



NEWS 2026



VOL. 43 NO. 4

MAKE IT COUNT

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026

Geisler, Quinn Reps for Mid-Winter

While we welcome the new year 2026, it's also time to make plans for the Department Mid-Winter Conference scheduled for February 6 and 7 at the Hilton Paper Valley in Appleton. As noted in the November/December issue, the "Fun Meter" will definitely be pegged as we welcome our VFW Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief Cory Geisler and Auxiliary National District Council Member #11 Renee' Quinn from Iowa as our National Reps.

Tentative schedules for both groups as well as info about training sessions and other special activities may be found on **page 6** in this online issue. Note that the VFW Past Commanders Luncheon and the Auxiliary Luncheon will again be held midday on Friday. Past – and current – VFW Commanders at ANY level are welcome at the Past Commanders Luncheon, and the Auxiliary Luncheon is open to *any and all* Auxiliary members who would like to attend. **Both require a pre-registration and payment.**

There is still time to submit your registration and meal reservations online – at



Cory L. Geisler
VFW Sr. Vice Cdr.-in-Chief



Renee' Quinn
Auxiliary NDCM #11

WI Past State Commander (2021-22) **Cory Geisler** was elected VFW Sr. Vice Cdr.-in-Chief on August 13, 2025. A Gold Legacy Life Member of VFW Post 721 in Waukesha, Cory served in the US Army from 2005-2012, earning his eligibility in Iraq. Prior to his election, Cory was serving as our National Council of Administration Representative. He has served in a variety of offices at all levels and is expected to serve as Commander-in-Chief in 2026-2027. Cory and his family live in Hartland.

Iowa Past Dept. President (2024-25) Renee' Quinn is a Life Member of VFW Auxiliary 6414 in Riverside, IA, eligible through the Desert Storm service of her US Marine Corps husband, Rob Quinn. Their family includes two sons and two grandchildren. She is proud to be a "granddaughter of a Korean War Army Veteran; the wife of a Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom Veteran; mother and mother-in-law to GWOT Veterans". Her many years of service to Veterans include the VFW Auxiliary as well as Family Readiness for the Iowa National Guard. Renee' is committed to diligent representation of her Iowa and Wisconsin Auxiliary family as our National Council Member.

vfwwi.org or vfwauxwi.org. Please note that additional fees now apply – **January 23, 2026 is the absolute deadline!** As of

publication time, the special rate hotel block may be filled, but it's worth a try using the QR code, also on page 6.

Celebrating in Fort Atkinson

VFW State Commander Ty Letto (left) visited VFW Post 1879 in Fort Atkinson in early December, for their monthly meeting and Christmas Party. Post Cdr. Archie Hafer (right) proudly presented Cdr. Letto with a \$1,500 donation for the Campfire for Courage Special Project. "VFW Post 1879 truly embodies what it means to serve beyond the uniform," said Cdr. Letto, "I am deeply grateful for their generosity and all the hard work they do." See more "sharing and caring" around our state on pages 10-11 and 18. Thank you Ty!



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THERE IS STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE 2026 Mid-Winter Conference

FEBRUARY 6-7, HILTON PAPER VALLEY, APPLETON

See page 6 in this issue for details,
and visit vfwwi.org to reserve your place - **by January 23! (Fees apply.)**

SEE YOU THERE!

THE SEASON OF SERVICE,
THE SPIRIT OF THE VFW

As we move through this season of reflection and gratitude, I want to begin with a simple but deeply heartfelt message: **THANK YOU**. Thank you for **YOUR** continued dedication to our organization, for **YOUR** tireless work recruiting new members, and for **YOUR** incredible generosity in support of *Campfire for Courage*, the Commander's Special Project. **YOUR** commitment proves every day that the VFW is more than an organization, **it is a family that continues to serve long after the uniform comes off**.

Membership remains the foundation of our strength. Every Veteran you bring into our ranks strengthens our voice, sharpens our advocacy, and ensures we remain the 800-pound gorilla in the room when fighting for Veterans' issues. Across Wisconsin, I have had the privilege of recognizing outstanding leaders and recruiters who understand that membership is about more than numbers, it is about belonging, purpose, and caring for one another.

I am equally grateful for the generosity shown toward *Campfire for Courage*. From Posts and Districts to individual members, and even corporate sponsors, **YOUR** donations reflect a shared belief that Veterans deserve connection, healing, and hope. Because of you, this project is already making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Since my last article, I have had the honor of traveling throughout our great state representing **YOU** as your State Commander. I have witnessed the strength of the Wisconsin VFW firsthand, touring facilities that restore dignity and stability, visiting Posts filled with camaraderie and service, attending community events that celebrate sacrifice, and advocating alongside VA leadership to ensure Veterans receive the best care possible. I have shared conversations with Veterans in our VA homes, celebrated mile-

Ty Letto
State Commander



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stones, and seen communities come together in powerful ways to remind our Veterans they are never forgotten.

No matter where I go, one truth remains clear: **the heart of the VFW is its people. YOUR** servant leadership, compassion, and willingness to continue serving inspire me every day.

As we complete the holiday season, I ask each of you to continue to remember the importance of the **Buddy Check**. While this time of year brings joy to many, it can also be difficult for some Veterans. A simple phone call, text, or visit can make all the difference. Reach out. **Check in. Let your fellow Veterans know they are not alone, because that is the spirit of the VFW.** I also encourage you to spend time with family and friends, to reflect on the blessings we share, and to recharge for the important work ahead.

As we look to the New Year, **let us carry this same energy, spirit, and dedication forward**. Together, we can meet and exceed our membership goals, continue to grow *Campfire for Courage*, and ensure that every Veteran in Wisconsin feels supported, respected, and remembered. **YOUR** efforts make a real difference, and with **YOUR** continued commitment, the coming year will be one of service, progress, and meaningful impact.

From my family to yours, I wish you a **Happy New Year**. And until next time, remember to **"Make it Count"**, because you make a difference in the life of a Veteran every single day.



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"The HQ
Dispatch"

We hope everyone enjoyed the holidays with family and friends. Our Mid-Winter Conference is just a few weeks away. There is still time to register if you have not done so. *[See Page 6.]* We would like to congratulate the Red Carpet, Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy and Teachers of the Year Winners that will be recognized at the Mid-Winter Conference.

As we enter the New Year, it marks the halfway point of the Command Year. Some key reminders:

- **January 22 through 24, 2026 – Statewide Online Training**
The topic is: **Post Quartermaster duties**. We will also touch on **Post Adjutant duties**. The training schedule is:
 - > Thursday, January 22: 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 - > Friday, January 23: 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 - > Saturday, January 24: 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- **March Post meeting:** Nominations are opened for Post elected positions.
- **March 31, 2026 – Newspaper Fee DEADLINE** – As a reminder: at the 2025 State Convention, a motion was passed to assess each Post a \$0.50 per member fee to support the **WI VFW NEWS**. Click this link to pay online <https://pci.jotform.com/form/251965000397054> **OR** mail your check to State Headquarters. Be sure to note **Newspaper Fee** in the memo.
- **April Post meeting:** Nominations are closed and Elections held for Post elected positions and Post Delegates. Post Election Report and Delegate Election Report are **due by April 30, 2026**.
- **April 3, 2026 - WI VFW Member of the Year nominations deadline.** The online nomination form is available in the members only section of the State website under On-Line Forms or click the following link <https://form.jotform.com/251354293856161>.
- **May Post meeting: Installation of Officers.** The elected and appointed comrades do not officially assume the position until after the installation of the new State Commander in June.

Thank you to those that responded to the New Website design survey. Your feedback will help shape the look and feel of the new website.

STATE OFFICERS

Happy New Year!

As we begin a new year, I want to take a moment to sincerely thank you for everything you've done over the past year to support our military members, Veterans, their families, and your communities. Your dedication truly shows. The growth we've seen isn't just in the numbers—it's in the lives you've touched and the difference you've made. For more than a century, our organization has played a vital role in advocating for Veterans, strengthening communities, and preserving the legacy of military service.

Because of you, every person we support becomes part of our story and our legacy. Each journey is different, but everyone deserves respect, opportunity, support, and a place where they belong. When we share and promote the work of the VFW and Auxiliary, we reach more people, strengthen our mission, and continue the work started by those who came before us.

For those of us who wear, or have worn, our nation's uniform, our service was never meant to be silent. And with the support of our members and allies, it never will be. Together, we'll keep standing up, speaking out, and fighting for the rights of Veterans and their families—now and into the future. The VFW and Auxiliary stand as a symbol of unity, service, and enduring commitment to those who have borne the cost of defending the nation. Through advocacy, community service, and Veteran support, the VFW and Auxiliary continue to uphold their founding promise: to care for those who have served and to ensure their voices are heard. As new generations of Veterans enter our ranks, the VFW remains a vital institution, adapting to changing needs while remaining rooted in its proud legacy.

Be open to new projects and ideas that not only support your VFW or Auxiliary but the community. Nothing need be on a grand scale or time consuming. It should be something that allows you the ability to be of service to others while promoting the mission. An opportunity for us to grow our "resume" and embrace the talents of new members and the ever-changing dynamics of those we serve. We not only need those that can be members to be successful, but volunteers that are not eligible as well. Grow the footprint of camaraderie, share the mission and goals of our organizations with your community and you will thrive.

You are our living historians and the voice for millions who have not found their voice yet. We are a family of warriors that have chosen a path of continued service and support. Thank you for all that you do to ensure the continued success not only of the VFW and Auxiliary, but of the lives you touch.

Greetings Comrades!

As we welcome the beginning of the new year, I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you about my experience this past Veterans Day. While on "holiday" in Australia on November 11, I was fortunate to observe the respect and reverence our valued "Aussie" Allies bestowed upon their heroes "down under".

My wife and I were enjoying a tour through the Daintree Rainforest in Queensland, Australia, when we drove past a coastal roadside Veteran's Memorial overlooking the Great Barrier Reef. We sped past, but not before I noticed several locals setting up flags and chairs in front of it for their Remembrance Day observance. Our guide informed us that we would briefly stop just before 11:00 a.m. so we could observe a minute of silence at the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month, to honor his country's Veterans. I can honestly say that I did not realize what day it was as my mind was still on this side of the International Date Line.

As promised, our guide pulled over, as did every vehicle that I could see in front or behind us, at approximately two minutes before 11:00, shut down the bus and respectfully asked us to remain silent until 11:01. To say that I was moved was an understatement. In the 50 plus years that I can remember, including my 24 years of active duty service and my time with the VFW, I do not recall a time, outside of 9/11, when the **population** of *this* country, stopped what they were doing, and remembered the Veterans who have fought to secure the freedoms they cherish. Don't get me wrong, I know we conduct numerous ceremonies, wreath layings and speeches. In fact, every year my Post 7308 participates in a Veterans Day ceremony held by the Village of Pleasant Prairie. However, as the ceremony is going on, cars and trucks speed by without giving any consideration to what we are doing.

My point is this: how amazing is it to have everyone across a country, stopping everything they are doing, for just one minute, to remember the men and women of their nation who have served in the Armed Forces? Since then, I have done some reading regarding how our Allies down under "take care" of their

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Veterans.

As it is here in the "States", there are a multitude of Veteran Organizations which advertise the support they offer to Veterans. The largest is the Returned & Services League (RSL) of Australia, which resembles the American Legion here in the states. Unfortunately, I did not find a comparable organization to our own, but that is not to say one does not exist. It is important to note that the RSL is also fighting to ensure the Veterans of Australia get the benefits they earned.

Although we are from different countries, the mantra appears to be the same: Veterans serving Veterans, and we in the VFW can say with pride **"No one does more for Veterans"** than we do!

988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

If you or someone you know
needs support now,
call or text **988**
or
chat **988lifeline.org**

STATE OFFICERS

Comrades,

At the most recent VFW National Convention, the membership approved the wearing of an **alternative baseball-style cap** when serving in an official capacity. This newly authorized cap is intended for wear during Post meetings, official functions, community events, and other occasions where members represent the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The alternative cap is designed to serve as an option to the traditional overseas cap, offering increased comfort and a different appearance while continuing to clearly represent the VFW organization. The design features the Cross of Malta on the front; the Post number or Department on the right side; title and years of service (if applicable) on the left side; and "Veterans of Foreign Wars" on the back, with an option to add "Life Member" or "Legacy Life Member." Caps are available with **Post, District, or Department-colored bill trim** [Gold, Green or Red respectively].

Discussion at the National Convention centered on the need for a cap that clearly displays who we are as an organization and can be worn more broadly in the community. The approval reflects an effort to adapt to changes in membership demographics while maintaining the professionalism and identity of the VFW.

Nick Webster
Judge Advocate



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There are specific restrictions regarding when the **alternative** cap may be worn. The baseball-style cap is authorized as an alternative, not a replacement, for the regulation overseas cap. It **shall not be worn** at formal ceremonies, when in business attire, or at events where the regulation cap is prescribed. During Post meetings, **officers are required to wear the regulation overseas cap, while members in attendance may wear the alternative cap.**

Overall, the alternative cap is intended to increase visibility of VFW members in the community as they continue to serve Veterans and support local initiatives. Members are encouraged to take pride in the organization they represent and to explore the cap options available through the **VFW Store**.

Wisconsin Veterans
of Foreign Wars News



Greetings fellow Wisconsinites,

I hope all are doing well, coming up to the half way point of the Command year. As of this writing, 38 Posts have met or exceeded the 101% Membership Goal already, with 28 Posts at 100%, knocking on the door to the Goal. That is crazy for only being half way – let's keep up the momentum.

Traveling around with the Command Team visiting Posts and doing Special Events, along with doing my District Inspections, I have been noticing a trend that I feel needs some attention. We are all doing great work at the Post level but we are not taking credit for it. Looking at the Department's Check List on the State Web site there are too many zeroes next to the Community Activity Reports.

