



NEWS 2024



VOL. 41 NO. 4

MISSION FIRST, FAMILY ALWAYS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

Pritchett, Wiese Reps for Mid-Winter

Now that we've celebrated another holiday season, we turn our attention to that fun weekend called the Department Mid-Winter Conference! This year's event is scheduled for February 2 and 3 at the Hotel Mead and Conference Center in downtown Wisconsin Rapids.

This year's National Representatives are VFW National Chief-of-Staff Carey Pritchett of Cookstown, New Jersey, and VFW Auxiliary National District Council Member #11 Laurel Ann Wiese of Horicon, Wisconsin.

Tentative schedules for both groups as well as info about training sessions and other special activities may be found on page 13 in this paper. Note that the VFW Past Commanders Luncheon and the Auxiliary Dutch Treat Luncheon will again be held midday on Friday. Past – and current – VFW Commanders at ANY level are welcome at the Past Commanders Luncheon and the Auxiliary Luncheon is open to any and all Auxiliary members who would like to attend.

There is still time to submit your registra-



Carey Pritchett
VFW National Chief-of-Staff

tion and meal reservations online – but hurry! **The deadline is January 15, 2024, NO EXCEPTIONS.** Visit vfwwi.org or wifwvaux.org for the links. Hotel reservations may still be made directly with the Hotel Mead (715-423-1500) - **deadline for the special rate room block is January**



Laurel Ann Wiese
Auxiliary NDCM #11

10, 2024 or when sold out.

Here's a brief look at our two representatives: Carey Pritchett was appointed National Chief-of-Staff of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. on July 27, 2023, at the 124th VFW National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. He served in the United States

Air Force from 1979 to 1986, and in the Air Force Reserve from 1986 to 2021, earning his VFW eligibility serving in Southwest Asia and Grenada. In recognition of his service, he received the Bronze Star Medal, Expeditionary Medal, and the Southwest Asia Service Medal.

Pritchett joined the VFW in 1984 at Post 6590 in Cookstown, New Jersey, later transferring to Post 5579 in Gibbstown, New Jersey, where he maintains his Bronze Legacy Life membership. He has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District and Department levels, culminating with his election as the Department of New Jersey Commander from 2017 to 2018, in which he achieved All-American Commander status.

On the National level, Carey has served on the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual Committee, and as Special Aide-de-Camp. He is also a member of the American Legion, and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE).

Now retired, Carey and his wife Twila, reside in Cookstown, New Jersey. Their family includes three sons, and ten grandchildren.

SEE MID-WINTER, PAGE 13



Ethel "Rusty" Garbacz
1997-1998 Auxiliary Dept. President

Wisconsin Mourns Rusty Garbacz

Another champion of Veterans has gone to her eternal rest. Ethel "Rusty" Garbacz passed away at the age of 91 in Apache Junction, AZ, on Sunday, December 3, 2023. She served as the 73rd Department President of the then-Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW in 1997-1998, alongside State Commander Robert J. Collins of Green Bay. PSC Collins passed away in April 2022.

Born in La Farge, WI, on October 21, 1932, Rusty as everyone knew her, was a 1950 graduate of Weyerhaeuser High School. She married Joseph Garbacz in August 1951. Returning to her studies in the 1970s, she earned a degree at Mount Senario College in Ladysmith, and later certifications in Nursing Assistance and Media Specialist. Her career paths included 32 years at the Weyerhaeuser Post Office and 21 years in the Weyerhaeuser Public Schools as a Media Specialist.

A longtime Life Member of the VFW Auxiliary to Weyerhaeuser Post 5780, Rusty was an extremely active member at all levels, holding many offices and chairmanships. Following terms as Department Jr. Vice and Sr. Vice President in 1995-1997, her year as President under the theme, "Volunteer with Love", began with an escort of Officers by the Wisconsin VFW State Honor Guard, a much-beloved group that Rusty generously supported in many ways throughout the years.

After a year filled with travels far and wide, some of the notable accomplishments were over 2,100 letters sent to Legislators; Hospital donations of \$132,000 along with 140,000 volunteer hours; and a new Emergency Disaster Program with \$6,622 donated from 168 of the existing 240 Auxiliaries.

SEE GARBACZ, PAGE 15

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VISIT OUR STATE WEBSITE — vfwwi.org

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VFW Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of Wisconsin
4622 Dutch Mill Rd, Madison, WI 53716-4108

2024 Gun Raffle
16 Prizes! 16 Winners!
Combined Guns Valued at \$10,000
Drawing May 24th, 2024 - 11am
VFW Headquarters | 4622 Dutch Mill Rd, Madison, WI
Tickets must be turned in by May 17th, 2024

Tickets:
\$20 each
or
6 for \$100

See back side for list of guns

Disclaimers:
- Guns listed could be changed due to availability at time of drawing.
- Gun winners will be drawn in order by largest value first.
- Winners will be notified by phone.
- Winners MUST go through a firearm background check or opt for cash value.
- Cash value is 75% of gun value.

All winners are subject to all applicable State and Federal Laws.

License# P0004509-A-65269

WI VFW 2024 Gun Raffle

Name: _____ Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Need Not Be Present To Win

02501

DEADLINE:
May 17,
2024!

**Get your tickets at
VFW State HQ; Dept. events;
or any member of the Wisconsin
VFW Council of Administration.**

See vfwwi.org for the prize list and complete rules.

Comrades,

As we reach the halfway mark of the VFW year, I am honored to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment to our cause. Your tireless efforts have made a significant impact on the lives of our Veterans and their families, and I am proud to be part of such a dedicated and passionate community.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting event on the horizon—the Mid-Winter Conference in February. This event is not just for Council members but for all members to join and learn. We will be hosting multiple training sessions and a joint session with our Auxiliary. It's a fantastic opportunity for us to come together, share knowledge, and strengthen our bonds as an organization.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Janesville Post 1621 for hosting their Army-Navy game event. It was an unforgettable experience at an exceptional Post. Additionally, I want to recognize VFW Post 2534 in Wisconsin Rapids for their outstanding program commemorating Pearl Harbor. Your dedication to honoring our history and the sacrifices of our Veterans is truly commendable.

