptoms of hypersomnolence as an example, then a zero percent non-compensable rating could be granted.

Note: Changes to the rating schedule do not impact those already rated for those items, as these ratings are maintained. If the new rating offers an increase, the increase must be applied for with a claim.

I recommend submitting an intent to file a claim as soon as you can if you are suffering from any disability that is possibly related to service. Doing so will preserve the date of claim for up to one year for a claim submitted in the future and preserves the ability to be rated by the current regulations. If the regulation changes during your claim timeframe, you legally fall under both rules and benefit by using whichever rating regulation creates the higher compensation.

VA home loans are made by private lenders to eligible Service members and eligible surviving spouses for the purchase of a home, which must be for their own personal occupancy. The guaranty means the lender is protected against loss if you fail to repay the loan. The guaranty replaces the protection the lender normally receives by requiring a down payment allowing you to obtain favorable financing terms.

You will need to get a Certificate of Eligibility from the VA to prove to the lender that you are eligible for a VA loan. In most cases your lender can obtain your Certificate of Eligibility for you.

There are different minimal service requirements but basically anyone who served under Honorable conditions since September 16, 1940, is eligible to apply.

If you are still serving on active duty, you must include an original statement of service that identifies you and your Social Security number and provides your date of entry on your current active-duty period.

There are many other rules pertaining to this program. You may contact the VA Home Loan Guaranty Center toll free at 1-888-244-6711 or [www.homeloans.va.gov](http://www.homeloans.va.gov).

For added information or assistance, contact your local CVSO at 844-947-2876 or our office at 414-902-5722.



## CAMP AMERICAN LEGION

### THE FUTURE OF CAMP AMERICAN LEGION



**Jim Klement**  
Camp American  
Legion Director

While planning the 100-year celebration, I wonder what the future of Camp American Legion is.

Camp American Legion has evolved over the last 100 years. From the rehabilitation of our wounded WWI Veterans to the healing of our entire Veteran families through our Wisconsin Northwoods.

Camp American Legion will need to focus on not only the physical but also the mental aspect of our Wisconsin Veterans. A big part of both are the families that deal with the Veteran's physical and mental injuries that not only require constant

support to the Veteran but also require a strong mental capacity that allows them to stay positive on good days and also through the worst of the recovery process. The key to Camp American Legion is helping to heal the Veteran and their families. This is our mission statement.

"Helping to Heal, Those who have Served, Continue to Serve and their Families through Wisconsin Northwoods Experience"

What does Camp American Legion need in order to continue to provide this to our Veterans and families?

Camp will need the support of the entire American Legion Family. The individual posts, counties and districts will need to continue to play an active role in the support of Camp. The

Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Riders will have to pledge to continue their outstanding support of Camp.

Not only the American Legion Family but other organizations both Veteran and community will need to continue their support.

With the support of the American Legion Family and other organizations Camp American Legion's future to serve our Wisconsin Veterans is full of hope and pride. We will be here for another 100 years to heal our great Wisconsin Veterans.

"Camp American Legion, Serving Wisconsin Veterans for over 100 years"

Thank You.

Jim Klement, Camp Director  
715-277-2510

To learn more about the mission of Camp American Legion or to get involved with answering the call, visit [wilegion.org](http://wilegion.org) or find us on Facebook.



"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

### NORTHWOODS NATIONAL CEMETERY



Legion Riders District 11 Director Jim Sprague placing a wreath at the entrance of the Northwoods National Cemetery.

### NEW FLAGS FROM SAL 454



On September 17, Sons of the American Legion Commander, Mike Schmitz from Mount Calvary Squadron 454 presents Carol Kaiser from the Mount Calvary Flag Committee a check for new flags for the community. These funds were from the recent SAL fundraiser.

### OPERATION CHRISTMAS IN POLK



Rochelle Glasspoole of Operation Christmas in Polk County receives a donation from Amery Post 169 Commander Mark Starsky. Operation Christmas of Polk County provides gifts to over 650 children in need. This year marks their 33rd anniversary, providing gift cards to Veterans and Christmas gifts to children. We are proud to donate to their cause!



Duane Klopp is Mondovi Post 154's only remaining WWII Veteran member. Mondovi students wait in line to shake WWII Veteran Duane Klopp's hand.



### MONDOVI AMERICAN LEGION, AUXILIARY AND COMMUNITY SALUTE VETERANS

Mondovi's Post 154 one remaining World War II Veteran member was surprised by Mondovi School District children who wanted to meet him and shake his hand on Veterans Day 2024. Duane Klopp (WWII; 98, with 66 years of Legion membership) was thanked by students after the community's annual Veterans Day Program, in which both the Legion and Auxiliary participated along with Buffalo County's Burlington Quilts of Valor and the Mondovi School District.

Duane continues to encourage Veterans and their family members to join the

American Legion family to get to know people, learn about their experiences, and enjoy the camaraderie that the Legion and Auxiliary offer to Veterans and their families. For the next generations, he strongly encourages direct outreach to Veterans and their families as soon as the Veterans return home from duty by asking them to join, their involvement helps to keep the organization going.

Carrying on the American Legion legacy is an unending mission for Duane as he provides a strong role model for all students as they consider their futures.

### NEENAH POST 33, SQUADRON 33 PRESENT COLORS



ABOVE: Neenah American Legion Post 33 and Squadron 33 presented colors at Shattuck Park in Neenah on Veterans Day.

AT RIGHT: Neenah American Legion Post 33 and Squadron 33 presented colors at New Hope School in Neenah on Veterans Day.



### POST 6 STEVENS POINT 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

Fifty-year Continuous Service Certificates were awarded by Stevens Point American Legion Post 6 to two members at the November meeting. Pictured left to right are: Post Commander Dave Strelke, recipients Ken Bemowski and John Schlice, 1st Vice Commander Dennis Kaminski.



## MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY

Marine Veterans attended the Marine Corps Birthday at Montello Post 351 on November 9. November 10, 1775 was the actual birthday date. The Marine Corps is now 249 years old.



## WAUSAU AREA VETERANS GATHER TO MARK VETERANS DAY

Wausau area Veteran organizations gathered on Veterans Day, Monday, November 11, 2024, at Bunkers Restaurant. A ceremony was held inside and the public was invited.

The emcee was Lt. Colonel Ralph Sliwicki, Army, Retired, and Wausau American Legion Post 10 Chaplain Don Hildebrandt provided the opening prayer. The guest

speakers were Mayor Doug Diny and Marathon County Veterans Service Officer Jill Geoffroy.

The Rifle Squad members included the Wausau American Legion, VFW, Man of Honor and AMVETS. The Solemn Bell tolled at 11:11 a.m. by the VFW to commemorate the first Armistice Day, ending WWI. Echo taps was performed by Jon Greenwood and Dale Osterbrink.

## POST 10 WAUSAU VETERANS DAY AT NEWMAN CATHOLIC

On November 8, Newman Catholic Middle and High School honored Veterans with a Veterans Day Assembly.

The Assembly started with presenting of the colors by the Color Guard of Wausau American Legion Post 10. Father Eric Mashak did the prayer.

The Newman Catholic High School Choir welcomed everyone and sang the national anthem. The



History of Veterans Day was given by Brecklyn Linder and Kaitlyn Barich. The guest speaker was Captain Phillip Southworth, U.S. Army retired. American Legion Post 10 Com-



mander Tony Nardi gave an explanation of the 21 gun salute and taps. We all joined the American Legion Post 10 Honor Guard on Baillet Field for a 21 Gun Salute and playing of taps.

## DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN



Michelle Adams  
Department  
Historian

In 2025, as approved in Resolution No. 20: Authorization for Conducting Department History Contest and Post History Showcase, departments will be able to submit one hard-copy post history, one digital post history, and one digital department history. Also beginning in 2025, post histories will no longer

be judged at the national level contest. Once submissions are made to the Department of Wisconsin contest, the three final entries will be forwarded to national, as follows: The digital post submissions will be made available through the national library and museum (<https://legionhistoryshowcase.omeka.net>) and hard-copy post submissions will be on display at the national convention.

To help clarify, posts have the flexibility to choose a digital &/or the traditional hard-copy book, to be judged at the department level contest. Your submissions to de-

partment are due June 10, 2025. The submissions sent to national will receive a special certificate of appreciation from National Historian Jennifer Laux. You can access the 2025 Historian's Guide by visiting the website mentioned above. I have numerous hard-copies of the Historian's Guide. Post, County, and District historians may contact me at [majfadams@earthlink.net](mailto:majfadams@earthlink.net) for a printout.

For new historians, this can seem overwhelming. When starting out, we often don't know what we don't know. Reach out to other current and past historians. Their wealth of knowledge is priceless.

We were honored to know Past Department Historian Frank Mathison. It is a poignant reminder of his legacy, having his Coon Valley Post 116 book for 2024 recognized at the final nationally judged post contest. We will forever remember his kind, generous, and gentlemanly nature. His passing is a great loss to the Legion family. We can honor his memory by dedicating ourselves to preserving an accurate and heartfelt account of our Legion activities.



Loki

## LOKI'S CORNER

Loki says – Attention TAL & SAL Districts, Counties and Posts/Squadrons: Please send your officer reports to Legion HQ so our records stay up to date.



## DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP



Julie Muhle  
Department  
Adjutant

During Midwinter, the three adhoc committees created by the Commander of Retention, Revitalization and Recruitment met and shared their progress since the last membership meeting. They have created a lot of great resources that will be put on our website ([wilegion.org](http://wilegion.org)) over the upcoming weeks. It will be shared in the weekly membership report when those resources become available.

Resuming the review of the Post Membership Plan, if you scroll past the months, there are many resources listed. These resources are meant to help officers run their posts. After the resources, there are some scripts to help in making several different types of calls to your members. First is a short Buddy Check script or text, followed by a renewal call and a 2930 transition post call. After the scripts, there is a letter to send to your members when receiving their renewals. Finally, there is a survey you can send to your members who haven't renewed.

Your Wisconsin American Legion continues to work to get you the resources needed to help become successful. Whether you are already there or are working towards it, there is always new and interesting things to learn about how to do business and/or the Wisconsin American Legion. To print your copy of the Post Membership Plan, go to our website at [wilegion.org/membership-forms-%26-info-1](http://wilegion.org/membership-forms-%26-info-1).

## WDVA SECRETARY



James Bond  
WDVA  
Secretary  
-designee

Greetings Legionnaires! I'm guessing that many of you have thought to yourselves, how is it that time seems to move faster and faster the older you get? I had that thought the other day when I realized that I'm beginning my third year as the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. The other thought I had was how lucky I am to have such committed partners like The American Legion. I look forward to meeting with your Department Commander, Jim Johnson, and his leadership team to discuss finding ways to address Veterans' needs and meet our collective obligation to serve them.

This year, I want to continue to prioritize fostering the relationships WDVA has with our partners. I am always looking for ways to improve our partnerships. That includes more visits with Veteran groups across the state. The more interaction we have, the better we can help each other. Strength comes from having an open and cooperative exchange of ideas with the people who are on the front lines serving Veterans in communities big and small. Together we can create lasting successful outcomes for our state's Veterans and their families.

I am already planning visits for the coming year and look forward to meeting with all 72 County and 11 Tribal Veteran service offices again. WDVA depends heavily on our CVSOs and TVSOs – they are primary partners in the vital network helping us connect Veterans with their eligible benefits, filing claims, and getting Veterans registered for VA Healthcare. They also work closely with WDVA's Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP) and our Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) to connect struggling Veterans with timely assistance including employment help, substance use and mental health treatment, and for those facing homelessness.

This new year marks the beginning of the Commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is a key player in the effort to highlight the role of Wisconsin in that event and the impact of its people on the nation's past, present, and future. 2025 will see a number of events celebrating the establishment of our Army, Navy and Marine Corp, which came into existence even before we were a country. The celebration will continue into 2026, as we all commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of Declaration of Independence. Please stay tuned to our social media channels and the Museum's America250WI website for more information at <https://wisvetmuseum.com/america250/>.

As always, I am grateful for the Legion and the Auxiliary's great work supporting Veterans across Wisconsin!



