



NEWS 2026



VOL. 43 NO. 6

MAKE IT COUNT

MAY/JUNE 2026

Our 2026 Convention Representatives

We extend a warm Wisconsin welcome to our National Representatives to the 2026 State Convention. Visiting on behalf of VFW C-in-C Carol Whitmore is Marc Garduno, VFW Quartermaster General. VFW Auxiliary Past National President Carla Martinez will represent National President Lois Callahan. The annual assemblage is slated for June 10-13, 2026, at the Holiday Inn & Suites/Central WI Expo Ctr. in Rothschild.

Marc Garduno was elected VFW Quartermaster General by special election of the National Council of Administration on March 21, 2022. He has also served as VFW Assistant QM General and on the National Legislative Committee and the National Bylaws Study Group.

Marc retired from the U.S. Army in 2008, after 20 years as a Chief Warrant Officer (CW3), Human Resources Technician, and his assignments included several tours in the Republic of Korea; Fort Bragg, NC; and the Joint Readiness Training Center headquartered in Little Rock Air Force Base, AR. After retiring, he held various civilian sector management positions, including



Marc Garduno
VFW Quartermaster General

several years as a Project Manager for a Department of Defense contracting company, with service at the Joint Personnel Effects Depot, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware.

He joined VFW Post 8180, Seoul, Korea in 2005, and currently maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership at VFW Post 3238, Camden, Delaware. Marc holds the distinction of being named a Triple Crown All-American Commander and he also led a VFW Outstanding Community Services Post in 2016. A 2021 graduate of



Carla Martinez
VFW Auxiliary Past Nat'l. Pres.

Wilmington University where he received a Master of Science degree in Nonprofit Management, Marc is a Life Member of the Military Order of the Cootie and the VFW National Home. He and his wife, Hyun Ju, reside in North Kansas City, Missouri.

Carla Martinez of Layton, Utah, continues to serve the VFW Auxiliary as a member of the National Bylaws Review & Resolutions Committee, and a Past National President on Council. In 2023-2024, she led 471,000 members under her theme, "Banding

Together for Our Veterans", focusing on strengthening the organization membership with 100-percent plus in current membership being achieved. A Gold Legacy Life Member of the VFW thanks to her service in the US Navy, including 13 months in Korea, Carla is the organization's first "dual member" National President.

Also a Life Member of Lt. Clarence E. Allen Auxiliary 409 in Salt Lake City, Utah, she joined on the eligibility of her father, Harry Creel, who served in the US Air Force for 23 years and served in the Vietnam War. Carla has served at all levels, including Auxiliary, District and Department President. She also served as Department Chief of Staff from 2017 to 2018. On the National level, Carla served as National Certified Recruiter Trainer for the state of Utah from 2016 to 2018 and as the National Western Conference Chairman for the Scholarships Program from 2017 to 2018.

Carla has a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a Master's degree in Criminal Law from Weber State University. She retired from WCF Insurance after 22 1/2 years of helping individuals who were injured on the job. Carla is also a Lifetime Member of the Military Order of the Cootie (MOC) and the Fleet Reserve Association. She and her husband, Stanley (Utah's National Legislative Member 2021-2024), have a son, daughter-in-law and four grandchildren. In her spare time, she likes to volunteer at the VA Hospital, recruit and mentor, and loves to bowl and swim.

Patriot's Pen National Fifth Place Awarded to Seanleander Hemanand

Our Wisconsin Patriot's Pen Winner for 2025-2026 has scored big at the National Level. Seanleander Hemanand of Sussex garnered Fifth Place, earning the \$2,500 Rehoboth Beach Post 7447 and Auxiliary (Dept. of Delaware) Award. Congratulations to him and his family!

An 8th grade student at Templeton Middle School, Seanleander was sponsored by Horne-Mudlitz VFW and Auxiliary 6377 in District 2. In addition to Post and District Awards, he was named Wisconsin's First Place Winner at the 2026 Mid-Winter Conference in Appleton, earning the \$1,000 Award sponsored by the Department Auxiliary.

Seanleander's entry was one of 5,018 Patriot's Pen participants this year. A total of 313 Post Winners were advanced to State competition from 106 Posts and 48 Auxiliaries in the Department. Both the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy programs used the same theme: "How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?"

Congratulations also to our 2026 Voice of Democracy Winner Sanjay Dagam,



Seanleander Hemanand
Patriot's Pen National Fifth Place

who was awarded the \$1,000 Department of Pennsylvania Joseph L. Vicites Memorial Scholarship at the Parade of Winners held in mid-April at the Union League of Philadelphia. The event was part of a trip to participate in Founding Forward's Spirit of America Youth Leadership four-day experience at Valley Forge, awarded to each Department Winner in the Voice of Democracy. In other "awards we watch", Elijah Taylor, from Honolulu, Hawaii, received the \$2,000 Department of Wisconsin Wally Hogan/Tom Tradewell Commanders-in-Chief Scholarship.

We congratulate all of our student winners at every level and look forward to strong participation in both programs. The theme for both programs next year is noted below.

2026 – 2027 Voice and Pen Theme:
"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

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**Finishing Strong:
A Legacy of Service,
A Future of Impact**

As I reflect on the final stretch of my tenure as State Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Wisconsin, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude, pride, and humility. **It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve alongside the men and women of the VFW, VFW Auxiliary President Kim McWilliams, and our incredible VFW Auxiliary across this great state. What we have accomplished together is nothing short of remarkable; but our work is not finished.**

Since our last publication, I have had the privilege of traveling across Wisconsin, witnessing firsthand the strength of our organization in action. From Post homes to community events, from Legislative chambers in Madison to national stages, one thing has remained constant: **the unwavering commitment of our members to continue serving long after the uniform comes off.**

I have seen Posts like 1707 in Portage making a difference not only for Veterans, but for their entire communities. I have stood in newly-built facilities like Post 2723 in Shawano, a testament to vision and long-term commitment. I have visited the "Mother Post," Post 328 in Stoughton, where our legacy is not only remembered, but carried forward. And I have celebrated milestones like the 50th Anniversary of Post 8280 in Peplin, honoring those who built the foundation the Peplin Post proudly stands on today.

Across our Districts, from District 4 to District 8, **I have witnessed exceptional leadership, strong mentorship, and a shared commitment to excellence.** Our youth programs continue to shine, reminding us that the future of our nation is in good hands. Our Posts continue to lead, with many already achieving 101% membership, proving that dedication and teamwork drive results.

I have also had the privilege of seeing our mission extend beyond our walls. At the Milwaukee VA Fisher House, I witnessed compassion in action, families supported during their most difficult moments. At the Highground Recognition Dinner, I was reminded of the critical importance of healing as we ramp up **Campfire for Courage**, helping Veterans and their families access life-changing PTSD retreats that restore hope and connection.

Our advocacy efforts have been nothing short of historic. Standing next to the Governor in the State Capitol as eight Veteran-focused bills were signed into law, was a powerful reminder that our voice is being heard. **This**

I have always believed that the mission of the VFW never truly ends — it simply evolves. This past year has reinforced that belief in ways I did not anticipate, from the communities of Wisconsin to the shores of southern Italy.

Let me start with a confession: I am constantly humbled by the people in this organization. The members of the Wisconsin VFW and Auxiliary give everything — their time, their energy, their heart — to serve Veterans and their families. Wisconsin's state motto is "Forward," and I can think of no group that embodies that word more fully.

Recently, I had the privilege of traveling to Italy, where I visited the U.S. Naval Support Activity Naples at the Gricignano Support Site. I did not know quite what to expect. What I found left a deep impression on me. With more than 55 Tenant Commands and roughly 8,500 personnel, the base is a small city unto itself — and the level of care extended to military members, civilians, and their families is extraordinary. Resources stretch beyond the base perimeter into the surrounding communities, and the VA support available for those transitioning to civilian life is, frankly, remarkable.

But the most meaningful part of the trip was personal. I reconnected with a longtime friend — someone I served alongside in the Army — and that reunion reminded me of something I sometimes think is taken for granted: we, as members of the VFW and Auxiliary, are ambassadors. Every conversation we have, every person we reach, could be the moment someone finally learns what benefits and services are available to them. That is not a small thing. That is everything.

The VFW is not a relic. It is not a museum piece. It is more relevant today than at any point in its history. We are serving multiple generations of Veterans simultaneously — each with different needs, different experiences, and different comfort levels with organizations like ours. Our job is to meet them where they are.

As we close out this membership year and look ahead to the next, I am asking every member to stay engaged. Attend your District and State meetings. Mentor someone new. Share what you know. The line between one membership year and the next is artificial — the mission is continuous.

None of what we accomplish is the work of one person. It never has been. It is a team effort, and every single member matters. I carry that with me everywhere I go — from the halls of a Navy base in Italy to the communities right here at home.

"Never Forget the Sacrifice" of our past and present warriors' legacy that we have the honor to build on.

**Ty Letto
State Commander**


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is the direct result of strength in numbers. When we stand united, when we speak with one voice, we become a force that cannot be ignored in Madison or in Washington.

That same strength was on full display when we stepped onto center court at a Milwaukee Bucks game, representing the VFW on one of the largest stages in our state. Moments like that matter. **They bring visibility to our mission and remind the public that Veterans are still leading, still serving, and still making a difference every single day.**

And through it all, one mission has remained close to my heart, the Commander's Special Project, **Campfire for Courage.** Thanks to your generosity and commitment, we have made incredible progress. But we must finish what we started. Our goal is clear: to sponsor 200 Veterans and their family members, giving them access to the healing retreats they so greatly deserve. We are close, but not there yet. **Find it in your heart to keep giving to surpass our goal!**

The same can be said for our membership goal. We set out to achieve 101% as a Department, **not for recognition, but because it strengthens our ability to advocate for every Veteran in this state and across this nation.** Membership is not just a number; it is our voice. It is our influence. It is our ability to deliver real results.

As we approach the finish line, I ask each of you to dig deep one more time. **Recruit one. Retain one. Reach 101%.** Reach out to that Veteran who has not yet joined us. Support that family who needs connection. **Step forward, as you always have, to ensure we cross that line together and achieve our goal.**

I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished. But more importantly, I am inspired by what I know we will continue to achieve in the future! This is **YOUR** VFW. This is **YOUR** impact. These are **YOUR** accomplishments. And together, we will finish strong. Until next time, remember to **"Make it Count"**, because you make a difference in the life of a Veteran every single day.

**Renee L.
Simpson
State Sr. Vice
Commander**


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STATE OFFICERS

Greetings Comrades,

I want to commend everyone for their hard work this year in supporting CDR Letto's initiatives. While we are still working on reaching our membership goal of 101%, I am impressed on how well all of the Posts have done on reaching, or exceeding, 100%. Remember, the membership year does not end until June 30, so please continue the push to recruit new, or reinstate members so we can cross the finish line of 101%.

In addition to membership, your support for CDR Letto's special project has been outstanding. I am humbled at how generous you all have been in helping him sponsor Veterans and their families during his "Campfire For Courage" campaign.

Lastly, I want to remind everyone about this year's Department Convention being held June 10 to June 13 at the Holiday Inn & Suites/Convention Ctr. in Rothschild. Every year, I have encouraged every VFW and Auxiliary member to attend, since this is your Department and you have the right to help shape the direction regarding how our organization is run. For as long as I have been attending Post, District or Department meetings and events, I have heard from our membership that they do not always understand, or agree with, the policies being made at the Department level. Again, this is your opportunity to see how our Department, business is transacted.

This is also your opportunity to see how your District Leadership represents your Post while on the Council of Administration. It is also your chance to vote in the leadership of the Department. I am hoping that I will get the opportunity to meet all of you at this year's Convention! Let's continue to keep helping Veterans like no one else!

**George
Stoeber
State Jr. Vice
Commander**


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"The HQ Dispatch"

Comrades,

This time of the year is a busy administrative season for everyone in the VFW, especially at the Posts! I want to outline some due dates that are important to keep your Posts in good standing, and ultimately eligible to vote during this year's State Convention:

- **April 30: March Audit** due date
- **May 1: Election Report** submitted by the CURRENT Post QM in OMS



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QM Tom Heath
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AAQM Steve Eisenhauer
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- **May 1: Department Delegate Dues & Newspaper Fee** (Paid in Members Only Section under FORMS on the state website)
- **May 11: Department & National Resolution and Bylaw Proposals** due to HQ
- **May 15: 990 filing due to IRS for Posts on a calendar year.** (Jan. 1- Dec. 31)
- **June 30: National Convention Delegate Report/Fee** (Paid in OMS)

As a REMINDER – a Post that:

- is delinquent in any dues/fees owed to Department,
- has not submitted an Election Report,
- or has not submitted completed audits,

WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. However, individual members from a Post that is not eligible to vote are still encouraged to attend Convention to learn and network.

On the technological side of things:

You should have hopefully received a couple of our new mass emails from our Constant Contact system. We can now start sharing critical information directly to all members via email. It is important that all members keep their contact information, including emails, up to date in OMS. One note here is that when submitting an Election Report with updated contact information, it will not update the master record of that member. **The Post QM must update the contact information in OMS through their Post QM portal.** Or, members may call 833-839-8387 and do it over the phone. A lot of our members joined in the pre-email days, but have not since provided a valid email.

Also, HQ has our new phone system up and running. When you call HQ, you will have a phone tree to select who you'd like to speak with and even have the option to be routed to the Service Office or National HQ Member Services. Thank you to the Council for approving this long overdue technological upgrade.

Finally, the HQ Team would like to thank you all for the hard work you put into your Posts and communities every day. We'd also like to thank Commander Letto for his leadership and dedication to the Department this year.

Greetings fellow Wisconsinites,

I hope all are doing well and hopefully enjoying the Spring weather. At this writing, 91 Posts have met or exceeded the 101% Membership goal, with 28 Posts at 100% and knocking on the door to the goal. Let's keep up the momentum. I hope to see all those Posts with their All-State packets during judging.

The State Convention hotel portal is active on the State website – **2026 STATE CONVENTION** – so get your reservation in. You can cancel with no penalty a week out if needed.

Commanders and all Delegates:

Please review the Candidate letters (in the March issue) and please see their ads in this issue. Tentative agendas and other important information can also be found in the center pages of this issue. Information on any potential By-law changes and proposals will be available on the state website prior to Convention. Please inform yourself on potential issues up for a vote.

Whether or not you are able to attend the

**Keith
Lauth
Chief-of-Staff**


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Convention, please also consider getting more involved at the Post, District and even Department levels. This is your VFW.

It has been an honor to be your Department Chief-of-Staff this year. Commander Letto, thank you for the appointment and putting your trust in me. It has been great to work with you and for you. Also, I've enjoyed traveling and visiting as Chief-of-Staff. I look forward to seeing you all at the State Convention. Thank you, for all you continue to do to "Make it Count".

STATE OFFICERS

Comrades,
Conflict within a VFW Post is inevitable. The measure of a strong organization is not the absence of disagreement, but how those disagreements are handled. As members of the VFW, we operate under a structured system of Bylaws and Procedures designed to resolve conflict fairly, professionally, and with integrity.

The first step in any dispute is respecting the Chain of Command. Concerns should be brought to Post leadership—typically the Commander or appropriate Officer—before being elevated to the District or Department level. Skipping steps often leads to confusion, incomplete information, and unnecessary escalation. Addressing issues at the lowest level not only promotes efficiency but also preserves relationships within the Post.

Equally important is the emphasis on informal resolution. Most conflicts do not require formal action. Personality differences, misunderstandings, and minor disagreements during meetings can often be resolved through direct and respectful communication. Leaders play a key role here by facilitating discussions, keeping conversations focused on facts rather than emotions, and encouraging professionalism. Addressing issues early can prevent them from growing into larger problems.

However, not all disputes can or should remain informal. Escalation becomes necessary when there are allegations of misconduct, violations of Bylaws, financial impropriety, or behavior that is disruptive to the organization. When prior attempts at resolution have failed, leadership must transition from mediation to a more structured approach that includes proper documentation and adherence to established procedures.

This is where Article IX comes into play. It is a formal disciplinary process intended for serious matters involving clear violations and substantiated claims. It should never be used to settle personal grievances or as a tool for retaliation. Misuse of this process undermines its purpose and can create further division within the organization. Leaders must ensure that any action taken under Article IX is supported by evidence and follows due process from start to finish.

Documentation is critical in any escalated situation. Accurate records of incidents, correspondence, and meeting minutes provide the foundation for fair and informed decisions. Without proper documentation, even valid concerns may be difficult to resolve and can lead to delays or overturned outcomes.

Ultimately, leadership sets the tone. Commanders and Officers must remain neutral, professional, and consistent when handling conflict. Taking sides prematurely or failing to follow procedures can erode trust and intensify disputes. The goal is not to “win” an argument, but to protect the integrity and mission of the VFW.

By addressing conflicts early, following the Chain of Command, and applying our Bylaws correctly, we strengthen our organization and ensure it continues to serve Veterans with honor and respect.

Nick Webster
Judge Advocate



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Comrades:
Your election of Post Officers and Delegates should be completed and probably about one-quarter of the Officers will be stepping down. Most retiring Officers may likely feel like coasting for a couple of months until the new guys take over. Well, that's not the way it should work!

All retiring Post Officers should make sure that their replacements are ready for the new command year. Some Officers will just continue on in the same position as before, but many are in for something new. Every Officer should attend training each year in order to do their very best in the position they have promised to uphold.

There are numerous videos on the State and National web sites that explain the duties of Commander, Quartermaster and Trustees. All you need is a little spare time and a computer to get training at any time of day or night. Please use these resources. I feel you'll find them interesting and useful. Another learning place is at your District meeting. Districts have at least one meeting a year devoted to Officer training. Quartermasters and Trustees in particular can gain a lot of useful information if you just attend and participate.