Comrades,

I hope you had wonderful Christmas and New Year holiday celebrations. Your work at the Post and District levels continues to astonish me. The dedication, passion, and commitment from each of you is amazing and I thank you for what you do every day to make a difference in the life of a Veteran.

The first weekend of November, the VFW Leadership attended the Council of Administration in Black River Falls. As usual, we took care of business, however, much of this meeting was focused on training. I want to commend Commander Ramos for putting a focus on training. Professional development of Leadership will be a focus in my command year also.

I had the pleasure of providing training in a discipline called Emotional Intelligence (EI) to the Leadership. Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions. People with high emotional intelligence can recognize their own emotions and those of others, use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, and adjust emotions to adapt to environments. EI gained popularity in the 1995 bestselling book, Emotional Intelligence by science journalist Daniel Goleman. Goleman defined EI as the array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance.

I personally learned the EI discipline in early 2003 and it had a significant impact on me as a leader throughout my career. I believe it positioned me to achieve the highlights of my career. It was an honor to work with our VFW Leadership statewide and share that knowledge with them to help improve their ability to lead this great organization. You can find more information on EI with a simple Google search. I encourage you to investigate it.

Until next time, remember to make it count in everything that you do, because you make a difference in the life of a Veteran every day!

Wishing you all a Happy New Year!

The Mid-Winter Conference in Wisconsin Rapids is just around the corner and I hope to see you all there. The Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy and Teacher of the Year Award lunch should be spectacular. It's a new year, which means spring is on its way and time to focus on what we need to accomplish by the end of our program year.

In March, you will open nominations for your elected Officers. In April, you will have elections and turn in your Delegate (State Dues) report and fees. In May, you will install your new Officers, so they are ready to take the reins in mid-June at the end of the 2023 State Convention in Green Bay. Don't forget to get your Post Election Report submitted as early as you can.

We are currently looking for donations to the following programs:

- Frank Brown Scholarship
- Scout of the Year
- National Home
- Unmet Needs
- Emergency Disaster Relief
- Student Veteran Scholarship
- Hospital
- WI Vet Home – King
- WVH-Union Grove
- Voice of Democracy

Ron Ramos
State Commander



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As we continue to make strides in membership, I urge you to keep pushing forward. Your diligence and enthusiasm have been instrumental in our growth, and we need to maintain this momentum.

It's also crucial to start preparing for the upcoming nominations and elections in the next few months. This is our chance to step up, effect meaningful change within the VFW, and continue serving our Veterans and communities with the utmost dedication.

Let's keep the momentum going, keep striving for excellence, and keep making a difference in the lives of our Veterans. Together, we are a force to be reckoned with, and I look forward to the incredible achievements that lie ahead. Let us remember: *"Mission First, Family Always!"*

Ty Letto
State Jr. Vice
Commander



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Tom Heath
State
Quartermaster



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- Patriot's Pen
- DOT - POW/MIA Flags
- VFW Service Office
- State Commander's Special Project
- Wisconsin VFW Foundation
- Teacher of the Year
- The Bobby Nelson Christmas Fund.

Remember: when sending a donation check to the State Headquarters at P.O. Box 6128, Monona, WI 53716, be sure to write in the memo line to earmark which program should be credited with your donation. 100% of your donations go to the fund you designate for use in that program. Helping Veterans, Veterans' families and supporting our communities is what we do! Please call us at 608-221-5276 for support. Be careful out there while you're waiting for Spring!

STATE OFFICERS

I hope this message finds you well. I hope everyone had an excellent Christmas and New Year's Eve. I wish you all the best for the New Year.

It is with mixed emotions that I share the news of Mitch Woytych's departure from the position of VFW Department Service Officer. Mitch has been an invaluable asset to our organization, and we extend our deepest gratitude for his dedicated service. In light of this, we are pleased to announce that Tim Neary expressed interest in the Service Officer position and he was recommended for the job and his recommendation was approved by the Council of Administration during the December Zoom meeting. Congratulations Tim – we know you will continue your excellent work for our Veterans as VFW VSO.

As we approach the Mid-Winter Conference, there is much to look forward to, including the Red Carpet Awards for membership. We commend everyone for bringing up our current membership level to 91.63%, inching us closer to our goal of 95% by the end of January. While membership recruitment tends to slow down during the holidays, we appreciate the Posts' endeavors to spread holiday cheer to Veterans in homes and hospitals. I know they look forward to seeing us and it is appreciated by all of them.

Let's take a moment to acknowledge the commendable work of our Commander Ron, who, despite the challenges of juggling the responsibilities of Commander and a demanding job as a Vet Tech, has excelled in both roles. Now, more than ever, let's rally behind him by actively participating in membership recruitment. Your support and gratitude will undoubtedly make a difference as we navigate the remaining months of the year.

Thank you for your dedication to the VFW, and let's continue working together to achieve our goals.

Greetings Comrades!

I hope the holiday season has treated you all well, and that you've had time to recharge and connect with your family and loved ones. It's hard to believe that we are halfway through our 2023-2024 year already! Where does time go?! Thank you all for your continued dedication to your communities, Posts, Districts, and State.

Our Mid-Winter Conference is almost upon us. I encourage every member to attend this event. There is great value in attending our Conferences as we provide training, information, and updates to those in attendance, as well as the opportunity to network with other comrades across Wisconsin. You also have the opportunity to meet and connect with your Department leadership. I know this is a "late call" to attend Mid-Winter, and many have plans far out, but consider heeding this call for our State Convention or future Conferences!

I'd like to provide an update and information regarding some partnerships the Department has entered into. The Council of Administration approved these partnerships in an effort to bring more value to your membership, and provide additional services and benefits to you, at no cost.