# The Last Bugle



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

<b>1 Germantown</b> Dale J. Schuldt V Charles E. Sawyer K Roland L. Pieper V <b>6 Stevens Point</b> Richard Zdroik K Henry E. Frisch WWII <b>7 Rhinelander</b> Kurt H. Krahn K <b>9 Wisconsin Rapids</b> James H. Fischer V <b>10 Wausau</b> Joseph Buska Jr. K Will Lazotte K Michael D. Siegel V Peter R. Nielsen V Roger Dean K Geraldine E. Schlamp K <b>11 Green Bay</b> Wilfred P. Borley K Patrick R. O'Dell K <b>12 Spooner</b> Harold H. Schulz Jr. V Gene Wisner WWII <b>15 Juneau</b> Donald R. Laatsch K <b>17 Arcadia</b> Gary F. Waters V <b>21 Kenosha</b> William P. Lyons Jr. V <b>29 Kewaunee</b> Maynard Blahnik V <b>32 Menomonie</b> Carlyle W. Gilbertson K <b>33 Neenah</b> Donald Fiedler WWII Frederick A. Schoessow V Daniel H. Fritsch GWOT <b>36 West Bend</b> Arthur F. Kufahl V Ronald F. Mentch V <b>38 Appleton</b> Gerald M. Lamb V Andrew J. Weyker PG Richard L. Kopelke V Philip D. Matson V Harold J. Trudeau Sr. V Leonard C. Brumbaugh K <b>40 Bangor</b> David M. Vetrano V <b>42 Platteville</b> Mark H. Lee K <b>43 Ripon</b> Paul L. Wesolek K Norman A. Bubolz K <b>45 Elkhorn</b> Robert O. Behrens V	<b>48 Beloit</b> John M. Connors V <b>49 Bayfield</b> William B. Andresen V <b>52 La Crosse</b> Le Roy H. Seidel V C.J. Fritsch WWII <b>53 Eau Claire</b> Edward A. Carlson V Laban A. Miller K Jerry Golke K Joseph L. Heil V <b>54 Marshfield</b> Dennis J. Kmiec V James Meyer V Ray M. Poeppel WWII Robert Lindner V Peggy J. Smith V <b>55 Hortonville</b> James W. McNichols V Gary J. Brick K Daryl W. Collar V <b>59 Stoughton</b> David C. Jensen P Charles C. Lyke V Melvin S. Alme K <b>60 Kimberly</b> Gordon Natrop K Anthony J. Paque K Kenneth Hoffmann V Eugene A. Malliet K <b>61 Prescott</b> Thomas A. Driscoll V Richard C. Miller V <b>63 Clintonville</b> Darrell G. Polzin V <b>69 Mayville</b> Stanley W. Wolters V John Gable V <b>70 Oshkosh</b> Donald W. Jaenke V Jan A. Nicholl V Dennis Kotloski V <b>71 Pewaukee</b> Alfred Hansen WWII Clarence Maki V <b>75 Fond du Lac</b> David A. Wiza Sr. V James T. Theis V Vincent V. Markowski K Richard Lefebvre V <b>80 New Richmond</b> Terry Miller K <b>82 Port Washington</b> John J. Belzer V <b>84 Monroe</b> Pete McGrath V
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<b>85 Muscoda</b> Joseph H. Allen V John P. Meyers WWII Jerome Linscheid K <b>90 Ashland</b> M. James Nemecek V <b>91 Oconomowoc</b> James J. Pihringer WWII Bob Morgan K Donald R. Angrick K Harold Haase V <b>93 Tomahawk</b> Walter Anderson K <b>95 Delevan</b> Tom C. Brauer V Martin J. Ogrady V <b>97 Dodgeville</b> Barbara J. Larson V <b>98 Cumberland</b> Richard L. Voshell Jr. V John R. Keagle V <b>100 Sparta</b> Robert B. Steinhoff V <b>102 Walworth</b> Joseph A. Koenig WWII Daniel Crego V <b>110 New Lisbon</b> Richard J. Orlovski V <b>113 Mount Horeb</b> Maxwell J. Rosenbaum WWII Donald Gordon K <b>114 Eagle River</b> Allen K. Burdick V <b>116 Coon Valley</b> Tom Sharratt V Francis L. Mathison V Elnor Haugen WWII <b>117 Shawano</b> Stanley A. Steenbock V Robert W. Schraeder V <b>120 West Allis</b> Robert E. Woppert V <b>121 River Falls</b> Kenneth L. Bourn V <b>122 Phillips</b> Arthur A. Fox V <b>128 Stockbridge</b> Dennis J. Vanoss P <b>132 Siren</b> Timothy A. Tjader V <b>134 Boscobel</b> Robert Wagner V <b>138 Viroqua</b> Larry R. Mosher K <b>139 Coloma</b> Peter J. Arendt K <b>143 St. Croix Falls</b> John C. Ayers K <b>145 Random Lake</b> Walter R. Johnson K <b>146 Beaver Dam</b> Charles D. Parrish K Edgar H. Mueller V <b>148 Bloomington</b> Thomas H. Krogman K <b>149 Sheboygan Falls</b> Gene H. Geltmeyer V <b>151 Madison</b> Paddhe Heinen V <b>155 Westby</b> Orvis L. Weber K <b>160 Brooklyn</b> George M. Loomis Jr. V <b>161 King</b> Stanley A. Steenbock V Richard J. Meyer V <b>164 Jefferson</b> Marvin Leschinsky V <b>165 Two Rivers</b> Arnold Wanek K <b>169 Amery</b> Lyle M. Sauve K <b>170 Mineral Point</b> Raymond C. Paynter K Orville James K	<b>171 Union Grove</b> Donald L. Gifford V Gary W. Kowalski V <b>172 North Freedom</b> Marion E. Coy K <b>175 Loyal</b> Donald Bangart V <b>179 Chetek</b> James J. Raddebach V <b>180 Milwaukee</b> Charles L. Rehorst V <b>181 Durand</b> James H. Lien K <b>183 Genoa City</b> Ronald Karcher K David A. Wuttke V <b>187 Wisconsin Dells</b> David J. Runde V Robert C. Theiler V Neil S. Ellison V Ralph W. Armson V <b>188 East Troy</b> John B. Kreidler V <b>189 Watertown</b> Tyrone E. Kohn V Robert F. Martens V Louis R. Checkai V Jerry L. Braudt V <b>192 Franklin</b> Walter L. Pfeiffer V <b>200 Black River Falls</b> Robert L. Rush V Harry J. Schoolcraft V <b>201 Tomah</b> Daniel M. Erickson V John H. Shutter V <b>204 Ellsworth</b> Melvin B. Johnson K Martin L. Herbers V Daniel T. Bjork V Thomas R. Phermetton V <b>211 Florence</b> Francis Miller K <b>212 Barron</b> Lester M. Wyckoff V Steve R. Mathews V <b>214 Darlington</b> Robert C. Wilkins V Charles O. Chapman V Clinton Halvorson K <b>215 Pardeeville</b> Robert A. Goodman K Jeffery W. Johnson V <b>216 Lodi</b> Kenneth E. Becker WWII John A. Fitzgerald WWII <b>218 Hayward</b> Joseph J. Jasek K Glenn O. Christianson V <b>219 Milwaukee</b> Richard W. Smith V Michael G. Griffith V <b>223 Hillsboro</b> Jerry D. Lowrey V <b>229 Mount Hope</b> Mark A. Drew V <b>231 Blair</b> Gary Tidquist V <b>233 Waterloo</b> Gregory D. Freund V <b>234 Omro</b> Russell Stone K Michael L. Will V <b>237 Footville</b> Carl G. Johnson V <b>238 Greenwood</b> Bradford Lovelace K <b>243 Plymouth</b> Charles E. Rohde V Tim Hansmann V Thomas A. Melger V Mark Schuler V Ralph Adamson V Gerald M. Schlaugat V <b>244 Westfield</b> James C. Warzynski
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<b>249 Frederic</b> John Buecksler K <b>251 Argyle</b> Ronald M. Hanson V <b>257 Ridgeway</b> Robert G. Birrenkott V Ronald W. Gilbertson V <b>258 Little Chute</b> Lyle N. Johnson K Norbert J. Evers K <b>263 New London</b> David R. Bohmstedt K Ronald J. Popke V <b>269 Cushing</b> Bernard J. Basler K <b>271 Poynette</b> Lyle N. Johnson WWII <b>278 Balsam Lake</b> Ronald Anderson K Allen L. Moe K <b>280 Coleman</b> Kray Gannigan V <b>288 Cedarburg</b> Arthur E. Filter V Walter Foth V Rovertto L. Leon K Michael Cocking V <b>294 Hartland</b> Timothy P. Karbler V <b>295 Bloomer</b> Wayne E. Steinmetz K Ron R. Zimmerman V <b>302 Oconto Falls</b> Darryl Greetan Sr. V <b>303 Winter</b> Felix J. Turcotte V <b>305 Johnson Creek</b> John Becker K Warner Thelen V <b>306 Green Lake</b> Gene Ladwig K <b>310 Racine</b> Roy D. Rogers K Paul T. Cook V <b>312 Peshtigo</b> Walter G. Wood WWII <b>316 Sheldon</b> John W. Wiacek V <b>317 Wautoma</b> Richard A. Williams K <b>329 Briggsville</b> Joseph J. Ives V <b>333 Sun Prairie</b> Terrence L. Connors V <b>336 Onalaska</b> Robert F. Muchow WWII Gerald E. Grenawalt WWII Dennis J. McHenry V James J. Busta V Leonard R. Nichols K Richard T. Polodna V John S. Bates WWII James W. Morgan V <b>337 Pulaski</b> Dennis A. Pahl V Frank Berna V <b>340 Berlin</b> Angela Hahn PG <b>347 Lomira</b> Clifford G. Nehring K Richard J. Patin K <b>350 Reedsburg</b> Arthur J. Biesek V Gary L. Marshall V <b>351 Montello</b> Gene M. Crook V <b>353 Cornell</b> Donald Klass V <b>354 Ettrick</b> Robert L. Wall K <b>357 Bay City</b> Blair Schuck V Robert W. Greske V <b>358 Unity</b> David H. Ruppert V <b>360 Waunakee</b> Henry E. Zander WWII	Ted S. Tweed <b>362 Kennan</b> Bruce Godfrey V <b>364 Winneconne</b> Donald Kunde K Ryan D. Poss G/L <b>368 Taylor-Hixton</b> John W. Kaplinski V <b>372 Forestville</b> Terry R. Cochart V <b>375 Mukwonago</b> Edward A. Kubicek WWII <b>384 Kewaskum</b> Carl J. Klemme V <b>385 Verona</b> Dennis L. Brager V <b>386 Cascade</b> Robert Kolvenbach V <b>390 Gresham</b> Ralph A. Welch K James Carroll V Lawrence E. Turkow K <b>394 Loretta</b> Joseph A. Blanda V <b>398 Plain</b> Elmer Kilian K Robert Boehmer V <b>399 Okauchee</b> Lawrence Tetzlaff V <b>401 Cambria</b> Robert V. Behling WWII <b>405 Dousman</b> Duane J. Griffin K <b>406 Milwaukee</b> Thomas L. Gajewski V <b>416 Greendale</b> David Birk K Henry M. Besch V Dan Chirpke WWII <b>417 French Isle (La Crosse)</b> Jack G. Longway WWII <b>420 Hustisford</b> Kenneth L. Wiedmeyer V <b>426 Milwaukee</b> John L. Immel WWII Kenneth Holdmann K Arthur J. Zinky K <b>427 Milwaukee</b> Kenneth J. Elmergreen K <b>431 Three Lakes</b> Donald D. Kinsey WWII <b>434 Oak Creek</b> Eugene M. Coblentz V Gary M. Bump PG David H. Oelschlaeger V <b>435 Superior</b> Thomas S. Donaldson V Troy I. Magnuson PG <b>436 Wrightstown</b> Roger J. Vaneperen K <b>438 Norwalk</b> Ronald G. Ziegler V <b>439 Melrose</b> Orlando W. Young WWII <b>442 Wisconsin Rapids</b> William M. Gadow V <b>446 Steuben</b> Theodore E. Daugherty V <b>447 Viola</b> Rodney G. Gilman V <b>449 Brookfield</b> John R. Pankratz K John Recklies V Thomas L. Schaefer K Alan L. Johnson V Jack A. Draak K Walter A. Gerke K <b>452 Spirit</b> Lawrence L. Plude K Ronald Johnson K James A. Marheine V <b>454 Mt. Calvary</b> David C. Engel V <b>459 Eleva</b> Terry L. France V <b>461 Pembine</b> John Stepien K
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Daniel D. Cardinal V <b>467 Ontario</b> Jack L. Melby V <b>470 Saukville</b> Gerald P. Thelen K <b>476 Loomis</b> Douglas M. Rohrbacher V Robert M. Loll K <b>477 St. Nazianz</b> Paul J. Meyer V James J. Kennedy K Charles Christel K <b>480 Presque Isle</b> Carl J. Gunderman K Roger M. Kamper K Richard E. Hemming V <b>481 Madison</b> Armond M. Gower K <b>485 Rudolph</b> Ervin F. Tomczyk K <b>486 Jackson</b> Ronald E. Held V Robert E. Coldewe Jr V Jeffrey D. Best V <b>491 Cazenovia</b> Joseph S. Bauer PG <b>494 Caledonia</b> Donald Lange K Harold Davitz Jr. V Paul H. Funk V <b>495 Sussex</b> Gene H. Schaber V <b>497 Keshena</b> Wayne Towne V <b>501 Madison</b> Stanley L. Wilson K John Bjerke K	<b>502 Wittenberg</b> Howard R. Koenig K Jay M. Timm PG <b>506 Iron River</b> James J. Jirku V <b>509 Rosholt</b> Guy E. Mockler V <b>511 Ridgeland</b> Charles D. Slagel V <b>521 Fox Lake</b> Charles Kamp V <b>534 McFarland</b> Robin E. Thompson V Russell J. Jenkins V <b>537 Milwaukee</b> Douglas R. Kintop V Ronald R. Mueller Sr. V Sam Zacharias V Joseph J. Smyczek WWII Thomas S. Zellmer V Robert G. Zecker WWII <b>540 Haugen</b> James S. Lenz V <b>541 Northfield</b> Charles Christianson V <b>547 Lublin</b> Albert Filas K <b>2930 Portage</b> Leroy R. Kamenick V Gene Kimball WWII Russell F. Witon V Lloyd Sheldon K Louis Stan V Richard D. Murray K Dennis Hardt V Gary Meske V Ernst W. Leichnitz V
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## POST 400 POW/MIA TABLE