Commanders: you need to make sure you or a member of the Post is logging the activities the Post is doing. Following the criteria on the Online Report Form found in the **Members Only Section** you should find a topic that fits mostly everything we do as a Veterans Service Organization. One of our main pillars is Community Service which we all do well, let's take the credit for it so our Department has the ability to have the numbers to back up our mission.

NOTE: The Mid-Winter hotel portal is still active on the state website - see page 6 of this issue, so get your reservation in. Also see the Tentative Agenda in this paper. Come out and support our Students and Teachers at the Banquet as we announce the winners in Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year.

Ty's Commander shirts are still available up on the State site, again in the Members Only section. If you don't have access you can reach out to me directly. Thank you for all you continue do to **"Make it Count"**.

Keith Lauth

Chief-of-Staff



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OFFICIAL BALLCAPS
DELIVERY IN LATE JANUARY



Post: Gold

District: Green

Department: Red



Left side:

Title, years



Right side:

Post, state



Back options



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VFWSTORE.ORG

Your purchase from the VFW Store supports veterans, military service members and their families.

Wisconsin VFW News Production Schedule

Mid-Winter Conference • February 6-7, 2026

March 2026 Issue Vol. 43, No. 5 Deadline to Editor: February 13, 2026

May 2026 Issue Vol. 43, No. 6 Deadline to Editor: April 6, 2026

Department Convention • June 10-13, 2026

Wisconsin VFW News

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Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars

Commanders and Quartermasters:

Now's a good time of year to take a close look at your Post rosters and pay particular attention to any member whose information is in **red**.

Red designates that the address on file at National HQ is **undeliverable** and it is likely that mailings from National, Department and maybe your Post, are not getting to your member. There are a number of reasons for this to occur.

The first is that your member moved and didn't update their address with the Post or National. A second reason may be that they are snowbirds and spend winters in a much warmer climate and didn't inform the VFW of their temporary address change. Lastly, it is possible that they may have passed away, and no one noticed.

At any rate, members who are undeliverable are not being served properly by the VFW since there is an information void that prevents mailings from reaching them. All the above situations are easy for Quartermasters to fix using the **VFW Online Membership System (OMS)** to complete an update. The difficult part is getting updated information from the member.

I recently got my own Post's roster squared away, and I was curious what was going on at other Posts. I was a little bit concerned at what I found. In District 9 for example, I counted 156 undeliverable addresses out of 2,842 members. That's 5.5% of the District's membership. I feel that the percentages in other Wisconsin Districts will be about the same. This is **not** actually a **District** problem. Posts can easily see the bad addresses on their roster and contact their member for an update. Larger Posts

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appear to have more bad addresses. In one case, a large Post had 57 bad addresses, which is 10% of their membership. This would be a lot of work for one person to take on so the Post Membership Committee should be asked to help get the updates needed.

National HQ told me that undeliverable Life Members stay on your roster, waiting to be corrected. A correction can be as simple as adding an apartment number to the street address, or as difficult as tracking down someone who moved to another state or passed away.

Post Quartermasters should constantly review their Post rosters and take action quickly to update address information, as well as any other information that may be incorrect such as e-mails and phone numbers. Start by trying to call or e-mail the member or contacting a relative or neighbor. Maybe a short road trip and "Buddy Check" is needed to get the information.

I hope that every District Quartermaster discusses this issue with Posts at their next District meeting so that the VFW can **"Make it Count"** for every member.

Planning for Upcoming Meetings

- **2026 Department Mid-Winter Conference**
Fri.-Sat., February 6-7, 2026
Hilton Appleton Paper Valley • \$129 + taxes
333 W. College Ave., Appleton, WI 54911 • 920-733-8000
- **2026 Department Convention**
Wed.-Sat., June 10-13, 2026
Holiday Inn & Suites/Central WI Expo Center • \$112 + taxes
1000 Imperial Ave., Rothschild, WI 54474 • 715-355-1111
- **2026-2027 Program Kickoff/Council of Administration**
Fri.-Sat., July 10-11, 2026
Stoney Creek Hotel • \$110 + taxes
3060 S. Kinney Coulee Rd., Onalaska, WI 54650 • 608-781-3060
- **2027 Department Mid-Winter Conference**
Fri.-Sat., February 5-6, 2027
Hilton Appleton Paper Valley • \$129 + taxes
333 W. College Ave., Appleton, WI 54911 • 920-733-8000
- **2027 Department Convention**
Wed.-Sat., June 9-12, 2027
Madison Marriott West • \$132 + taxes
1313 John Q Hammons Dr., Middleton, WI 53562 • 608-831-2000

NOTE: In most instances, special room blocks include the night before events start.

A NEW YEAR, A RENEWED MISSION: LOVE IN ACTION AT OUR VFW POSTS

As we step into a new year, we are reminded that time itself is a gift, and what we do with it defines our legacy. For the Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars, this year begins with a renewed mission and a simple but powerful charge: Make It Count.

Every handshake at the door, every conversation at the canteen or meeting table, and every welcome extended to a new or returning member matters. These moments are more than routine interactions; they are investments in the brotherhood and sisterhood forged through shared service and sacrifice. Our strength as an organization has never rested solely on numbers, but on unity. Yet unity grows when we intentionally reach out, stand together, and invite others to stand with us.

Let this be the year we grow stronger in membership, louder in advocacy for Veterans' needs, and deeper in our bonds with one another. When we speak with a unified voice, legislators listen. When we stand shoulder to shoulder, no Veteran stands alone.

This renewed mission calls us to something equally important: Love in Action. Love isn't just something we say, it's something we choose to do. It's a phone call to a comrade who hasn't been seen in a while. It's sharing a

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cup of coffee and listening without judgment. It's visiting a fellow Veteran in the hospital or checking in on a surviving family member who still carries the weight of loss.

Esprit de corps is not built in grand speeches or ceremonial moments alone. It is formed quietly, steadily, and faithfully through acts of loyalty and care. These gestures may seem small, but they are the mortar that holds our organization together.

Our VFW Posts are more than buildings; they are spiritual homes. They are places where stories are shared, burdens are lifted, and healing begins. As we move forward into this new year, let us recommit to making our Posts places of refuge and renewal; for ourselves, for our fellow Veterans, and for the next generation who will one day walk through our doors.

This year, Make it Count. Through unity. Through service. Through love in action.

Angela Thomsen
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As we enter a new year, many of us reflect on the goals we want to accomplish and the habits we hope to improve. For Veterans across Wisconsin, the New Year is an ideal time to refocus on health, not just physical fitness, but overall well-being. After years of service to our country, caring for our own health is not a luxury; it is a continuation of the mission.

Winter in Wisconsin can be challenging, often limiting activity levels and increasing isolation. This season brings higher risks for weight gain, joint stiffness, chronic pain flare-ups, and mental health strain, including depression and seasonal affective disorder (SAD) symptoms. Veterans living with chronic conditions, service-connected injuries, or stress-related concerns may feel these effects even more strongly.

The good news is that small, consistent steps can make a meaningful difference. Scheduling an annual physical or VA appointment early in the year helps set a strong foundation. Staying active does not require a gym membership: walking indoors, stretching, or participating in local VFW or community programs can maintain strength and mobility. Equally important is mental health: staying connected with fellow Veterans, attending Post meetings, or reaching out when stress feels overwhelming.

Wisconsin Veterans also have access to a wide range of resources, including VA health care; Whole Health programs; Mental Health Services and community-based support. These programs are designed to treat the whole person, mind, body, and spirit, not just a diagnosis.

This New Year, let's encourage one another to make health a priority. Supporting our fellow Veterans, checking in on those who may be struggling, and taking proactive steps for our own well-being honors the service we've already given, and strengthens the community we continue to build together. Until next time, stay happy and healthy!

Greetings all comrades –

The Service Office Team and I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. We are working as diligently as ever still serving all our Veterans and their families.

To update all of the happenings at your friendly neighborhood Service Office:

The Government shutdown did throw a big old wrench in the whole Service Office operation. This was the first time the Service Officers could not work outside of the office, which is not an ideal situation. However, we were able keep representing our clients by working with our partner agency "VetsNet", the Wisconsin Veterans Network. They were gracious enough to let us work out of their office, which meant there was little to no lack of services from us. Though it did make it a lot harder to deal with our case load, and it took a lot longer for us to get back to people and respond.

Now that the shutdown is behind us, there are new things learned about what is needed to keep making these types of "curve balls" less of an issue in the future.

In other news, if you have any questions regarding the new Post Benefits Advisor (PBA), I plan on setting up some training at the State Convention in June. Please make sure your Post and Districts let us know who would like to participate in that training.

DID YOU KNOW...?

VA Non-Service Connected Pension (NSC Pension)

• What it is:

A needs-based, tax-free monthly benefit for low-income wartime Veterans.

• Who's eligible:

Wartime Vets with honorable service, 90+ days active duty (one day during a wartime period), meeting age/disability (permanent and total) and income/net worth limits.

• Purpose:

Helps offset catastrophic medical costs when unreimbursed expenses exceed income, especially for older Vets.

• How to apply:

Use VA Form 21P-527EZ.

I hope this helps clear up some questions that are out there, but as always, let me know if you need more information.

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STATE OFFICERS

Hello,

I am hoping you all made it through the Holiday Season! It got cold early this year, maybe that means we will have an early Spring. The next scheduled events we have coming up are our State Mid-Winter Conference in Appleton and the National Washington, DC Conference.

Two notes from National Commander Carol Whitmore - General Orders No. 4:

1. Commanders on all levels are reminded that according to Section 105 of the National Bylaws, a member whose dues are unpaid after their anniversary date ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They shall not attend meetings or Conventions and shall not participate in Post, County Council, District, Department or National functions.

2. The attention of Department, District, County Council and Post Commanders is directed to Section 103 of the Manual of Procedure, which prescribes the manner in which applications for membership will be handled. Applications for membership of new, reinstated or transfer members must be voted on by the members present at a regular Post meeting.

From the National Headquarters Bulletin, here are a few ways to continue to support the VFW:

• Salute Someone Who Changed Your Life –

Honor. Remember. Give. Salute the hero who inspired you. Create a VFW tribute or memorial gift and salute the hero who inspired you. Learn the two most popular ways to establish a tribute gift by visiting vfw.planmylegacy.org/salute-a-mentor. Contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or plannedgiving@vfw.org to speak with an Officer about your options.

• Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism?

Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for Veterans, service members and their families. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis, which helps reduce expenses and eliminates the amount of fundraising mail you receive. It is called Partners in Patriotism. As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account.

Once you join Partners in Patriotism, you will only receive the Quarterly Supporter newsletters to keep you informed of the many efforts your monthly gifts are making possible and a Year-End Tax Receipt mailed by the end of January. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department toll-free at 1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483) or email them at partners@vfw.org with "Partners in Patriotism Application" in the subject line.

• **VFW Friends of Freedom** – If you are not already a member of the VFW's online community, please visit vfw.org and look for the gold banner that says "Find Out What's Happening" to sign up. As a member of the VFW's Friends of Freedom, you will receive special emails with breaking VFW news, legislative alerts and unique opportunities to help the VFW in assisting our nation's Veterans, service members and their families. You may also visit vfw.org/VFWatWork and click on "Read VFW success stories" to learn how the VFW is fighting for Veterans' rights, assisting Veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

My commitment to communication, leadership, mentorship, innovation, and, of course, membership continues. I firmly believe that success at the Post level begins with strong membership, which is built through excellent community service, active community engagement, and support for both youth and seniors in our communities.

Spring is on the way, stay safe, and keep warm.

Tom Heath
National Council Member
VFW
608-221-5276
ncm@vfwwi.org



JOINT SPECIAL PROJECT Supporting PTSD Retreats for Veterans and Families at THE HIGHGROUND

As of December 31,
we have donations
to serve 162
attendees!



Keep up the great work – let's
PASS our goal of \$100,000!

MEMBERSHIP

Current Membership Totals By District

Dist.	Life	New	Reinstate	Continuous	Total	Adj. Prior Year	Percentage
1	2265	199	48	333	2845	2797	101.71%
2	3088	44	12	200	3344	3489	95.84%
3	729	6	3	62	800	845	94.67%
4	1134	13	2	83	1232	1269	97.08%
6	1677	21	9	96	1803	1863	96.77%
7	2106	30	10	158	2304	2378	96.88%
8	1801	16	10	157	1984	2059	96.35%
9	2549	40	6	98	2693	2739	98.32%
10	1330	19	9	155	1513	1534	98.63%
11	1606	16	9	130	1761	1844	95.49%
99	1435	59	17	123	1634	1906	85.72%
Totals	19720	463	135	1595	21913	22723	96.43%

Totals as of December 30, 2025

434 Legacy Life Members

1,038 members needed to reach our 101% goal 22,951

Thank you Miki!



Yes, VFW and Auxiliary members can recruit for the “other” organization. Here, VFW State Chaplain Jordan Tilleson (left) and State Adjutant Adam Wallace present Auxiliary member Michele “Miki” Cairo with her “Recruit Wisconsinbly” T-shirt. Photo from Membership Chair Michele Rathke.