First, the Council of Administration approved a partnership with Service Member Benefits (SMB) to provide all of our members with a free burial and will kit. This "kit" is delivered by way of an appointment or meeting with an SMB/AIL (American Income Life) representative. While the representative you meet with may offer additional services/coverage, you are under no obligation to make any purchases to receive

Mary Ann Christopherson
State Sr. Vice
Commander



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Adam Wallace
State Adjutant



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your free information. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may reach out to me, or you can contact SMB directly at contact@servicememberbenefits.com

Additionally, the Council of Administration has renewed our Department's Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) policy directly with AIL. By now you should have received a letter in the mail explaining this benefit to you. No action or response is required on your part to be covered under this benefit, as you being a member of the Wisconsin VFW is what qualifies you for this benefit. If you choose to return the response card, AIL will contact you about your AD&D policy, and may offer additional services/coverage. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about your AIL AD&D policy you may reach out to me or Wisconsin VFW's policy manager Amanda Mlinaz at akmlinaz@ailife.com

As we are now at the halfway point. Please don't lose your motivation and dedication. We must carry our momentum on in our programs, membership, and service to our communities and Veterans. I hope to see many of you in a few weeks in Wisconsin Rapids.

Hello Comrades,

This year is rolling down the track like a fast freight. I hope that everyone had a blessed time over the holiday season. This year is half over, can you believe it? Now that the Christmas and New Year holidays are a memory, it is time to press ahead.

How many Posts have made their reservations for the Mid-Winter Conference? How many Posts will meet the qualifications for the Red Carpet Award? There are some great rewards for achieving the Red Carpet AND attending Mid-Winter.

You can attend without qualifying for Red Carpet. It is a great way to connect and network to see what is working well for other Posts. It will also give you some insight on how the VFW is run on the State level. Remember, even if you get the Red Carpet Award, don't let up on membership.

We should also be looking beyond Mid-Winter to the end of the year and All-State qualifications. Everything is doable, just take it a piece at a time. Now is the time for Posts to pull together to accomplish the mission of the VFW.

How many Posts in the state have welcomed new members and then turned around and asked them to be Post Commander? We are losing our older members and with that we are losing all that experience. It is necessary to find and train our future leaders. See if you can get the younger members *engaged and trained* for Post positions. Bring those younger members to the Mid-Winter Conference – this is their organization too. Make them feel a part of it, so they can take ownership of it too.

During the first half of the year I have traveled to many Post and District meetings, and I have enjoyed them all. I'm looking forward to finishing strong.

Mitch Cline
Chief-of-Staff



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Greetings Comrades!

Let's continue our Whole Health Journey. This column will cover the last four categories of self-care listed around the "me" in the Circle of Health. Those final categories are: **Recharge, Family, Friends & Co-workers, Spirit & Soul, and Power of the Mind.**

Recharge refers to sleep, rest, and relaxation. Like our cell phones and other electronics, our bodies need enough time to recharge to live well and enjoy our lives. Ensuring we get enough sleep can help improve our physical and emotional health. Your mind and body need enough sleep to work properly.

Relationships are essential to our emotional, mental, and physical health. Connections to **Family, Friends & Co-workers**, and even animals, can reduce stress and improve well-being. If you are looking for ways to connect with more people around you, consider the following: volunteer, consider adopting or fostering a pet, join an online community with similar interests as you, help organize community events by joining a committee or board, take a course or join a hobby or interest group. *Perhaps, become more involved with the VFW?*

The Whole Health approach to **Spirit & Soul** address-

Angela
Thomsen
State Surgeon
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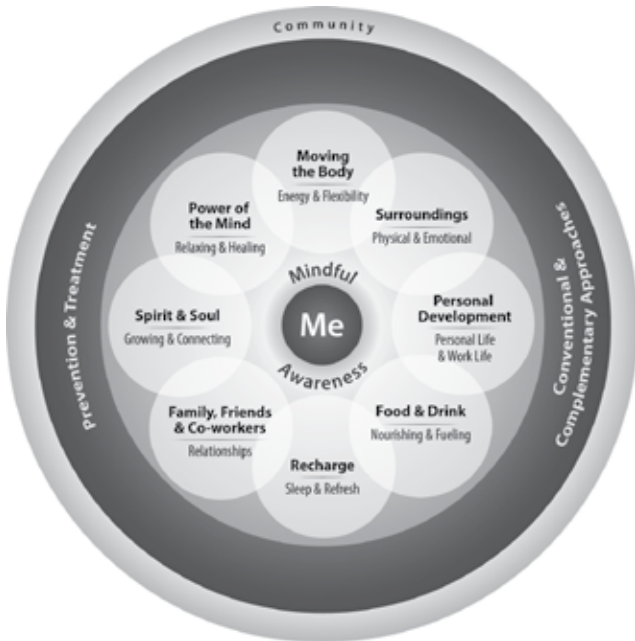


es forgiveness, coping, spiritual anchors, and different ways of spiritual practice. Having a sense of purpose and meaning can help strengthen you during difficult times. Spiritual health can mean different things to each individual. Still, it generally involves connecting with something or someone bigger than yourself and living based on what matters to you and gives your life meaning.

The following list is some ways to focus on **Spirit & Soul** as part of your self-care: Be clear on what you value, seek a spiritual and/or religious guide, set aside regular times for spiritual activities, practice gratitude, practice self-compassion, work the 12 steps, try mindful awareness activities, use a spiritual anchor.

Power of the Mind. Your mind and body affect each other, probably more than you realize. The relationship between your mind and body can improve your health or worsen it. Mood and thinking patterns can affect your health and well-being positively or negatively. Research has shown that mind-body approaches such as relaxation, breathing, or guided imagery can help treat many health conditions.

This concludes the eight categories of self-care. For



more information, please schedule an appointment with your VA primary care physician or visit www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/. Until next time, stay happy and healthy!