The POW/MIA table that is on permanent display at the Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin, Culver's restaurant. Ron Hoefler, General Manager, Culver's of Pleasant Prairie, has set up a permanent POW/MIA Table in the restaurant. Hoefler told Curtiss Peck, Harley-Davidson Post 400, that he is committed to remembering the sacrifices of all our comrades who are still unaccounted for.



## POST 501 MIDWINTER ATTENDEES

Madison Post 501 Adjutant Morris Sadicario and member Paul Reilly attend the Midwinter Conference in Appleton.



# WISCONSIN



February 2025

American Legion Auxiliary  
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Portage, WI 53901

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The official publication of the Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary

www.amlegionauxwi.org

## MEMBERSHIP

### Department Membership Team

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Chair

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**Teresa Steinke**

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### 2025 Membership Totals – 81.54%



District	Goal %
4	88.51%
3	85.82%
5	85.31%
6	83.42%
9	83.19%
2	81.87%
11	80.39%
10	80.20%
12	79.89%
8	78.59%
7	77.07%
1	76.82%

(as of 1/21/2025)

We're over halfway through our membership year already. Time flies when you're having fun! We've learned that membership is definitely a team effort. Thank you for all your hard work in keeping the Department of Wisconsin near the top nationally. Below are a few highlights of our achievements:

*Top 15% of all Departments  
62 units at 100% or better*

*324 new members*

*Two new male members*

*Three counties over 100%*

*486 Facebook members*

Without a solid membership we cannot carry out the many programs that comprise the American Legion Auxiliary. It's important to retain those on our rolls and actively seek out new members to remain the largest patriotic organization in the world. Don't be afraid to speak up! Encourage those eligible

CENTRAL DIVISION			
As of January 22, 2025			
Department	Total	Goal	% of Goal
Ohio	28,811	34,719	82.98%
Iowa	14,740	17,857	82.54%
Wisconsin	13,442	16,514	81.40%
Indiana	30,928	40,119	77.09%
Michigan	22,016	28,792	76.47%
West Virginia	3,668	4,923	74.51%
Illinois	14,713	20,083	73.26%
Kansas	6,709	9,189	73.01%
Missouri	5,609	8,114	69.13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140,636</b>	<b>180,310</b>	<b>78.00%</b>

to join our American Legion Family. Sometimes all it takes is to simply ask the question. Trying something new can make things fun! Consider hosting an open house along with your Legion and/or SAL or host a "bring a friend" meeting.

## MEMBERSHIP QUIZ

### HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MEMBERSHIP?

Take the true/false quiz below and find out. Answers are on page A2.