TOP RECRUITING UPDATE

through 12/30/2025

Recruiter	Post	Dist.	Recruits	Recruiter	Post	Dist.	Recruits
Robert E. Haisler	11038	1	100	David F. Gentile	9536	10	4
Steven J. Eisenhauer	1318	2	44	John D. McCoy	7308	1	3
Thomas E. Heath	1621	1	28	Rob L. Drogsvold	328	2	3
Dena M. McCormick	11038	1	25	Garret A. Collins	2260	2	3
James A. Cairo	11038	1	25	Anthony E. Veeder	8483	2	3
Brent C. Hibbard	11038	1	24	Giles E. Svehlek	9387	2	3
Jason T. Coffey	11038	1	19	David A. Mix	2126	6	3
Michelle Leick-Leurquin	2113	8	16	Richard J. Bartol	2925	6	3
Adam S. Wallace	328	2	12	Paul E. Morrison	2534	7	3
Gundel M. E. Metz	1318	2	8	Joseph D. Mills	3635	8	3
Lawrence A. Rugg	7308	1	7	John P. Wierer	7534	8	3
Randy L. Engness	2204	9	7	Mark T. Schiltgen	2115	9	3
Thomas J. Hoffman	2723	7	6	Krist D. Beseler	10406	9	3
Michael F. Fischer	11038	1	5	James G. Alsteen	3143	10	3
Randall J. Meyer	1163	2	5				
Phillip D. Nelson	2723	7	5				
Paul R. Koehler	305	9	5				
Nate Haumschild	2115	9	4				

Plus – 31 Recruiters with 2 Recruits each,

and 64 Recruiters with 1 Recruit each.

Keep up the great work!

Comrades,
Hope you had a safe and happy holiday! With 2025 in our rear view mirror, now is the time to focus on the last half of Commander Ty Letto’s command year. As a whole, everyone is doing awesome work on increasing membership for our “Recruit Wisconsinbly” theme this year.
Let’s keep it up and finish strong by honing in on our next **Monthly Recruiter Challenges for January, February, March and May:**

Michele Rathke
State Membership Chairman
VFW
715-218-0440
MicheleR@vfwwi.org



- **January** – Two tickets to the Fireside Dinner Theatre in Fort Atkinson, mileage to and from and overnight hotel stay.
- **February** – Two tickets for Veteran of the Game at a select Brewers Game, chosen by the Membership Chairman and subject to the availability of the Brewers.
- **March** – One VFW member will join the State Commander at their choice of Supper Club in the winner’s community. The winner will be picked up and taken to dinner in the Commander’s Corvette. Incentives and locations will be based on weather and schedules.
- **May** – VFW members who recruit: 5 members – \$100; 3 members – \$50; 1 member – \$25 in the month of May 2026 will receive the amount stated.

NOTE: All monthly challenges start on the first day of each month. Recruiters leading with the most new and reinstated Life Members on the last day of the month will receive the monthly prize listed.
We are surpassing our goals, so let’s keep the momentum going strong and keep the membership coming! Thank you for your commitment and teamwork for the continual support of ‘Recruit Wisconsinbly’ successes! If you require assistance or have questions, please reach out to one of the membership team members or me and let’s “Make it Count”.

Congratulations
Red Carpet Winners!

Division 1 (301 +):

Post 11038, Rochester (D1) – 126.64%
Cdr. Michael Fischer, QM James Cairo

Post 1621, Janesville (D1) – 95.91%
Cdr. Michael Zientek, QM Mark Dykstra

Division 2 (229-300):

Post 7308, Pleasant Prairie (D1) – 101.78%
Cdr. Lawrence Rugg, QM Larry Sorensen

Post 1318, Madison – Cranefield (D2) – 95.61%
Cdr. Steve Eisenhauer, QM Gundel Metz

Division 3 (138-228):

Post 7534, Village of Howard (D8) – 103.40%
Cdr. Bruce Jagodinsky, QM John Wierer

Post 328, Stoughton (D2) – 100.49%
Cdr. Rob Drogsvold, QM Lothar Straub

Post 2115, Hudson (D9) – 100.00%
Cdr. Nate Haumschild, QM Richard Byers

Division 4 (61-137):

Post 2723, Shawano (D7) – 106.60%
Cdr. Thomas Hoffman, QM Phillip Nelson

Post 1163, Beaver Dam (D2) – 104.41%
Cdr. Curtis Gruenewald, QM Keith Lauth

Post 664, Clintonville (D7) – 101.92%
Cdr. Brandon Pszanka, QM Tina Flanagan

Post 1866, Marshfield (D7) – 101.00%
Cdr. Richard Wilson, QM Michael Pietsch

Post 2204, Rice Lake (D9) – 100.00%
Cdr. Randy Engness, QM Dennis Degidio

Post 8338, Barron (D9) – 98.57%
Cdr. Roger Bender, QM Greg Roth

Post 1916, Reedsburg (D11) – 96.61%
Cdr. John Noga, QM Wayne Georgeson

Division 5 (11-60):

Post 9536, Mercer (D10) – 110.81%
Cdr. Don Radloff, QM David Gentile

Post 10533, Shullsburg (D3) – 107.31%
Cdr. Jeremy Danner, QM John Walker

Post 7896, Benton (D3) – 104.87%
Cdr. John Scanlan, QM Lee Mau

Post 3635, Florence (D8) – 104.16%
Cdr. Aaron Volling, QM Joseph Mills

District 1 – 101.46% ♦ Cdr. Jim Cairo

District 9 – 98.10% ♦ Cdr. Krist Beseler

District 2 – 95.64% ♦ Cdr. Steve Eisenhauer

Those in attendance at the 2026 Mid-Winter Conference

will be recognized at a special Luncheon

on Saturday, February 7.

Department of Wisconsin VFW and Auxiliary
2026 Mid-Winter Conference

Friday, Feb. 6
– Saturday, Feb. 7
Appleton

Hilton Appleton Paper Valley
333 W. College Ave.
Appleton, WI 54911

VFW AGENDA

(Schedule of Events subject to change)

Friday, February 6, 2026

(Attire for C of A members: Business Casual - VFW Polo/Shirt and khakis/slacks)

9:30 am – 5:00 pm	Registration (Hotel Lobby)
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Vendor Tables (Lobby/Halls)
	Poppy Displays (Linden Room)
9:30 am – 12:00 pm	Committee Meetings (Salon A)
	All Committee Members must be present at 9:30 am
	Service, Finance, News, Membership
12:00 – 1:30 pm	VFW Past Commander's Club Lunch (Evergreen Room)
	Pre-registration required
1:45 – 3:00 pm	Mental Health Workshop with VA/BRAVE program (Salon A)
	- Subject to change/availability
3:00 – 4:00 pm	Women Veterans Committee Seminar (Salon A)
	- ALL Comrades are invited to hear presentations and resources available to our Women Veterans across the State.
Evening:	Dinner on your own.

Saturday, February 7, 2026

(Attire for C of A members: Business Casual - State Commander's Shirt or VFW Shirt and khakis/slacks)

8:00 am – 5:00 pm	Registration (Hotel Lobby)
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Vendor Tables (Lobby/Halls)
	Poppy Displays (Linden Room)
8:30 – 8:45 am	VFW Opening Ceremonies (Salon A) Cdr. Ty Letto
8:45 – 12:00 pm	VFW Business Session (Salon A)
	- Unfinished and New Business
	- Reports:
	Service Comm.; Service Office; Finance; News; Corporate Sponsorship; Strategic Planning; State Legislative; National Legislative; Voice/Pen; Teacher; Membership; Special Project
	- Candidate Announcements
	- Council Comments
	- Remarks by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Geisler
12:00 – 1:30 pm	Lunch on your own
	- Red Carpet Luncheon <u>by invitation only</u> (Great Hall)
1:45 – 2:45 pm	Legislation 101 (Salon A)
	Humana Presentation (Evergreen Room)
3:00 – 4:00 pm	State/National Website Training + Refresher – All are welcome (Salon A)
	Preferred Rate Mortgage Presentation (Evergreen Room)
5:30 – 6:30 pm	Cocktail Hour for all attendees.
	- Cash Bar
6:30 pm	Banquet - Attire: Business (Salon BCD)
	Pre-registration required
	- Recognition of District Voice of Democracy Winners
	- Recognition of Top Placing Patriot's Pen Winners
	- Recognition of Teachers of the Year

AUXILIARY AGENDA

(Schedule of Events subject to change - All events open to all members.)

Friday, February 6, 2026

(Attire: Business Casual/President's Shirt)

9:30 am – 5:00 pm	Registration (Hotel Lobby) + Credentials in meeting room
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Vendor Tables (Lobby/Halls)
	Poppy Displays (Linden Room)
9:30 - 11:00 am	Training (tentative) (Empire Room)
	- How to Make a Reel; What are Credentials?; Secretary Q & A
11:30 am	Auxiliary Luncheon with our National Rep (Great Hall)
	Open to all - Pre-registration required
1:30 pm	Council of Administration Meeting (Empire Room)
	Call to Order & Opening Ceremonies Pres. Kim McWilliams & Officers
	Previous Minutes & Communications Secretary Faith Elford, PDP
	Financial Report Treasurer Lenore Otto, PDP
	Audit Report Chair Sherrie Rosenau, PDP
	Budget Report Chair Charlene Cobb, SVP
	Ways & Means Report Committee Co-Chairs
	Chief-of-Staff Report COS Sherrie Rosenau, PDP
	Old Business 100th Anniv. Comm.
	New Business
	- Gifts to VFW; Spring District Meeting Dates; Guest Remarks;
	Announcements; Closing Remarks & Ceremonies
4:00 pm	Floor Practice for Cross of Malta Floor Team & Officers
5:00 pm	Dinner on your own (Hospital Reps and Deps dinner by invitation)
7:00 pm	Paint and Sip (Great Hall)

Saturday, February 7, 2026

(Attire: Business Casual/President's Shirt)

8:00 am – 5:00 pm	Registration (Hotel Lobby) + Credentials in meeting room
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Vendor Tables (Lobby/Halls)
	Poppy Displays (Linden Room)
8:30 – 11:30 am	Program Chair Reports Meeting (Empire Room)
	Cross of Malta/Opening Ceremonies Pres. Kim McWilliams & Officers
	Program Reports: Veterans & Family Support; Americanism;
	Aux. Outreach; Historian/Media Relations; Legislative;
	Poppy/National Home; Hospital; VFW News
	- Morning Break -
	Awards; Nat'l. Scholarships; Dept. Scholarships; COS/Extension;
	Youth Activities; Membership
11:45 am	Lunch on your own
1:00 – 4:30 pm	Program Reports cont.: Resolutions; WI Vets Assistance; Ways & Means;
	Web Services; Credentials; Achievement Awards
	Guest Remarks NDCM #11 Renee' Quinn
	Announcements, Closing Remarks & Ceremonies Pres. McWilliams & Officers
5:30 – 6:30 pm	Cocktail Hour for all attendees.
	- Cash Bar
6:30 pm	Banquet - Attire: Business (Salon BCD)
	Pre-registration required

Scan the QR Code below using your phones camera to reserve a room and to register for the conference and pay online.



Mid-Winter Conference
Reminders

- ◆ As noted on the front page, there is still time to register, however additional fees apply and the hotel block may be sold out. The **best way** to find out is to use the **QR code** elsewhere in this section. There is a **link to the Hilton Appleton Paper Valley** at the bottom of the first page of info. Hurry! **Registration ends January 23, 2026!**
- ◆ Please make sure you have **pre-registered and paid in advance** for any group meals you are attending. No "tickets at the door".
- ◆ Note the requested **Attire**: Business Casual/Cdr. or Pres. shirt for meetings; Business for the Saturday Banquet.
- ◆ We are grateful to our Sponsors of the Voice/Pen/Teacher Awards. All will be recognized in the Mid-Winter Conference Book.
- ◆ And continued thanks to **Humana** (Premier Sponsor of our Dept.) and **Festival Foods** (Awards Banquet Sponsor).



TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS

This listing reflects the most recent reporting of deceased members obtained from VFW National Headquarters. While every effort is made to provide accurate and timely information, it does not necessarily reflect the year of the members' passing. Please contact Editor Marla J. Morgan (wivfweditor@gmail.com) with any questions or corrections.

Post	Name	City	Post	Name	City	Post	Name	City	Post	Name	City
305	LeRoy Schultz	Eau Claire	2063	Jerome Swanson	Crivitz	7080	Donald Blumer	Cassville	9387	John Schulz	Hoopeston, IL
305	Willard Young	Eau Claire	2312	John Daehlin	Monroe	7221	Marshall Stack, Jr.	Mukwonago	9440	Joseph Hasburgh	Muscoda
305	Wayne Zogleman	Eau Claire	2312	Charles White	Freeport, IL	7233	David McIntosh	Theresa	9464	Allen Phetteplace	Ladysmith
664	Walter House	Marion	2344	Kenneth Richardson	Belton, SC	7591	Lawrence Mattie	Sun Prairie	9677	James Jerue	Green Bay
1037	Carl Turner	Waupaca	2344	Leo Stelpflug	Lancaster	8068	Bradley Block	Eland	9677	Eugene Nickodem	Green Bay
1038	Thomas McMahon	Eau Claire	2534	Frederick Camacho	Wis. Rapids	8123	Michael Dishnow	Soldiers Grove	9692	Matthew Mitchell	Verona
1163	Ken Waddell	Beaver Dam	2653	Raymond Eckardt	Birnamwood	8278	Gerald Elsen	Melrose	10393	Edward Spiegelberg	Lawrence, KS
1318	Robert Marten	Duncansville, PA	2653	Erik Olsen	Antigo	8280	Theodore Hallas, Jr.	Mosinee	10394	Salvatore Scifo	Milwaukee
1391	Robert Gall	Racine	2687	Willard Jones	Northbrook, IL	8337	David Niedzwiecki	Baileys Harbor	10544	Eugene Mason	Appleton
1393	Dennis Benz	West Bend	2687	Richard Rollmann	Appleton	8375	Barrett Obermeyer	Bristol	10818	Thomas Haugen	New Richmond
1393	Norbert Kirsch	Saukville	2687	Claude Willet	New Berlin	8483	Donald Mickelson	Madison	15051	Robert Allmann	Wauwatosa
1465	Roger Merkel	Wauwatosa	2723	John Kriewaldt	Shawano	8584	Willard Brueggen	Sparta	15051	Donald Androsky	Superior
1465	Steven Peckham	Milwaukee	2723	Billy Suprise	Shawano	8584	Terry Dickman	Sacramento, CA	15051	James Jacobs	Medford
1621	Irving Metcalf	Janesville	3143	Walter Yunk, Sr.	Rhineland	8584	William Handt	Minneapolis, MN	15051	Malcolm McGuirk	Superior
1621	Arthur Miller	Janesville	3153	Dean Connors	Chilton	8733	Jay Cole	Mosinee	15051	Nicholas Rindt	New Lisbon
1621	Donald Negus	Janesville	5274	Laverne Rawson	Neillsville	8733	Ronald Nelson	Mosinee	15051	Ronald Small	Eagle River
1865	Albert Patty	Kenosha	5716	James Splaine	New Berlin	9057	Dennis Henke	Edgar	15051	Richard Smith	Superior
1879	Merlin Frohmader	Jefferson	5780	John Miller	King	9060	Jerry Severson	Prescott	15051	Ronald Swanson	Beloit
1879	Richard Fry	Janesville	5828	Peter Fall	Amery	9362	David Mahoney	Sun Prairie	15051	Thomas Unti	Waukesha
2063	David Goddard	Crivitz	6707	Raymond Scharenbroch	Kiel	9387	Charles Balsmeider	Wisconsin Dells	15051	Boguslaw Wnuk	Superior

Deadline for the March 2026 issue is February 13.