Comrades,

I hope this latest edition of the *VFW NEWS* finds you well. The State Capitol has been very busy these last couple of weeks, as the Legislative Session is ending. **Sadly, we are canceling Veterans Day at the Capitol that was planned for Wednesday, February 21, 2024 because the Wisconsin Legislators changed the session schedule, and are planning to end the session before that date.**

On a better note, we launched our new **Voter Voice System** so the Legislative Committee can send everyone regular updates on VFW Legislative activity and encourage members to reach out to their State Representatives and State Senators. I have had a lot of positive feedback from our initial broadcast and I'm excited to ramp up our use of the system! If you didn't see the Legislative email, please go to the VFW Department of Wisconsin Landing Page to sign up for alerts and stay informed. [See **Voter Voice info below.**]

Jordan
Tilleson
State Legislative
Chair
WFW
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Remember, this landing page can also be used to signup any **friends or family** to help us urge lawmakers to support our causes. There has been a lot of movement on our priority bills and I am hoping to have good news for everyone at Mid-Winter! Check your email for future updates and remember to invite your State Representatives and State Senators to your local events! Get involved and make a difference!

2024 Publication Guidelines for Candidates

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

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

Standard deadlines apply –

- March 2024 paper Deadline of February 16, 2024
- May 2024 paper Deadline of April 5, 2024

Ad rates – "member and candidate discounted" with sizes shown are:

Price	Size	Width x Height
\$600	Full Page	10.25" x 15"
\$325	½ page	10.25" x 7.5" — Horizontal
\$200	¼ page	5" x 7.5" — Rectangle
\$125	1/8 page	5" x 3.75" — Rectangle
\$85	1/16 page	2.5" x 3.75" — Vertical

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

Wisconsin VFW News Production Schedule

Mid-Winter Conference • February 2-3, 2024

March Issue Vol. 41, No. 5 Deadline to Editor: February 16, 2024

May Issue Vol. 41, No. 6 Deadline to Editor: April 5, 2024

Department Convention • June 12-15, 2024

Wisconsin VFW News

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I.S.S.N. #1061-4591 U.S.P.S. #007787
Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars

Planning for Upcoming Meetings

- **2024 Department Mid-Winter Conference**
Fri.-Sat., February 2-3, 2024
Hotel Mead & Conference Center • \$82 Sgl./Dbl. + taxes
451 E. Grand Ave., Wis. Rapids, WI 54494 • 715-423-1500
- **2024 Department Convention**
Wed.-Sat., June 12-15, 2024
Tundra Lodge & Conference Center • \$100 + taxes
865 Lombardi Ave., Green Bay, WI 54304 • 920-405-8700
- **2024-2025 Program Kickoff/Council of Administration**
Fri.-Sat., July 12-13, 2024
Stoney Creek – La Crosse • \$110/120/125 + taxes
3060 S. Kinney Coulee Rd., Onalaska, WI 54650 • 608-781-3060
- **2025 Department Mid-Winter Conference**
Fri.-Sat., February 14-15, 2025
Best Western Premier • \$125 + taxes
1 N. Main St., Oshkosh, WI 54901 • 920-230-1900
- **2025 Department Convention**
Wed.-Sat., June 11-14, 2025
Madison Marriott West • \$124 + 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.

ADOPT-A-UNIT – “GETTING BACK TO OUR ROOTS”

There is one thing about being a member of the VFW and Auxiliary that we have in common with our military: long periods of time away from our loved ones. As the deployment tempo increases once again in Wisconsin, members of all organizations should be stepping up to ensure a better quality of life for all involved in safeguarding our freedom.

We have a prime opportunity to support service members and their families using the Military Assistance Program (MAP). We understand better than most what faces those deploying and those at home keeping the fires burning. There is no time like the present to bolster a strong relationship with those who are currently serving.

As a volunteer for the Soldier & Family Readiness Group for the 32D Infantry Brigade Combat Team, I am thankful for the opportunity to share my knowledge with soldiers and their families. Adopt-a-Unit is a prime step to ensure that our “grassroots” efforts are successful. I love how sharing our knowledge improves the lives of others. There are a number of programs that can help us be successful.

1. Legislative Program
 2. National Military Services
 3. VFW “Sports Clips Help a Hero Scholarship” Program
 4. Unmet Needs
 5. VFW & County Veteran Service Offices.
 6. Wisconsin National Guard – Joint Resilience & Wellness Directorate

Not sure how to get an Adopt-a-Unit program off the ground? Below is just one item of the wealth of resources available at vfw.org/community/troop-support:

Renee Simpson
MAP/Adopt-a-Unit
Co-Chair
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Adopt-a-Unit FAQ

The Adopt-a-Unit Program assists in building relationships between the VFW and our military members.

Who is Eligible to Adopt-a-Unit:

- VFW Posts
- VFW Auxiliary
- Combination of Both

Why you should Adopt-a-Unit:

- To support your local military members and their families. As VFW/Auxiliary members, you understand the challenges military members and their families face and the support they need.
- To help connect military members with the vast network of resources the VFW has available. Conducting Adopt-a-Unit activities is a great recruiting opportunity.

How to find a military unit:

- Contact your local National Guard, Reserve and Active Duty units.
- Access the “Find a Unit Flyer” which is available at vfw.org/TroopSupport/
- Speak with other VFW Posts and Veterans Organizations who may have knowledge of units in the area.

When to adopt a unit:

- There is no time like the present and our military members and their families need your assistance now more than ever. Your assistance is equally important whether the unit is home or deployed overseas.

What kind of activities should you plan:

- Welcome Home, Deployment, Yellow Ribbon, Family Day, Dinner/Picnics, Holiday Parties, Meetings/Briefings and Funeral/Memorial Services to name a few.
- You are only limited by your imagination when it comes to supporting our troops and their families.

Where to get assistance for Adopt-a-Unit Questions:

Call the Military Assistance Program Office at 816.756.3390

Email the MAP Office at m.a.p@vfw.org

How to Apply:

Submit an Adopt-a-Unit Application to the MAP Office, the form is located on the VFW website at www.vfw.org/TroopSupport/

When to Report:

Submit a minimum of one AAU Activity Report annually per adopted unit.

Your first report is due at least one year from the date the application was received. You can also submit a report after every event that you conduct with your adopted unit.

As always, feel free to contact me or MAP/Adopt-a-Unit Chairman Ken Corry for assistance. Many Wisconsin Posts and Auxiliaries have adopted units with great success – you can too!