Most Posts do not have a complicated accounting system, yet year after year we receive Audits that do not balance from one quarter to the next quarter. As of this writing, about 16% of the Posts in Wisconsin are delinquent in getting their Quarterly Audits submitted. Some Posts are several Audits behind. So, whose responsibility is it to make sure an Audit is submitted? You guessed it – the Post Commander. However, the Trustees – and there are three of them – should also be concerned

Leroy Jansky
State Inspector



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when finances are not being reported correctly or in a timely manner. So, we have at least four members who should be concerned when their Quartermaster doesn't provide a finance report at every meeting and submit an Audit report to the Trustees for review quarterly. Furthermore, when an Audit is rejected at State HQ because it doesn't balance, the Trustees have all failed at their job. If we fail month after month and quarter after quarter, it gets to be a huge (maybe impossible) task to backtrack and fix things.

These few issues can be resolved if everyone understands the duties of their elected positions. Training and mentoring are available and will help. We don't need to get totally bent when errors are made or when a report is a little late (we are all human), but someone needs to question situations that are potential trouble for the Post.

To the vast majority of Posts that continuously file well prepared, accurate and timely reports, we greatly appreciate your dedication to your Post and Department.

With all that said, I'll close the year by thanking Commander Letto for the appointment as State Inspector. Let's all finish the year with increased membership and 100% reporting.

Greetings Comrades,

As Wisconsin finally shakes off winter, May and June offer the perfect opportunity for Veterans to reset and refocus on health. Warmer weather, longer days, and increased community events create an ideal environment to build sustainable habits that support both physical and mental well-being.

One of the most important areas to prioritize this time of year is cardiovascular health. With May recognized as National High Blood Pressure Education Month, Veterans are encouraged to check their blood pressure regularly and stay active. Even moderate activities, such as walking, gardening, or biking, can significantly reduce cardiovascular risk.

Mental health also deserves attention. June marks PTSD Awareness Month, a critical reminder that many Veterans continue to carry invisible wounds. Connecting with fellow Veterans through VFW events, spending time outdoors, or engaging in mindfulness practices can help reduce stress and improve overall resilience. If additional support is needed, resources through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs remain readily available.

With increased outdoor activity comes increased exposure, to sun, allergens, and ticks.

Angela Thomsen
State Surgeon



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Wisconsin Veterans should take preventive measures, including using sunscreen, staying hydrated, and performing regular tick checks after time in wooded or grassy areas to reduce the risk of Lyme disease.

Finally, early summer is a great time to reassess nutrition. Fresh, local produce becomes more accessible, making it easier to incorporate healthier foods into daily routines. Small changes, like increasing fruit and vegetable intake, can have long-term benefits.

This season, take advantage of the momentum that spring provides. Health doesn't require drastic change, just consistent, intentional steps forward.

Until next time, stay happy and healthy!

THE CALL OF THE SEASONS

There are seasons in every year that call us back to what matters most. April and May, as they unfold across Wisconsin, are not merely a transition from spring into summer, they are a passage into remembrance, renewal, and resolve. For those of us in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, these months carry a sacred weight, one that binds faith, fellowship, and purpose into a single, unbreakable thread.

When the burdens of life seem heavy, and they often do, we are reminded to look not inward, but beside us. To the left and to the right stand comrades who understand, who have walked similar roads, who carry their own stories of service and sacrifice. Our fellowship within this organization is not accidental; it is a testament to the enduring strength of shared experience.

There is something profoundly spiritual in that bond. It is found in the quiet conversations after meetings, in the firm handshake of a fellow Veteran, in the simple act of showing up. In these moments, faith is not abstract, it is lived. It is renewed in the embrace of community. So the call is simple, yet urgent: join, participate, invite others in.

As May brings us to Memorial Day, we are called to pause, not just to remember, but to reflect on what remembrance truly demands of us. The fallen are not honored by memory alone, but by the lives we lead in their name. Their legacy is not confined to history books or solemn ceremonies. It lives in what we build today, in the advocacy we pursue, in the voices we raise, and in the care we extend to those who still walk among us.

As we gather once more for State Convention in June, let us do so with both purpose and joy. Celebrate the year. Honor the work. Strengthen the bonds. And yes, eat the hot dogs and dress fancy. Because even in the seriousness of our mission, there is room for fellowship, laughter, and the kind of camaraderie that reminds us why we came together in the first place.

It has been a great year. And the best work is still ahead.

Jordan Tilleson
State Chaplain



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Wisconsin VFW News Production Schedule

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Remaining 2026-2027 Schedule TBD

Wisconsin VFW News

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Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars

Planning for Upcoming Meetings

- **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.

Hello,

Welcome to Spring and the end of our program year! We have many tasks to wrap up in the next two months. Membership is looking great for this year, keep up the outstanding effort right to the end. The next scheduled events we have coming up will be our June State Convention in Rothschild, the July Council of Administration in La Crosse and the National Convention in Reno. Hope to see you at all of these events.

Also, as a reminder there is still time to donate to the National Commander's special project! Carol Whitmore's project is to assist in finishing the National Home on-site convenience store. You can send your donations to the State HQ, earmarked for CIC Special Project: VFW Wisconsin, 4622 Dutch Mill Road, Madison, WI 53716.

Two notes from the National Commander Carol Whitmore from General Orders No. 8:

1. LOYALTY DAY AND MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE:

Section 223 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure provides that each Post shall make the necessary arrangements for proper observance of Loyalty Day and Memorial Day. Officers should see that suitable grave markers, wreaths and flags of the United States are placed on the graves of deceased veterans.

2. INSTALLING OFFICERS:

Installing Officers will see that the provisions of Section 216 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure are properly carried out and that all Officers are members in good standing and qualified to hold office prior to installing Post Officers for the current year. Post Officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed.

Post Election Reports must be submitted following Post election of Officers in April and no later than June 1 to the National Headquarters. We highly encourage all Post Quartermasters to use the online Election Report process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS). Post Election Reports received electronically will be forwarded to the Department Headquarters.

From the National Headquarters Bulletin,

Tom Heath National Council Member



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here are a few ways to continue to support the VFW:

• MEMBERSHIP GOALS

As we continue to go through the membership year, we want everyone to remember the goals that the Commander-in-Chief has set out in her 2025-26 Membership Program:

1. Achieve 101% in Membership
2. For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member
3. Increase membership drives and/or events
4. Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts
5. Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership

• MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES:

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into vfw.org and go to <https://vfw.org/my-vfw/vfw-training-and-support/membership-recruiting-and-retention> where you can view training videos, download recruiting materials and posters, and gain access to all the tools you need in order to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members! The 2025-26 Membership Program is available online at vfw.org, under MY VFW, scroll down to Membership Quick Links, click on Membership Recruiting and Retention.

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 here, stay safe. You are appreciated!

STATE OFFICERS

Greetings all comrades –

The Service Office Team and I hope you all are having a wonderful spring. The Service Office stays busy rain or shine, making sure Wisconsin's Veterans and their families are well served. My team and I are doing, as always, a bang-up job helping our clients obtain the optimal benefits they need and deserve. However, with the institution of AI, new changes to VA rules or laws, and the increased activity of "Claims Sharks", it is always a challenge to keep up with the

best practices to make sure we stay ahead of the game. And we still need to make sure that our Veterans and VFW family are aware of the barriers we do come across.

We have seen an uptick in "Claim Shark" activity. Comrades, please make sure if you come across an ad on Facebook or in passing online, or wherever the "Claim Sharks" circle, for that matter, **please** contact us or your local CVSO **before signing up with them**. I understand the promises these people will make, outlining a "too good to be true narrative", such as: "we will get you a 100%." There is No magic formula to get the higher ratings. It really always boils down to the three rules of Service Connection. **If someone or some company is saying otherwise, they are lying and scamming.**

Please give us or your CVSO and/or other VSOs the chance to help you before signing up and paying for a service that should be **free with no strings attached**. Often we see what can happen to the victims of these "Claims Sharks", and it is usually not a good outcome. Now, I'm not saying that these companies or groups don't have some positive outcomes. It's just never any quicker or better than actual Accredited Representatives can do. In fact, I have seen some of the victims that have come to us after working with these guys actually have **reductions** and the Office of Inspector General (OIG), questioning the validity of their claims. **So please be careful out there and don't hesitate to reach out if there are any questions.**

DID YOU KNOW...?

National Guard and Reserve members qualify for VA benefits including Disability Compensation; Education Assistance (GI Bill); Home Loans; and Healthcare, particularly if they served on Federal Active Duty (Title 10) or full-time National Guard Duty (Title 32). Traditional Drill Status members (one weekend a month/two weeks a year) are eligible for specific VA benefits such as Service Members Group Life Insurance (SGLI); Home Loans (after 6 years); and Disability for injuries incurred during training.

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Legislative work, as we have seen this year, is not politics. It is love in its most public form. It is remembrance transformed into action. It is the promise that sacrifice will never be met with silence or neglect. And this year, that promise was kept.

The Wisconsin VFW can stand tall in the wake of a remarkably successful Legislative session. Through tireless effort, unified voices, and unwavering commitment, meaningful change was achieved for Veterans across the state. We were honored to see our leadership represented at the highest level, as State Commander Ty Letto and I were invited to attend the signing of critical bills benefiting Wisconsin's Veterans. It was not merely a ceremony, it was a testament to the power of advocacy done right.

Among the victories:

- The creation of a \$25 matching grant program supporting private, VA-funded homeless transition programs, offering a stronger path forward for those working to rebuild their lives.

An increase in the Military Funeral Honors stipends from \$50 to \$100, ensuring that those who render final honors are properly supported.

- A reduction in residency requirements for both the Wisconsin GI Bill and the Veterans Grant for Private Nonprofit Schools, from five years to three—expanding access to education for those who have earned it.

- And several additional measures that collectively strengthen the network of care and opportunity for Wisconsin Veterans.

Tim Neary State Veterans Service Officer



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Jordan Tilleson State Legislative Chair



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This was not the work of a few. It was the work of many members who wrote letters, made calls, showed up, and made their voices heard. The work, of course, is not finished. We are already setting our sights on 2027, when we will once again gather for Veterans Day at the Capitol, a powerful reminder that our presence in the halls of government matters.

Until then, we will continue pressing forward on critical issues, including expanding eligibility for the Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit and securing essential funding for the UWMIA Recovery and Identification Project. These are not just policy goals. They are moral commitments.

As we approach the State Convention, there is much to celebrate. Not just the Legislative victories, but the spirit that made them possible. The unity. The persistence. The quiet determination of Veterans who refuse to leave one another behind. To all who took the time to reach out to Legislators, to advocate, to stand in the gap—thank you. Your efforts mattered. They made a difference.

Veteran Bills Signed into WI Law



A number of Veterans' advocates, Legislators and others joined WI Governor Tony Evers (seated) in early April for two signing sessions of several Veteran-related Assembly and Senate Bills into law. The new laws include:

- **AB-596 & AB-597 (Acts 153 & 154):** Establish state matching grant programs supporting organizations that care for veterans through federal per diem programs.

- **AB-659 (Act 155):** Expands tuition and fee remission opportunities for veterans and their families across Wisconsin educational institutions.

- **SB-521 (Act 156):** Establishes highway signage honoring the Mount Horeb Veterans Memorial.

- **AB-913 (Act 205):** Income tax subtraction for certain National Guard and Reserve members.

- **SB-810 (Act 206):** Reimbursement for the provision of military funeral honors (increased to \$100).

- **SB-387 (Act 207):** Veteran designation on driver's licenses and identification cards.

- **SB-134 (Act 204):** Expanded open enrollment window (30 to 90 days) for military families relocating due to orders

Commander Letto noted, "Since 2018, we have continued to build momentum, strengthen our voice, and prove that when the VFW shows up united, we deliver results. Working alongside our partners in the American Legion and Disabled American Veterans, we demonstrated what is possible when Veteran Service Organizations stand together with one voice. These bills represent real, tangible progress for Wisconsin Veterans and their families. This is what happens when strength in numbers is put into action. This is 'Making it Count' in Madison." *Photo courtesy of State Legislative Chair Jordan Tilleson.*



**Final Applications for 2026
must be postmarked by May 16.**

**VISIT: [Hogsforheroeswi.org](https://hogsforheroeswi.org)
click on APPLICATION & SELECTION**

MEMBERSHIP

Current Membership Totals By District

| Dist. | Life | New | Reinstate | Continuous | Total | Adj. Prior Year | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 2271 | 241 | 61 | 392 | 2965 | 2797 | 106.00% |
| 2 | 3099 | 65 | 22 | 285 | 3471 | 3489 | 99.48% |
| 3 | 732 | 8 | 5 | 90 | 835 | 845 | 98.81% |
| 4 | 1134 | 17 | 2 | 107 | 1260 | 1269 | 99.29% |
| 6 | 1678 | 36 | 13 | 136 | 1863 | 1863 | 100.00% |
| 7 | 2113 | 46 | 18 | 220 | 2397 | 2378 | 100.79% |
| 8 | 1801 | 30 | 14 | 219 | 2064 | 2059 | 100.24% |
| 9 | 2557 | 59 | 12 | 126 | 2754 | 2739 | 100.54% |
| 10 | 1334 | 33 | 17 | 188 | 1572 | 1534 | 102.47% |
| 11 | 1612 | 25 | 12 | 204 | 1853 | 1844 | 100.48% |
| 99 | 1443 | 89 | 25 | 184 | 1741 | 1906 | 91.34% |
| Totals | 19774 | 649 | 201 | 2151 | 22775 | 22723 | 100.22% |

Totals as of April 24, 2026
451 Legacy Life Members
176 members needed to reach our 101% goal 22,951

Comrades,
Congratulations to the Districts, Posts and individuals who won a membership and recruiting challenge thus far! We still have challenges remaining, so let's make an impact for the last push on recruiting those members that are still out there. As Cdr. Letto says, "Once we reach the finish line, we will be an even stronger 800-pound gorilla in the room and our voice will be even louder!"

Michele Rathke
State Membership Chairman



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MicheleR@vfwwi.org



Everyone is doing great work recruiting across the state, let's crush it the last leg of the membership year and achieve our 101% goal! We are SO close - let's "Make it Count".

2025-26 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM CHALLENGES

CORRECTION from March –

1st Quarter – 100% membership achieved by 9/30/2025

• Post with 26-49 members – winner of \$250:

We actually had **TWO** winners:

- Post 3434, Hillpoint – 103.13%
- Post 10195, Rosendale – 103.13%

TOP RECRUITING UPDATE

through 4/24/2026

| Recruiter | Post | Dist. | Recruits | Recruiter | Post | Dist. | Recruits |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|----------|----------------------|-------|-------|----------|
| Robert E. Haisler | 11038 | 1 | 101 | Christina Flanagan | 664 | 7 | 5 |
| James A. Cairo | 11038 | 1 | 50 | Phillip D. Nelson | 2723 | 7 | 5 |
| Steven Eisenhauer | 1318 | 2 | 45 | Nate Haumschild | 2115 | 9 | 5 |
| Thomas E. Heath | 1621 | 1 | 31 | James G. Alsteen | 3143 | 10 | 5 |
| Brent C. Hibbard | 11038 | 1 | 25 | David F. Gentile | 9536 | 10 | 5 |
| Dena McCormick | 11038 | 1 | 25 | Jason E. Johns | 328 | 2 | 4 |
| Jason T. Coffey | 11038 | 1 | 25 | Anthony E. Veeder | 8483 | 2 | 4 |
| Michelle Leick-Leurquin | 2113 | 8 | 17 | Richard J. Bartol | 2925 | 6 | 4 |
| Adam S. Wallace | 328 | 2 | 12 | Robert M. Soward | 2687 | 10 | 4 |
| Randy L. Engness | 2204 | 9 | 12 | Mark R. Dykstra | 1621 | 1 | 3 |
| Gundel M. E. Metz | 1318 | 2 | 9 | Michael E. Zientek | 1621 | 1 | 3 |
| Lawrence A. Rugg | 7308 | 1 | 8 | Jack E. Daily | 721 | 2 | 3 |
| Rob L. Drogsvold | 328 | 2 | 7 | Alex J. Kaleta | 1465 | 4 | 3 |
| Thomas Hoffman | 2723 | 7 | 7 | John F. Kleinmaus | 1393 | 6 | 3 |
| Glenn E. Manske | 7784 | 8 | 6 | Brandon Pszanka | 664 | 7 | 3 |
| Paul R. Koehler | 305 | 9 | 6 | Paul E. Morrison | 2534 | 7 | 3 |
| John D. McCoy | 7308 | 1 | 5 | Joseph W. Knaapen | 3088 | 8 | 3 |
| Michael F. Fischer | 11038 | 1 | 5 | Joseph D. Mills | 3635 | 8 | 3 |
| Randall J. Meyer | 1163 | 2 | 5 | John P. Wierer | 7534 | 8 | 3 |
| Tyrone L. Letto | 1163 | 2 | 5 | Christina Baurichter | 305 | 9 | 3 |
| Garret A. Collins | 2260 | 2 | 5 | Mark T. Schiltgen | 2115 | 9 | 3 |
| Giles E. Svehlek | 9387 | 2 | 5 | Krist D. Beseler | 10406 | 9 | 3 |
| David A. Mix | 2126 | 6 | 5 | Timothy Salzwedel | 2114 | 11 | 3 |

PLUS 42 Recruiters with 2 Recruits each; 181 Recruiters with 1 Recruit each; and 164 Recruits with no named Recruiter. **Thank you all!**

2025-26 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM CHALLENGES WINNERS

through 4/30/2026

3rd Quarter – 100% membership achieved by 3/31/2026:

• Posts with 50 or more members – winner of \$200:

Post 10301, Racine – 101.47%

• Posts with 26-49 members – winner of \$100:

Post 10388, Franksville – 100%

Monthly Recruiter Contest

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 scheduled based on weather and schedules.