1. A potential Auxiliary member must join the post in which their service relative is a member.
2. An individual is eligible to join the ALA through the war service of a divorced spouse.
3. If a member does not renew and has several years of lapsed membership, they must start over by completing a new application and will obtain a new member number.
4. Membership year runs January 1 – December 31.
5. Units must have 10 or more senior members to keep their charter.
6. A unit cannot require that a member attend a certain number of meetings to vote.
7. If a member wants to transfer to a different unit, the Member Change Form must be signed by the current Unit Membership Chair.
8. Honorary Life Members do not receive membership renewal notices.
9. Members not paid by January 1 are not in good standing and are considered delinquent/expired.
10. Members should always carry American Legion Family applications with them.

## MEMBERS VISITING MEMBERS



Members of Alois Dreikosen Unit 469 in Marathon spread Christmas cheer to the homebound. They also discovered it was a reunion of FIVE Unit Presidents: Betty Blume (2015-2019 & 2023-Present), Marlene Seubert (2009-2015), Ruth Franke (1962-1963), Bonnie Schult (2001-2002), and Kathy Grell (2021-2023).

## 2025 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The Auxiliary session at The American Legion Midwinter Conference was quite the success! Approximately 115 Auxiliary members of all ages had a great time learning about leadership opportunities and report writing, and the youth in our Department engaged members with sign language, pocket flag folding, and trivia contests. Meredith Clark, 2024 ALA Badger Girls Stater and recipient of a \$10,000 Samsung Scholarship, shared about her experience at ALABGS. The day also included a



Members folding pocket flags as demonstrated by the Junior members.



visit from SAL National Vice Commander Harl "Butch" Ray, service projects for our Veterans, information on legislative issues and strategic planning, and a presentation on the UW MIA Recovery and Identification Project.

**ABOVE: SAL Detachment Cdr. Allen Watry, President Becky Mueller, SAL National Vice Cdr. Butch Ray.**

**AT RIGHT: \$10,000 Samsung Scholarship Winner Meredith Clark.**





## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

**Donna Jensen**  
 Department Chaplain  
 djensen20@gmail.com  
 414-303-6186

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

— Romans 15:13

**HOPE:** trust, reliance; desire accompanied by expectation of fulfillment; something hoped for; one that gives promise for the future. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

The world is made better and the future brighter with a sense of hope. To me, hope is a feeling of optimism and plan for a future filled with good things. Hope is not a guarantee everything we wish for will happen but the positive attitude to believe it will be possible.

What do you “hope” for? Do you approach life with a positive mindset, believing some of the things you want to happen will actually happen? There is the “reality check” part of us that chimes in saying not all we hope for will happen. How do you deal with that? I find it more beneficial to keep a positive attitude but also prepare for what happens if all my hopes are not fulfilled. For me, prayer is a way to hope for good things and ask God for his help in making it happen, knowing sometimes the answer to my prayers could be “no” or “later.”

### Music

“Whispering Hope”: by Alice Hawthorne 1868; Recorded by Jim Reeves in 1959.

Soft as the voice of an angel, breathing a lesson unheard.

Hope with a gentle persuasion whispers her comforting word:

Wait till the darkness is over, wait till the tempest is done.

Hope for the sunshine tomorrow, after the shower is gone.

### REQUEST

Please help me put together an inspiring and beautiful prayer book for President Becky Mueller. I am asking everyone to please send prayers, poems and inspirational pieces to include in this book. They can be original or from another source. Include the author plus **name** and **unit number** of the person sending. You can send it to me via mail (Donna Jensen, 6936 N 86th St, Milwaukee, WI 53224) or email (djensen20@gmail.com). Thank you.



## POPPY ORDERS

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

**New orders will not be accepted until August 2025.**

## GREETINGS FROM HEADQUARTERS

### IMPORTANT DEADLINES

- March 1** Scholarship applications
- March 15** ALA State Bowling Tournament entry forms
- March 15** Unit Member of the Year nominations to Leadership Chairman
- April 1** Online ALA Badger Girls State registrations for delegates and alternates
- April 15** Unit Year-End Reports
- May 15** Mentor of the Year nominations to PPP Chairman
- June 1** Department Resolutions
- June 1** District nominations for alternates to national convention
- June 1** Online Salute to Servicemembers nominations

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- District Spring Conferences – Check with your District President for details
- June 14** Camp American Legion's 100th Anniversary Celebration
- July 17-20** Department Convention at the KI Center/Hyatt Hotel in Green Bay
- Aug 23-28** National Convention in Tampa Bay, Florida

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

The national organization mailed final dues renewal notices on February 1. If you received a notice but think your dues were paid, please verify with your Unit Membership Chairman that your payment was transmitted to department headquarters. Members may reinstate their membership by mailing a check to their unit or department headquarters or pay by credit card to the national organization (317-569-4570 or [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)).

Unit presidents are reminded to submit Unit Year-End Reports by April 15. Members should be proud of all they accomplished and report it!

Please note several important deadlines that are quickly approaching.

## MEMBERSHIP QUIZ ANSWERS

### MEMBERSHIP QUIZ ANSWERS

(from Page A1):

1. **FALSE** – The potential member is eligible for membership in any Auxiliary unit.
2. **FALSE** – A divorced person does not occupy the status of spouse and therefore has no eligibility. But the fact that a member has become divorced from the person whom they originally gained eligibility does not force them to surrender their membership, even if they remarry, as long as their membership has never lapsed.
3. **FALSE** – A lapsed member who wants to reinstate should not complete a new application. The original member number is reactivated. Eligibility must be reverified by the unit making sure that a person has not since divorced or the living Veteran is also a current member of The American Legion. Rejoins should be submitted on a Member Change form. Back dues do not have to be paid unless they want to keep continuous years/original join date.
4. **TRUE** – No matter when you joined, your membership term is always January – December.
5. **FALSE** – Ten senior members are needed to obtain a Unit charter. However, once obtained a unit may fall below ten senior members and still maintain their charter.
6. **TRUE** – The right to vote and the right to hold office are clear privileges of membership.
7. **FALSE** – Members wishing to transfer units must have the Member Change Form signed by the new Unit Membership Chair.
8. **TRUE** – Honorary Life Members do not receive membership renewal notices. The unit is responsible for paying dues annually for Honorary Life Members.
9. **TRUE** – A member is deemed delinquent for failing to pay dues by December 31 of the current membership year and is classified as expired.
10. **TRUE** – Absolutely! Membership applications can be downloaded from the ALA Department website or contact Headquarters to order membership brochures.

## CANDIDATES FOR DEPARTMENT & NATIONAL OFFICES

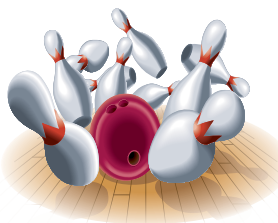
Candidates for department or national offices must email their announcement (300-350 words) with a high-resolution head/shoulder photo to [deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org](mailto:deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org) **by Monday, March 17, 2025** for publication in the April issue of the *Wisconsin*.