SCOUTING BUILDS COURAGE, CONFIDENCE, AND CHARACTER

As this year’s Department Scouting Chairman, I would like everyone to take a “second look” at Scouting. Scouting has long been a cornerstone in building patriotic values and developing rich, fulfilling skills and relationships that endure for generations. In addition to nurturing our young people, the impact of Scouting on participating Posts and Veterans is tremendous.

Scout Awards are based on participation. The number of submissions received by the Department, dictates the monetary award values. A minimum of 18 applications are required for the top monetary award level. The VFW Scout of the Year program allows members of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to be recognized for their outstanding citizenship, patriotism and love of country.

Christina Flanagan
Scouting Chairman
VFW
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Scouts who are registered, active members of a Boy or Girl Scout Troop; Venturing Crew; or a Sea Scout Ship; who have received the Eagle Scout Award, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Award or Sea Scout Quartermaster Award can enter. There is no minimum age requirement for applicants as long as all other eligibility criteria have been met. The **maximum** age requirement for applicants is 18 years old and if an applicant reaches

STATE OFFICERS

Post 1318 and the 115th Fighter Wing



And sometimes the events are huge, like this celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Truax Field-based 115th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard. The September weekend’s events culminated with a well-attended Family Day on a picture-perfect Sunday. Post 1318 adopted the 115th in the fall of 2022. *Photo courtesy of Gundel Metz.*

Post 2037 and ANG B Company, 2-127 Infantry



Sometimes the gatherings are casual “hanging out” with good friends and much camaraderie. Here members of Post 2037 and the Army National Guard Bravo Company, 2-127th enjoy time together in Green Bay. *Photo courtesy of Ken Corry.*

their 18th birthday during the nomination year, they remain eligible as long as they are still in High School at the time of the submission deadline.

The complete rules, eligibility requirements, necessary documentation and entry form/brochure can be found on the National VFW website – vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/scout-of-the-year. Scouts should download and submit a completed VFW Scout of the Year Program application form, resume of high school activities, Scouting record, community service record and letters of recommendation to ONE local VFW Post, **no later than March 1, 2024. NOTE: Applications may also be sent directly to the Scouting Chairman at: N11759 Palmer Rd., Clintonville, WI 54929. ALL applications need to be in by April 1.** After State judging, the Chairman will submit the Department winner to the VFW National Headquarters by May 1, 2024 for recognition.

Note: to find a Gold Award Girl Scout in your community, please go through your local Girl Scout Council. We have six (6) Girl Scout Councils throughout Wisconsin; to find your Council, please visit: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/council-finder.html>, and enter the Post’s zip code. The contact information for your area Council will show up; either call or email the Council’s customer care team.

Please make sure you are including the Scouting Program and Scout of the Year Award on your meeting agendas and in your program discussions. We need to promote this Program – these are our future leaders! And THANK YOU to those Posts (and Auxiliaries!) who continue to sponsor Troops and the Scout of the Year Program. Please keep up your strong support of our Scouting youth! Please call or email me if you have any questions.

MEMBERSHIP

Current Membership Totals By District

Dist.	Life	New	Reinstate	Continuous	Total	Prior Year	Percentage	N/R LM
1	2265	47	32	201	2545	2845	89.45%	29
2	3231	15	8	277	3531	3846	91.80%	20
3	729	5	0	92	826	897	92.08%	2
4	1194	9	2	119	1324	1421	93.17%	8
6	1708	8	2	126	1844	1963	93.93%	12
7	2148	22	9	196	2375	2528	93.94%	21
8	1806	12	1	143	1962	2166	90.58%	13
9	2544	39	4	95	2682	2851	94.07%	21
10	1300	15	8	169	1492	1616	92.32%	16
11	1620	17	14	124	1775	1961	90.51%	14
99	1418	48	13	154	1633	1902	85.85%	20
Totals	19963	237	93	1696	21989	23996	91.63%	176

Totals as of December 31, 2023
315 Legacy Life Members

Recruit, engage,
inspire, retain!



DON'T
FEED
THE
SHARKS



DontFeedTheSharks.org

What is a "Claim Shark"?

- A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" Veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!
- Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.
- Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.

Some of their predatory practices are:

- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a Veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling Veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

Who are the Claim Sharks?

- Trajector Medical
 - Vet Benefits Guide
 - Veterans Guardian
 - VA Claims Insider
 - Telemedica
- Patriot Angels
 - Veteran Care Services
 - VetComm
 - VA Claims Academy
 - Vet Assist

Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.

Who is NOT a Claim Shark?

- VA accredited veterans service organization representatives, like the VFW
- VA accredited claims agents
- VA accredited attorneys
- Attorneys assisting with Camp Lejeune lawsuits who do not charge excessive fees



Greetings Comrades,
We have all made it through another holiday season and the blessings of family and friends around us. We now find ourselves halfway through the membership year, a number of Post and Districts will have qualified for the Red Carpet Awards at the Mid-Winter Conference. Congratulations to all that have led the way and qualified for this prestigious award.

Everyone has worked hard the first half of the year and it shows. As of the time of writing this we are at 91.63% and 2nd in the Big Ten Conference. This is great, however we have a long way to go to reach our goal of 102% this year. We are well behind the 94.2% of last year at this time. We currently have 21,989 members and need 2,487 members to make our goal. It is of the greatest importance we reach or exceed this as set by our Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. Our great organization must grow in order to remain a force for the Veterans in our great nation.

First, we need to work on retention, to keep our Annual members and get them renewed. Talk to members that have not renewed yet about upgrading to a Life Membership. Look back at unpaids over the last five years, talk to them about renewing and if they won't, find out why. Every member is important and we shouldn't work hard on getting them to join, to just have them walk out the back door.

Second, we have to recruit new members. This time of the year there are events like gun shows and craft shows, meat raffles, steak feeds, etc., In the spring, County Fairs and Town Festivals, and our Brat Fries start up again. Anytime we are out doing Poppy Drives, or any of these or other activities, we must take the opportunity to seek out and talk to other Veterans.