- Jim Cairo, Post 11038, Rochester, recruiting 25 in March

April: One VFW member with the highest number of new or reinstated members recruited will receive a jacket.

- Codey Schultz, Post 1638, Merrill

The Challenge of the Swag:

- Adam Wallace, Post 328, Stoughton

2025-26 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM CHALLENGES WINNERS

remaining through 5/31/2026

May: VFW Members who recruit in the month of May:

- 5 members – \$100; 3 members – \$50; 1 member – \$25

Reinstate Members Award: Post with the most reinstated members by May 31, 2026, will receive a \$250.00 award for the Post. (**Minimum of 25 members reinstated**)

District Commanders Contest: District Commanders **LEADING** their Divisions and reaching or exceeding 101% by May 31, 2026, will receive a \$250.00 award for their use.

Post and District Extra Incentives:

- The Post and District with the highest number of **Reinstated Annual Members** (minimum of 30 for a Post and 200 members for a District) by May 31, 2026, will receive \$200 towards purchase of membership items from the VFW Store for the Post/District.
- The Post and District with the highest number of **New, Reinstated and Converted Life Members** (minimum of 30 for a Post and 200 for a District), by May 31, 2026, will receive \$300 towards purchase of membership items from the VFW Store for the Post/District.
- The Post and District with the highest number of **New Legacy Life Members** (minimum of 15 for a Post and 75 for a District) by May 31, 2026, will receive \$300 towards purchase of membership items from the VFW Store for the Post/District.

NOTE: no Post or District will be eligible for more than one award.

Recruiting Wisconsinbly



District 7 Commander Dale Dahlke (right), presented David Zoromski from Andrew J. Sutter Jr. Post 8527 in Athens with his Recruit Wisconsinbly t-shirt. Congratulations and thanks to ALL who recruited members this year! And thank you D7 Cdr. Dale!

FISHER HOUSE NEWS

This spring marks an exciting milestone for Fisher House Wisconsin as we celebrated the **Ten year Anniversary of the Fisher House at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center on May 1, 2026. It is quite exciting to look back on the incredible impact of Fisher House Milwaukee.**

Since opening in 2016, the Milwaukee Fisher House has provided more than **20,600 nights of lodging and support for over 7,600 military and Veteran guests**, ensuring families can stay close to a loved one receiving care at the VA without worrying

Steven Rose
Executive Director
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about the cost of travel or lodging. Through this support, the Milwaukee Fisher House has **saved Veteran families more than**

\$2 million in out-of-pocket lodging costs since opening.

The celebration comes at an exciting time as we prepare to **begin construction this summer on Wisconsin's second Fisher House at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison.** After several years of planning and partnership with the Fisher House Foundation and the VA, we are thrilled to see this project moving toward groundbreaking.

Together, the Milwaukee and Madi-



son Fisher Houses will provide **up to 11,680 nights of lodging, food, and wrap-around support each year, all at no cost to military and Veteran families** while their loved ones receive care.

Editor's note: STAY TUNED! As we await the start of the second Wisconsin Fisher House, we will include more news and information in upcoming issues of the WIVFW NEWS. Be sure to visit fisherhousewi.org to chart their progress as well.

**STATE CONVENTION
POPPY DISPLAY INFO**

Have you thought about your "Buddy"® Poppy entry for the VFW State/Department Convention? You still have plenty of time to make a display and enter it into the competition.

There will be first, second, and third place winners in each of three categories. First place winners will have the option of submitting their entry for judging in the National Competition in Reno, NV. The three categories are:

CATEGORY 1: Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign

- Window, booth, parade, poster displays, campaign promotion, etc.
- Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message soliciting a donation for and wearing of the VFW "Buddy"® Poppy.

CATEGORY 2: Memorial or Inspirational Displays

- Wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes.
- Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and Country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the "Buddy"® Poppy.

CATEGORY 3: Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies

- Post Home displays, table center-pieces, corsages, pictures, models, scenes, hats, novelty pieces, etc.
- *Any display not meeting the qualifications of Category 1 or 2, shall automatically be

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VFW "Buddy"®
Poppy Co-Chair
VFW
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Louise Engness
Aux. "Buddy"® Poppy/
Natl. Home Chair
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entered in Category 3.

In **ALL CATEGORIES**, at least one (1) of the poppies used in the display **MUST BE** in its **ORIGINAL FORM AND COLOR WITH LABEL ATTACHED**. The entry form below is for reference. A full size form may be found on the Auxiliary State website at: [Dept. Poppy Display Form](#). Scroll down to the third item in the Chairman's bulletin list.

We hope to see *many* creative entries this year. **Good luck to all.**

WISCONSIN VFW QR CODES



Wisconsin VFW YouTube Channel

Commander's Message • From the Frontlines • Other Wisconsin VFW Official Videos

Scan for official updates, videos, and monthly communications. This area serves as the centralized location for all official VFW Wisconsin QR codes.

**REGISTRATION FOR BUDDY POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST
ANNUAL STATE/DEPARTMENT CONVENTION**

Post and/or Auxiliary Number _____ City _____

Category (1,2, or 3) _____ Display No. Leave Blank _____

Number of Poppies used in Display _____ (where display is entered in Category 3 & is a sample of a number of identical items, only one item needs to be displayed, but indicate the number of such items used and the total number of Poppies used.)

NOTE: Display entries must be constructed using "Buddy"® Poppies purchased through the VFW Store. Any display using non-VFW Poppies will be disqualified.

Name of Person/Persons responsible for setting up & taking down the display. _____

If you are the top winner in one of the three categories, do you wish to have your display entered in the National Contest? If yes, you will be responsible for having the display transported to the National Convention. In case the winners cannot get their display to the National Convention, the VFW and VFWA Chairmen will pick a substitute.

YES _____ NO _____

Your Signature & Title _____

NOTE: This entry form must accompany your display to the designated area at the State/Department Convention prior to 12:00 noon on Friday of the Convention week. If entering a display in more than one category, prepare a separate copy of this form for each display.

**BUDDY POPPY ANNUAL CONVENTION AWARDS PROGRAM
BUDDY POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST**

1. Will follow State/Department Rules
2. Judges Award for "MOST IMPRESSIVE" - \$25.00 State/Department Convention Only
3. 1st, 2nd, 3rd place awards in each category - State/Department Convention Only
4. 1st place in each category will be entitled to represent the State/Department of Wisconsin in the National Convention Contest

DISPLAY CONTEST CASH AWARDS-ANNUAL STATE/DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

| CATEGORY | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 st Place | \$75.00 | \$75.00 | \$75.00 |
| 2 nd Place | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$50.00 |
| 3 rd Place | \$25.00 | \$25.00 | \$25.00 |



**CAMPFIRE
FOR COURAGE**

JOINT SPECIAL PROJECT

**Supporting PTSD Retreats
for Veterans and Families
at THE HIGGROUND**

WE DID IT!

**223 attendees
and counting!**



Let's keep going to serve even more!

TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS

In the March/April TAPS, five members were listed in the TAPS received from VFW National in error. We are pleased to report that **David Knueppel** of Fond du Lac (Post 1904); **John Stake** of Friendship (Post 6279); **Gabriel Kolesari** of Sussex (Post 6377); **James Kirwan** of Twin Lakes (Post 8375); and **Alan Jacobson** of Westby (Post 8584) are still very much on our membership roles!

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 | James Donaldson | Seattle, WA | 2119 | Richard Johnson | Townsend | 6003 | Troy Austin | Marshfield | 8483 | Jeffrey Taylor | Madison |
| 305 | Robert Hubbell | Chippewa Falls | 2126 | William Hoffman | Menasha | 6003 | James Bennett | Oxford | 8512 | Donald Thuftin | Almena |
| 305 | James Scott | Eau Claire | 2204 | John Richter | Cameron | 6179 | Roger Brey | Oshkosh | 8527 | Gary Rauen | Merrill |
| 305 | James Tullar | Eau Claire | 2219 | George Ferriter | Hudson, FL | 6352 | Norman Kaiser | Stratford | 8527 | Laverne Zettler | Mesa, AZ |
| 388 | Frank Biesel | Wausau | 2260 | Brian Dowling | Scottsdale, AZ | 6377 | Ronald Markkola | Sussex | 9060 | Gerald Morrow | River Falls |
| 388 | James McMenamin | Rothschild | 2260 | Rodger Nelson | Oconomowoc | 6498 | Richard Haase | Milwaukee | 9202 | Ronald Pritchard | Germantown |
| 659 | Ronald Ullman | Manitowoc | 2260 | Richard Robertson | Markesan | 6498 | Howard Holland | Adell | 9362 | Richard Amelse | Sun Prairie |
| 664 | DuWayne Novak | Clintonville | 2267 | Gail Surrem | Richland Ctr | 6498 | Dale Kangas | Mt. Pleasant | 9362 | Lawrence Maly | Sun Prairie |
| 721 | Donald Corn | O' Fallon, MO | 2306 | Donald Mortenson | Beloit | 6498 | Andrew Litter | Milwaukee | 9392 | Lynn Brinkman | Menomonee Falls |
| 1037 | Roger Zeihen | Kenosha | 2306 | Robert Sloss | Beloit | 6498 | Charles Timm, Jr. | Cedarburg | 9392 | Donald Kuhlman | Pardeeville |
| 1038 | Lee Kammeyer | Cadott | 2344 | Frank Clark, Jr. | Lancaster | 6550 | George Moats | Mondovi | 9464 | Martin Reynolds | Ladysmith |
| 1318 | Karl Kleemann | Sun Prairie | 2534 | Victor Saeger | Wis. Rapids | 6705 | Timothy Mleziva | Denmark | 9536 | Henry Oleson | Marshfield |
| 1382 | James Tyler | Tomah | 2534 | Leo Welling | Wis. Rapids | 6707 | Daniel Huber | Cleveland | 9677 | Donald Matczak | New Franken |
| 1391 | Mike Lemut | Racine | 2653 | James MacDonald | Antigo | 7233 | Raymond Dums | Hayward | 9677 | Dennis Raisleger | Green Bay |
| 1391 | Sanford Sell | Racine | 2687 | Robert Byrns | Tomahawk | 7308 | Donald Delaney | Somers | 10187 | Carl Totzke | Edgar |
| 1393 | Thomas Downing | West Bend | 2687 | Mark Eisenman | Tomahawk | 7345 | Nancy Franke | Dodgeville | 10262 | Kenneth Piotrowski | Stevens Point |
| 1530 | Arden Sprain | La Crosse | 2708 | Robert Koch | Edgerton | 7485 | Roy Schmidt | Sussex | 10272 | Wayne Hook | Oregon |
| 1621 | Fredrick Harris | Lady Lake, FL | 2778 | Albert Kudrie | Appleton | 7534 | Ralph Destiche | De Pere | 10301 | William Skaggs | Sturtevant |
| 1865 | Larry Albertson | Kenosha | 2925 | Emil Bohn | Neshkoro | 7591 | Peter Niesen | Waterloo | 10394 | Ferdinand Buchel | Grafton |
| 1865 | M. Carroll, Jr. | Kenosha | 3032 | Harlan Friske | Viroqua | 7694 | Joseph Rugolo | Glendale, AZ | 10406 | Louis Duellman | Fountain City |
| 1866 | Jerold Weis | Marshfield | 3071 | Thomas Lang | Seattle, WA | 7929 | Richard Buck | Amery | 10452 | Robert Burdick | Marquette |
| 1879 | Jonn Klement | Fort Atkinson | 3392 | Norbert Beining | Denmark | 8092 | Richard Philippsy | Oakfield | 10818 | Joe Neal | Sioux Falls, SD |
| 1904 | Richard Cusick | Fond du Lac | 3392 | Robert Ross | Sun City West, AZ | 8171 | Leroy Bluma | Muskego | 15051 | Allan Basile | Green Bay |
| 1904 | John Townsend | Glen Ellyn, IL | 5276 | Billy Funk | Oak Creek | 8216 | John Hall | Madison | 15051 | Raymond Delvoye | Green Bay |
| 1916 | Anthony Matyas | Reedsburg | 5276 | Stephen Pluemer | Potosi | 8280 | Micheal Dacquisto | Mosinee | 15051 | Robert Everitt | Holmen |
| 2037 | Robert Schiebenes | De Pere | 5278 | Daniel Meilahn | Ripon | 8320 | Lyle Larcheid | Brookfield | 15051 | Thomas Hruby | Darien, IL |
| 2113 | Virgil Kussow | De Pere | 5612 | Robert Janssen | Plymouth | 8338 | Roger Bender | Barron | 15051 | Charles Moon | Fernley, NV |
| 2113 | Robert Michels | Green Bay | 5778 | Tony Logan | Fountain Hills, AZ | 8478 | Thomas Neuenfeldt | Augusta | 15051 | Daniel Niehaus | Marshfield |
| 2115 | William Cave | Roberts | 5778 | Vernon Palacheck | Park Falls | 8483 | Robert Johnson | Waunakee | | | |

Deadline for the July 2026 issue is June 22.

Cpl. John J. Ginzl Comes Home at Last

Another of our long-missing WWII heroes is returning home to Rhinelander, to be laid to rest on May 24, 2026. **Corporal John J. Ginzl** was accounted for on June 11, 2025. His Visitation will be held from 12:00 pm to 1:45 pm at Rhinelander High School, followed by a full military honors Memorial Service. Graveside services will be held at Forest Home Cemetery, also in Rhinelander. Hildebrand Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

John James (Jack) Ginzl was born December 6, 1917, in Winchester, WI, to Joseph, Sr. and Mary Ginzl. The youngest of seven children and the younger twin brother of Joseph, Jr., John was raised in Rhinelander and graduated from Rhinelander High



John J. Ginzl

School in 1936. After high school, John worked at the Rhinelander Paper Mill and was the first Ripco employee to enter military service in WWII. He reported to Chanute Field, Illinois, on July 19, 1940, and was a member of the 17th Bombardment Squadron, 27th Bombardment Group, stationed in the Philippines at the time of U.S. entry into World War II.

The 27th Bombardment Group fought on the Bataan peninsula, holding out for over three months despite a lack of food, medicine, and ammunition, but ultimately they surrendered to the Japanese on April 9, 1942. The majority of the men were subjected to the 65-mile "Bataan Death March" into captivity. Cpl. Ginzl was among those who survived the Bataan Death March.

As World War II progressed, the Japanese sent Allied Prisoners of War back to Japan for use as slave laborers, packed into unmarked "hell ships". Allied aircraft unknowingly attacked these vessels, resulting in the sinking of several and the deaths of thousands of Prisoners. Cpl. Ginzl is believed to have been among the survivors on the Oryoku Maru, that was bombed on December 13, 1944. He was subsequently killed on January 9, 1945 aboard the Enoura Maru, which was sunk while docked at Takao, Formosa. He was buried in a mass grave on shore.

After the war, U.S. personnel exhumed the grave at Takao and U.S. service members who could not be identified at the time were interred as Unknowns at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Through the dedicated work of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) and advances in forensic science and DNA analysis, the remains of Cpl. John J. Ginzl were accounted for in June of 2025, finally allowing him to be brought home.

At the time of his death, his surviving family members included his maternal grandmother; parents; three brothers; three sisters and six nieces and nephews, with five more nieces and nephews born after his death. For his service Cpl. Ginzl received the Bronze Star and Purple Heart and many other decorations. He is memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines, where a rosette will be placed to indicate he is accounted for.



Honoring Dan Newbauer

Daniel J. "Dan" Newbauer, age 83, of Merrill and formerly of Tomahawk, passed away peacefully on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at his home, under the care of his loving family and Aspirus Hospice.

One of the Dept. of Wisconsin's first Auxiliary "Brothers" after men were admitted in 2015, Dan was a familiar face at many District and Department meetings and events. His gentle spirit and warm, easy smile made others feel at home. He even (willingly!) took on a Co-Chair-



Daniel J. "Dan" Newbauer

manship for Ways and Means during the 2018-2019 "Reaching for the Stars for Veterans" year.

Dan is survived by his wife, Victoria Newbauer of Merrill; children: Rebecca (Chris) Schleif, Merrill; Heath (Patty) Berger, Medford and Thea (Carmen) Schmitt, Stratford, as well as seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He is further survived by several brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, as well as many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, two siblings and three brothers-in-law. In accordance with Dan's request, a private immediate-family service was held, with Generations Funeral Home & Crematory assisting the family.

"We rejoice in the promise that this is not goodbye. But a gentle 'see you again' until we meet in the presence of our Lord."

IN LOVING MEMORY

Karl Kleeman

1923 - 2026

A Life of Service.
A Legacy of Honor.
A Heart That Never Stopped Giving.

Proud Veteran.
Dedicated Member
of VFW Post 1318.
Friend to many.

Karl's life was defined by courage, commitment, and quiet strength. From his service to his country to his presence in the community, he represented the very best of a generation, that shaped our world.

His stories, his smile, and his spirit will live on in every life he touched.

"All gave some. He gave so much."

Forever remembered. Forever honored.

S'MORE NEWS

It is astonishing to realize that the year is drawing to a close, as time has seemingly flown by. The achievements we have celebrated this year would not have been possible without each of you, whose dedication, commitment, and eagerness to learn have been invaluable. I appreciate those who have shared their positive feedback regarding the training, mentoring, and support provided throughout the year. Embracing change and remaining open to new ideas are essential for growth; clinging to the notion of "we have always done things this way" can hinder progress and lead to the loss of valuable Auxiliaries.