THE BOOK CORNER

In Combat in Korea
Eighteen Veterans
Remember the War

by Ryan Walkowski
and Ed Gruber

It was a Police Action...a war in all but its name, that became "The Forgotten War". How can a war — labeled a Police Action costing millions of lives, traumatizing countless other individuals, and razing cities and villages — be forgotten? Despite its widespread effects, the Korean War received less media attention than World War II with its global scope, and the Vietnam War with its stormy protests and inglorious conclusion. And forgotten, because it was overshadowed by the Cold War which followed WWII. And, because nobody gave a damn — except those who were there. Eventually the name stuck: Korea, "The Forgotten War".

Those who were there? Bewildered, yet courageous young men who left their homes, schools, jobs, and loved ones, for a foreign land that some had no idea even existed. Engaging in ferocious battles under the grimmest and grisliest weather and topographic conditions.

American Korean War survivors, along with those from twenty other United Nations Forces, have not forgotten that their sacrifices had some meaning, with this being the first battle against the advance of Communism. And they could not forget what they saw and experienced. In the words of US Secretary of State Dean Acheson, "If the best minds in the world had set out to find us the worst possible location in the world to fight this damnable war, the unanimous choice would have been Korea."

But all of that was long, long ago. And now the time for these grizzled warriors to share their accounts is winding down. Those who remain are in their nineties, with stories that must be told, so that a war which cost almost 1,300,000 American and United Nations deaths and wounded, plus millions of civilian casualties, is not forgotten. Their time to speak is here and now.

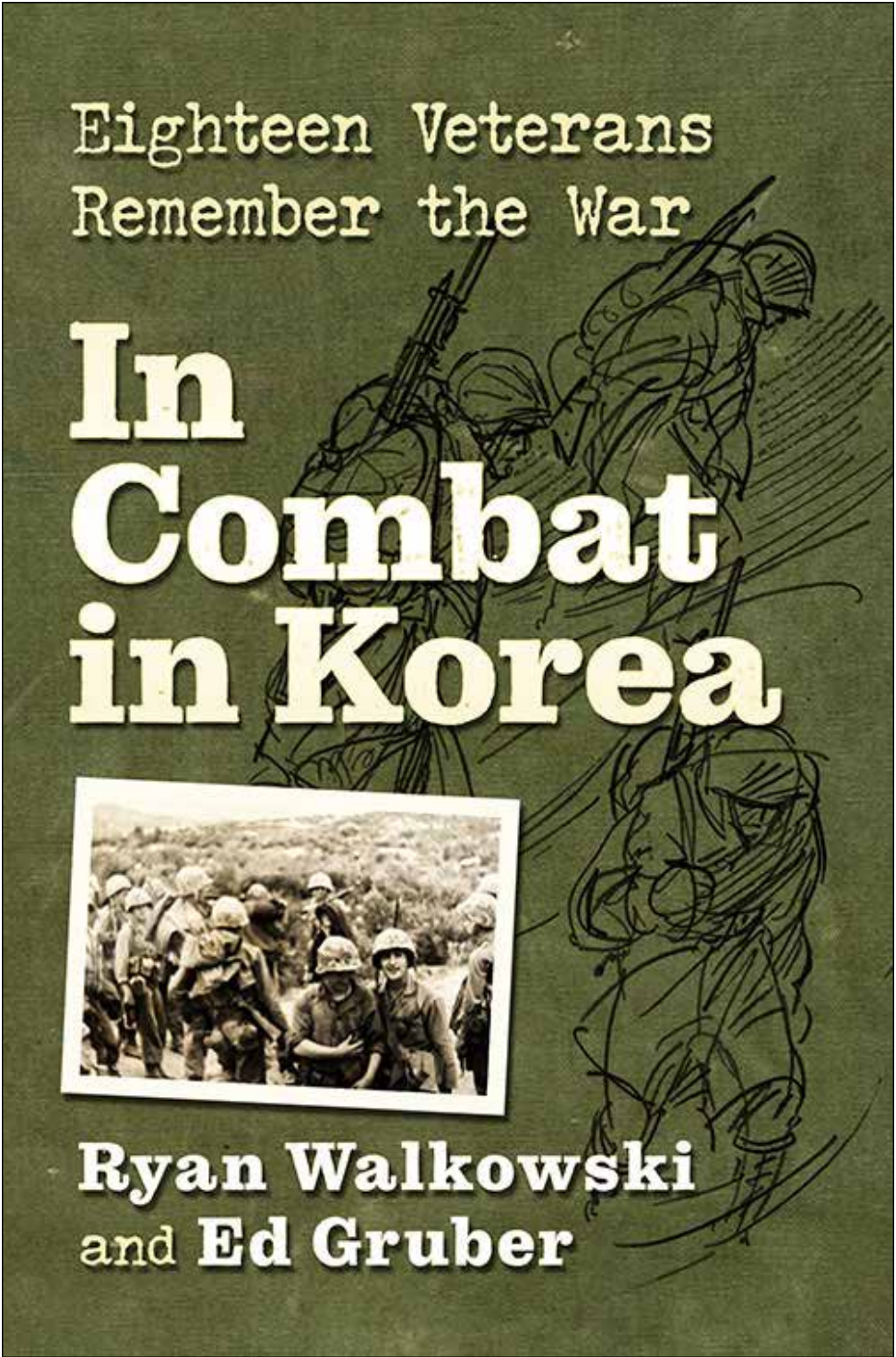
Enter young Ryan Walkowski, from a



Ryan Walkowski

small town in Wisconsin. Who as a sixteen-year-old High School Sophomore, heard a teacher preach that "The Korean War was the first war America had lost". Recalling his Great-Uncle Smokey's and his Grandfather Sonny's rare and sparse words about their Korean War experiences, Ryan rebuffed his teacher who laughed and challenged the student to get the facts from his relatives. Ryan's father warned him, "Don't get your grandpa started with something said by a liberal teacher. He'll be off on a rant and never stop." Grandpa's exact response (nearly): "You tell that goddamned liberal pinko communist teacher he doesn't know what the f*** he's talking about. Ask him if they teach you that our machine gun barrels would melt."

From there, Ryan learned all he could about the Korean War, and then in 2022, this self-described "blue collar electrician and valve technician", took on a mission to ensure this war, in which his grandfather and great-uncle fought,



would be remembered. Taking overnight drives across the United States, he interviewed Korean War Veterans who recounted the most terrifying times of their lives. Walkowski and author Ed Gruber, a Navy and Korean War Veteran, sought to present these stories of battles in frigid and monsoon conditions, of fierce warfare in rugged mountains and muddy paddies, of bugle-blaring enemies attacking in waves.

Blunt, profane, hesitant, and tearful, these firsthand accounts of vicious hand-to-hand fighting and other harrowing

experiences provide a stark reminder of the immense devastation that was the Korean War. Ryan gently and mindfully interviewed these Veterans, letting each speak in his own way, at his own pace, and in his own words.

In Combat in Korea is available from several online booksellers, among them: [McFarland Books](#), and [Amazon](#). Walkowski's next book is about the Vietnam War, from Veterans who lived it.

If you're interested in sharing your story with him, you can email at **Ryan.author1993@gmail.com**.

S'MORE NEWS

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

Our current membership as of calendar year end stands at an impressive 98.41%, with just 118 additional members needed to achieve our full (current) 100% membership in our collective initiative. We are on track to surpass our goal, aiming for 101% by June 2026. Your exceptional efforts in both recruitment and retention are commendable, and we eagerly anticipate your continued success in expanding the Auxiliaries.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has reached out with inquiries, whether during Council meetings, via email, or over the phone. Your commitment has enabled us to enhance our offerings to our members by incorporating your suggestions and providing clarity when necessary.

As many Auxiliaries have already contributed their annual donations, I want to remind everyone that we still need to reach out to 24 Veterans and their families to achieve our goal of 100 participants in the President's Project. Each contribution of \$500 is essential for attending the weekend retreats focused on PTSD and suicide prevention. I am grateful to those who have engaged in discussions about this initiative, as it has highlighted the growing need within our state.

We eagerly anticipate welcoming everyone to the Mid-Winter event on February 6 and 7 at the Hilton Paper Valley in Appleton. Join us for an enjoyable evening at the Paint and Sip event on Friday night, which is open to all attendees. Don't forget


Kim McWilliams
 Department President
 815-999-9214
 mrsffiiemt@gmail.com

to send in your choice of pictures. Please be mindful of the upcoming deadline of January 15.

I will be traveling across the state to visit various Auxiliaries in the coming months. If you have an event that you would like me to attend, please complete the request form, and I will make every effort to be there. It has been a pleasure to witness the impactful work being done in communities to support Veterans and their families.

You are a vital part of this organization and its mission. Keep in mind the reasons behind your commitment and share from the heart what we stand for. This authenticity resonates with our communities, families, and colleagues. It is important not to confuse differing passions and beliefs with a lack of shared purpose; our mission remains unified, even if our approaches vary.

"We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided."
—J.K. Rowling

"We Rise by Lifting Others"

CONGRATULATIONS to our Foursquare Raffle Winners!

- **Quilt** — SVP Charlene Cobb
- **Charcuterie Board** — Aux. 1866, Marshfield
- **Football** — Audie Grawien
- **Griddle** — VFW 1866, Marshfield

Thank you to all who supported our Raffle!

Paint and Sip

LAST CALL!

Please join us at Mid-Winter on Friday, February 6 – 7 pm for the Paint and Sip

Visit vfwauxwi.org for the Registration Form.
 Deadline is January 15, 2026!

Ways and Means Mobility Scooter Raffle

Contact for tickets:
Jennifer Mauritz
715-383-8628

Thank you to
HME Home Medical in Green Bay
 for your generous support.


Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
 1383 W WISCONSIN AVE OCONOMOWOC, WI 53066
 BUZZAROUND CARRYON MOBILITY SCOOTER

Travel anywhere in the Buzzaround CarryOn folding scooter! Whether by plane, cruise or train, this lightweight & portable scooter promises comfort & style on-the-go.

Weight Capacity: 300 lbs Length: 38" Width: 19.5"
 Operating Range: 14 miles Maximum Speed: 3.6 mph

DRAWING WILL BE AT 8PM FEBRUARY 6, 2026 AT MID-WINTER IN APPLETON, WI

\$20 EACH TICKET

Need not be present to win.

Raffle License #R0032634-A-82120

TICKET NO. 0001

NAME: _____

ADDRESS _____

MAIL: _____

Sample

AUXILIARY

Deployed at Home

Happy New Year! Hopefully everyone had a joyous Christmas.

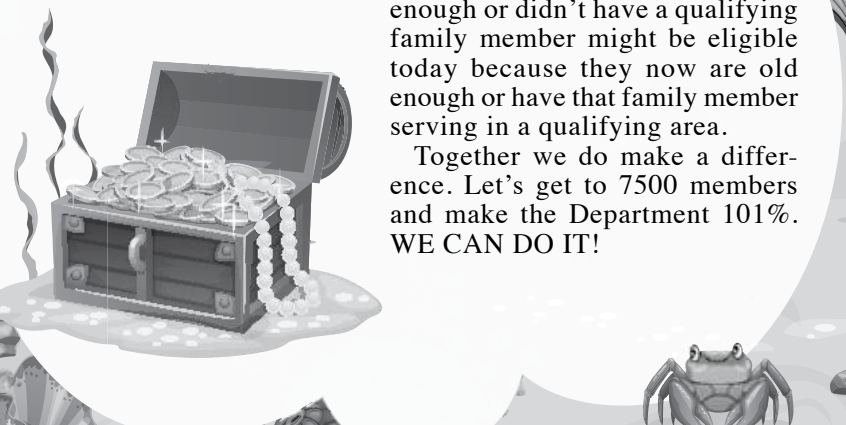
I just finished reading Kristin Hannah's, "Homefront". It's about a National Guardsman who is a wife and mother and gets deployed. It tells of the difficulty she has leaving her family and also what is happening with those left at home. For me, this reinforced the belief that our families serve right along with their service members and often have the harder struggle.

Even after she returns, their lives are still fractured. After a serious meltdown with her daughter, she seeks treatment from the VA and is told the first available appointment is three months away. She wonders how they will all survive and what she can do in the interim. This story is just a well-researched fiction, but unfortunately things like this happen all too often.


The last two years, our Commander/President Special Projects have raised funds to offer Veterans and their families alternatives to VA treatment. We have taken on this mission to care for those that have sacrificed for us and we need to remain steadfast in this endeavor. The larger our organization, the more we can help and the better able we are to make a difference for them. At every event and opportunity in your community, I would encourage everyone to actively recruit others to join us in caring for our Veterans and their families.