TOP RECRUITING
UPDATE

through 12/31/2023

Recruiter	Post	Dist.	Recruits
James A. Cairo	11038	1	22
David A. Zien	305	9	18
Steven J. Eisenhauer	1318	2	15
Jason T. Coffey	11038	1	14
Peter A. Pemrich	1621	1	13
David G. Green	10818	9	11
Tricia L. Flaig	2112	11	10
Patrick E. Pierce	8280	7	5
Kevin J. Bertetto	305	9	5
Ronald Ramos, Jr.	10818	9	5
Wayne A. Georgeson	1916	11	5
Frederick N. Falk	2708	1	4
Scott J. Weber	6375	1	4
John D. McCoy	7308	1	4
Larry F. Sorensen	7308	1	4
Phillip D. Allen	7308	1	4
Christina F. Flanagan	664	7	4
Norbert H. Strasser	10262	7	4
Anthony R. Matecki	8813	8	4
Timothy F. Salzwedel	2114	11	4

Randy
Engness
State Membership
Chairman



715-651-0263
engnessr@gmail.com



Now is also the time to make your last push for Post and District **All-State**. The requirements may be found starting on page 26 of the 2023-2024 State Commander's Program Book. And **All-American** Award requirements can be found starting on page 35 of the Program Book. **[Visit vfwwi.org, LOGIN, MEMBERS ONLY, to access the Program Book.]**

And, remember these ongoing **individual membership incentives**, available to ALL who recruit new or reinstated members:

- 1st Member Recruited: Letter from the State Commander.
- 3 Members Recruited: Letter from State Commander and Commander's Pin.
- 5 Members Recruited: Certificate of Accomplishment, mentioned in the VFW News, and Commander's Coin.
- 10 Members Recruited: \$150 stipend for use at State Convention and plaque.
- 15 Members Recruited: \$200 stipend for use at State Convention and plaque.
- 20 or more Members Recruited: \$300 stipend for use at State Convention and plaque.
- 50 or more - J.R. Weber Award, will receive an additional \$500 and plaque.

Note: Plaque is for the highest level achieved. Only one (1) level of stipend will be authorized. Plaques will be shipped after June 30.

Let's keep the momentum going and make the most of the second half of this year. National has many membership brochures and recruiting materials available for free (shipping fees may apply) that can be ordered from the National website – vfw.org. I am always happy to assist you in any way I can, just call or email!

We all have to work together to achieve 102%. Remember: **Recruit, engage, inspire, retain!**

TOP RECRUITING
POSTS

through 12/31/2023

Post	District	Recruits
11038	1	41
305	9	25
10818	9	21
7308	1	20
1621	1	19
1318	2	18
2112	11	13

Congratulations
Wisconsin!

Commander-in-Chief Sarmiento
challenged all VFW Departments
to increase their New and Reinstated Members
for November 2023

by at least 10% over last November
and we did it!

Each of the 27 Departments meeting
the challenge received
\$500 and a special plaque to display
at State HQ.

(By the way, six of the 27 states
are in the BIG TEN!)

WAY TO GO!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**SIERRA
DELTA**
SERVICE DOGS FOR VETERANS

PHOTOS MAY BE EMAILED TO WIVFWEDITOR@GMAIL.COM; PLEASE USE 2025 VFW RAFFLE CALENDAR PHOTO IN THE SUBJECT LINE. RECEIPT WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED BY REPLY EMAIL. PLEASE ALSO INCLUDE THIS INFO:
Complete address, city, zip code of Memorial; - Date and year the Memorial was completed; - Groups involved (VFW, municipality, other VSOs, etc.); - Any special or unique characteristics or facts about the Memorial; - Contact person if further info needed.

TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS TAPS

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

Post	Name	City	Post	Name	City	Post	Name	City	Post	Name	City
305	Todd Benson	Eau Claire	2112	Herbert Severson	Sparta	6175	Richard Zwiefelhofer	Bloomer	8512	Richard Miller	Rice Lake
305	Edward Brown	Eau Claire	2113	Richard Bracker	Windsor	6186	Cornelius Micke	Medford	8514	Alvin Voss	Fairchild
305	Bradley Hanson	New Auburn	2113	Lawrence Walker	Green Bay	6279	Leon Lecy	New London, CT	8527	Bernard Nowacki	Medford
305	Lamoyne Jevne	Chippewa Falls	2115	John Cameron	Clive, IA	6279	Glenn Moore	Arkdale	8718	Thomas Mason	Mountain Home, AR
305	Gordon Larson	Eau Claire	2115	Walter Lamson	Hammond	6352	Orville Bornbach	Marshfield	8733	Floyd O'Connor	Wausau
305	John Monsos	Annandale, MN	2126	George Schroeder	Neenah	6352	James Hollar	Milladore	8813	Duane Johnson	Vulcan, MI
305	David Smith	Eau Claire	2126	Clement Van Gompel	Menasha	6375	LeRoy Harry	Elkhorn	9057	William Strohkirch	Withee
305	John Tepp	Burlington	2219	Delbert Langsdorf	Rio	6377	Ralph Artner	Sussex	9060	Gary Larson	River Falls
305	Rolland Veitch	Rice Lake	2260	Stanton Luker	Oconomowoc	6498	Bruce Heintz	Lac du Flambeau	9336	Danny Lund	Madison
388	Donald Bevers	Wausau	2267	Everett Thompson	Richland Center	6498	Steven Iwinski	Milwaukee	9362	Gary Brown	Sun Prairie
388	Rufus (Bud) Gore	Fremont	2312	Martin Betts	Merrillan	6550	Dennis Brion	Mondovi	9362	Regis Nesselrode	Aurora, IL
388	Otto Imm	Schofield	2312	Jack Oostdik	Monroe	6614	Hans Dunneisen	Waterloo	9362	Fred Ross	Sun Prairie
388	Roger Merry	Wausau	2312	Marvin Rufi	Madison	6705	William Kress	Green Bay	9511	Deane Haag	Blanchardville
388	Henry Meverden	Wausau	2336	John Trigleth	North Freedom	6705	Dennis Wanish	Crivitz	9511	Edgar Norris	Blue Mounds
388	Kenneth Peters	Schofield	2653	Dennis Baginski	Antigo	6769	John Lillie	Cumberland	9536	Gregory Bugni	Montreal
659	James Hendricks	Manitowoc	2653	John Ellner	Pelican Lake	6769	Ronald Parsons	Cumberland	9537	Dean Charlevoix	Waukesha
659	Leonard Reindl	Manitowoc	2653	Earl Mortenson	Antigo	6823	Lynn Liesch	Rhineland	9537	Berwyn Gosseck	Omro
721	Alan Bundy	Waukesha	2687	Patrick Sharkey	Theresa	6856	James Donnelly	Centuria	10171	Raymond Tiegs	Grafton
721	Leo Monahan	Waukesha	2687	Robert Smith	Tomahawk	7221	Gordon Hanna	Eagle	10197	William Thibedeau	South Milwaukee
1037	Thomas Young	Waupaca	2708	Richard Josephson	Edgerton	7300	Gary Heyel	New Berlin	10203	Robert Sessions	Athens
1248	Harold LuMaye	Luxemburg	2708	Glenn Witt	Edgerton	7308	Robert Anderson	Kenosha	10232	Gary Marek	Grantsburg
1256	Michael McCann	Grantsburg	2778	Gary Brynjulfson	Appleton	7444	George Wulf	Goodman	10262	Anton Ramczyk	Stevens Point
1318	Wayne Bewick	Middleton	2778	Michael Grant	Austin, MN	7485	Charles Ustine	Milwaukee	10272	James Anderson	Vero Beach, FL
1318	James Devine	Madison	2778	Paul Klemmer	Appleton	7591	Rodrick Anderson	Waunakee	10272	Robert Luther	McFarland
1318	Adrian Stransky	Madison	2778	James Zimmer	Greenville	7591	Richard Priebe	McFarland	10394	Robert Kliesmet	Milwaukee
1393	John Camery	West Bend	2823	Joseph Brook	Great Falls, MT	7591	Sylvia Schliet	Merrillan	10394	Gil Lenski	Franklin
1393	Arthur Fellers	West Bend	2895	Joseph Kotarak	Cudahy	7591	Robert Tormey	Madison	10394	Glenn Withington	Oconomowoc
1393	Bernhard Johs	Shawano	2925	Tracy Allen	Wautoma	7591	Thomas Welch	Evansville	10405	L. Trautmann	Eau Claire
1530	Earl Patterson	Rio Verde, AZ	2925	Aloysius Hermes	Green Lake	7591	Arnold Willis	Hayward	10405	Cecil Berlin	Eau Claire
1580	Ray Perry	Herndon, VA	2925	Eric Schroeder	Berlin	7692	Vernon Court	Appleton	10406	Allen Kochenderfer, PSC	Cochrane
1621	Gregory Cabi	Janesville	3032	Tommy Proffitt	Colorado Springs, CO	7694	Dean Pfaff	Prairie du Sac	10407	William Brace	Weyauwega
1621	Everett Duvall	Janesville	3143	Michael Decker	Rhineland	7753	James Tuma	Two Rivers	10407	Melvin Richter	Wild Rose
1621	Milford Gavin	Janesville	3143	Joseph Kuehn	Central Islip, NY	7784	Bruce Motquin	Oneida	10424	Ted Erickson	Boyceville
1621	Willard Quade	Milton	3319	James McDaniel	Kaukauna	7784	Thomas Swille	Green Bay	10452	James Strasser	Wausau
1621	Kenneth Warner	Janesville	3392	Roy LeCloux	Morgantown, WV	7924	Richard Kasprowicz	Union Grove	10519	Jacob Mukansky	Milwaukee
1621	Roy Wolfe	Janesville	3392	Ronald Worachek	Kewaunee	7924	Mike Leider	Union Grove	10818	Michael Weyers	Hudson
1707	Roger Dorman	Poynette	3589	Alfred Fokett	Jefferson	7929	Thomas Rodgers	Balsam Lake	11244	Herman Walker	Monticello
1707	Jerry Markgraf	Arlington	3635	Walter Wilhelmi	Florence	8021	Sylvester King, Jr.	Westby	15051	Harry Brechler	DeForest
1707	Steven Sarbacker	Portage	5158	Ronald Jones	Vernon Hills, IL	8068	Emerick Zoromski	Wittenberg	15051	Louis Bruenning	Argonne
1865	Jerald Hanson	Cape Coral, FL	5274	Terrill Novinskie	Lancaster	8123	Dwight Elliott	Viroqua	15051	Edward Ebert	Campbellsport
1865	John Hosmanek	Kenosha	5278	Jerome Brack	Ripon	8216	Lawrence Landgraf	Middleton	15051	Mark Fritz	Trego
1865	Charles Statkus	Kenosha	5278	Joseph Galica	Ripon	8239	Myron Lohman	Bayfield	15051	Thomas Hayner	Germantown
1866	Thomas Pankratz	Washburn	5373	Eugene Haseley	Lake Geneva	8280	Willard Mogenson	Kronenwetter	15051	Thomas Kilgore	Superior
1879	Dean Schmidt	Jefferson	5373	Robert Wester	Sheboygan Falls	8314	David Olson	De Pere	15051	Emil Kolbe	New London
1879	Kurt Troemel	Whitewater	5387	Joseph Schladweiler	Warrens	8320	Marlyn Fisher	Butler	15051	Robert Kowalski	Stevens Point
1879	Bruce Vermillion	Janesville	5387	Bradley Wildes	Tomah	8320	Harlan Ross	Brookfield	15051	Gary Magnus	Spooner
1916	Jake Christopherson	Madison	5716	Clemens Glugla	New Berlin	8338	Donald Scoggin	Ridgeland	15051	William McNeal	Wilton
1916	Jack Williams	Reedsburg	5729	Henry Deml	Medford	8338	Terence Smith	Dallas	15051	Edward Nagel	Eagle River
2037	Ralph Disalvo	Cable	5778	Ervin Engel	Butternut	8400	Roger Martin	Milwaukee	15051	James Palmer	Schofield
2037	Ervin Ripp	Green Bay	5778	Ray Wallner	Park Falls	8483	Bruce Elliott	Madison	15051	Ronald Patz	Coleman
2037	Keith Schacht	Green Bay	5960	Eugene Pfeifer	Nekoosa	8483	Dennis Frappier	La Crosse	15051	Robert Pfeifer	Hales Corners
2037	Lawrence Sikowski	Green Bay	6003	Dale Carlson	Port Charlotte, FL	8483	Lyle Johnson	Poynette	15051	Anthony Quinones	Lake Nebagamon
2063	Charles Cretton	Norway, MI	6003	Ryan Mantz, Sr.	Westfield	8483	Robert Philumalee	Madison	15051	Albert Rivord	Superior
2112	Donald June	Sparta	6003	Thomas Roos	Oxford	8491	Dale Quednow	East Troy	15051	James Seracki	Fountain City
			6005	Randall Holtman	Cadott	8512	Henry Alfieri	Barron	15051	John Wicinske	Neenah