## WISCONSIN ALA STATE BOWLING ASSOCIATION

# ANNUAL 9-PIN TAP TOURNAMENT

## APRIL 12 & 13, 2025

 AMERICAN  
**LEGION**  
 AUXILIARY



**Ten Pin Bowling Alley**  
 6285 Nesbitt Road  
 Madison, WI 53719  
 608-845-1010  
 Hosted by Unit 385 – Verona

**CONTACT INFORMATION**  
 Jenni Syftestad  
 Tournament Manager  
[syftes@chorus.net](mailto:syftes@chorus.net)

### EVENTS

Double – Singles  
 Team (4-Person)  
 All Events

### SQUAD TIMES

Saturday, 11 am or 2 pm  
 Sunday, 9 am

Entry Closing Date  
 ENTRIES MUST BE  
 POSTMARKED  
 NO LATER THAN MARCH 15, 2025



**SAVE THE DATE:  
JULY 16, 2025**

**KICK-OFF TO DEPARTMENT  
CONVENTION WITH  
JOINT AMERICAN LEGION  
FAMILY TESTIMONIAL**

**HYATT REGENCY HOTEL,  
GREEN BAY  
Watch for details...**

**WANTED:**

**ALA Department  
Finance Committee Member**

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

Candidates should submit a resume to [deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org](mailto:deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org) by **April 11, 2025.**

Upon receipt of all resumes, candidates will be contacted by the Department Senior Vice President for a telephone interview. The successful candidate will be appointed to serve a 3-year term (July 2025-July 2028).



**HELP WANTED!**

**ALA Badger Girls State Counselors,  
and Staff are still needed!**  
Friday, June 13 – Friday, June 20  
UW-Oshkosh Campus

You can volunteer the whole week or just a couple days. Please review the opportunities available and submit an online application ([www.ALABGS.org](http://www.ALABGS.org) > About ALABGS > ALABGS Volunteer Info)

**Questions?**

Contact ALABGS Chairman  
Danyelle Thompson

at [alabgs.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:alabgs.chairman@gmail.com)

**JUNIOR ACTIVITIES**

**Christine Johnsen**  
Department Chairman

**Morgan Johnsen**  
Department Vice Chairman

Hello! It's me again, Lindsay Stiff, your Honorary Department Junior President. Did you see me at Midwinter? If you missed it, let me give you a recap. My fellow Juniors and I worked very hard on making a presentation to show how the Junior Activities Patch Program works for us Juniors. To earn patches, we have different tasks to complete, based on our age groups and category. Patches are available in Poppy, Leadership, Americanism, VA&R,



**Junior Auxiliary Members performing a Membership skit.**



**Lindsay demonstrating the Pledge of Allegiance in sign language.**

Fitness, Education, and a few more.

We completed seven different tasks with the Senior members at the Midwinter Conference. Some of the tasks included learning the Pledge of Allegiance in American Sign Language, folding pocket flags, learning facts about the ALA and the SAL, studying the history of the U.S. Constitution, learning facts about the poppy, and learning the signs and symptoms of a heart attack or stroke. These activities were chosen from various patches within the program. Once we completed the tasks, the Senior members earned a Certificate of Completion. We couldn't give actual patches because those are only available

for the Junior members that earn them.

If you have Junior Auxiliary members in your Unit, I encourage you to put together patch program workshops where they can work together on the patch requirements. It would even be fun to invite the Junior and Senior members to work together on these activities and build relationships within your Unit. If you have questions about the Junior Activities program, you can reach out to the program chair, Christine Johnsen at [cmj102@aol.com](mailto:cmj102@aol.com).

*Article submitted by Lindsay Stiff, Honorary Junior President.*

**AMERICANISM**

**Diane Burkhalter**  
Department Chair  
[burkhalterdl@gmail.com](mailto:burkhalterdl@gmail.com)  
262-284-6873

As I pondered what to write, I kept coming back to our Preamble, "...to foster and perpetuate a 100% Americanism." What is Americanism exactly? Americanism is attachment or allegiance to the traditions, interests and ideals of the U.S. (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2023). Reflecting on the words "100% Americanism" truly indicates that our efforts will be continuously ongoing. Although this seems a bit overwhelming at first, it really isn't.

One important avenue we can put our effort into is our children and youth. They are our future. There are so many ways we can make connections

with our children and youth. If your unit has Education and Americanism Committees, work together to make connections with your schools, homeschooling parents, the local library, and clubs in your area. Units that do not have these committees, ask for volunteers within your unit who would like to contact schools and other groups to develop programs with them. When you plan events that are family oriented, have a variety of materials for various ages, including the "Star Spangled Kids Kits" which can be purchased from Flag & Emblem. At family events, you can have scavenger hunts, riddles and games that focus on American history, traditions, Constitution, etc. Educating our youth can be interactive, fun and exciting!

If you have not yet reached out to the various youth groups, consider contacting them regarding the Americanism Essay Contest. The essay

form, rubric and flowchart are on the Department website. Please remember that your unit reads and evaluates all submitted essays and selects the top one in each category. These are the only essays you should send to me by March 15. The Americanism Committee then reads and evaluates all the essays received selecting the top one in each category to forward to the division chairman by April 15. I know that the committee is looking forward to reading what our children and youth have to say and we hope you all consider participating in this wonderful opportunity. This is a great way to make connections within your community

Please send me any pictures or ideas you have. I would love to share the numerous ways we foster and perpetuate a "100% Americanism" with our Central Division Chairman. Feel free to contact me any time.

**American Legion Auxiliary  
2025 District Spring Conference Schedule**

*(as of 01/27/2025 - Subject to Change)*

DISTRICT	DATE	LOCATION
1st District	April 26	American Legion Post 95, Delavan, WI
2nd District	April 26	American Legion Post 69, Mayville, WI
3rd District	April 26	American Legion Post 84, Monroe, WI
4th District	May 10	American Legion Post 434, Oak Creek, WI
6th District	April 26	American Legion Post 70, Oshkosh, WI
7th District	April 19	American Legion Post 201, Tomah, WI
8th District	April 26	World War II Building, Wautoma, WI
9th District	May 3	Colonial House Supper Club, Kaukauna, WI
10th District	April 26	Prescott Food Pantry, Prescott, WI
11th District	April 26	Fifield Fire Station, Fifield, WI
12th District	May 3	Sheldon Community Center, Sheldon, WI

**SCHOLARSHIPS DUE  
MARCH 1, 2025**

The American Legion Auxiliary offers more than \$25,000 in scholarships at the state and national levels. Applications and rules are posted on the department website.

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

Questions? Please contact Chairman Diane Weggen at [dsweggen@gmail.com](mailto:dsweggen@gmail.com) or 715-644-2668.



## CHRISTMAS GIFT SHOP

**Diana Sirovina**  
 Department Chairman  
[dsirovina@icloud.com](mailto:dsirovina@icloud.com)

For many years, the American Legion Auxiliary Christmas Gift Shop has brought joy to many of our Veterans in long-term care facilities. This year was certainly no exception! As we visited with the Veterans when we helped them select their gifts, we could tell by the smiles on their faces that this program means so much to them. Some Veterans told us about their loved ones, while others were just happy to have someone visit with them for a little while. Without a doubt, the program made a difference for these Veterans and their families.

For those of us involved in this amazing program, it is something we look forward to with great enthusiasm. As we moved through the process of scheduling dates for taking orders, selecting just the right gifts to offer, placing orders and receiving the items, and ultimately wrapping them for shipment, our volunteers are always mindful of the impact this program has for these very special Veterans.

This year, for the first time, we were able to expand our program. Through the generosity of our members, we were able to reach out to two additional care facilities to provide more Veterans the opportunity to select gifts for their families – all at no cost to them! When the ordering was complete at all four of the Veteran care facilities, we had gift requests from 265 Veterans. This was more than double the number of Veterans we reached in the past!



While the logistics of ordering and wrapping 834 gifts presented some interesting challenges, we know that no matter how much time and effort goes into the program, the amount of

joy that it brings to our Veterans and their families is well worth it.