We have only a few "port of calls" left for this membership year. For those Auxiliaries that are 100% or better, thank you for your accomplishments, but please DON'T STOP NOW! For those that still need some members, continue to ask individuals to join you in this very important work. Remember, things change all the time so someone that wasn't eligible yesterday because they weren't old enough or didn't have a qualifying family member might be eligible today because they now are old enough or have that family member serving in a qualifying area.

Together we do make a difference. Let's get to 7500 members and make the Department 101%. WE CAN DO IT!



Charlene Cobb
 Membership Chairman
 262-348-6547
 ckcdand2k9@yahoo.com



Auxiliary	Current Total	Deceased	Paid Total	Prior Total	Current Percent	Paid Percent
Total – Non-District	391	5	396	467	83.73%	84.80%
Total – Dist. 2	1062	18	1080	1084	97.97%	99.63%
Total – Dist. 4	285	14	299	286	99.65%	104.55%
Total – Dist. 6	479	7	486	498	96.18%	97.59%
Total – Dist. 7	1238	20	1258	1245	99.44%	101.04%
Total – Dist. 8	807	10	817	814	99.14%	100.37%
Total – Dist. 9	772	9	781	766	100.78%	101.96%
Total – Dist. 10	678	10	688	685	98.98%	100.44%
Total – Dist. 11	433	9	443*	447	96.87%	99.11%
WI – At Large	1158	12	1170	1129	102.57%	103.63%
Total – Dept. of WI	7303	114	7418*	7421	98.41%	99.96%

Membership as of 12/31/2025 — *with 1 Canceled

DRAPING OF THE CHARTER

This listing reflects names as of the most recent reporting of deceased members. While every effort is made to provide accurate and timely information, depending on when the member was reported (or not), it does not necessarily reflect the year of their passing. **Treasurers:** please remember to report your deceased Sisters and Brothers in a timely fashion so we can honor them and their service with this final tribute.

Aux.	Name	City	Aux.	Name	City
328	Marjorie Erickson*	Mesa, AZ	7591	Mary B. Waller*	Monona
1707	Jana Gocke	Portage	7629	Virginia A. Reynolds*	Mineral Point
1916	Karen Parks*	Reedsburg	8123	Frances Lindsay*	Lansing, IA
2112	Kathryn S. Culpitt*	Sparta	8216	Cecile L. Henneman	Scotch Plains, NJ
2204	Melody Leuthner*	Rice Lake	8329	Dorothy A. Berggren*	Barnes
2227	Virginia P. Reis*	Unity	8329	Priscilla Harsvick*	Gordon
2653	Carolyn Ann Franzen*	Antigo	8478	Eunice Hoefert*	Brooklyn, IA
2653	Betty Hetto*	Mosinee	8584	Lorraine Bakkestuen*	Westby
2687	Sherry Thompson*	Tomahawk	8733	Olga Hornung*	Mosinee
2687	Judith K. Wagner*	Tomahawk	9362	Jean L. Clavette*	Sun Prairie
5373	Claudette M. Mann*	Jackson	9362	Judy Reis*	Sun Prairie
5729	Delores Dietzman	Medford	10394	Marie F. Benz*	New Berlin
5970	Geraldine Potter*	Lyndon Station	10394	Joyce A. Carlson*	Greendale
6003	Dorothy Beier*	Portage	10394	Shirley M. Kaisler*	Milwaukee
6003	Jon Allen Fecteau, Jr.	Franksville	10394	Marilyn Schoedel*	New Berlin
6007	Betty J. Sparks*	Plover	10406	Ruthmary Farner*	Fountain City
6279	Freda E. Hafemann*	Plano, TX	10519	Patrick N. Patterson*	Suring
6279	Vivian J. Stelse*	Adams	15051	Catherine M. Bathke	Wis. Rapids
6279	Marguerite Waller	Adams	15051	Verna Eglund*	Wisconsin Dells
7591	Irene M. Ferris*	Madison	15051	Rita M. Eversoll*	Platteville
7591	Elaine F. Hartung*	Oconomowoc	15051	Ann M. Kotulski*	Bruce
7591	Doris L. McLaughlin*	McFarland	15051	Christina Kovach*	Crandon
7591	Virginia L. Menssen*	Stoughton	15051	Bonnie Krabbenhoff*	Knoxville, TN
7591	Annette M. Nichols*	Fall River	15051	Sylvia O. Krebsbach*	Fond du Lac

* DENOTES LIFE MEMBER

UNITED IN SERVICE, STRONG IN PURPOSE

As members of the Wisconsin VFW Auxiliary, we stand on the shoulders of heroes — those who answered the call to serve our nation. Their sacrifices remind us daily why our mission matters. We are more than an organization; we are a family united by love of country and a commitment to those who have borne the battle.

In today’s fast-paced world, it’s easy to feel that one voice cannot make a difference. But history proves otherwise. Every act of kindness, every hour volunteered, every dollar raised strengthens the fabric of our communities and honors the legacy of our Veterans. When we work together, we amplify that impact beyond measure.

This year, let us renew our dedication. Attend a meeting. Volunteer for a project. Reach out to a fellow member who may need encouragement. These small steps create ripples that touch lives in profound ways. Our programs — whether supporting hospitalized Veterans; advocating for leg-

Sherrie Rosenau Chief-of-Staff 920-251-8888 littlemama6@yahoo.com



isolation; or educating youth — are powerful tools for change. But they only succeed when we bring our passion and energy to the table.

Remember: service is not just what we do; it’s who we are. By standing shoulder to shoulder, we ensure that the sacrifices of our Veterans are never forgotten and that their families feel the unwavering support they deserve.

Together, we are unstoppable. Let’s make this year one of action, compassion, and pride. The future of the Auxiliary is bright — because of you.

NEW Membership Form in Effect!

As noted in previous announcements, and most recently, in the **January 2026 Auxiliary National Magazine**, an updated Membership Application is now available, effective **January 1, 2026**.

►►►►►IMPORTANT:

- The new form is the **ONLY** application the organization will accept.
- Applications for membership on any OLD forms, **will NOT be processed** and will be returned.
- Save yourself a LOT of time and trouble by using the new form so you don’t have to contact your prospective member for a “redo”.
- **DISCARD ALL OLD FORMS** so they are not confused with the new forms. This includes single-sheet printed versions as well as brochures.

►►►►►WHAT’S CHANGED:

- Better readability.
- Includes changes adopted at the 2025 National Convention.
- **More efficient and safer processing** of credit card payments – applicants will not provide card info; instead, they will receive an email or text with a secure payment link. This should prove to be easier and quicker, with fewer questions back and forth.

A snapshot of the new form is provided here *for reference ONLY*. For the proper, FULL-SIZE form, please visit **vfwauxiliary.org**. The form is even available without logging into MALTA – click on **JOIN US** – then scroll down to **Download Membership Application**. In addition to the National website, the new form is also on our DEPARTMENT website: **vfwauxwi.org**. (Link takes you right to Membership Program info.)

VFW AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP / MEMBER TRANSFER APPLICATION

Please print legibly. An incomplete application could delay your membership start date.

Applicant completes sections A, D or E and H,I. Auxiliaries/Departments complete sections B,F,G.

A APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name ☐ Female ☐ Male
Address Date of Birth
City State ZIP Phone Email

B Auxiliary Post No. City State
☐ New Member ☐ Transferring Member ☐ Rejoining Member (Prior Member ID Number)
☐ Member at Large in Department of ☐ Member at Large - VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters

C (Transfer only information) ☐ ANNUAL TRANSFER ☐ LIFE MEMBER TRANSFER
Member ID Previous Auxiliary ☐ Paying ☐ Nonpaying

D ☐ POST-AFFILIATED (*Must be a current member of the VFW Post affiliated with the Auxiliary to which you are applying.)
I am the (Relationship) to (Eligible Veteran* Name)
VFW Membership ID VFW Post (Must be same as B)

E ☐ NON-AFFILIATED (*Veteran is not a current member of the VFW Post affiliated with the Auxiliary to which you are applying.)
I am the (Relationship) to (Eligible Veteran* Name)
Name of campaign ribbons or medals:
Dates of Service: to Foreign Location:

F Recruited/Recommended by: Recruiter Member ID
Check one: Aux ☐ VFW ☐

G Investigating Committee Signatures
1 ☒ 2 ☒ 3 ☒
Per Section 102 of the National Bylaws. ☐ Rejected ☐ Accepted Meeting Date Obligated Date

H ☐ Annual Membership ☐ Life Membership ☐ Check here if this is a gift (Membership card will be sent to Treasurer and not member.)
Payment Method and Amount: Cash ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card ☐
****If paying by credit card, after this application is processed, an email and/or text message will be sent to the contact information provided above for payment. Instructions in the communication for payment must be completed within 30 days; otherwise the application will be voided. If someone other than the applicant above is paying by credit card for the membership, please list your phone number and email address below to receive payment instructions once the membership application has been processed.
Phone Email

I OBLIGATION In the presence of Almighty God and the members of this organization here assembled, I do of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise that I will never wrong or defraud this organization nor a member thereof nor permit either to be wronged if in my power to prevent it. I will never propose for membership any person not eligible, according to our Bylaws. I will be faithful to the United States of America, obedient to the laws and loyal to the Flag. Should my membership with this organization cease in any way, I will consider this obligation as binding outside of the organization as though I had remained a member. I do so promise. I attest that I am at least 16 years of age. I pledge to comply with the National Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary. I attest I am not eligible for membership in the VFW. I further attest that the above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, including my stated relationship to the Veteran.
Signature ☒ Date
(Must be signed by all members.)
By filling out this application and providing your contact information, you agree to receive communications from the VFW Auxiliary. The communications may include updates, promotions, and other information related to our services. Communications may be in the form of emails, SMS text messages, and/or automated calls. You understand that these communications may be sent using an automated telephony dialer system. Standard message and data rates may apply. You can opt out at any time by following the instructions provided in the communications. No mobile information will be shared with third parties/affiliates for marketing/promotional purposes.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEES
Life Membership fees are not refundable. Attained age at 12/31 of year applying for Life Membership.
Through 20 \$253
21-25 \$242
26-30 \$230
31-35 \$219
36-40 \$213
41-45 \$201
46-50 \$196
51-55 \$184
56-60 \$173
61-65 \$161
66-70 \$150
71-75 \$132
76-80 \$109
81-85 \$86
86-90 \$69
91 and over \$58
Revised January 2026

National Art Contests Due Soon

The **Young American Creative Patriotic Art (YACPA) Contest** and its newer “companion”, the **3-Dimensional Patriotic Art (3-D Art) Contest** should be well under way in area schools, as the **March 31, 2026 deadline to Auxiliaries** is approaching.

Wisconsin has enjoyed many National winners over the years and while it seems to have gotten more difficult to “sell” this to some Art Teachers, the potential Scholarship Awards are definitely worth the effort! The YACPA has 19 prizes totaling \$37,000, and the 3-D Art prizes total \$5,500.

Students in grades 9-12 in public, private, parochial or home school programs are eligible and do NOT have to be related to a VFW or Auxiliary member to participate. Both contests have several other specific rules and requirements and students must use the current contest entry form. ALL info can be found on our state website (with national links) at **National Patriotic Art Contests**. Click on the links for ALL of the program details and forms.

Let’s have another Wisconsin High School artist in the winner’s circle again! Questions? Contact **Dept. National Scholarships Chair Marge Southworth** at 715-551-3487 or mdsouth2228@gmail.com.



Flags for Heroes



Winecki VFW Post 9677 Auxiliary President Joan Van Ess (left) presents US flags on behalf of the Auxiliary to Aurora Hospital Coordinator Randy Cash. The flags are for Veterans organ donors’ final walk before their surgery. Thank you Aux. Treasurer Pat Siebert.

Post 664 Supports School District



Five members of Post 664 in Clintonville presented a \$200 donation to the Clintonville School District Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) Program Counselor in late November. Thank you Tina Flanagan.

Collecting Hides in Denmark



Denmark VFW Post 6705 members Charlie Winnekens and Richard “Sarge” Verheyen collected 330 deer hides for Hides for Heroes to support Veterans programs here in the State of Wisconsin. Thank you Sarge!

Auxiliary 1038 Outreach in Action



Chippewa VFW Auxiliary 1038 completed an Auxiliary Outreach Project last fall by offering to help the Women of the Moose from Lodge 246 with their Food Drive. Members from both organizations worked in shifts and handed out slips to Family Fare customers suggesting items that the local food pantries especially needed. The Chippewa Falls neighbors were very generous – over 800 pounds of food and \$264 in cash donations were distributed among three different local food pantries. From left are Sue Carlson (member of both groups); Patty Jansky and a Manager from Family Fare Grocery. Thank you Patty!

Post 1916 Supports Reedsburg Food Pantry



Ann Seamonson of the Reedsburg Food Pantry (front left) received a donation last fall from Reedsburg VFW Post 1916 members including (l-r): Wayne Georgeson; Pete Link; Gil Biskupski; Wayne Unrath, and John Noga. Thank you to Cdr. Noga and Crystal Link for the photo.

Spreading Holiday Cheer at King Veterans Home



Members of Elderon Memorial VFW Auxiliary to Post 8068 recently spread Holiday cheer by collecting Christmas gifts for Veterans at the King Veterans Home. From left are: Darla Oppen; Rita Betker; President Bernice Suwyn; Nicole Flack, Activity Therapist Supervisor at King Veterans Home. Thank you Dianne Chaignot.

Santa Visits Post 3143 in Rhinelander



Santa and Mrs. Claus enjoyed some time with some very young visitors to Post 3143 in Rhinelander, who found the bell truly captivating.