At every level, it is essential to embrace learning and remain receptive to new ideas. I have observed significant growth and increased confidence among many Auxiliaries this year, which exemplifies true leadership. Achieving this progress requires collaboration among all parties involved, including Department, District, and Auxiliary Officers. I sincerely appreciate your ongoing commitment to seeking assistance when necessary. It has been our privilege to support your development and foster confidence within your Auxiliaries.

This year, we made significant strides in increasing our membership, currently standing at 92 members away from achieving 100% in Current membership. We have surpassed our Paid membership targets and are ranked third in the Big Ten Conference. With the membership period open until June 30th, there remains ample opportunity for further growth, and recruiting will be essential to our continued success.

Our efforts in Wisconsin have also led to a notable increase of 1,129 followers on

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



Facebook. Additionally, we established a new Auxiliary and revitalized several existing ones. To enhance our organizational effectiveness, we implemented Treasurer and Secretary training through TEAMS meetings, ensuring comprehensive engagement across the Department. At the start of the year, we also conducted specialized training for Line Officers and District Officers. All of you have contributed to the success of this year. I sincerely appreciate all that you have accomplished.

Traveling across Wisconsin this year and collaborating with various Auxiliaries was one of my most cherished experiences. The warmth and hospitality of the people I encountered made the journey truly memorable, as everyone was exceptionally friendly and welcoming.

Join us as we conclude the year at our Convention, taking place at the Holiday Inn & Suites in Rothschild from June 10th to 13th. The Banquet will be held in military/formal attire, providing a wonderful opportunity to dress up and commemorate our 100 year commitment to our Veterans and their families, as well as to celebrate our collective achievements over the past year. Please continue to "Rise by Lifting Others", "From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free!"

**THE YEAR IS ENDING,
BUT OUR MISSION IS NOT**

As the year draws to a close, we take time to reflect on all that has been accomplished by the members of the VFW Auxiliary. Together, we have supported our Veterans, service members, and their families through countless acts of service, compassion, and patriotism. While calendars may turn and months come to an end, our mission continues without pause.

Our commitment to Veterans does not follow a timeline. Needs remain year-round—whether it is providing support to a hospitalized Veteran, advocating for those who served, mentoring youth, or strengthening our communities through outreach and education. Every effort, no matter how small, makes a lasting difference.

As we look ahead, let us carry the momentum of this year into the next. Let us recommit ourselves to the values that define the VFW Auxiliary: service, dedication, and unwavering support for those who have worn the uniform. The year may be ending, but our purpose remains strong, our resolve steady, and our mission ongoing.

Thank you for all that you do. Together, we will continue to serve—today, tomorrow, and always.

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



AUXILIARY

**TWO STEPS FORWARD,
NO STEPS BACK**

Last week we only needed 89 to be 100% in current members and today when I looked, we needed 90. Tomorrow we could be up by three or down by two. No one knows! Are we on a roller coaster? No, but at times it sure might feel like it.

That is why it is important for every one of us to be on the membership team!!!

Wherever you are, have an application with you and be prepared to tell someone why it is important for them to be a member of our Veterans service organization and as A. Lincoln said: "to care for those who have borne the battle and their widows and orphans."

Our advocacy and support for our Veterans and their families makes a difference every day. Take the time to list everything you do and you will be amazed at the difference we make in our communities. Not only do we prevent other organizations from potentially harming our Veterans but we also support those agencies that are making a difference in the lives of our citizens including Veterans and their families.

Unfortunately, we can't control the loss of a dedicated member of our team, that is going to happen whether we want it to or not. But we can work diligently to ensure the organization continues to honor the legacy left by them. Talk to your Post members and remind them that as Commander Ty says, "the Auxiliary is a force multiplier," and their families can make a difference by joining with us in the Auxiliary.



Also, remember the rules changed a decade ago and the pool of potential members increased. So don't just focus on your current members and their families but reach out to the families of those members we have lost and encourage them to honor the service of their loved one by following in their footsteps and continuing to provide "Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes!"

Wisconsin's motto is **FORWARD** and we can end the year moving **FORWARD** with a positive growth in current membership!

WISCONSIN FORWARD – let's end the year with more current members than we started the year with.

We are so close to continuing our 2nd century with an

increase in current membership that stops the downward spiral. We can do it. **TWO STEPS FORWARD WISCONSIN** – we're not going back!

**Charlene
Cobb**
Membership
Chairman
262-348-6547
ckcand2k9@
yahoo.com



Our Current Membership Stats

| Auxiliary | Current Total | Deceased | Paid Total | Prior Total | Current Percent | Paid Percent |
|----------------------|---------------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Total – Non-District | 869 | 23 | 892 | 965 | 90.05% | 92.44% |
| Total – Dist. 2 | 1068 | 31 | 1099 | 1084 | 98.52% | 101.38% |
| Total – Dist. 4 | 291 | 16 | 307 | 286 | 101.75% | 107.34% |
| Total – Dist. 7 | 1246 | 32 | 1278 | 1245 | 100.08% | 102.65% |
| Total – Dist. 8 | 809 | 20 | 829 | 814 | 99.39% | 101.84% |
| Total – Dist. 9 | 780 | 18 | 798 | 766 | 101.83% | 104.18% |
| Total – Dist. 10 | 678 | 19 | 697 | 685 | 98.98% | 101.75% |
| Total – Dist. 11 | 437 | 12 | 450* | 447 | 97.76% | 100.67% |
| WI – At Large | 1151 | 25 | 1176 | 1129 | 101.95% | 104.16% |
| Dept. of WI | 7329 | 196 | 7526* | 7421 | 98.76% | 101.41% |

Membership as of 5/1/2026 — *with 1 Canceled



*Cheers to
100 Years
for Our
Department*

Join us at our 2026 Dept. Convention as we complete our Journey to 100 Years, reflecting on the experiences that shaped our past. We are all looking ahead together, as we plan for the future of our mission. Your stories, your service, and your vision will help guide us into the next 100 years. See you in Rothschild, June 10-13, 2026!

**Keeping
Up With
Marie Skic**



Our "senior" Past Dept. President Marie Skic of Merrill was the recipient of a beautiful handmade quilt depicting her life events as told in many photos and stories. She served as our 67th President in 1991-1992, under the theme "Wisconsin Cares". And is still going strong at 98 years young. See you at Convention Marie! Thanks to Alicia Weix and Tina L. Scott of the Merrill Foto News.

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 |
|------|-------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 305 | Bernadine Gonderzik* | Eau Claire | 2267 | Mildred M. Nordmann* | Richland Ctr. |
| 305 | Beatrice Ryder* | Eau Claire | 2778 | Donna L. Abitz* | Appleton |
| 305 | Irene J. Zien* | Chippewa Fls | 2977 | Daniel J. Newbauer* | Merrill |
| 328 | Elaine Vesterdahl* | Stoughton | 3153 | Emily Irene Sauerbry* | Chilton |
| 388 | Leona F. Cichocke* | Wausau | 5778 | Marian A. Nussberger* | Prentice |
| 388 | William L. Dahlke* | Wausau | 5778 | Susan C. Vich* | Phillips |
| 388 | Geraldine Hopperditzel* | Wausau | 6352 | Brenda A. Burggraf* | Stratford |
| 388 | Mary Ann Howard* | Wausau | 7591 | Caroline D. Currie Amdahl* | Madison |
| 664 | Ruthann Buelow | Shawano | 7591 | Joan P. Mandt* | Deerfield |
| 1038 | Elfrieda Wittrock* | Bloomer | 7591 | Leatrice H. Rahman* | Madison |
| 1691 | Kathleen A. Miller | Tomball, TX | 8478 | Eileen C. Stensen | Osseo |
| 1915 | Alice K. Pawlicki* | Tucson, AZ | 9156 | Jeanette L. Veldboom* | Sheboygan |
| 2112 | Edna Joy Anderson* | West Salem | 9156 | Vivian J. Veldboom* | Sheboygan Fls |
| 2112 | Beverly Jean Howard | Jackson | 10818 | Joann C. Nelson* | Baldwin |
| | | Cape Coral, FL | 15051 | Sue Borsos* | N. Fond du Lac |
| 2113 | Rosemary B. Bartels* | De Pere | 15051 | Dorothy Hanson* | Black River Fls |
| 2113 | Alice Corene Byrnes* | Deerfield, FL | 15051 | Frances Hirschert* | Platteville |
| 2260 | Phyllis Lehto | Oconomowoc | 15051 | Dorothy M. McCann* | Tucson, AZ |
| 2267 | Ruby Hodge | Richland Ctr. | 15051 | Beatrice W. Wallace* | Siren |

* DENOTES LIFE MEMBER



Karen Baumann is ready to sell an assortment of delicious homemade treats at one of the Auxiliary 7591 Bake Sales last fall.

Editor's note: This GREAT idea comes to us from longtime member and friend Karen Baumann of Auxiliary 7591 (Day Post) in Madison. She even saved the Editor some work by including all the great info in an article format! We publish it here in May as an event that is just waiting to happen in your Auxiliary and community. Your Post may not conduct Bingo, but how about those Brat Fries, Steak Feeds and Chicken Dinners? Pay special attention to the details on packaging – and special individual, ready-to-enjoy portions. Thank you for sharing Karen!

OLD STYLE FUNDRAISER HAS BONUS BENEFITS

Last year, Auxiliary 7591 in Madison held a series of Bake Sales to raise funds for donations to groups that aid Veterans. A traditional fundraising method for membership groups like ours, the Bake Sales had a ready audience of potential customers at our Post's weekly Bingo events. A bonus we didn't expect was that the activity provided a new way for members to get involved. Out of **18 contributors** to our last fall's two Bake Sales, seven were people who had not attended a meeting for years, **if ever**.

We held six different sales during calendar 2025. January and February money went to the VFW Foundation's Mental Health Support Fund (last year's President's Project), and to Madison Dryhooch which offers financial and peer psychological support to area Veterans. The April Sale supported Homes for Our Troops which builds adapted custom homes for severely injured post-9/11 Veterans, and in May, we raised money for the Veterans Transitional Housing Program run by Porchlight, which focuses on eliminating barriers to permanent housing for troubled Veterans in Madison. Those four sales raised \$798.

The year finished up with two sales in September and October that raised \$452 for the Joint Special Project, Campfire for Courage. That's \$1,250 total to help five different projects that support our Veterans. It should be noted that a big bonus was that the sales publicized these projects and our customers often said "Keep the change" or gave us additional donations for the causes.

Other bonuses:

- Because we had the existing Bingo customer base, no extra publicity was needed and the sales were easy to conduct.
- One member solicited and coordinated donations via e-mail, then priced and sold the food items. Others did the baking and delivered their packaged goodies to the Post. (Many hands made light work.)
- Most popular were things the customers could eat while at Bingo so we packaged most dessert and snack items as single servings in baggies, plastic wrapping, or clear plastic cups (covered with wrap), or clear to-go containers. And we had napkins and forks available for the taking.
- Perhaps best of all, our customers enjoy the sales and are happy for the opportunity to support us this way!

WAYS AND MEANS UPDATE

Thank you all for your support throughout this year. Your dedication truly makes a difference, and we appreciate everything you do. Here are some year-end reminders:

• Calendar Raffle Reminder

The Calendar Raffle deadline is **May 15, 2026**. Tickets were to be turned in at your Spring District meeting to your Department Representative. If you still have tickets,

please get them to Lenore before the deadline. Please remember these **cannot be mailed** due to our Raffle License. If you need help getting your tickets to Lenore, contact Jennifer Mauritz at **715-383-8628** ASAP.

• Convention – Ways and Means Support

Help us finish the year strong by supporting the Ways and Means table at the State Convention in Rothschild, June 10th–13th. We will have gift cards; takehome Paint and Sip kits; 50/50 raffles and more. Be sure to stop by and check it out.

Thank you again for supporting these efforts and for helping us make a meaningful impact in our communities. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our entire team – Lerrine Rochocki, Aimee Vilvejac and Barbara Stillman - for your hard work and dedication. We could not have accomplished everything we did this year without each one of you.

Jennifer Mauritz

Chaplain/Ways and Means Co-Chair

715-383-8628
jmauritz922@gmail.com



Auxiliary Candidates for Office

Sending campaign letters for Auxiliary Department offices is not a new practice, just one that "went by the wayside" in recent years. This year, we've saved some space in the May/June NEWS to include and revive this very important practice and protocol.

Please read and learn about those who wish to lead our organization in the year ahead, so that all Delegates to the State Convention are informed voters. These letters are also available on the Auxiliary Dept. website: **CANDIDATE LETTERS**. (Scroll down below the May/June S'More NEWS.)

Cobb for President

It is my incredible honor to be a candidate for the position of Wisconsin VFW Auxiliary Department President. Our advocacy is as important today as it was over 100 years ago when the organization first began.

As a Dual Member, I earned my eligibility to the VFW on the USS Nimitz in the Persian Gulf and I joined the VFW Auxiliary 25 years ago on my Dad's service. He served during World War II in the Army and was awarded a Purple Heart for wounds sustained while serving in France.

Caring for our Veterans and their families is a passion of mine. I am a member of Kienow-Hilt Auxiliary 1621, Janesville and Delavan-Darien Post 10173, Delavan. I have served in numerous positions at all levels including VFW National and State Chaplain; Post Commander; VFW Auxiliary Dept. Jr. and Sr. Vice President. Additionally, I am a member of the Military Order of the Cooties, the American Legion and Ladies Auxiliary, the Fleet Reserve Association and AMVETS. I was also a County Veterans Service Officer, helping our Veterans and their families receive their benefits from the State and Federal government.

I have always felt that the Auxiliary is an integral component to the success of our organization. However, these last two years of working closely with our Auxiliary members have shown me a dedication and passion for caring for our Veterans and their families that is truly inspiring. I am asking for your support to allow me to serve our Department and our organization alongside this amazing group of men and women as we provide "Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes."

Thank you,
Charlene K. Cobb

Southworth for Sr. Vice

I appreciate the support I have received as your Jr. Vice President and would like to request your support again to elect me

as your Sr. Vice President for 2026-2027. It will be my honor to represent you in this position.

An Auxiliary member since 2003, I joined under my husband Dan's service of two tours in Viet Nam. We both decided to join Burns Post and Auxiliary 388 in Wausau when our son, Phillip, was called to serve in Iraq. Two years later, another son, Kevin, was also sent to Iraq. I am proud to say both



are also Wisconsin VFW Life Members at this time.

My Auxiliary service includes Auxiliary 388 President; District 7 Youth Activities Chairman; and most recently, the Department National Scholarships Chairman. Every position presents unique opportunities and challenges, and an opportunity to learn. I have led annual fundraisers for our Post and Auxiliary and have done volunteer work in various capacities all my life, but nothing compares to volunteering for an organization such as ours. It is a privilege to help our Veterans.

I am proud to help celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our Department Auxiliary and pray we continue to celebrate anniversaries indefinitely, and look forward to being a part of incoming President Charlene's team to continue our important work for Veterans. Thank you again for your support and your vote at our State Convention in June in Rothschild.

Marge Southworth

Mauritz for Jr. Vice

I am honored to announce my candidacy for the office of Junior Vice for the Department of Wisconsin VFW Auxiliary.

I proudly belong to the MuellerHintz VFW Auxiliary 1866 in Marshfield,



where I became a Life Member in 2019. I am eligible through my husband, Doug, whose service in the United States Air Force included deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Northern Watch and Desert Thunder. Together, as Life Members of Post and Auxiliary 1866, we share a strong commitment to the mission and values of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliary.

Since joining, I have worked to support our organization at every level. I currently serve as Department Chaplain and have held multiple offices within my Auxiliary, District, and Department, including Auxiliary Treasurer, District Jr. Vice, District Sr. Vice, and Department Conductor.

SEE MAURITZ, PAGE 10

Mauritz

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

I have also held numerous chairmanships at all levels—including Membership, Lillian Campbell Medical Scholarship, Credentials, and Ways and Means—all focused on strengthening membership, promoting community engagement, and uplifting veterans and their families.

In addition to my Auxiliary service, I am an active member of the D7 VFW Riders and serve as Treasurer for the Department VFW Riders, further supporting veteran-focused outreach across Wisconsin.

I am seeking the office of Junior Vice because I believe deeply in the mission of the VFW Auxiliary and the importance of strong leadership. Our work honors veterans, supports their families, and strengthens our communities. I want to help ensure that our programs remain vibrant, our membership continues to grow, and every Auxiliary member feels valued and supported. With experience at every level and a commitment to teamwork, I am ready to continue serving in a role that helps move our organization forward.

With dedication, enthusiasm, and a passion for service, I respectfully ask for your support.

Jennifer Mauritz

Elford for Treasurer

Good day,

My name is Faith Elford and I am running for Department of Wisconsin Auxiliary Treasurer for 2026-2027. I want to see our Department continue and grow in every way it can for a long future, and believe there are changes that can be made to help us get there. It is time that we join many other VFW Department Auxiliaries and combine the offices of Secretary and Treasurer. Not only will that move be more efficient and transparent, it will also be extremely budget-friendly for our diminishing resources.

I have been a member of the VFW Auxiliary 1879 in Fort Atkinson since 2009, joining under the service of my father Kenneth J. Zimmerman, who served during the Korean War. I have been an Officer at all levels, including Auxiliary Secretary; Auxiliary President; District 2 President; and your Circle of Excellence Dept. President in 2022-2023. Currently, I am serving my third term as Dept. Secretary.

Working all my adult life in secretarial- and budget/treasurer-type employment, I hold an Associate's Degree in Accounting from Madison Area Technical College (MATC). After private sector work, I became a Municipal Clerk in the City of Jefferson and later, Fort Atkinson. I also became involved with the Wisconsin Municipal Clerks Association (WMCA), where I held several offices, including President in 2001.