The amazing Christmas Gift Shop 2024 is now history! Without the outstanding financial support from our

members all over the state, none of this would be possible. Even though Christmas Gift Shop season only lasts a few months each year, units can send in donations whenever they

have funds available. Your donations are vital to ensuring that this great program will always be available to our Veterans in long-term care facilities and their families.

## ALABGS ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: HANNAH CATT



**Hannah Catt**

Hannah Catt was a delegate to ALA Badger Girls State in 2010 while attending Stanley-Boyd High School. After graduating, she attended Indiana University, double majoring in Political Science and Folklore & Ethnomusicology. She then attended the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law where she received her J.D., and then obtained an LL.M. in Agricultural and Food Law from the University of Arkansas School of Law. Hannah's experience at ALABGS served her well in law school by providing opportunities to network with peers, practice public speaking, and advocate for legislation as an ALABGS elected official.

Hannah currently lives in Arkansas and serves as a Corporate Counsel for Simmons Foods, Inc., a poultry processor and pet food manufacturer based in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. She is active as a board member of a local non-profit and continues to support ALABGS and the Auxiliary as a member of ALA e-Unit 352 based in Cassville. Further, returning to ALABGS as a counselor for many years enabled her to build lasting friendships with multiple generations of ALA members with the shared goal of shaping young women into tomorrow's leaders and advocates for our country.

*Editor's Note: ALABGS Alumni are invited to submit a head/shoulder photo with a brief bio describing the impact that attending Girls State has had on them. The article should be 200-250 words and the photo should be high-resolution jpg.*

**Got Soap?**



Units interested in donating items to Camp American Legion are encouraged to purchase Arm & Hammer laundry soap from Camp's Amazon wish list: [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1E4GRD70KL0J7?ref=\\_wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1E4GRD70KL0J7?ref=_wl_share). The item will ship directly to Camp for your convenience!

## ALA MADISON UNIT 501 SUPPORTS HONOR FLIGHT



**Chaplain Betty Ingwell of Severson-Cairns Unit 501 in Madison presented Badger Honor Flight Board Chairperson Brian Ziegler with a \$500 check funded in large part by the Auxiliary's poppy distribution.**



## CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

### ALA-Wisconsin 2025 Department Convention Resolutions

A resolution is a written, formal motion. If written well, the resolution makes it easier for members to consider the proposal. Importance, length and complexity of the motion, and size and formality of the assembly are major considerations in using resolutions.

ALA-Wisconsin bylaws require that resolutions presented by an individual member must be approved by the unit or district to which the member belongs and submitted to department

by June 1 so they can be transmitted to units 30 days before department convention. Any resolution not approved by a unit or district, or when the district conference is held after June 1, must be approved by the appropriate department chair of the program to which the resolution pertains. After the Resolutions Committee and other appropriate chairs/committees have acted on all resolutions, the Resolutions Chair will present recommendations to the delegates at department convention.

Please visit the department website for the Resolutions Form and instructions for more details.

## SALUTE TO SANTA: HUBERTUS UNIT 522



**Hubertus American Legion Auxiliary Unit 522 sponsored a Salute to Santa event. Members served 75 families with a Waffle Bar that included sprinkles, chocolate chips, fruit, whipped cream and traditional syrup for everyone to make their own breakfast creations. Letters were sent to Santa and he even replied! The kids had a blast going into the Army truck to visit Santa.**

## THANK YOU

*American Legion Auxiliary*

I am taking this time to thank you all so much for the generous donations of gifts and beautiful cards during the Christmas time while my husband, Lester, was in the VA Hospital having a pacemaker put in and dealing with other health issues. You made our week, during his stay, much more cheerier as did the doctors and nurses that cared for him so that he was able to return home to me. He will be turning 95 on January 25<sup>th</sup>. I am so blessed to have him back home here with me.

Sincerely,

Cheri

## EDUCATION

**Diane Weggen  
Department Chair  
dsweggen@gmail.com  
715-644-2668**

**SCHOLARSHIPS:** NOW is the time to complete and submit scholarship applications. The purpose of the ALA Education Program is to promote quality education for children, especially military children, and adults. Applicants are encouraged to apply for every scholarship for which they are eligible.

The national scholarships—Children of Warriors, Non-Traditional Student, Spirit of Youth and Member Loyalty—are “live” on the national website ([www.alaforVeterans.org](http://www.alaforVeterans.org)). Each scholarship application has its own link and must be submitted electronically. To be eligible, Wisconsin applications must be submitted electronically by 10:59 pm on March 1, 2025.

Anyone starting one of the National ALA scholarships with intentions to complete it later, should know that the attachments (letters of recommendation, transcripts, etc.) cannot be saved. The attachments must be re-attached before submitting the final application to National. Applications will be disqualified if all the rules are not followed. Note: Essays must be the original work of the applicant and not generated by artificial intelligence. The national organization uses an AI Detector to review essay questions and will disqualify those created by AI.

The national organization sponsored a webinar to clarify criteria for the scholarships. The webinar was recorded and is now posted on the ALA Academy for members to access. Sign into the national website, select “meetings/trainings,” and under “online” select “ALA Academy.”

ALA Wisconsin offers twenty-two \$1,000 scholarships. Applications are due to unit presidents by March 1. Unit presidents or their representative should review applications to be sure the applicant has filled out everything

completely and followed all of the scholarship rules and guidelines, then be sure to sign it. After signing, unit presidents submit Wisconsin ALA scholarship applications to the Department Education Chairman by March 15, 2025.

In addition to scholarships, Give 10 to Education, Veterans in Community Schools, M. Louise Wilson Educational Loans, Legislation, and educating about AEF, ALA Foundation Veterans Projects Fund, and Be The One – are ways the Wisconsin ALA Education Program is “Serving our Veterans, Military and Each Other from the Depths of our Hearts”.

Please email pictures to [dsweggen@gmail.com](mailto:dsweggen@gmail.com) demonstrating how you incorporated the ALA Education Program in your activities.

**M. LOUISE WILSON EDUCATIONAL LOAN FUND:** On February 4, 1925, the Executive Committee of ALA-Wisconsin established the M. Louise Wilson Educational Loan Fund with \$200 to aid women Veterans and female members in attaining a higher education.

This Educational Loan Fund offers interest-free loans of \$800 annually, renewable for up to five years for a total loan limit of \$4,000 available to women enrolled in college on a full-time basis. Repayment starts within six months after graduation or withdrawal from a full-time academic program with minimum payments of \$50 per month.

Since 1925, the maintenance and growth of the fund has been entirely dependent upon the repayment of loans and voluntary contributions from units and friends of ALA-Wisconsin. No other department has this program. Help keep this program a viable part of Wisconsin’s Education Program with a donation from the unit, county or district. Personal donations are also welcome. Donations should be payable to “ALA-MLW Loan Fund” and mailed to ALA-Wisconsin, PO Box 140, Portage, WI 53901. Thank you for supporting this great benefit for our members.

## ALA UNIT 106: BE THE ONE!



**BE THE ONE!** — The Seymour American Legion Family participated in the 12th annual H.O.O.A.H. (Helping Out Our American Heroes) event in November. This was a Veteran suicide awareness march of 17.5 miles, representing the number of Veterans that commit suicide each day.

**Pictured (l-r):** ALA Unit President Juellaine Miller; ALA members Jaden Hauser, Bambie Thielbar and April Hauser; Tony Hauser and Legionnaire Chuck Miller.