Holiday Cheer from Oregon-Brooklyn Vets



Oregon-Brooklyn Memorial VFW Post 10272 spread some holiday cheer to area Care Facilities including Beehive Homes Memory Care and Assisted Living, as well as Sienna Crest Memory Care and Assisted Living. From left: Oscar Larson; Val Zibung, and Calvin Gilbertson with an unnamed caregiver. Thank you Cal!

Post 3071 Distributes Poppies in Oconto



Lester J. Crane Post 3071 SVC Mike Vizer and daughter Kelly held a “Buddy”® Poppy Drive last fall at Thompson’s County Market in Oconto, raising over \$550. Many thanks to Thompson’s and Kelly for their support of Post 3071 and Veterans! And thanks to Post QM Carl Plaster for submitting.

Supporting UWSP Student Veterans



Plover VFW Post 10262 presented a POW/MIA Flag to the UW-Stevens Point Veterans Club at their monthly December Post meeting. The club, one of more than 1600 on-campus chapters of Student Veterans of America (SVA), helps ensure that student Veterans and military-connected students achieve their greatest potential. From left: Post Cdr. John Canisino; UWSP Veterans Club VP Larry Scharff; UWSP Veterans Service Coordinator Christopher Smith; UWSP Veterans Club President Marisa Camps; VFW Veterans Club Liaison Jim Maas. Thank you Debbie Manthey.

Flag Education in Cochrane-Fountain City



Members of Cochrane-Buffalo City VFW Post and Auxiliary 10406 conducted another well-received Flag Etiquette and Education program last fall. The grades K-6 students had great questions and enthusiasm, especially for the flag-folding demo by Steve Schiffli and Jim Goss. And who better to teach the Flag than Betsy Ross (aka Kim Goss)? From left are: Jim; Betsy/Kim; Kathy Kochenderfer; Deb Kujak and Steve. Thank you Kim!

VFW 2026 Priority Goals

As noted on the VFW National website:

“The VFW’s 2026 Priority Goals are in. We’re committed to ensuring members of Congress “Honor the Contract” and meet the obligation to our nation’s Veterans, service members, survivors and military families. This includes opposing any effort to cut or reduce Veteran benefits.

The location of our Washington, D.C. office allows us to monitor all legislation affecting Veterans, alert VFW membership to key legislation under consideration and to actively lobby Congress and the administration on Veterans’ issues. By testifying at Congressional Committee hearings and interacting with Congressional members, the VFW has played an instrumental role in nearly every piece of Veterans’ legislation passed since the beginning of the 20th century.

Everything we do on Capitol Hill is with the VFW’s Priority Goals and Veterans’ well-being in mind. With the strength of the more than 1.4 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary, our voice on Capitol Hill cannot be ignored!”

Our 2026 Priority Goals are:

- Budget
- Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
- Education, Employment and Transition Assistance
- Health Care
- Military Readiness
- National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA.

Visit: [VFW Priority Goals](#) on the National website to educate yourself with more detail on each goal.



Budget

To fully fund relevant programs for veterans, service members and their families, Congress must:

- Hold leaders accountable to “Honor the Contract” and uphold their end of the military service contract by opposing any effort to cut or reduce veteran benefits.
- Ensure sufficient, timely appropriations and proper budget oversight for VA.
- Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- Never reduce one veteran’s benefits to pay for another.
- Modernize and reform VA and DOD programs that do not meet the needs of service members, veterans and families.

Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

To ensure veterans and their survivors have timely access to earned benefits, Congress and VA must:

- Implement the VFW’s recommendations to improve the VA disability claims process, specifically appeals, digital claims, DBQs and disability examinations.
- Crack down on unaccredited claims consultants known as Claim Sharks.
- Study all toxic and environmental exposures, and implement programs to ensure health care and benefits are provided to all exposed service members and veterans.
- Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, burial allowances and other benefits for survivors.
- Improve the accuracy of disability compensation claims related to military sexual trauma.

Education, Employment and Transition Assistance

To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service, Congress, VA, DOD and DOL must:

- Improve education benefits through modernized student housing and supply allowances, child care stipends, parity for National Guard and Reserve members and elimination of delimiting dates.
- Improve the delivery of the Veteran Readiness and Employment program to include administrative support for counselors and standardized training.
- Ensure parity of VA and DOD education programs with other federal programs.
- Expand small business, hiring preference, tax incentives and entrepreneurship resources for veterans and military spouses.
- Increase funding for HUD-VASH vouchers, grant and per diem payments and pilot programs to combat veteran homelessness.
- Conduct oversight of VA’s Transition Assistance Program to ensure compliance with the law, and require the inclusion of accredited claims representatives.
- Protect the VA Home Loan Guaranty program and expand it to the reserve components.
- Eliminate red tape preventing effective use of education and employment benefits.

National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA

To fully support the all-volunteer force, protect our nation’s citizens and defend American interests around the world, Congress and DOD must:

- Ensure DPAA is fully funded to perform its personnel recovery mission.
- Deter threats to our national security by supporting our allies in Ukraine, Israel, Korea and Taiwan.
- Ensure all service members who served in harm’s way—to include foreign nationals, translators and allies—receive the recognition, care and benefits they may have earned.

Health Care

To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares, Congress, VA and DOD must:

- Eliminate service member and veteran suicide.
- Improve the coordination of community care at VA, including CHAMPVA and the Foreign Medical Program.
- Strengthen care and research for mental health, blast overpressure and traumatic brain injuries.
- Research the efficacy of alternative therapies for PTSD.
- Improve oversight of Vet Centers to ensure adequate staffing, resources and funding.
- Enhance programs and services for women and underserved veterans.
- Preserve the integrity of TRICARE.
- Properly implement VA and DOD health IT systems.
- Expand nursing home eligibility and long-term care options.

Military Readiness

To maintain a strong and ready all-volunteer force capable of protecting American interests, Congress and DOD must:

- Enhance quality of life and health care programs that allow service members to focus on the mission.
- Ensure equity of benefits for reserve component service members.
- End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.
- Provide benefits enrollment for all transitioning service members.
- Eliminate sexual assault and harassment from the military.
- Increase military base pay so that it is competitive with relevant civilian pay.
- Ensure that military housing and work spaces are safe and modern.
- Eliminate food insecurity in the military.

Opportunities in the New Year

As we settle into our new year and the second half of the “Making it Count” command year, there are many incredible opportunities both inside and outside our organization,



to bring to your attention. Some offer healing and support; others knowledge and experience; still others, a possible path to future leadership opportunities. As always, one

of the best ways to learn more about these and other programs is by attending events like the Mid-Winter Conference; State Convention and of course, District Meetings. **“Make it Count”!**

Comrades,

Happy New Year! As we prepare for the 2026 Washington Conference March 1-5, 2026, I encourage any and all VFW and Auxiliary members, to join us for the Conference and to visit “the Hill” for visits with our Wisconsin Congressional Representatives.

Jason Johns
Nat'l Legislative
Chair



608-209-0805
fightin4vets
@gmail.com



For nearly 75 years, this annual Legislative Conference has given VFW delegations from each state opportunities to personally lobby our lawmakers on behalf of legislation supporting Veterans. Supporting the VFW Commander-in-Chief as they testify before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees is always a highlight of the Conference.

Please note though that while there is no “conference fee” or such to attend the VFW meetings and briefings, all attendees have to pay their own travel and lodging expenses to attend. Potential attendees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the VFW 2026 Legislative Priority Goals. And if you intend to participate and would like to be part of the Wisconsin Delegation, please contact State Adjutant Adam Wallace immediately – **no later than January 26** – at Adj@vfwwi.org. And of course, visit this link: [Washington Conference](#) to make your hotel reservation on the National website.

Please contact me if you have questions, and look for information about meetings for the Wisconsin Delegation at the end of January.



Hogs for Heroes Application Opens in February

Here’s the latest word from our friends Audra and Kevin Thompson at Hogs for Heroes Wisconsin:

“Although an official timeline hasn’t been set yet, watch for our 2026 application period to open in early February. Learn about our qualifications and how to prepare in advance on our website www.HogsForHeroesWI.org. Maybe this isn’t an opportunity for you... but maybe you know someone who could benefit from the healing gained by getting back out on ‘The Road’. Spread the word to help struggling Veterans heal with our alternative therapy.”

President Callahan Visit Set for April

Planning is underway for National VFW Auxiliary President Lois Callahan’s official visit to Wisconsin. Slated for April 7-9, 2026, the specific details are still in the works, but you are urged to mark your



calendar and “stay tuned” for more information. We do know that her time with us will include activities in the Madison area.

As always, the National President’s visit is an excellent way to meet our top leadership without extensive out-of-state travel on YOUR part, so be sure to set aside some time to participate. Any and all VFW and Auxiliary members are welcome!



**National VFW Auxiliary President
Lois Callahan**

BITS & PIECES

A compendium of things new and noteworthy ...

- **Kudos to Waupaca VFW Post 1037** for their generous donation of fuel gift cards to the Waupaca County Veterans Service Office. The cards will support transportation for Veterans to and from their medical appointments, employment, etc.
- **A hearty salute to Calumet County VFW Post 3153** for their donations of \$2,500 to Old Glory Honor Flight and \$3,000 to Missions of Honor, which take Veterans on other special trips other than the Washington, DC area.
- And while we're at it in the donations category: **REALLY hearty salutes to Wurl-Feind-Ingman VFW Post 2687 in Tomahawk** for their **\$30,000** check presented to the Never Forgotten Honor Flight in early December. \$19,000 were proceeds from a recent Pool Tournament.
- **Best wishes to Maj. Gen. Brian E. Winski, US Army (Ret.)**, who will begin his term of service as President and CEO of the **War Memorial Center** in Milwaukee this spring. A Wisconsin native, Winski retired in 2021 after a distinguished 32-year career, including Command of the renowned 101st Airborne Division. He comes to the War Memorial after a term as President and CEO of the Fort Campbell Historical Foundation, leading a \$40 million effort to build a world-class museum honoring the history and legacy of the units stationed at Fort Campbell. Welcome home sir!
- **Great news!** After five years of planning and perseverance, the land has been secured for a **SECOND Fisher House in Wisconsin!** Just minutes from the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison, the House will feature 16 private family suites along with other shared facilities and gathering spaces. The Milwaukee Fisher House has provided over 20,000 nights of lodging and support to military and Veteran families since opening in 2016. **STAY TUNED** – this one is VERY near and dear to the Editor's heart!



Valentines for Wisconsin Veterans sends cards to WDVA facilities

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is asking for help in showing our appreciation to veterans for their service and sacrifice by sending Valentine's Day cards to veterans living in WDVA facilities.

"In three years, we've been able to spread so much happiness because of the outpouring of support and love you all have shown," said Secretary James Bond. "Thousands of folks from across the state and nation have taken the time to participate, and I'm excited to continue this tradition again this year."

Since beginning this program in 2023, we have received over 80,000 Valentine's Day cards for our members and veterans. This overwhelming response has allowed us to bring joy to our veterans homes in Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove, as well as to residents of our Veterans Housing and Recovery Program.

The valentines are hand-delivered by staff, including Secretary Bond, to the veterans, loved ones, and Gold Star families residing in our veterans facilities. To see pictures from last year's visit of Secretary Bond at Union Grove delivering valentines, [visit our album on Flickr](#).

Please ensure that you **mail your cards by January 31**, so we have them in time to distribute to all our facilities on February 14. We kindly request that you refrain from including candy, food, or snacks with these due to allergies or dietary restrictions.

Please send to:

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
Attn: Veteran Valentines
PO Box 7843
Madison, WI 53707-7843

FROM THE EDITOR

"What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you."
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Marla Morgan
Editor
WFW
715-384-2500
wivfweditor@gmail.com



Peace and blessings as we enter the New Year 2026, and the second half of the "Make it Count" command year. I wish you good health, good fortune and safe travels. Mother Nature has certainly made up for our recent past mild winters since last fall. Now if the ice melt supplies can return to the usual inventory, we'll be set.

As this paper is posted on the website, we are gearing up for another Mid-Winter Conference to celebrate our wins, honor our achievers and exchange ideas and learn new things. Oh, and reconnect and "peg the Fun Meter". As you see in several places in this issue, there is still a short time to register and reserve your hotel room, so hesitate no more!

Besides some of our recent accomplishments throughout the Department in this issue, you will also find some other opportunities to consider:

- Attending the **Washington Conference** to address legislative concerns with the WI delegation.
- Supporting the **WI VFW NEWS** as a **NEWS Booster**.
- Encouraging our students to enter the **National Art Contests** and apply for the **Lillian Campbell Medical Scholarship**.
- Supporting our friends at **Hogs for Heroes** – spread the word about their upcoming application.
- Attending and participating in District meetings – "many hands make light work"!
- Submitting your items to the WI VFW NEWS to Inform, Inspire, Invite.
- And of course, continuing to **"Recruit Wisconsinly"!**

As I heard someone I respect very much say recently, "Remember to **'Make It Count'**, because you make a difference in the life of a Veteran every single day." Isn't that a great feeling?

2026 Publications Contest Now Open

Attention VFW Post and District Newsletter Editors in the Department of Wisconsin: it is time to submit your Newsletter to our State Contest. Based on the **expected** National Contest, here's how the Wisconsin Contest is set up for this year:

- Basis of Judging is **Overall Content and Design**.
- Publication frequency should also be noted: 1-4 times per year or 5+ times per year.
- State Competition is further divided by Post size - see the entry form for details.
- **ALL entries received for the State Contest will be submitted to the National Contest**, regardless of the State results, in keeping with the "open submissions" policy of the National Contest.

NO MATTER WHAT CATEGORY YOU ARE ENTERING, please select the **best** of your Post or District Newsletters **published in calendar 2025**, print a good clean copy – **DOUBLE-SIDED PLEASE!** – and mail as directed on the Contest Entry form.