After my term, the WMCA Secretary retired and I became the Executive Director, followed by 20-years of contract work with WMCA under my own business – Faith's Association Coordination & Technical Services, LLC (F.A.C.T.S., LLC). I retired in December, 2023.

All of that experience makes me very well-suited to bring our Department to the most current standards of budgeting, record-keeping, organization and book-keeping. I thrive in a challenging and active environment and am confident that the Department Auxiliary I love, will succeed and thrive as well.

I thank you in advance for your vote at State Convention, to become your next Auxiliary Department Treasurer.

Otto for Treasurer

Sisters and Brothers of the Great Department of Wisconsin,

At this time I would like to announce that

I am seeking Re-election to the Office of Department Treasurer for the Department of Wisconsin VFW Auxiliary.

My Husband earned me my eligibility by serving 3 tours to Vietnam. I have belonged to the VFW Auxiliary #2260 as a Life Member for over 50 years. Within that time I have served as: Auxiliary Secretary for numerous years and 20 years as Auxiliary President; County Council President; 2nd District chairs



leading up to Presidency and 3 terms; Various chairmanships at the Department level; Department President 1995-1996; Continued service in various Dept. positions; 20 years+ representing the Auxiliary on the VFW State Honor Guard. I have always been a mentor to many and will always be here to give assistance.

Ray and I own our own company for 20 years were I do the company books. Prior to that I had managed several restaurants were bookkeeping was a part of the job always maintaining financial stability in those businesses.

The veteran is always near and dear – from serving a meal, finding the direction for a veteran to get the help they may need or honoring those that are no longer with us. Growth is only seen when it is done as a 'Team' for there is no 'I' in that word. We will continue to grow this office and move this organization forward into the future. I, do ask for your support and truly will appreciate your vote for the Office of Department Treasurer.

Lenore Otto

McKinney for Chaplain

Hello fellow Auxiliary members, My name is Jody McKinney, and I am honored to announce my candidacy for Wisconsin Department Chaplain for the 2026–2027 year. I would sincerely appreciate your vote and support.

I have been part of the Auxiliary family since 2011, beginning my journey at the Hendersonville, TN Auxiliary 9851, before joining Chetek Auxiliary 10331 after moving to Wisconsin. I joined under the eligibility of my grandfather, Robert Briddick, Jr., who proudly served in WWII. Military service runs deep in my



family, and it is a legacy I hold with great pride. Both of my grandfathers served in the Army during WWII; my stepfather and my uncle, both served in the Navy. My son, Dylan Glenn, continues our family's tradition of service as a member of the Army National Guard and is just five years away from retiring with 20 years of service. Service is simply part of who we are.

Throughout my Auxiliary journey, I have been grateful for the opportunity to serve at every level. I have held the positions of Auxiliary Trustee, Senior Vice President, and President; District Trustee and President; and I am currently serving as Dept. Guard. I have also chaired several programs at the District level, including VFW News, Ways and Means, and Auxiliary Outreach, and at the Department level, I am honored to serve as your Veterans and Family Support Chairman.

Mentorship is one of my greatest passions. I am deeply grateful for the mentors who have guided me, and I strive to pay that forward. The saying "We're only as strong as our weakest link" resonates with me because it reflects the heart of every successful TEAM. To me, TEAM means volunteers working together for our Veterans, sharing accountability, collaborating

with purpose, and standing united with our VFW to maximize our impact.

If I am blessed to serve as your Department Chaplain, I will bring compassion, support, mentorship, and a positive, team-focused approach. I will work to uplift and encourage our members so that together we can rise above any challenge before us. I would be honored to earn your vote at the VFWA Department of Wisconsin State Convention in June.

Sincerely,
Jody McKinney

Nuernberger for Conductor

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the VFW Auxiliary,

I would like to announce that I am seeking re-election as your Conductor for the VFW Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin, and would sincerely appreciate your support and your vote at the Department Convention in June.

I am proud of my eligibility through my grandfather, Alfred "Pete" White, who served our country during World War II. He was also the first Post Commander of Klossner-Dietzler Post 5729 in Medford, Wisconsin. His service and dedication to Veterans and our community are the reasons I am honored to be a part of this great organization.

Since becoming a member in 2015, I have had the privilege of serving in many capacities at the Auxiliary, District, and Department levels. These include Auxiliary Treasurer, Trustee, and Chief of Staff; District President, Treasurer, Trustee, Conductor, and Chief of Staff; and at the Department level as Assistant Treasurer, Webmaster, Color Bearer, Assistant Conductor, and Secretary Office Help. These experiences have strengthened my commitment to the mission of the VFW Auxiliary and the Veterans and families we proudly serve.

It would be a privilege and an honor to continue serving you as Department Conductor, a position I truly love and respect. I appreciate your support and ask for your vote for Department of Wisconsin Conductor.

Sincerely,
Jeff Nuernberger

Goss for Guard

Hello, my name is Kimberly Goss.

I am a Life Member of VFW Auxiliary 10406 in Cochrane–Buffalo City, and I humbly ask for your vote for the Department of Wisconsin Auxiliary Guard at the 2026 Convention in Rothschild.

My commitment to service has been shaped by both my community involvement and my deep connection to the military family life. I have proudly served as an EMT and supported Veterans and their families through volunteer leadership, including serving as the Winona Family Support Group Leader during deployment—an experience that strengthened my passion for this mission. My dedication to the VFW Auxiliary comes from lived experience. I understand the sacrifices of service members and their families, and I am committed to ensuring they are supported, recognized, and never forgotten.

I come from a proud military family. My husband is a retired Command Sergeant Major, my daughter served 18 years in the United States Air Force, and we continue to have family actively serving today. My eligibility in the Auxiliary is through my husband and daughter, both Combat Veterans and members of VFW Post 10406.

Within the Auxiliary, I have served at both the Auxiliary and District levels, including roles as President, Senior Vice President, Secretary, Trustee, and Scholarship Chairman. I am also currently serving as the Dept. Chairman for the Lillian Campbell Medical Scholarship. These positions have given me valuable leadership experience and a strong understanding of our programs and mission. As I continue to move up the chairs, my goals are clear: to strengthen our Auxiliaries through mentorship and unity; to promote and grow our programs; and to inspire participation at every level. I believe in leading with faith, integrity, and purpose—building a future where every member feels valued and every Veteran and family we serve feels supported. My vision is to encourage growth, increase engagement, and carry forward the mission of the VFW Auxiliary with pride and compassion.

I humbly ask for your vote for the Department of Wisconsin Auxiliary Guard at the 2026 Convention in Rothschild.

With heartfelt gratitude,
Kimberly Goss



**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN**



Journey to 100 Years



The 100th Anniversary Committee would like to make a brief history booklet about the Department of Wisconsin and the Auxiliaries that make it what it was and is today. An example could be how Auxiliary members hauled cans of water to wash the floor as they didn't have water at the club or another Auxiliary held lunches at farm auctions and worked out of milk houses and garages with no heat in the winter.

In order to do this, we need your input. Brief paragraphs about past and current Auxiliaries are needed. Information should be sent to Rita Byers on or before May 15th at rabyers66@gmail.com with 100th Anniversary Booklet as the subject.

Also, members who advised they have past uniforms and mannequins or dress forms to display them, please be sure to bring them to the Convention.

Thank you.

100th Anniversary Committee

CONVENTION

Renee Simpson
for State Commander
2026-2027

"Never Forget the Sacrifice"



- Proven supporter of Veterans, Service Members and their Families
- Committed to leveraging our historical knowledge and experience for the future of the VFW

VOTE Renee Simpson
At the 2026 State Convention
Saturday, June 13

Dept. of Wisconsin 105th VFW Convention 101st VFW Auxiliary Convention



June 10 – 13, 2026
Holiday Inn & Suites/Cent. WI Expo Ctr.
1000 Imperial Dr.
Rothschild, WI 54474

- Use QR Code at right to register online and make your hotel reservation (May also print form and mail check to HQ)
- Registration Deadline: May 22, 2026
- VFW and Auxiliary members attending as Voting Delegates must register, and ensure they are submitted as a Delegate. VFW also pays a Delegate Fee.



EVENTS OF NOTE

- Joint Memorial Service – June 10, 4:30 pm
- Social @ Post 1638, Merrill – June 10, 6:00 pm (Food, drink and transportation on your own)
- VFW Past Cdrs' Lunch – June 11, Noon (pre-register)
- Auxiliary Lunch – June 11, Noon (pre-register)
- Joint Awards Celebration – June 11, includes: 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Program
- Women Vets Breakfast – June 12, 7:30 am (pre-register)
- Auxiliary Club Lunch – June 12, Noon (pre-register)
- All-State Banquet – June 12, Military/Formal Attire – 5:00 pm Cash Bar, 6:00 pm Banquet (pre-register)

Note the full Agendas (Subject to change) in the pages that follow. See You In Rothschild!

NOTICE

**VFW Proposed Resolutions
and Bylaw Amendments
will be posted by June 1
in the MEMBERS ONLY
SECTION at
VFWWI.ORG.**

RE-ELECT



THOMAS E. HEATH
STATE QUARTERMASTER 2026-2027
NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER 2027-2031

ELECT GEORGE STOEBER



**State Senior Vice
Commander 2026-2027**

"I am extremely proud to be a member of the VFW, proud of my service in the United States Navy, proud to call each of you my Comrade, and honored to continue my leadership service to the Veterans of Wisconsin."

Thank you for your continued support.
"Wisconsin Remembers"

CONVENTION

105th VFW Convention

June 10 – 13, 2026

Holiday Inn & Suites/Cent. WI Expo Ctr.
10101 Market St., Rothschild, WI 54474

AGENDA

(Agenda and Room Locations Subject to Change)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2026

Attire for C of A/Committees: VFW Bus. Casual
(Collared Shirt/Polo & Slacks) & Fun Meters!

- 11:00 to 3:00 pm **Registration, Credentials, and Poppy Displays**
- 12:00 to 5:00 pm **Vendor Tables (Convention Center Hallways)**
- 1:00 to 1:45 pm **Wisconsin VFW Foundation Meeting: (Salon C)**
- 2:00 to 4:00 pm **Council of Administration – (Salon C) Approval of Convention Rules**
- 4:30 to 5:30 pm **Joint Memorial Service – (Grand Ballroom)**
- 6:00 pm **VFW & Auxiliary Night Out at Merrill VFW Post 1638 (own transportation)**
- Pizza and salad bar for \$10. Wear your most patriotic attire!

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2026

Attire for State Officers: VFW Bus. Casual
(Nat'l. Home Polo encouraged) & Fun Meters!

- 7:30-11:30 am & 1:30 to 3:00 pm **Registration, Credentials, and Poppy Displays**
 - 8 am to 5 pm **Vendor Tables (Convention Center Hallways)**
 - 8:00 to 8:30 am **Opening of VFW Convention (Salon C)**
Open Meeting
Presentation of Colors
Opening Prayer
Pledge of Allegiance
Post Colors
Roll Call
Reading of Convention Rules
Credentials Committee
Intro of National Representative
Reports (Breaks as Needed)
Convention Committee
Service Committee
Finance Committee
WI VFW Foundation
 - 8:30 to 10:00 am
- Commander Ty Letto
 State Honor Guard
 Chaplain Jordan Tilleson
 Commander Ty Letto
 State Honor Guard
 Adjutant Adam Wallace
 Judge Advocate Nick Webster

 Commander Ty Letto
 Wayne Woodman – Chair
 Phil Landgraf – Chair
 Jim Cairo – Chair
 SVC Renee Simpson – Sec/Treas

- 12:00 to 1:30 pm **Past CDRs' Club Luncheon – Ticketed Lunch** or lunch on your own.
- 2:00 to 4:30 pm **Training/Seminars (Salon C) Topics TBD**
- 6:00 to 7:00 pm **Joint Awards Celebration Cocktail Hour (Grand Ballroom)**
- 7:00 pm **Joint Awards Celebration Program (Grand Ballroom)**

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2026

Attire for State Officers: VFW Bus. Casual
(State CDR Shirt encouraged) & Fun Meters!
Attendees are encouraged to wear their Red One-member recruited T-shirts!

- 7:30-1:30 am & 1:30 to 3:00 pm **Registration, Credentials, and Poppy Displays**
 - 7:30 to 8:30 am **Women Veterans Breakfast (Room TBA) -Ticketed Breakfast**
 - 8:00 to 5:00 pm **Vendor Tables (Convention Center Hallways)**
 - 8:00 to 8:30 am **General Session, Cont. (Salon C)**
 - Reopen Meeting
Roll Call
Credentials Committee
Charter, Bylaws and Resolutions Report
 - 8:30 to 10:00 am **Guest Speakers**
 - 10:00-10:30 am **Break**
 - 10:30-11:00 am **Nomination of State Officers**
 - 11:00 to 12:00 pm **District Caucuses with State Officer Candidates for 2026-2027**
 - 12:00 to 1:30 pm **Lunch – On your own & Past State Commanders Luncheon (By Invitation Only)**
- Commander Ty Letto
 Adjutant Adam Wallace
 Adam Wallace – Chair

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

RE-ELECT JORDAN TILLESON STATE CHAPLAIN 2026-2027

- † WI ANG 2001-2010; two tours in Iraq
- † Gold Legacy Life Member of VFW Post 328
- † Post JVC; D2 Trustee & Past JVC, SVC
- † State Legislative Chair 2023-present
- † State Chaplain 2025-present

Dedicated

Passionate

Energetic

“When the burdens of life seem heavy, and they often do, we are reminded to look not inward, but beside us. To the left and to the right stand comrades who understand, who have walked similar roads, who carry their own stories of service and sacrifice. Our fellowship within this organization is not accidental; it is a testament to the enduring strength of shared experience. The kind of camaraderie that reminds us why we came together in the first place.”

**Thank you for your support and
vote at the 2026 State Convention!**



CONVENTION

101st VFW Auxiliary Convention

June 10 – 13, 2026
Holiday Inn & Suites/Cent. WI Expo Ctr.
10101 Market St., Rothschild, WI 54474

AGENDA
(Subject to change)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2026

Attire: Bus. Casual for Attendees/President's Shirt for Officers

| | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| 11:00 to 3:00 pm | Registration and Poppy Displays (Credentials in Meeting Room) | |
| 12:00 to 5:00 pm | Vendor Tables (Convention Center Hallways) | |
| 1:00 to 4:30 pm | Ways & Means Raffle Tables (Hallway) | |
| 11:00 am – 1:00 pm | Credentials in Meeting Room | |
| 10:00 to 11:30 am | Cross of Malta/Floor Practice (State Ballroom) | By Invitation – Officers and Floor Team |
| 11:45 am to 12:45 pm | Lunch on your own | |
| 1:00 to 2:00 pm | Council of Administration Meeting (State Ballroom) | Meeting open to all Members |
| 2:00 to 2:15 pm | Line up in hall for Parade of Flags | |
| 2:15 pm | Convention Opening (State Ballroom) | |
| | Opening Greetings | Patriotic Instructor Sally Lamers |
| | Cross of Malta March | Officers and Floor Team |
| | Call to Order | President Kim McWilliams |
| | Roll Call | Sec. Elford/Cond. Jeff Nuemberger |
| | Auxiliary Ritualistic Opening | Pres. McWilliams & Floor Team |
| | Escort of National Representative | Cond. Nuemberger, Floor Team & Past Nat'l. Pres. Carla Martinez |
| | Escort of other Guests | Conductor and Floor Team |
| | Approval of 2025 Convention Minutes | President Kim McWilliams |
| | Official Communications | Secretary Faith Elford, PDP |
| | Convention Appointments | Printed in Convention Book |
| | Convention Rules | Printed in Convention Book |
| | Announcements | Secretary Faith Elford, PDP |
| | Recess until 8:00 am Thursday | President Kim McWilliams |
| 4:30 to 5:30 pm | Joint Memorial Service (Grand Ballroom) | VFW Chaplain Jordan Tilleson Aux. Chaplain Jennifer Mauritz |
| 6:00 pm | VFW & Auxiliary Night Out at Merrill VFW Post 1638 (own transportation) | - Pizza and salad bar for \$10. Wear your most patriotic attire! |

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2026

Attire: Bus. Casual for Attendees/President's Shirt for Officers

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 7:30 to 11:30 am & 1:30 to 3:00 pm | Registration, Vendors, Poppy Displays, Ways & Means (Hallways) |
| 7:30 to 9:00 am & 12:45 to 2:00 pm | Credentials (in Meeting Room) |

| | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| 8:00 to 11:30 am | Convention Reconvenes (State Ballroom) | |
| | Greetings | COS Sherrie Rosenau, PDP |
| | Roll Call | Secretary Faith Elford, PDP |
| | Program Awards Presentations – Chairmen should be ready to report at any time. | |
| | Veterans and Family Support | Chair – Jody McKinney |
| | Americanism | Chair – Sally Lamers, Pat. Inst. |
| | Auxiliary Outreach | Chair – Karen Janssen |
| | Legislative | Chair – Gail Brown Bensen |
| | Awards (Jeanette Frank) | Chair – Lenore Otto, PDP |
| | National Scholarships (Art) | Chair – JVP Marge Southworth |
| | Department Scholarships – (Lillian Campbell) | Chair – Kim Goss |
| 11:45 am | Auxiliary Plated Lunch (Salon B Room) – Ticketed Lunch | |
| 1:00 to 4:30 pm | Convention Reconvenes (State Ballroom) | |
| | Greetings | Nancy Ustruck |
| | Greetings – Allied Organizations – tentatively | |
| | Program Awards Presentations continue: | |
| | Membership | Chair – SVP Charlene Cobb |
| | Extension/Chief of Staff | COS Sherrie Rosenau, PDP |
| | Youth Activities | Chair – Patty Jansky |
| | Auxiliary Achievement Awards | Chair – SVP Charlene Cobb |
| | Hospital | Chair – Laurie Coffin |
| | Presentation of Hospital Volunteers (tent.) | |
| | Gold Star Parents and Families Recognition | President Kim McWilliams |
| | Draping of the Charter/Memorial Service | Chaplain Jennifer Mauritz; Cond. Nuemberger; Dist. Presidents; COS Rosenau; Musician Jean Miller; Soloist Aimee Viljevac Dept. Treasurer Lenore Otto, PDP President Kim McWilliams |
| | Memorial Address | |
| | Nominations of 2026-2027 Officers and Big Ten Rep & Alternate | |
| | Credentials Report | Chair – Denni Radloff |
| | Announcements | Secretary Faith Elford, PDP |
| | Recess until 8:00 am Friday | President Kim McWilliams |
| | Dinner on your own | |
| 5:00 pm | Joint Awards Celebration Cash Bar (Grand Ballroom) | |
| 6:00 to 7:00 pm | Joint Awards Program (Grand Ballroom) | |
| 7:00 pm | | |