**Jim Johnson**  
Department  
Commander

## DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Hello Fellow Legionnaires,  
I hope this edition of the Badger Legionnaire finds you all happy and healthy. We had an awesome time and increased our knowledge during the training classes at Midwinter in Appleton and are looking forward to the Department Convention. I truly appreciate all the hard work by headquarters team and volunteers that helped make Midwinter a resounding success! Attendance was the highest since 2020, we are stronger together and will continue to make Wisconsin #LegionStrong!

In addition to the 100% Post Commander drawing for a suite at Department Convention, every Legionnaire that brings a Legionnaire that has not attended a Department Convention will be entered in "Bring a Buddy" drawing for a Department Convention suite. The Wisconsin American Legion Family Leadership Testimonial will be held on Wednesday July 16 at the Hyatt Hotel in Green Bay as we launch our 106th Department Convention.

We are in the midst of our Wisconsin winter, that comes with isolation and at times loneliness. Now is an important time to check on one another with our Buddy Checks. I also encourage you to check on Veterans not yet blessed with American Legion membership and while you're at

it check your neighbors and other non-Veteran friends. Buddy Checks are not membership recruitment calls, they are a friendly call or visit to tell people we are thinking about them and for us to listen. Listening is a big part of Being The One, listening to another Veteran and hearing what they are saying, and being there for them when they need us.

I know quite a few of the Wisconsin American Legion Family received training on the Columbia Suicide Severity Scale training at Midwinter. If you missed it, you can find online classes at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) under the Advocacy tab select Be The One. I also encourage you to take the VA S.A.V.E. training provided by Psycharmor.org under the learn tab, select all courses and then select VA S.A.V.E. Or another outstanding training opportunity that will give you the tools to Be The One is R.A.C.E. Suicide Prevention located at [racesuicideprevention.us](http://racesuicideprevention.us).

Be The One is service to our fellow Veterans. Your Wisconsin American Legion is working toward becoming a resource for Veterans that call 988 and 211. Our purpose will be to take calls from Veterans that have been cleared through 988 as not suicidal. These are Veterans that just need to talk with someone, someone to hear them without judgment. If you can help with our assistance to 988 and 211, please let Adjutant Julie Muhle know. Her email address is [adjutant@wilegion.org](mailto:adjutant@wilegion.org).



**Becky Mueller**  
2024-2025  
Department  
President

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Warm Heartfelt Greetings!

What an amazing Midwinter event we had in January! More members in attendance than expected – huge donations of toiletries and socks – hundreds and hundreds of homemade Valentine's Day cards – great questions and ideas expressed – learning to 'say' the Pledge of Allegiance in sign language – finding out we are NOT smarter than a Fifth Grader with our Junior members – meeting ALA Badger Girls State delegate and \$10,000 Samsung Scholarship winner Meredith Clark – and a great session with Charles Konsitzke from the UW-Madison MIARIP. The Auxiliary Emergency Fund support was also unbelievable, raising over \$1,300! Thank you to my entire American Legion Family and leaders Jim, Al, and Corey for your support and participation with us.

Members, please continue to check in with each other, especially during this FREEZING weather. Let's make sure everyone has the support they need. Pray for those who are struggling with illness and recovering from surgeries. I heard about so many of you facing difficulties at this time. Know your Legion Family has your back. BE THE ONE!

Testimonial time is approaching. Another new idea this year – Commander Jim, Commander Allen, Director Corey and I are hosting a joint testimonial dinner on the Wednesday night before the start of Department Convention in July at the convention hotel. Hopefully, this will make it easier and less expensive to attend both events. We are looking forward to seeing you there. More details will follow.

Events are springing up now that the holiday season is ending. Look forward to patriotic events in spring – essay and poppy poster entries arriving, Legion birthday parties and those early spring conferences in the next few months. My calendar is already filling up. Keep those invitations coming!

I am so proud of all of you and the diverse ways you demonstrate Service, Not Self. You are serving from the *depths of your hearts* and making such a difference to our Veterans, military and each other in our communities, state, and nation.

May God bless each one of you and your families.



**Allen Watry**  
SAL Detachment  
Commander

## SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER

I am composing this article the final day of our Midwinter Conference. This year was another amazing Conference. After participating in Committee meetings where we talk about all the different activities you are doing, helping lead Training Sessions which covered a lot of great topics and questions, and hearing the accolades about the SAL from the rest of the Legion Family, all I can say is THANK YOU. You are making a difference in the activities you are doing! Keep up the great work.

As we are preparing for Spring, please make sure you are starting to plan the yearly activities which occur this time of year. These include holding Elections, updating/submitted Squadron Information Forms, attending Spring Conferences, and submission of a Squadron Consolidated Report. All of these are important activities which need to be completed yearly. Please contact myself or any other Detachment Officer if you need any help with any of these.

And now a request before I close this message. Please continue with Buddy Checks and helping each other when needed. There is a lot of pain out there and winter tends to be a tough emotional time

for many people. There are also many still trying to recover from the hurricanes which devastated parts of Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Now add the wildfires in California; we have many people who need our help and support. Please keep all of them in your prayers. And, if possible, please consider financially supporting them through programs like the Legion National Emergency Fund and the Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Program. These are two great programs which help fellow Legion Family Members through an emergency.

And again THANK YOU for continuing to live out the mission of the Wisconsin Legion Family!



**Corey Doehrmann**  
State Director  
American Legion  
Riders Association

## LEGION RIDERS DIRECTOR

As I write this article I have just returned from the 2025 American Legion Midwinter event. These events provide some amazing opportunities to learn and grow in our knowledge of American Legion programs, as well as socialize with fellow Legion Family members from across the state. I encourage all to take time to attend next year's event if you've never been before. A couple of highlights from this past weekend were the Be The One Training - Columbia Protocol on how to evaluate and know if a person you're talking to is in need of help. Two other highlights happened during the Celebrate Your Heritage banquet on Saturday, Legion Rider Assistant Director Brad Heller serenaded us with some great David Allen Coe and the entire room singing and holding hands for God Bless the USA. On Friday there were also many chances to attend committee meetings and hear what is going on in the Department of Wisconsin.

Planning for the WI Legion Riders-Cruise for a Cause, 'Be The One for Wisconsin-25' is progressing well. We have locked in almost all of

our stops and are preparing the route itself. We also plan to have registration and hotel blocks published by March 1. I've had some questions and comments come up about the ride that I want to ensure we all have clarity on. All of our motorcycle fundraising rides that we've had over the years are planned by the Legion Riders, however, it is only through the involvement of the Legion Family at the post, unit & squadron level that makes these rides successful. If we don't have family members at the local level helping by promoting the rides in their community and making donations, the ride fails. We appreciate all the support we have gotten over the years and I wanted to make sure that Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and S.A.L. members all know. Toward that end, a big 'Thank You' to everyone that stopped by our table at Midwinter and participated in the 50/50 raffles on Friday & Saturday, we raised \$750 for the ride this year.

If you have any questions about the Wisconsin Legion Riders don't hesitate to contact me: Corey Doehrmann/State Director, cell 262-305-0305 or email at [alrawi.director@gmail.com](mailto:alrawi.director@gmail.com). Our next meeting after the publication of this will be at 1 p.m. on May 3 at Post 263 in New London, WI.

**Veterans Crisis Line**  

**DIAL 988**  
then **PRESS 1**



# 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*