NOTE: If your publication is distributed electronically by email, you will still have to **PRINT one hard copy to send for submission to the contest**. This is a really good time to double-check spelling, grammar and other errors too ... Please be sure to include the completed entry form!

Remember: **YOUR ENTRY MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE EDITOR NO LATER THAN MARCH 6, 2026! NO exceptions.** The form will be available at the Mid-Winter Conference and on the State Website if you want a full size form to use. Good luck to all! Questions? Contact **WI VFW NEWS** Editor Marla J. Morgan at wivfweditor@gmail.com OR 715-384-2500.

Department of Wisconsin VFW
2026 Publications Contest
Entry Form

Check ONE:
_____ POST Entry _____ DISTRICT Entry

Post Name and Number: _____

District # _____ Post Commander's Name _____

Post Membership Size (as of **June 30, 2025**): _____

Frequency of publication: _____ 1-4 x per year _____ 5+ x per year

Method of Distribution: _____ .PDF email _____ USPS mail _____ BOTH

Print stock: _____ Coated "magazine" stock _____ Uncoated "bond" paper

Publication Name: _____

Editor Name: _____ Phone: _____

Editor mailing address: _____

City/ST/ZIP _____

Editor email address: _____

Please include ONE clean issue of your publication, *published between January 1 and December 31, 2025*. (Padded envelope or cardboard inserts are suggested.)
ENTRY MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN MARCH 6, 2026!

Mail to: Marla J. Morgan, Editor
Publication Contest, 505 S. Apple Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449

- Basis of judging is Overall Content and Design.
- DEPARTMENT citations issued for First, Second and Third place in District competition (regardless of size) and in Post competition in 3 membership groups: Small (100 or fewer members); Medium (101 – 200 members) and Large (201 or more members).
- **ALL Entries received in all categories will be forwarded to National Headquarters for their competition.**

NOTE regarding Electronic Newsletters: If your newsletter is distributed electronically by email, you will have to **PRINT one hard copy (two-sided!)** to send for submission to the contest.

A Very Cootie Christmas



Not sure what everyone is focusing on so seriously, but apparently it was still the usual festive time at the Annual Cootie Christmas at the VFW National Home, sponsored by the Grand of Michigan. From left are: 2025-26 Grand Commander Brian Rickmann; Past Gr. Cdr. Lewis Lindloff; Past Gr. Cdr. Paul Kirsch; Past Gr. Cdr. and current Supreme SVC Tracy Woodman; 2025-26 MOCA Grand President Connie Lindloff; VFW National Home Trustee # 7 and PSC Michele Rathke; Past Gr. Cdr. Wayne Woodman.
Thanks to Michele Rathke.

So What ARE “The Cooties”?

The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States (MOC) is a non-profit Veterans Service Organization known as “The Honor Degree of the VFW”. Founded in September 1920, the MOC is based on the principals of good humor and fun. Following the outbreak of WWII, the Cooties recognized a need to entertain hospitalized troops and Veterans during their confinement and rehabilitation at Veterans Administration facilities throughout the country. The MOC service program is described as a directive to “**Keep ‘em Smilin’ in Beds of White.**” Each year the Cooties volunteer thousands of hours of time worth nearly 20 million dollars (2024-25) to VA Hospitals and domiciliaries throughout the United States.



Why a “Cootie”? When the MOC was founded, most of the VFW members were WWI Veterans. They looked for something humorous that they all had in common – the parasitic louse they all spent many non-combat hours attempting to eradicate was the answer. On the positive side though, Cooties are **Industrious** (you usually find many together); **Fraternal** (they work to remain with their host); **Persistent** (they remain on the job through thick and thin). Their goal is to “Increase and Multiply”, while remaining “Closer than a brother, busier than a bee”.

The distinctive red hat and unusual uniform sets the Cooties apart and draws attention to the plight of those less fortunate. They sacrifice a little of themselves to bring a smile or a laugh during what is normally a difficult time for our heroes.

In addition to their Hospital work, the MOC also continues to support the VFW National Home in many ways. The Annual Tomb Trek to the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery, to honor the fallen, was inaugurated in 1934.

How Do I Join?

Membership in the MOC or the Auxiliary (MOCA) is open to active VFW and VFW Auxiliary members in good standing, who have demonstrated their ability as a leader in their Post or Auxiliary. The other requirement is to honor the MOC prime directive: Have Fun.

Local units are known as “Pup Tents”. The current locations in the Grand of Wisconsin are listed below. For more information and how you can join, please contact either Gr. Cdr. Rickman or Gr. President Lindloff, or any current MOC/MOCA member who can direct you to a particular Pup Tent or Auxiliary. Join us!

THE GRAND OF WISCONSIN

- “Badger” Pup Tent # 6, Kenosha
- “Wacha-Kalit” Pup Tent #9 and Auxiliary, Janesville
- “Tornado” Pup Tent #14, Monroe
- “Who, What” Pup Tent #21, Sparta
- “Short Arm” Pup Tent #23 and Auxiliary, Green Bay
- “Wat-O-Ma” Pup Tent #38, Plainfield
- “Mad City” Pup Tent #41 and Auxiliary, Madison

Cootie Corner

Listen Cooties,
I hope all of our hard-working Cooties had happy holidays.

It was a pleasure to attend the Cootie Christmas at the VFW National Home. Good times were had by all. It was nice to meet fellow Cooties from as far away as California.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at our Cootie Mid-Winter and Testimonial in early January.

As we approach the end of our year, if you are considering running for an office in the Grand of Wisconsin, please submit your intentions to the

Brian Rickmann
MOC Grand Commander
608-290-2588
bcteb3@gmail.com



CCDB Ken Patterson. Remember that all Pup Tent elections need to be completed before the Grand Convention in April.

“Keep ‘em Smilin’ in Beds of White”!
Brian Rickmann
WI Grand Commander



Hello Everyone,
The holidays have come and gone. I hope everyone had safe travels and joyful celebrations. Commander Brian and I, along with others from Wisconsin, got the pleasure of sharing the Cootie Christmas experience with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the National Home in Eaton Rapids, the first weekend in December. We shared the Christmas spirit and helped with presents and entertained the children that live on campus. Fun was enjoyed by all. Thank you to the Grand of Michigan for hosting.

- Reminders:
- Audits for October - December are due now to Grand Treasurer Dolores Sorenson.
 - Elections of new Officers should be held between January 1 and March 31, 2026.
 - Continue with membership, it would be great to be 100% this year.
 - If you haven’t made your donations,



Connie Lindloff
MOCA Grand President
262-215-7074
lindloffs@hotmail.com



the time is now. Don’t forget our Special Project Stop Soldier Suicide - please help if able.

The MOC and MOCA Grand Mid-Winter Conference and Testimonial will be underway as this paper is posted - I hope to see a number of you in attendance. Thank you for what you are doing for our Veterans and their families.

May the New Year find you happy and surrounded by the love of family and friends. Hugs to ALL!

Connie Lindloff
WI Grand President

COOTIE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 10-12 MOC/MOCA Grand Convention – Green Bay, WI
(Watch Cootie e-mailings and the March/April WI VFW NEWS for registration and details.)

June 26-28 5th Annual Cooties Across Borders – Marshfield and Neillsville, WI

- **Baymont by Wyndham** –
 - 2107 N. Central Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449
 - 715-384-5240 • Mention Cooties/Group 2628)
 - \$78.32 per night, tax included
 - **Deadline:** May 15, 2026
- **Activities include:**
 - Bingo at Riverside Assisted Living, Neillsville
 - Tours at The Highground Veterans Memorial, Neillsville
 - Meals and Social time at American Legion 73/VFW 2241, Neillsville

(Watch Cootie e-mailings and the March/April WI VFW NEWS for registration and details.)

Keep ‘em Smilin’ in Beds of White.



**MOC Grand
Raffle Tickets
Are Available NOW**

Tickets are \$2 each or 3/\$5
Seven prizes totaling \$1,000
will be drawn on April 11, 2026
at the WI Grand Convention

For tickets, contact:
MOC Raffle Chair 'Twiggy' Johnson
920-766-1491
or wilfredjohnson@gmail.com

2026 Publication Guidelines
for Candidates

Upon announcing their candidacy for **VFW** or **Auxiliary** elected office – whether new candidate or current office holder – those running for office are afforded **one “free article”** outlining their announcement and qualifications. Space is limited, so standard editing policies apply, with 450 words maximum. A “Dear Comrades” (“Dear Auxiliary Members”) announcement letter format seems to work pretty well. Candidates must also supply one good quality “head and shoulders” .jpg photo electronic file for publication. Current “file photos” may be used as well. **Publication of the “free article” is typically scheduled for the March issue**, following the Mid-Winter Conference.

Candidates are then encouraged to purchase paid advertising in the Wisconsin VFW News at the substantially discounted VFW member rates currently in effect. **These ads typically publish in the March and/or May papers.**

Standard deadlines apply –

March 2026 paper deadline of February 13, 2026
May 2026 paper deadline of April 6, 2026

Ad rates –

“member and candidate discounted” with sizes shown are:

Price	Size	Width x Height
\$600	Full Page	10.25” x 15”
\$325	Half page	10.25” x 7.5”
\$200	Quarter page	5” x 7.5”
\$125	1/8 page	5” x 3.75”

Ad layout assistance is available free of charge. For more information and to place your candidate advertising, please contact Editor Marla J. Morgan at 715-384-2500 or wivfweditor@gmail.com.

Submitting Items to the
WISCONSIN VFW NEWS

The following tips will give your item its **best** chance at getting published.

- Items may be snail-mailed, but EMAIL is **best** – wivfweditor@gmail.com
- Try to send items right away and no more than 2 weeks after the event.
- Consider *publicizing your public events in advance*. (See page 3 in paper for DEADLINES)
- **PHOTOS:**
 - > MUST be IN FOCUS.
 - > **MINIMUM** .jpg file size is 1 MB or larger, but the larger the file, the better.
 - > MUST be an **ORIGINAL** image, not cropped or reduced. Downloaded or emailed (**NOT TEXTED!**) from the original digital device is the BEST. Those photos will usually be **2-4 MB** in size, which is **much better** for our printing purposes.
 - > **SEPARATE** .jpg files, **NOT** embedded in word documents please.
- A well-grouped and lighted photo with *everyone looking at the same camera*. You have a better chance of a better photo if folks take photos **ONE CAMERA AT A TIME!**
- Out of focus? Can’t use. Period. Check what you just took on your device **before** the group disperses. Then you’ll see if you need more takes!
- Take a nice **GROUP** shot of all winners – we probably don’t have room for 3-6 photos from each event. And group them in a nice sitting/standing group – not spread out in one line!
- **Action** photos – doing, building, hauling, folding, saluting, etc. - create extra interest.
- Names (and titles) of those in the photo **MUST** accompany the photo submission. Period. List them left to right, by rows/seated/standing – whatever applies. Interesting details are a bonus!
- You do **NOT** need to write a “perfect story” – just make sure you supply all of the important details!

Thank you to all who continue to share their news items to **INFORM, INSPIRE AND INVITE!**

Questions? Contact:
Marla J. Morgan
Editor, WI VFW NEWS
wivfweditor@gmail.com
715-384-2500

1.833.839.8387 VFWSTORE.ORG

Prices valid through 8/31/2026

Plus Shipping & Handling



Back

NEW



Front

NEW! MEN'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRT Navy blue 100% preshrunk cotton. Screened design on back. VFW logo screened left chest. U.S. flag screened left sleeve. Imported; decorated in the USA. 7499 S-3XL \$24.00

NEW! LADIES' 250TH ANNIVERSARY V-NECK T-SHIRT Navy blue 100% preshrunk cotton. Screened design on front. VFW logo screened right sleeve. Imported; decorated in the USA. 7450 S-3XL \$24.00



NEW! 250TH ANNIVERSARY FLAG 3 x 5' nylon single reverse flag, reads correctly from one side. 250th America Anniversary logo printed in red, white and blue. Made in the USA. 2525 \$45.90

The AMERICA 250 word mark and logo are trademarks owned by the United States Semiquincentennial Commission and any use of such marks is under license.

NEW

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of Wisconsin with the
USS Wisconsin
and her crews.



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to support the Commissioning and crew
of the nuclear-powered ballistic missile
submarine that will carry our state's name
ON WISCONSIN!