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2026

Attire: Bus. Casual for Attendees/President's Shirt for Officers

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 7:30 to 11:30 am & 1:30 to 3:00 pm | Registration, Vendors, Poppy Displays, Ways & Means (Hallways) |
| 7:30-9:00 am ONLY | Registration & Credentials Open |
| 8:00 to 11:45 am | Convention Reconvenes (State Ballroom) |
| | Greetings |
| | Roll Call |
| | Program Awards Presentations continue: |
| | "Buddy"® Poppy/National Home |
| | WI Veterans Assistance |
| | VFW News |
| | Web Services |
| | Resolutions |
| | Historian/Media Relations |
| | Lucetta Jasinski, PDP Secretary Faith Elford, PDP |
| | Chair – Louise Engness |
| | Chair – Mary Lou Duerr |
| | Chair – Sharon Kamrowski |
| | Chair – Faith Elford, PDP |
| | Chair – Lucetta Jasinski, PDP |
| | Chair - Historian Karen Janssen |

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



MEL ZEHM

Candidate for Wisconsin
VFW State Chaplain
2026-2027



- ★ VFW Life Member, 15 Year Member
- ★ Veteran Advocate, Servant Leader
- ★ U.S. Army Desert Storm Veteran
- ★ Christ Follower, Spiritual Leader
- ★ Post 10818 & District Chaplain
- ★ Consistent, Steady, Trusted

My Commitment To You

I'm excited for the opportunity to become your Department Chaplain. I have been the Post 10818 Chaplain for 12 years and District 9 Chaplain for several years, also serving as the Post and District Youth Essay Contest and State Teacher of the Year Chairman. As a 20-year volunteer for our local church, I've served in many ministries, such as Safety Team and Usher Leader, Teacher of numerous Christian classes, Mentor for youth and adults, and much more. Following Past National Chaplain Peter Hook's direction, my vision is to lead the Chaplaincy program with compassion, encouragement, hope and strong spiritual guidance. Micah 6:8 ESV, says; "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Let's grow together!

"Here to serve those who have served."

James Cairo

CANDIDATE FOR STATE JR. VICE COMMANDER 2026-2027



Why I am running for Jr. Vice Commander:



My vision is to strengthen the Wisconsin VFW by ensuring financial accountability and fiscal responsibility to secure our Department's long-term stability. I am committed to championing family-focused, Veteran-centric initiatives that enhance our organization's role in improving leadership, I will empower local Posts to boost membership, increase fundraising and advocacy, I will amplify the needs of Posts and Districts, raising awareness of the VFW's vital support for our comrades. Additionally, I pledge to bolster our Service Office, advance Legislative priorities, and reinforce membership initiatives, all while upholding the noble mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.



I earned my eligibility for the VFW while in the United States Army while serving in Iraq from 2003-2004, earning the Combat Action Badge and Army Commendation Medal with V Device

I am a Life Member of Rochester Post 11038, since 2014.

I am a Gold Legacy Life Member Since 2022.



VFW Positions held:

- National Bylaws Committee 2025 - 2026
- Department Finance Chair 2023 - Current
- Department Scouting Chair 2024 - Current
 - Depart Honor Guard Member
- Department Commander 2024 - Current
- District Sr. Vice Commander 2023 - 2024
- Distric Jr. Vice Commander 2022 - 2023
 - Post Commander 2023 - 2024
- Post Quartermaster 2016 - 2023 and 2024 to Current

VFW Achievements included:

- All American District Commander Co-Captain 2024 - 2025
 - All American Commander 2023 - 2024
 - All American Quartermaster 3 times
- All State District Commander Captain 2024 - 2025
 - All State Commander Captain 2023 - 2024
 - All State Quartermaster 6 times
 - Assistant Inspector General 2024 - 2025
 - Special Aide - De - Camp 2023 - 2024
 - National Aide - De Camp 2021 - 2022
- Wisconsin VFW Scouter of the Year 2018 - 2019
- Wisconsin VFW Top Recruiter 2019 - 2020 and 2024 - 2025

CONVENTION

105th VFW Convention

June 10 – 13, 2026
Holiday Inn & Suites/Cent. WI Expo Ctr.
10101 Market St., Rothschild, WI 54474

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

| | |
|---|--|
| 2:00 to 4:00 pm | Training/Seminars (Salon C) Topics TBD |
| 5:00 to 6:00 pm | Cocktail Hour Cash Bar (Grand Ballroom) |
| 6:00 pm | All-State Banquet - Military Ball/Formal Attire (Grand Ballroom) |
| SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2026 | |
| Attire for State Officers: Business Attire (Suit) & Fun Meters! | |
| 7:00 to 8:00 am | Registration and Credentials |
| 8:00 am to 12:00 pm | Vendor Tables (Convention Center Hallways) |
| 8:00 to 9:00 am | General Session (Salon C) Reopen Meeting/Salute Colors Roll Call Credentials Committee |
| | Commander Ty Letto Adjutant Adam Wallace |
| 9:00 to 10:00 am | Vote on Resolutions and Bylaw Amendments |
| 10:00 to 10:30 am | Break |
| 10:30 to 11:15 am | Election of 2026 – 2027 State Officers |
| 11:30 am | Closing Remarks – Commander Ty Letto |
| 1:00 pm | Joint VFW/Auxiliary Installation of 2026 - 2027 Officers (Geneva Room) Officers to be installed attire: Business. |
| 30 mins after Installation | 2026 - 2027 Council of Administration Meeting (Geneva Room) |
| 4:00 - 8:00 pm | Commander/President Reception – VFW Post 388, 212 E. Randolph St., Wausau |

101st VFW Auxiliary Convention

June 10 – 13, 2026
Holiday Inn & Suites/Cent. WI Expo Ctr.
10101 Market St., Rothschild, WI 54474

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| 12:00 to 1:15 pm | Auxiliary Club Lunch (Salon B Room) OR Lunch on your own | |
| 1:30 to 4:00 pm | Convention Reconvenes (State Ballroom) Greetings Presentation of Past Department Presidents Final Credentials Report Election of 2026–2027 Officers and Big Ten Rep & Alternate National Representative Remarks Other Remarks Announcements Recess until 8:30 am Saturday | Mary Brown, PDP President Kim McWilliams Chair – Denni Radloff President Kim McWilliams Past Nat'l. President Carla Martinez PDP Club President Faith Elford, PDP Secretary Faith Elford, PDP President Kim McWilliams |
| 5:00 to 6:00 pm | Cocktail Hour Cash Bar (Grand Ballroom) | |
| 6:00 pm | All-State Banquet - Military Ball/Formal Attire (Grand Ballroom) | |
| SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2026 | | |
| Attire: Bus. Casual for Attendees/President's Shirt for Officers | | |
| 7:30 am | Past Department President's Breakfast (Holiday Inn) | |
| 8:30 to 10:45 am | Convention Reconvenes (State Ballroom) Greetings & Meeting Opening Program Awards Presentations continue: Buddy Poppy Display Winners Ways and Means Final Report PDP Club Presentation President's Final Report | SVP Charlene Cobb Chair Louise Engness Chair Jennifer Mauritz President Kim McWilliams |
| 11:00 am | Presentation of Past Department President's Pin Announcements Closing Ceremonies for 2026 Convention | Sherri Rosenau, PDP/Lenore Otto, PDP Secretary Faith Elford, PDP Officers and Floor Team |
| 1:00 pm | Joint VFW/Auxiliary Installation of 2026 - 2027 Officers (Geneva Room) Officers to be installed: Official look | |
| 30 mins after Installation | 2026 - 2027 Auxiliary Council of Administration (State Ballroom) | |
| 4:00 to 8:00 pm | Commander/President Reception – VFW Post 388, 212 E. Randolph St., Wausau | |

Need an Updated Photo of Yourself?

VFW State Photographer Sherri L. Smith has graciously offered her services to any members – VFW or Auxiliary – who would like a new photo of themselves. This is especially for those folks who may not have a photo more recent than graduation, military service or an anniversary decades ago!

The DETAILS:

- Plain backdrop or Flag backdrop available.
- Dress how you want to be remembered – can be casual or more business/formal.
- Cost: \$20 – HALF of which our photographer is going to donate to this year's Joint Special Project.
- A LIMITED NUMBER of time slots for individual or "couple" sittings will be available – be sure to sign up when you REGISTER at Convention. *When the slots are gone, they are gone!*
- Photos will be available to upload from the VFW State website Photo Albums about the end of June/beginning of July.

Don't miss out! Check for the **PHOTO SESSION** sign-up sheet when you REGISTER at Convention. Your kids will be glad you did.

HELP WANTED: Video Editor

We are seeking a creative and detail-oriented **Video Editor** to join our team. The Video Editor will be responsible for assembling recorded footage, graphics, audio, and motion elements into polished video content that aligns with brand standards and storytelling objectives. This role requires strong technical editing skills, creativity, time management, and the ability to collaborate with marketing, production, and leadership teams to deliver engaging multimedia content across digital, social, web, and presentation platforms. Depending on experience, the monthly time requirement isn't expected to exceed 10 hours per month.

Contact Nate Haumschild at nateh@vfwwi.org for more information

HONOR THE HEROES. INSPIRE THE FUTURE.



Support VFW Programs & Chamber Youth Initiatives

FRIDAY
JUNE 19, 2026

AT HILLY HAVEN
GOLF COURSE

Check-in: 8:00am
Shotgun Start: 9:00am

.....
\$600 - Per Foursome
\$150 - Single Golfer
.....

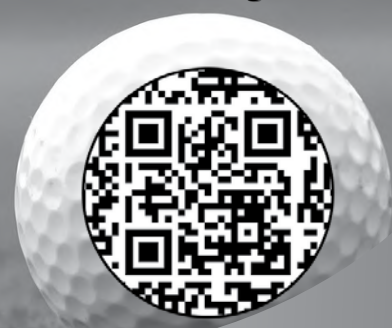
Sponsorships Available

All donations and entries are tax deductible

Register now. space is limited

www.deperechamber.org/events

Scan to Register





Cootie Corner

Listen Cooties,
Thank you all for allowing me to try and see if I can do a better job than last time. I hope I have learned a few things over the past 10 years that will help the Grand to "Increase and Multiply" in Wisconsin and "Keep our Veterans smiling in beds of white". I am happy to say that Cheryl Woodards is the Auxiliary President and we will be working together with the VFW for our special project. More will be announced at the VFW State Convention in June.

Cheryl Woodards
2026-2027
Grand President
608-402-7692
cherylwoodards
8797@gmail.com

Patrick Moran
2026-2027
Grand Commander
920-639-0922
pmoran3147@gmail.com

The next thing for Cooties is going to be at the VFW State Convention for escorting at the Memorial Service. Dress for this is full Cootie attire including jacket, tie or bolo, white pants and gloves. NO medallions please.

Our Cooties of the Year for 2025-26 are Michael Woodards and Julie Harris, and Seam Squirrel of the Year is Manny Salas. Congratulations to all of you for doing an outstanding job last year.

MOC Grand of Wisconsin 2026-27 Officers Cdr. Pat Moran

Sr. Vice Manny Salas
QM/Adj. Ken Patterson
Judge Advocate Brian Rickman
Historian/Inspector Bruce Sorensen

Jr. Vice Wayne Woodman
Chaplain Dave Jacobson
Surgeon Michele Rathke
Past Cdr. Brian Rickman

MOCA Sisters & Brothers,

It is an honor to be your President for the next year. Having said that, let me say I could not do this alone, and I am proud of those sisters who once again stepped up to keep our Grand moving forward.

I look forward to serving with Commander Pat Moran and his MOC team. As with all our organizations, it is extremely important to seek out new members. Keep asking, keep smiling, keep moving forward. Most importantly, keep up the work you do for our Veterans, whether they are in or out of the hospital.

Congratulations to Kathy Matthees, our MOCA Member of the Year and Carol Welch, our MOCA President of the Year.

MOCA Grand of Wisconsin 2026-27 Officers President Cheryl Woodards

Sr. Vice Carol Welch
Secretary Karen Johnson
Chaplain Linda Moran
Guard Cindy Rickman

Jr. Vice Faith Elford
Treasurer Dolores Sorensen
Conductress Rose Jacobson
Trustees Judy Borg, Kathy Matthees, Rita Byers

Wis 827 Deployment Schedule 2026

as of May 1, 2026

| Date | Event Name | Display Address | Time |
|----------|--|--|-----------|
| 16-May | Armed Forces Day | Harley-Davidson Museum 400 W. Canal St. Milwaukee, WI 53203 | 0900-1500 |
| 23-May | Memorial Day Event | Richard I. Bong Historical Ctr. 305 Harbor View Pkwy. Superior, WI 54880 | 1000-1500 |
| 14-June | Flag Day Event | Richard I. Bong Historical Ctr. 305 Harbor View Pkwy. Superior, WI 54880 | 1000-1500 |
| 3-July | Mallards Baseball Game (Non-profit Spotlight) | Warner Park (Duck Pond) 1625 Northport Dr. Madison, WI 53704 | 1300-1800 |
| 4-July | SUBFEST 2026 | Wisconsin Maritime Museum 75 Maritime Drive Manitowoc, WI 54220 | 0900-1600 |
| 30-July | Rock Cty. 4H Fair (Veterans & Military Appreciation Day) | Rock Cty. Fairgrounds 1301 Craig Ave. Janesville, WI 53545 | 1000-1700 |
| 1-2 Aug. | Door Cty. Classic & Wooden Boat Show | Door Cty. Maritime Museum West Waterfront Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235 | 1000-1600 |
| 20-Sept. | Green Cty. Cheese Days | Courthouse Square 1016 16th Ave. Monroe, WI 53566 | 1000-1800 |

COOTIE CORNER

COOTIE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 26-28 **5th 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:** 15 May, 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
 (See Cootie e-mailings for registration and details.)
- July 30 – Aug. 2 **107th MOC Supreme Scratch and 65th MOCA Convention –**
 Nugget Casino Resort, Sparks, NV (Visit lotcs.org for info.)
- September TBD **Tomah Days – Hospital Visit and Scratch** (Watch e-mailings for info.)
- November 5-8 **91st MOC/MOCA Tomb Trek to the Argonne Cross**
 and Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington, VA (Visit lotcs.org for info.)
- January 8-10, 2027 **MOC/MOCA Grand Mid-Winter Conference – Monona, WI**
 (Watch Cootie e-mailings and future papers for info.)

Military Order of the Cootie Grand of Wisconsin 2026 Raffle Results



1st Place – \$500
2nd Place – \$250
3rd Place – \$100
4th Place – \$50
5th Place – \$50
6th Place – \$25
7th Place – \$25

Pup Tent 9 – Janesville
Rick Lantow
Rick Dodge
Rod Fifield
Sara Manke
Cathy Seippel
Cathy Seippel



Thank you to all who sold and purchased raffle tickets to support our work for hospitalized Veterans – "Keeping 'em smilin' in Beds of White"

Connecting the people
of Wisconsin with the
USS Wisconsin
and her crews.



Your support is appreciated!
www.USSWisconsinSub.org



USS WISCONSIN
SSBN 827 ASSOCIATION

SUPPORT OUR SUB!

Scan the QR code or visit:
USS WISCONSIN SSBN 827 ASSOCIATION
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, U.S. Navy and Submarine Veteran

BITS & PIECES

A compendium of things new and noteworthy ...

- **Apologies to District Commander Steve Eisenhower** for misidentifying him in the Red Carpet photo on page 14 in March. He is Commander of District 2.
 - **Walk 4 Warriors – kudos to Lt. Marion C. Cranefield Post 1318 in Madison** for picking up the torch to continue the work of the former Operation Ruck 22, which held its final Ruck last September. **See the Walk 4 Warriors flyer on page 23** and save the date of September 19, 2026 to participate.
 - **Great job** working our Programs! **Aux. 2204 in Rice Lake** donated 14 books to St. Joseph Catholic School for **Patriotism through Literacy**. They also joined forces with their Post to pack food for the Feed My Starving Children initiative.
 - **Congratulations to John J. Deschane** of Crivitz Post 2063, honored by the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Fund as one of 49 recipients of their inaugural **Service Beyond Service Award**. Still serving.
 - **Please note** the return of **Cpl. John J. Ginzl** to Rhinelander on page 7. The public is encouraged to attend and pay their respects.
 - **CONGRATULATIONS to our 2026 Publications Dept. Contest Winners:**
- | Post size | Award | Post #/City | Editor |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Small (Up to 100) | First | 2113, De Pere | Randy Hansen |
| | Second | 6709, Waupun | Kevin L. Iverson |
| | Third | 8338, Barron | Greg Roth |
| Medium (101-200) | First | 1879, Fort Atkinson | F. Elford/N. David |
| Large (201+) | First (tie) | 388, Wausau | Curt Dahlke |
| | First (tie) | 1318, Madison | Gundel Metz |

Stay tuned for the results of the VFW National Publications Contest!