Ad sponsored by Randy Engness, US Navy and Submarine Veteran

Raffle Calendar

Winners

Date	Ticket	Name	City	Prize
Nov. 7	8977	J. Schlumpf	Green Bay	\$50
	7435	E. Pyrcioch	Princeton	\$50
	6855	L. Groeschl	Malone	\$50
	4755	S. LaBadie	Hebron	\$50
	714	J. Willegal	Montello	\$50
	6967	G. Seideman	West Bend	\$50
	1200	B. Dennison	Wauunakee	\$50
Nov. 14	11971	J. Hammes	Bangor	\$1,000
	11334	J. Gunderson	Chippewa Falls	\$500
	10531	J. Grabowski	Peshtigo	\$50
	5538	D. Wildes	West Allis	\$50
	6545	P. Boden	Hartford	\$50
	11809	T. Bush	Weyerhaeuser	\$50
	5677	L. Klink	Waukesha	\$50
Nov. 21	12131	B. Schroeder	Tomah	\$500
	141	N. Skinner	Iron Ridge	\$400
	12537	R. Berg	Cashton	\$50
	7582	VFW POST 388	Wausau	\$50
	3501	M. McKenzie	Hot Springs, AR	\$50
	4388	S. Grunewald	Deerfield	\$50
	8129	J. Hendricks	Iron River	\$50
Nov. 28	10961	T. Bartholomew	Clayton	\$50
	1854	M. Olson	Burlington	\$50
	12421	T. Lee	Viroqua	\$50
	14267	S. Oppermann	Waupun	\$50
	8626	R. Beaudre	Gorden, MI	\$50
	3717	C. Schwark	Cambria	\$50
	1960	Y. Chenier	Madison	\$50
Dec. 5	8977	J. Schlumpf	Green Bay	\$50
	8091	J. Schuh	Appleton	\$50
	4473	E. Swart	Milton	\$50
	4160	H. Stern	West Allis	\$50
	10696	T. Vettrus	Prairie Farm	\$50
	1030	S. Jewell	Richland Center	\$50
	9549	A. Quiram	Duluth, MN	\$50
Dec. 12	8050	J. Carnes	Fort Atkinson	\$50
	11368	B. Buss	Thorp	\$50
	14149	L. Lewer	Marshfield	\$50
	3520	D. Parent	Milwaukee	\$50
	1864	K. Olson	Burlington	\$50
	8753	E. Strick	Appleton	\$50
	6800	K. Allen	Sheboygan Fls	\$50
Dec. 19	7511	G. Kallinet	Sun City, AZ	\$500
	13257	J. Walker	Sun Prairie	\$50
	10723	H. Walker	Cameron	\$50
	215	T. Philipsky	Lomira	\$50
	9975	G. Golden	Mountain	\$50
	2669	D. Langley	Sargent, TX	\$50
	2262	D. Adams	Brookfield	\$50
Dec. 26	541	D. Bohl	Portage	\$500
	11943	G. Kaehler	Mauston	\$50
	9257	M. Knapstein	N. Barrington, IL	\$50
	12861	B. Frey	Tomah	\$50
	113589	C. Devine	Owen	\$50
	1537	S. Tracy	Beloit	\$50
	5621	S. Van Hecker	Milton	\$50
Dec. 31	782	S. Carman	Athens	\$50
	478	VFW Post 11038	Waterford	\$50
	9582	A. Levenhagen	West Allis	\$50
	1756	M. Egner	Grayslake, IL	\$50
	4636	D. Moore	Janesville	\$50

Raffle Winners are also posted on the VFW State Website – vfwwi.org – after the Friday drawings at VFW State HQ. Click on **NEWS**, then on **VFW RAFFLE CALENDAR NEWS**.

Reminder!

The 50-cent per member

Newspaper Fee is DUE

from Posts BY MARCH 1!

(Submit online)

EVENTS AND DEADLINES

January 17	District 1 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 9:30 a.m. – Post 1621, 1015 Center Ave., Janesville, WI 53547. Rep: PSC Metz
January 17	District 6 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 10:00 a.m. (Regis. 9:00 a.m.) – hosted by VFW Post 3153 at the Eagles Club, 1041 E. Chestnut St., Chilton, WI 53014 Rep: JVC Stoeber
January 17	District 11 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 9:00 am (Regis. 8:00 am) – VFW Post 1530, 630 S. 6th St., La Crosse, WI 54601 Rep: SVC Simpson
January 23	FINAL Deadline for Mid-Winter Conference Registrations (<i>fees added</i>)
January 24	District 7 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary – 10:00 a.m. (Regis. 9:00 a.m.) – hosted by VFW Post 1866 at the Eagles Club, 1104 S. Oak Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449 – Awards Luncheon at 12:15; Advance Registration required. Rep: CDR Letto
January 25	District 3 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 10:00 a.m. (Regis. 9:00 am) – VFW Post 5274, 110 E. Mineral St., Platteville, WI 53818 Rep: CDR Letto
January 31	Deadline for Post Audits to State Headquarters
January 31	District 2 – VFW ONLY – 9:00 a.m. (Regis. 8:00 a.m.) – VFW Post 1879, N2074 Veterans Ln., Fort Atkinson, WI 53538 Rep: SVC Simpson
January 31	District 8 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary – 11:00 Awards Luncheon (Regis. 10:00 am) – hosted by VFW Post 7692 at Colonial House, N4330 Cty. Hwy. E, Freedom, WI 54130. Meetings follow at 1:00 pm. Rep: CDR Letto
February 6-7	VFW/VFWA 2026 Dept. Mid-Winter Conference – Hilton Appleton Paper Valley – 333 W. College Ave., Appleton, WI 54911 (See page 6)
February 13	Deadline for March/April 2026 <i>Wisconsin VFW News</i> (<i>Printed and mailed</i>)
February 15	District 4 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary – 12 Noon Awards Program, 1:00 p.m. meetings – hosted by VFW Post 10394 at Clifford's Supper Club, 10418 W. Forest Home Ave., Hales Corners, WI 53130 Rep: CDR Letto
February 15	District 10 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 9:00 a.m. – ONLINE ONLY – link to be distributed
Feb. 28-March 5	VFW Washington Conference – Washington, D.C.
March 8	Daylight Saving Time Begins – <i>move clocks ahead one hour!</i>
March 31	Deadline for \$.50 per member Newspaper Fee from Posts (<i>Pay online</i>)
April 3	Deadline for Nominations for the WI VFW Member of the Year – <i>online applications only; login in to MEMBERS ONLY, then click on ONLINE Forms.</i>
April 6	Deadline for May/June 2026 <i>Wisconsin VFW News</i> (<i>Printed and mailed</i>)
April 18	District 4 Meeting – Auxiliary ONLY – 9:00 a.m. (Regis. 8:30 a.m.) – Greendale Police Dept., 5911 W. Grange Ave., Greendale, WI 53129
April 18	District 10 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 9:00 am (Regis. 8:00 a.m.) – hosted by VFW Post 5729, Medford Rep: CDR Letto
April 25	District 1 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 9:30 a.m. – VFW Post 1621, 989 Legion Dr. (AL Post 544), Twin Lakes, WI 53181. Rep: CDR Letto
April 25	District 2 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 9:00 a.m. (Regis. 8:00 am) – VFW Post 5716, 17980 W. Beloit Rd., New Berlin, WI 53151 Rep: CDR Letto
April 25	District 6 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 10:00 a.m. (Regis. 9:00 a.m.) – hosted by VFW Post 6709 at the Waupun Community Center, 520 McKinley St., Waupun, WI 53963 Rep: SVC Simpson
April 25	District 9 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary – • VFW @ Post 10406 – 100 Michaels St., Cochrane, WI 54622 – 8:30 a.m. Regis.; 9:30 OTI; 1:00 p.m. meeting. Rep: JVC Stoeber • Auxiliary @ Cochrane-Fountain City School – S2770 State Road 35, Fountain City, WI 54629 – 9:00 a.m. Regis., 10:00 a.m. Meeting
April 25	District 11 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary – 9:00 a.m. (Regis. 8:00 a.m.) – • VFW @ Post 3032, 751 S. Washington St., Viroqua, WI 54665 • Auxiliary @ Viroqua Eagles Club, 216 S. Rock Ave., Viroqua, WI 54665
April 26	District 3 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:00 a.m.) – VFW Post 10533, 204 E. High St., Shullsburg, WI 53586
April 30	Deadline for Post Audits to State Headquarters
April 30	Deadline for Post Election Report and Delegate Report (online)
May 1	Deadline for All-State Packets to State Headquarters
May 2	District 8 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary! – SCHEDULE: 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. – Veterans Against Hunger Food Drive 10:00 a.m. – Registration for lunch and meetings 11:00 a.m. – Lunch 1:30 p.m. – VFW and Auxiliary Meetings LOCATION for all events: Cotter Family Gathering Center, 518 Meadow Lane, Wrightstown, WI 54180
May 9	District 4 Meeting – VFW ONLY! – VFW Post 8482 – 9:00 a.m. (Regis. 8:30 a.m.) – at AL Post 434, 9327 S. Shepard Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53154 Rep: JVC Stoeber
TBD	District 2 Auxiliary Meeting and District 7 VFW & Auxiliary Meetings



SUPPORT THE WISCONSIN VFW NEWS

Regular and accessible
communication to our
membership is essential
to achieving our goal to
“**MAKE IT COUNT**”
and we take our
mission very seriously.

**WITH YOUR HELP,
WE CAN ALL STAY ON THE
SAME PAGE THIS YEAR!
PLEASE TAKE ACTION TODAY!**



WI VFW NEWS BOOSTER

This program is for individuals, Posts, Auxiliaries, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and other non-profit organizations who wish to support the WI VFW NEWS on an ongoing basis. All donations will be applied directly to the preparation, production and distribution of the Official Publication of the Dept. of Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Supporters at all levels will be recognized in at least two issues of the NEWS (September and May) and the list will also updated and maintained permanently on the State Website. Note: A separate program for Business Boosters is being established by our Corporate Sponsorship Committee and will be available early next year.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| \$50 – FRIEND | \$100 – SUPPORTER |
| \$250 – CHAMPION | \$500 – ADVOCATE |
| \$1,000 – INNOVATOR | \$2,500 – GUARDIAN |
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Thank you for your generous support of the WI VFW NEWS!

Name (Individual/Post/Aux/etc.) _____
(as you would like it to appear in the NEWS)

Address _____

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Select BOOSTER LEVEL:

_____ \$50 Friend _____ \$100 Supporter _____ \$250 Champion _____ \$500 Advocate

_____ \$1,000 Innovator _____ \$2,500 Guardian _____ \$5,000+ Visionary

Please make check payable to VFW Dept. of WI, earmarked “NEWS Booster” and mail to:
NEWS BOOSTER
VFW of Wisconsin
PO Box 6128, Monona, WI 53716-0128

Recruiting in District 3



ABOVE: Dodgeville Memorial VFW Post 7345 Commander Terry Wilkinson (left), received his “Recruit Wisconsin” shirt from State SVC Renee Simpson and Membership Team member Carla McAndrew. **BELOW:** District 3 and Joseph F. McCrea VFW Post 7896 Commander John Scanlan (left) proudly displays his “Recruit Wisconsin” shirt awarded by State SVC Renee Simpson and Membership Team member Carla McAndrew. *Thanks for both photos Carla!*



Visiting WVH Union Grove

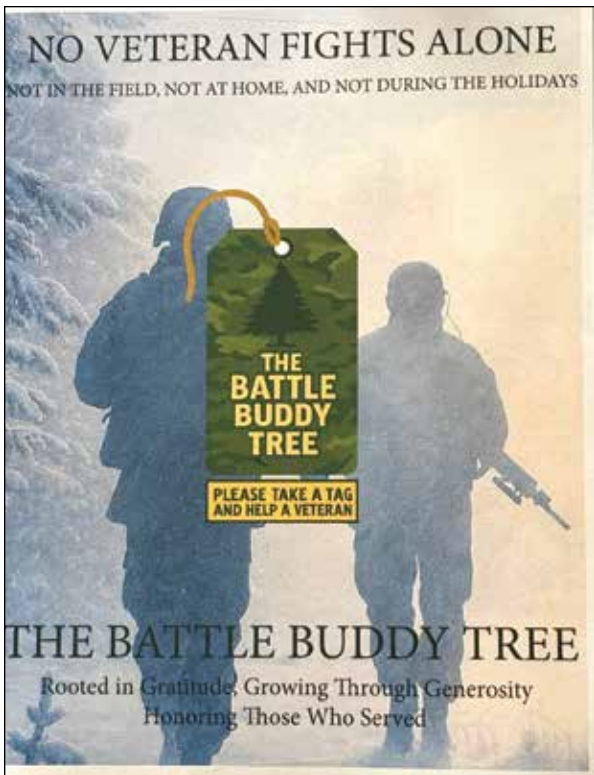
State Commander Ty Letto, Auxiliary President Kim McWilliams and other Officers and members spent quality time visiting the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove. During their tour, they explored the newly completed kitchen remodel, a major improvement that now allows staff to prepare fresh meals onsite. Cdr. Letto also joined residents for birthday celebrations and personal conversations — moments that truly reflect the heart of our mission. *Photos and info from Ty Letto.*

TOP RIGHT: A bonus of the Union Grove visit was the chance to award Hospital Rep. Bob Haisler (left) with his haul of “Recruit Wisconsin” goodies, including shown here, the Wind Jacket for recruiting at least 25 new members. Of course, Bob is at four times that number now... and counting!

BOTTOM RIGHT: In addition to presenting a \$700 Dept. donation to WVH Union Grove, American Legion Member Rickard Oberst (right) received Commander Letto’s Challenge Coin recognizing his impactful service as volunteer Chaplain.



MAKING IT COUNT



Post 1318 Hosts “Battle Buddy Tree”

PSC Gundel Metz shared a really nifty idea from Cranfield VFW Post 1318 in Madison: “This holiday season, VFW Post 1318 conducted its first Battle Buddy Tree, to support Veterans in need. The idea was developed by volunteers Erik van Gompel and Nathan Troy, and brought together volunteers, Post members, and community supporters to make a meaningful impact during the holidays. Volunteers contacted the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Outreach Program to identify priority needs. We do plan to continue the program in the future.” *Thank you Gundy!*



AT LEFT: The tree launched with 60 tags and was restocked three additional times due to an overwhelming response. Donations included clothing, food, hygiene items, cleaning supplies, and prepaid phone gift cards for local Veterans.

BELOW: We suspect there were multiple truck loads to deliver the gifts. From left are: Nathan Troy; Adayta Axelson of WDVA; Eric van Gompel; Jamie Herrmann.



Breakfast with Santa in Tomahawk



Wurl-Feind-Ingman VFW Post 2687 in Tomahawk pulled out all the stops at a well-attended community “Breakfast with Santa” in early December. Besides the “guest of honor” Santa himself, State Cdr. Letto and Post Cdr. Bob Soward were interviewed by both Radio Station WJJQ and TV Station WJFW Channel 12, AND as noted on page 13, the Post presented a \$30,000 check to the Never Forgotten Honor Flight, based in Wausau. And it looks like Cdr. Letto was able to submit his wish list to Santa directly!

Thank you Ty.