FROM THE EDITOR

“The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives.”
~ Tony Robbins
American Author
and Speaker

As Volume 43 is completed, and my 13th year as Editor come to a close, I hope you have continued to partake of our WI VFW NEWS, finding items and ideas that Inform, Inspire and Invite. My thanks to Commander Letto for the appointment, and my awesome NEWS Chairman SVC Simpson for your support and trust.

My continued gratitude also to those who never hesitate to share their events and stories in these pages. As you well know, the NEWS doesn't exist without that communication and sharing. And the fact that we get so many thoughtful columns, high-quality items and great photos speaks volumes about our Department.

Congratulations to the six Posts that submitted their newsletters for the Annual Publications Contest. The winners are next door in “Bits and Pieces”. No news at press time on the result of the National Contest, but stay tuned and we'll get that out electronically and at Convention. Last year, four of our entries took home National recognition, so

Marla Morgan
Editor



715-384-2500
wivfweditor@
gmail.com



here's to repeating that.

If you've made it this far to page 17, you've hopefully seen a lot of info on upcoming events, most notably our State Convention, June 10 – 13 in Rothschild. Not many days remain to register for the deadline of May 22, so get that done right away. Remember, any and all members in good standing, are welcome to attend any or all parts of the Convention as your life permits. And the location is an easy trip for many, so we hope to see you there! By the way, if you paged through to get to this page first (lol), you'll want to go back to pages 11-15 to get the details.

It's been a great year and we've had many achievements along the way to celebrate, but there are many more still in store: our All-State Winners; more Student Scholarship recipients; our Top Recruiters; our extraordinary Public Servants, the list goes on. See you at Convention!

WI VFW NEWS BOOSTER

This program is for individuals, Posts, Auxiliaries, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and others 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

\$5,000+ - VISIONARY

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 _____

City, ST Zip _____ Phone _____

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

THANK YOU NEWS BOOSTERS

We are grateful for your support
to keep us publishing!

INNOVATORS

Editor Marla J. Morgan
In honor of Past Editor
“Knot” Knudson
Edwin Frohmader VFW Auxiliary 1879
– Fort Atkinson

ADVOCATE

Ignite Dispensary & Cigar, Tomah

CHAMPIONS

Denmark Auxiliary 6705
Plover Auxiliary 10262
Rita Byers, PDP

SUPPORTERS

Ann Wirth
Auxiliary 9156, Sheboygan
Chippewa VFW Auxiliary 1038
Dist. 7 VFW Auxiliary
KPR Brokers, Plover
Mueller-Hintz Auxiliary 1866
Nancy Malewiski
VFW Post 6550, Strum

FRIENDS

Athens Auxiliary 8527
Auxiliary 1908, Oshkosh
Bob Pfefferkorn
Donna Laux
Jody McKinney
Lerline Rochocki
Linda Reitzner
Marion Dahlke
Sally Lamers

OTHER

Anonymous
Kathleen Budzinski

2026-2027 Program Year VFW & Auxiliary Kickoff

Friday-Saturday, July 10-11
Stoney Creek Hotel
3060 S. Kinney Coulee Rd.
Onalaska, WI 54650
608-781-3060

Tentative Schedules
(Subject to change)

VFW

(All sessions open to all members;
Dress Code: VFW Business Casual - Polo/Slacks)

Friday, July 10

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9:00 – 9:15 am | Opening/Introduction |
| 9:15 – 11:00 am | Committee Meetings |
| 11:00 am – Noon | Program Book Review |
| Noon – 1:30 pm | Lunch – <i>on your own</i> |
| 1:30 – 3:30 pm | HQ Orientation (Bring laptop, etc.) |
| 4:00 pm | Closing of Friday sessions |
| 5:00 – 6:00 pm | Joint VFW/AUX Special Project |
| 6:00 pm | Dinner & Kickoff Event |

– **Paid reservation required**

Saturday, July 11

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 9:00 am | Open Meeting |
| 9:00 – 10:30 am | Committee Reports & Business |
| 10:45 am – Noon | Inspection Training |
| Noon – 1:30 pm | Lunch – <i>on your own</i> |
| 1:30 – 3:00 pm | Training – Membership, etc. |
| 3:15 – 3:45 pm | Line Officer Remarks |
| 3:45 – 4:00 pm | Commander's Closing Remarks |

AUXILIARY

(All sessions open to all members;
Dress code: President's Shirt/Business Casual)

Friday, July 10

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 10:00 am – Noon | Hospital Committee/VAVS Meeting |
| Noon – 1:00 pm | Lunch – <i>on your own</i> |
| 1:00 – 4:00 pm | School of Instruction (<i>Open to all</i>) |
| | • District Presidents and Vice Presidents |
| | • Running an Auxiliary Meeting Training |
| | • Other topics and questions |
| 4:00 pm | Closing of Friday sessions |
| 5:00 – 6:00 pm | Joint VFW/AUX Special Project |
| 6:00 pm | Dinner & Kickoff Event |

– **Paid reservation required**

Saturday, July 11

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 8:30 am – Noon | Program Chairmen Promotions |
| Noon – 1:00 pm | Lunch – <i>on your own</i> |
| 1:00 pm | Membership Kick-off |
| 1:30 – 3:30 pm | Council of Administration (<i>Open to all</i>) |
| 3:30 – 4:00 pm | Closing remarks |

2026-2027 Program Year Kickoff

State Commander
Renee L. Simpson
Never Forget the Sacrifice

Dept. President
Charlene K. Cobb
An Anchor for Veterans

As we conclude the current Command year, it's time to set our sights on the Kickoff for the next one. While the sessions focus on preparing the newly-elected and appointed leadership for their roles in the coming year, ALL sessions are open to attendance by any member in good standing. This one may be especially helpful to newer members and/or those considering stepping up to District and/or Department offices in the future.

Make your reservations, and come learn about next year's Program goals and Joint Special Project and of course, meet the new Commander and President!

2026-2027 Program Year VFW & Auxiliary Kickoff

Friday-Saturday, July 10-11, 2026

Stoney Creek Hotel
3060 S. Kinney Coulee Rd., Onalaska, WI 54650 • 608-781-3060

- Room rate is \$110 + tax – **Group Code: 2026 VFW**
- **Deadline for room block is June 11, 2026.**

Program Kickoff Meal Reservations

NAME: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/ST/ZIP: _____ **PHONE:** _____

Friday, July 10 – 6:00 pm – Roasted Chicken, Sirloin Tips, Yukon Mashed Potatoes, California Blend Gardent Salad – \$53.00

_____ @ \$53 EACH = \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL = \$ _____

- **Please make check payable to VFW-Dept. of WI, earmarked "Kickoff"**
- **Mail to: VFW Dept. of WI, PO Box 6128, Monona, WI 53716-0128**
- **Or scan the QR Code, complete the reservation and pay online.**



- **Reservations MUST be received by June 19 – no exceptions!**

2026 – 2027 Shirts Available to Order

Three styles of shirts are available for purchase for the Command Year of Cdr. Renee Simpson and President Charlene Cobb:

- Short sleeve Polo – Men's and Women's styles - \$25
- Long or short sleeve Button-up – Men's and Women's - \$35
- Short sleeve T-shirts – Unisex style - \$15

ALL are available in either Charcoal Grey or Maroon for VFW and/or Auxiliary, and utilize "Wisconsin - Partners in Success". The T-shirt features a screen-printed logo of the crossed flag pin that was developed in Wisconsin! The other shirts feature the saying with both embroidered VFW and Auxiliary logos, since both of our top leaders are dual members of



both organizations.

Complete info and ordering is available NOW at vfwwi.org. Look for the "SLIDER" 2026-2027 Command Year Shirts, and

click on the link to order. The first order for shirts by Convention is closed, but **shirts ordered between May 9 and June 16** will be available at the Kickoff.



ABOVE: Post and Auxiliary 1318 rolled out the red carpet (again!) to welcome our National President. Quite an honor since they also hosted C-in-C Carol Whitmore last October. From left are: Dept. President Kim McWilliams; Natl. Pres. Lois Callahan; State Cdr. Ty Letto; Aux 1318 President Rose Doucette; and Post 1318 Cdr. Steve Eisenhauer. **AT RIGHT:** President Lois recognized all of the dual VFW/Auxiliary members in attendance with a special memento. Post QM and PSC Gundel Metz is with her at left.



Adventures with Lois Callahan

National President Lois Callahan made her official visit to Wisconsin in early April, and while Spring hadn't quite sprung, at least nothing got cancelled due to snow! The visit included a Welcome Dinner at VFW Post 1318 on Tuesday evening, and an entire day chock-full of activities on Wednesday, starting at Epic Software's Campus in Verona, then moving on to lunch and Troll hunting in Mt. Horeb. The fun day concluded with a visit to Cave of the Mounds in Blue Mounds, west of Mt. Horeb. It looks like a good time was had by all! *Thank you to Dept. Historian Karen Janssen and dual member Tina Flanagan of Post/Aux. 664 for the photos.*



ABOVE: A privately-held leader in electronic medical records software, Epic Software's sprawling Verona campus includes 28 themed office buildings throughout six unique campuses. An abundance of art sourced from local Wisconsin artists is on display everywhere. Here, the Auxiliary group poses in front of a beautiful screen with an extremely lifelike "girl"



AT LEFT: Another part of the tour at Epic in Verona.

AT RIGHT: President Lois (right) and President Kim discover that Elvis hasn't left Verona.



AT LEFT: No, that is NOT a troll on the right...it's Lois Callahan getting into the spirit of the Troll Hunt in Mt. Horeb.

ABOVE: An intrepid group of Troll Hunters pose with their new-found friend, outside of Buck and Honey's where all enjoyed a delicious lunch. From left are: Historian Karen Janssen; PDP Mary Brown; Linda Reitzner; Pat. Inst. Sally Lamers.

Aux. 8068 Recognizes Students



Elementary School students from Wittenberg, Rosholt and Bevent honored Veterans at WVH-King with handmade cards recently and Elderon Auxiliary 8068 presented them with Certificates of Appreciation and Patriotic RAP cards to thank them for their Patriotism. Looks like it was Pajama Day at school! *Thank you Dianne Chaignot.*

NOW Teamwork in Marshfield



Mueller-Hintz Post and Auxiliary 1866 in Marshfield has continued its support of the United Way's Nutrition on Weekends (NOW) Program, packing weekend food bags four different times this year. NOW is a food safety net for children in need when they are not able to access school meals. Most recently, the Post and Auxiliary teamed up with smiling friends from the Marshfield Festival Foods. *Thank you Mary Lou Duerr.*

Post 7694 Retires Flags



Quite the conflagration at a Flag Retirement conducted by Lachmund-Cramer VFW Post 7694 at the launch pad at the Wisconsin River in the Veterans Memorial Park, Prairie du Sac. Here, the youngest participant, Ares Haag, 7 and the oldest (91 years young), Korean War Veteran Roy Gag carry flags of all sizes to the fire. Ares is the son of Megan Haag and grandson of member and Past Post Cdr. Steve Haag. Approximately 1,000 Flags were retired. *Thank you Bart Mauch.*

Celebrating the Seasons in Chippewa Falls



Chippewa Auxiliary 1038 is always ready to celebrate the next season or holiday with our 72 members at the WVH – Chippewa Falls. Here, several of our Auxiliary members holding a "flock" of handmade yellow Easter chick cards, complete with googly eyes! A colorful Easter egg sticker along with happy Easter wishes from the Auxiliary were inside. Fun! *Thank you Patty Jansky.*

Another Food Drive Success in District 8



This is just ONE corner of the large area at the Cotter Family Gathering Center in Wrightstown, site of the second annual VFW Day of Service Food Drive sponsored by District 8 VFW and Auxiliary. Another great project success! We look forward to more coverage of their event in the next issue. *Thank you Karen Janssen.*

Honoring Post 8280 for 50 Years



State Cdr. Ty Letto (right) helped Peplin VFW Post 8280 celebrate a big milestone, presenting their National Golden Anniversary Award to Post Cdr. Patrick Pierce (center left) and Post QM Robert Dietel, as D7 Cdr. Dale Dahlke looks on at left. Four of the Post's seven founding Charter members were also present. Ty said, "Fifty years of impact doesn't happen by accident, it happens because of dedicated comrades who choose to stand together, serve together, and fight for one another. That legacy is our responsibility to carry forward." *Thank you Cdr. Letto.*



Post and Auxiliary 388 Help Ringle Tornado Victims

Burns Post and Auxiliary 388 in Wausau gathered donations for the victims of the recent tornadoes in Ringle. Over 100 houses were damaged and only 42 are inhabitable. In addition to items donated, over \$9,000 was collected. From left are: Auxiliary members Jean Stahl and Rick Stahl; Post 388 Sr. Vice Cdr. Tony Warren; Ringle Fire Chief Chris Kielman; Dept. JVP and Aux. 388 member Marge Southworth; Post 388 Cdr. Dan Southworth. *Thank you Marge.*

MOC 23 Meat Raffle

Smiling MOC and MOCA Pup Tent 23 members at another successful Meat Raffle held at Sidekicks Bar and Grill in De Pere. Looks like a "lousy" time...*Thank you Saly Lamers.*



Day of Service a Team Effort in Janesville



Kienow-Hilt Post and Auxiliary 1621 in Janesville members teamed up with the Marine Corps League (MCL), American Legion, VFW Riders, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assoc. (CVMA), VVA, DAV and JVA, to pack lunch bags at the local food pantry. This project plays a vital role in Janesville, helping children and families supplement their food supplies. Approximately 1,000 food packs were filled. The Post also presented a check for \$1000 to Program Director Maryam Enterline to support the worthy cause. *Thank you Pete Pemrich.*



District 4 Thanks Wisconsin State Fair



Last summer, the Wisconsin State Fair provided District 4 with discounts on tickets and parking passes during the 2025 State Fair VFW Booth event. Recently, a VFW delegation presented the Fair with a Certificate of Appreciation for their support of Veterans and the VFW. From left are: Post 6498 QM Bill Rheingans; Dist. 4 Cdr. Alex Kaleta; Beth Pomije, from the Wisconsin State Fair; VFW State Fair Chairman Doug DeLaurier. *Thank you Bill and Alex.*

Raffle Calendar Winners

| Date | Ticket | Name | City | Prize |
|----------|--------|-----------------|----------------|-------|
| Mar 6 | 6097 | M. Martinez | Plymouth | \$50 |
| | 6550 | A. Erdman | Wis. Rapids | \$50 |
| | 913 | J. Woodcock | Beloit | \$50 |
| | 3967 | B. Popp | Cuban City | \$50 |
| | 9591 | T. Polzin Sr | Porterfield | \$50 |
| | 4574 | P. Sites | Racine | \$50 |
| Mar 13 | 2508 | L. Feltz | East Troy | \$50 |
| | 13023 | M. Deegan | Oregon | \$50 |
| | 7430 | B. Waltczek | Florence | \$50 |
| | 6582 | T. Wolfe | Nekoosa | \$50 |
| | 7756 | K. Kane | Denmark | \$50 |
| | 6039 | S. Scheffen | Cascade | \$50 |
| Mar 20 | 9978 | E. Grundtner | Menomonie | \$50 |
| | 10643 | C. Bradshaw | Cadott | \$50 |
| | 11555 | J. Hoffman | Lyndon Station | \$300 |
| | 9891 | R. Engness | Rice Lake | \$50 |
| | 1372 | J. Keller | Monticello | \$50 |
| | 2707 | J. Perkins | Benton | \$50 |
| Mar 27 | 13949 | D. Mentink | Neshkoro | \$50 |
| | 886 | T. Croni | Beloit | \$50 |
| | 1120 | G. Margelofsky | Mayville | \$50 |
| | 8895 | T. Brabant | Green Bay | \$50 |
| | 9753 | N. Standifer | Eau Claire | \$50 |
| | 3068 | B. Scheidegger | Mount Horeb | \$50 |
| April 3 | 3032 | D. Bettenhausen | Milton | \$50 |
| | 9287 | K. Schorer | Baileys Harbor | \$50 |
| | 2564 | M. Voigt | Waukesha | \$50 |
| | 9565 | T. Finger | Oconto | \$50 |
| | 3292 | B. Trapp | Columbus | \$100 |
| | 3825 | S. Harline | Lancaster | \$50 |
| April 10 | 11400 | S. Fisher | Oshkosh | \$50 |
| | 6166 | R. Schroeder | Sheboygan | \$50 |
| | 134225 | VFW Post 8320 | Brookfield | \$50 |
| | 3043 | D. Evenson | Cambridge | \$50 |
| | 3774 | D. Splinter | Dickeyville | \$50 |
| | 2694 | K. Neis | Benton | \$50 |
| April 17 | 3758 | Legion Post 105 | Shullsburg | \$50 |
| | 12571 | R. Pingel | Chilton | \$50 |
| | 5652 | L. Van Swol | Hartford | \$50 |
| | 6660 | N. Lake | Edgar | \$50 |
| | 98 | T. Pepke | Kenosha | \$50 |
| | 10629 | K. Colvin | Chippewa Falls | \$50 |
| April 24 | 8215 | D. Schultz | Appleton | \$50 |
| | 4755 | D. Bruening | New Berlin | \$50 |
| | 7406 | E. Dagostino | Florence | \$50 |
| | 10912 | J. Mess | Phillips | \$50 |
| | 1473 | T. Robinson | Juda | \$50 |
| | 8213 | M. Welch | Liberty | \$50 |
| April 24 | 5698 | B. Krueger | Brown Deer | \$50 |
| | 8215 | D. Schultz | Appleton | \$50 |
| | 4755 | D. Bruening | New Berlin | \$50 |
| | 7406 | E. Dagostino | Florence | \$50 |
| | 10912 | J. Mess | Phillips | \$50 |
| | 1473 | T. Robinson | Juda | \$50 |
| April 24 | 8213 | M. Welch | Liberty | \$50 |
| | 5698 | B. Krueger | Brown Deer | \$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.

Greetings, VFW members!

I can't express how much I appreciate your leadership providing me with this opportunity to communicate directly with you. Increased communication is key to any hope I have of making progress on two of my main priorities as Secretary - sustaining the strong relationships that WDVA has with our partners and advocating for programs that benefit Veterans in Wisconsin. One of those important benefit programs is our Wisconsin Veterans Homes, located in Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove.

Wisconsin has a proud tradition of caring for military Veterans and their eligible spouses. During my time as Secretary, I've made it a goal to be a regular visitor to our three homes. I look forward to spending time talking with our members, asking about their time at the home, and seeing if there's anything we can do to make it better. I also look forward to talking with the passionate volunteers who do so much for these Veterans. They are a big part of what makes our homes so special.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the overwhelming response to this past February's Valentines for Veterans campaign. More than 40,000 Valentine's Day cards were sent in from across the country and as far away as Germany. I visited King and Union Grove to hand-deliver gift bags filled with Valentines made by elementary students, community groups, churches, businesses, and of course, several VFW Posts. The

James Bond

Secretary,
Wisconsin
Department of
Veterans Affairs



smiles on the residents' faces as they read those cards are something I won't forget. My thanks to all who took the time to create and send such heartfelt appreciation for our Veterans.

Another thing that sets our homes apart is the variety of activities we can offer residents. Our dedicated staff go above and beyond to provide our members with a wide variety of opportunities to engage their minds and bodies, including music and entertainment in

our halls, Packer game-day gatherings, woodworking projects, trips to local zoos and parks, fishing, boating, classic car shows, and so much more.

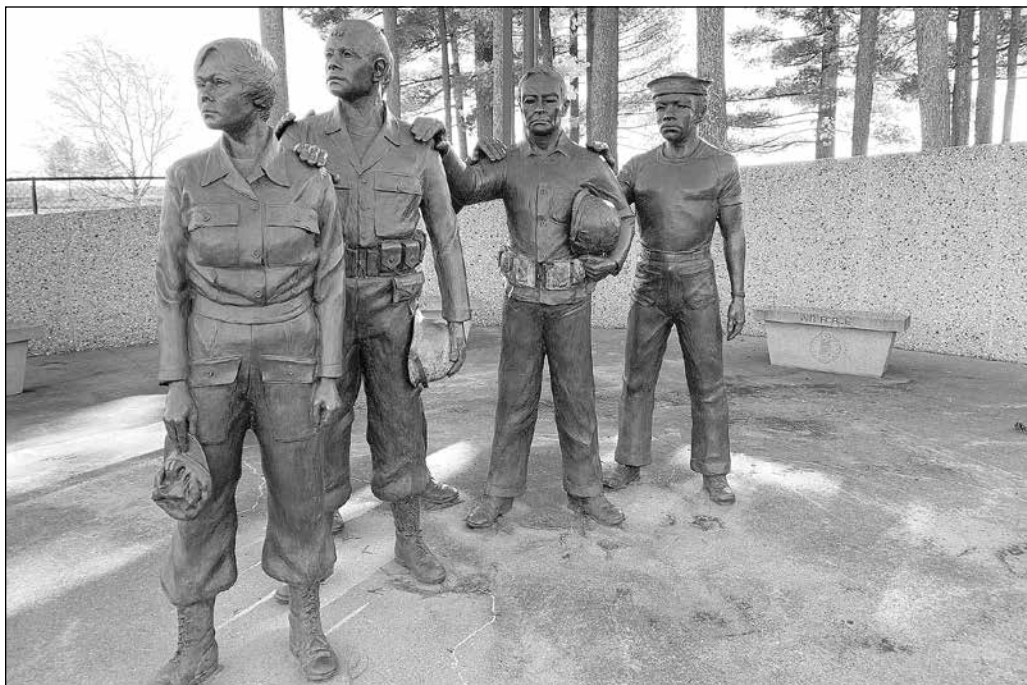
Beyond activities, each campus offers a range of amenities that make our members feel truly at home. Our goal is not only to provide excellent health care, but also to create a lively, welcoming community where Veterans and their spouses can live with dignity, connection, and purpose.

If you are on social media, I encourage you to follow our Veterans Homes on Facebook and see what our activities teams and skilled care staff are doing to make each home a warm, welcoming, and caring community for our members. Even better, I invite you to visit one of our Wisconsin Veterans Homes, take a guided tour, and see firsthand how special they are.

I am grateful for the VFW's steadfast support, volunteerism, and generous donations to our three Wisconsin Veterans Homes. Thank you for all you do for our Veterans and their families.

EVENTS AND DEADLINES

| | |
|----------------|--|
| May 9 | District 4 Meeting – VFW ONLY! – VFW Post 8482 – 9:00 am (Regis. 8:30 am) – at AL Post 434, 9327 S. Shepard Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53154 Rep: JVC Stoeber |
| May 11 | Deadline for Dept. & National Resolution and Bylaw Proposals to State Headquarters (posted on vfwwi.org in Members Only by June 1) |
| May 15 | 990 filing due to IRS for Posts on a calendar year. (Jan 1- Dec 31) |
| May 15 | Deadline for applications for WI VFW Foundation Grants. |
| May 22 | Deadline for 2026 State Convention Registration and Meals (Visit vfwwi.org for info and registration.) |
| June 10-13 | VFW/VFWA Dept. of Wisconsin State Conventions – Holiday Inn & Suites/Central WI Expo Center, 1000 Imperial Ave., Rothschild, WI 54474 |
| June 14 | 2026 Flag Day – Waubeka, WI (See flyer on page 23 and more info at flagdayfoundation.com.) |
| June 19 | Deadline for July Kickoff Meal Registration |
| June 22 | Deadline for July/August 2026 Wisconsin VFW NEWS |
| July 10-11 | Program Kickoff/Council of Administration – Stoney Creek Hotel, 3060 S. Kinney Coulee Rd., Onalaska, WI 54650 (See info on page 18) |
| July 25-29 | 127th VFW/113th VFWA National Conventions – Reno, NV (Visit: vfw.org and vfwauxiliary.org for hotel and registration info.) |
| July 30-Aug. 2 | 107th MOC Supreme Scratch and 65th MOCA Convention – Nugget Casino Resort, Sparks, NV (Visit: lotcs.org for info.) |
| July 31 | Deadline for Post Audits to State Headquarters |
| Sept. 24-27 | Commander-in-Chief Geisler's Homecoming – Milwaukee, WI (Watch vfw.org and July WI VFW NEWS for info.) |
| October 16-18 | 2026 Big Ten Conference – Kalamazoo Radisson Plaza Hotel, Kalamazoo MI (Visit: vfwmi.org for Registration forms and Hotel information.) |



2026 Wisconsin Korean War Veterans Memorial Ceremony

The Village of Plover will conduct the annual **Wisconsin Korean War Veterans Memorial Ceremony** on **Sunday, June 7, 2026**. Music will begin at 10:45 am, with the ceremony starting promptly at 11:00 am. As always, this event will be held **rain or shine**, at the Wisconsin Korean War Veterans Memorial, 1831 Maple Dr. in Plover.

Korean War Veterans and their families, Veterans from all branches of service and the public are invited to attend. Representatives from the Korean Consulate and State of Wisconsin are invited to speak at the program. The Memorial pays tribute to Wisconsinites who fought, died, or are still considered missing as a result of the Korean War.

To get to the Memorial, take Interstate Highway 39 (Exit 153) to County Highway B in Plover. Head west one block to Village Park Dr., turn left on Village Park Dr. and you will be directed to designated parking areas. Restroom facilities will be available within the Sentry Curling Center.

FLAG DAY 2026

SUNDAY ★ JUNE 14 ★ WAUBEKA, WI



JOIN US AS WE HONOR THE U.S. 250th ANNIVERSARY AND U.S. NAVY 250 YEARS OF SERVICE PAST AND PRESENT • AND ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL

PLEASE REGISTER BELOW AND JOIN US ON FLAG DAY!

- 10:00-11:30 a.m. Veteran/Honored Guest Sign-In, Welcome Reception
- 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Parade Line Up • National Flag Day Foundation, Americanism Center • 4200 Valley View Drive
- 11:00 a.m. Prelude Music • NFDf Americanism Center
- 11:30 a.m. Program • NFDf Americanism Center
- 1:30 p.m. Patriotic Parade: Cars, Trucks, Floats, Bands
- 300 p.m. Family Day Kick Off • Food, Games and Fun!
- DUSK-9:00 p.m. HUGE Fireworks Display



All Military Guests of Honor should check in at the Americanism Center building entrance, you will be recognized with a honor packet, reserved seating and beverage tickets. All activities will originate at the Americanism Center, 4200 Valley View Drive, Waubeka, WI.

Join us and tour the all accessible Americanism Center tribute rooms, enjoy reserved, covered seating for the presentation and a seat on an honoree float through Waubeka's parade route.

To register please complete this form by May 23 and send to:
The National Flag Day Foundation
P.O. Box 55, Waubeka, WI 53021, OR flagdayfoundation.com/events
Call 262-483-2576 - Or - Scan the QR Code and registration electronically.



Name: _____
Branch of Service/Title: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____

Please call the National Flag Day Foundation at 262-483-2576 if you have questions.

1.833.839.8387 VFWSTORE.ORG
Prices valid through 8/31/2026
Plus Shipping & Handling



NEW



NEW! 250TH ANNIVERSARY FLAG Navy blue 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 use of such marks is under license.

NEW! 1776 FLAG CAP Five-panel, structured, with hook-and-loop closure. Woven loop label on closure "EST 1899" for the year the VFW was founded. 7201 \$20.00



VFW GRAVE MARKER
Durable Thermo-plastic emblem measures 4 1/4". Metal rod. 3503 \$14.00

U.S. VETERAN GRAVE MARKER
Durable Thermo-plastic emblem measures 6". Metal rod. 3509 \$14.00

U.S. VETERAN GRAVE MARKER
Anodized zinc alloy. Emblem measures 6". Metal rod. 3205 \$19.95

VFW BRONZE GRAVE MARKER
Emblem measures 5". Metal rod. 3500 \$64.00

WALK 4 WARRIORS

September 19, 2026 • VFW Post 1318 • 2740 Ski Lane, Madison

5K • 10K • 18K

8:00 AM CHECK-IN | 9:00 AM KICKOFF

WALK 4 WARRIORS SUICIDE PREVENTION

OUR MISSION

- Walk for Warriors exists to honor our veterans by raising awareness of the tragedy of veteran suicide and providing meaningful support to those who are struggling.
- Through community action, education, and by donating proceeds to local organizations that provide direct services and assistance to veterans, we work to ensure no veteran walks alone.
- Walk for Warriors is a fully volunteer-driven effort, ensuring that the maximum amount of funds raised goes directly to supporting local organizations helping veterans in need.
- Proceeds from this event will be donated to local organizations that help veterans in need.

EVENT DETAILS

- DATE:**
Saturday, September 19, 2026
- SCHEDULE:**
8:00 AM - Check-in
9:00 AM - Kickoff
- LOCATION:**
VFW Post 1318
2740 Ski Lane, Madison, WI
- DISTANCES AVAILABLE:**
5K - Open to all experience levels
10K - A step up challenge
18K - Honor distance representing the 18 veterans lost each day
Participants may walk, run, or complete the 18 lb. Honor Challenge

WHERE THE FUNDS GO

All proceeds from Walk 4 Warriors will be donated to local organizations that support veterans by meeting them where they are and helping them navigate life's challenges when they need it most.



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

- Register to walk or run
- Purchase event merchandise (Shirts, Patches)
- Make a direct donation
- Volunteer to support the event

REGISTER TODAY!

w4vfw1318.redpodium.com/walk-4warriors



WHY IT MATTERS

This is more than a walk. It is a commitment to ensuring no veteran faces their battles alone. It is a chance to come together as a community and make a real impact. It is a reminder that every step forward can help save a life.

★ TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE ★

Follow updates, invite others, and help us spread awareness as we prepare for this important event.
Questions? Contact us at walkforwarriors@gmail.com Walk 4 Warriors

Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

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

Four Critical Questions

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

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

Next Series Begins

.Get Informed .Get Involved .Save a Life

Aug 11

Two Time

Options:

11:30 am or

6:00 pm

Central Time

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

Register Today at

www.RACESuicidePrevention.us

Be the lifeline.



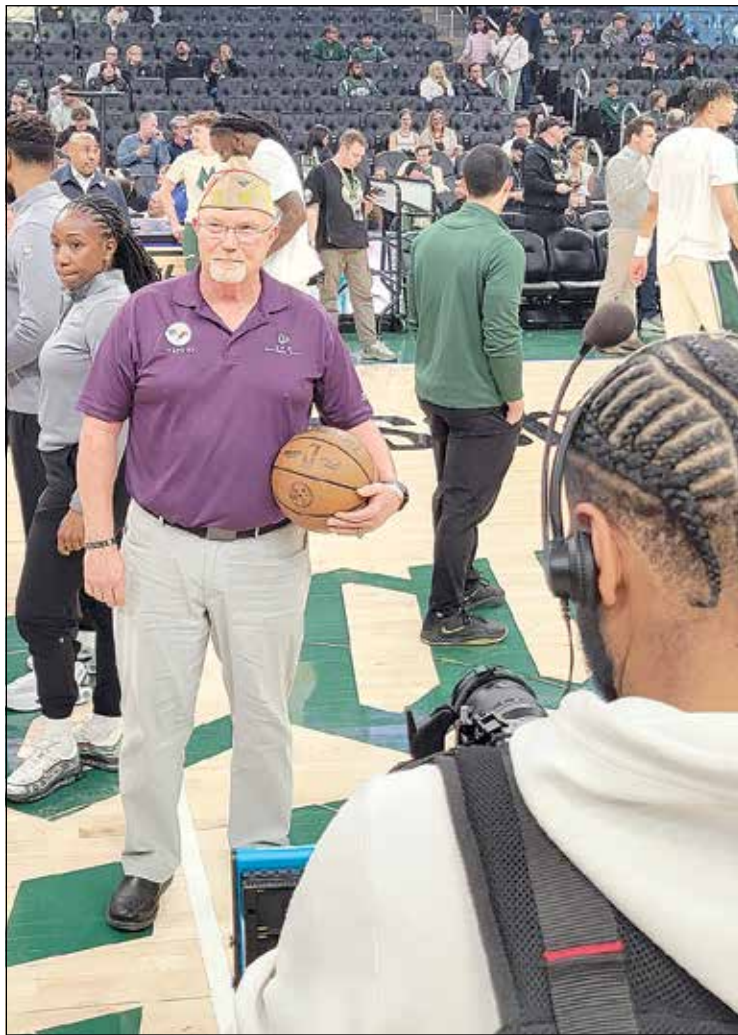
In Partnership With





Visiting Fisher House Milwaukee

State Cdr. Ty Letto and his “better half” Lisa Patterson visited the Fisher House in Milwaukee recently, touring the facility with Executive Director Steven Rose (at left). Ty shared, “What we saw at the Fisher House was nothing short of inspiring. This is compassion in action—removing burdens so families can focus on what truly matters: being there for their loved one. The need is real, and the mission is powerful. This is exactly why we must continue to support efforts like this that make a direct impact in the lives of our Veterans and their families.” Watch for more info on supporting Fisher House Wisconsin as the construction of Fisher House Madison begins in 2026.



Honoring Service on Center Court

The final regular season home game of the Milwaukee Bucks at Fiserv Forum, was extra-special this year as State Commander Letto stepped onto the court to deliver the game ball prior to tip-off. Our Wisconsin VFW Honor Guard also gave an outstanding performance presenting the colors before the game. With approximately 24 VFW members in attendance, comrades also saw the Bucks secure a victory against the Brooklyn Nets, making the night even more memorable. Great visibility for us and the mission.

AT LEFT: There’s a LOT going on at Center Court as Cdr. Letto waits to present the game ball.
TOP RIGHT: The always-impressive State Honor Guard looking extra-sharp on the “JumboTron”.
BOTTOM RIGHT: The big moment – on the BIG screen.



Listening and Leading in Sparta

State Cdr. Ty Letto (left) and other Officers traveled recently to Post 2112 in Sparta, for a powerful Town Hall meeting with Dr. Paul R. Lawrence, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, (center) and his team. Post Cdr. Gary “Mike” Harris (right) moderated the program.
Cdr. Letto said, “The evening stood out as one of the most meaningful engagements of his tenure, as Veterans and Veteran Service Officers spoke candidly about what is working and what still needs improvement within the VA system. When Veterans have a seat at the table and leaders are willing to listen, real progress is possible.”



Cdr. Letto stands near WDVA Secretary James Bond (left) as all watch Gov. Evers sign important Veteran-focused legislation.

“Making it Count in Madison”

The Wisconsin VFW was front and center in the Capitol in April as Gov. Tony Evers signed several critical pieces of Veteran-focused legislation into law. (See page 4 for the list) State Legislative Chairman Jordan Tilleson and Co-Chair Mike “Gunner” Furgal, PSC accompanied the Cdr.
Ty noted, “Since [the Green Alert in] 2018, we have continued to build momentum, strengthen our voice, and prove that when

the VFW shows up united, we deliver results. Working alongside our partners in the American Legion and Disabled American Veterans, we demonstrated what is possible when Veteran service organizations stand together with one voice. These bills represent real, tangible progress for Wisconsin Veterans and their families. This is what happens when strength in numbers is put into action. This is Making it Count in Madison.”