Deadline for the March 2024 issue is February 16.

Remembering Etola Pingel

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Etola D. Pingel, 90, on December 9, 2023, at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. She would have turned 91 on December 19. Etola and her husband Lyle, who passed away in October 2018, were longtime VFW and Auxiliary Hospital volunteers at King. They were recognized at the State Convention in June 2009 with over 11,000 hours of service combined to our hospitalized Veterans. Following Lyle's passing, Etola became a happy resident of King's Ainsworth Hall.

Many of us have fond memories of them both at hospital visits to King, especially during the February Salute to Hospitalized Veterans and the Annual Scheibe-Munro King Day each August. And making the rounds in the Halls with those "legendary" Treat Carts.

Rest in peace, good and faithful servants. Our loss is heaven's gain.



Etola Pingel, all bundled up and festive, enjoying the drive-by parade on the grounds of the WVH at King in December 2020 during the COVID pandemic, just before her 88th birthday. Thank you Mary Grace Biesek of WVH-King.



Classic Etola (second from right), in her element at the August 2014 Scheibe-Munro King Day on the green at King. Beautiful summer weather, lots of Veterans and family, special youngsters, clowns and of course, "Wyatt Derp" the equine ambassador with the very special "saddle". A perfect day! VFW NEWS file photo.

THE BUZZ

We are at 97.89% in membership! You are all doing amazingly! Keep up the great work! I would like to put out a **membership challenge** to everyone. If we can get our **PAID** membership to 98% by February 1, I will take a chocolate pie to the face at our Mid-Winter Conference on February 2-3, 2024. I know we can do this. **Let's get after it!**

Funds for hospital projects and hospital programs are low. This money is used to support all 8 hospitals in our area, so please give generously. Earmark checks Hospital Projects or Hospital Programs and send them to the Department Treasurer, Lenore Otto. If you've given previously, please consider making another donation. We need to make sure that our hospitalized Veterans are well taken care of.

Our next meeting will be the Mid-Winter Conference at The Mead in Wisconsin Rapids on February 2-3, 2024. Detailed information can be found in this paper and on our Auxiliary website (vfwauxwi.org). Registration is due by January 15. The room rate for the hotel is \$82. Call them directly at 715-423-1500 and mention the VFW block when booking.

We will be having an election for a new

**Sherrie
Rosenau**
Department
President

920-251-8888
littlemama6@
yahoo.com



Department Conductor at the Mid-Winter Conference. If you are interested in running, please let us know.

I have begun visiting Auxiliaries that haven't been visited by the Department President in five years or more. If you'd like me to visit your Auxiliary, please fill out the request form on our website. I will do my best to meet your wishes.

I'd like to end this article with some words of wisdom: "Don't be pushed around by the fears in your mind. Be led by the dreams in your heart." — **Roy T. Bennett, The Light in the Heart**

Wishing all of you a very happy and healthy New Year. May God bless you all. Remember to "Bee the Change" while "Banding Together for Our Veterans"!

"BUDDY"® POPPY UPDATE

It is time for you to bring out your creativity and make a "Buddy"® Poppy Display for the 2024 Mid-Winter Conference. I know there are lots of great ideas out there for making an award-winning display, and I'm sure our Dept. President's and National President's themes will inspire you.

Here is the general info:

- **DESIGN:** Design a display to show how the "Buddy"® Poppy impacts all or any of the National Programs, especially the VFW National Home.

- **JUDGING:** Will be accomplished by Auxiliary members picked at random and also each person viewing the displays.

- **AWARDS:** 1st Place \$20.00; 2nd Place \$15.00; 3rd Place \$10.00; Honorable Mention \$5.00. Participation Certificates will be given to each Post/Auxiliary that enters a display.

- **REQUIREMENTS AND RULES:**

- > One (1) "Buddy"® Poppy **MUST** be used in the original form (red color) and label attached.

- > All VFW Post and Auxiliary members can enter this contest.

Faith Elford
"Buddy"® Poppy/
Natl. Home Chair

608-322-5144
faelford@
outlook.com



> Please remember to use one or both President's themes to represent our Veterans.

- **PRESIDENTS' THEMES:**
 - > "Bee The Change" (Dept.)
 - > "Banding Together for Our Veterans" (Natl.)

This information is also in the December/January mailing – or on the state website – vfwauxwi.org – I hope to see a record number of entries this year. Drop me an email to let me know you are bringing an entry at faelford@outlook.com. You can fill in the entry form and bring it with you, or I will have forms in the Display area. See you at the Mid-Winter Conference!

JEANNETTE FRANK AWARD INFO

Happy New Year to all! May your days be filled with good health, safe travels and happy times.

We are now just a few short weeks away from the **April 10, 2024 deadline** for nominations for the Jeannette Frank Continuous Service Award. This special award recognizes the dedicated, ongoing service of an Auxiliary member who has served the organization for

Marla Morgan
Awards Chairman
715-384-2500
marla.morgan@
charter.net



at least **25 consecutive years**. Any member in good standing may nominate an outstanding Auxiliary member who they feel is deserving of this recognition. Again, nominees must have served for a **minimum** of 25 years.

The nomination form was included in the October bulletin e-mailing and is also available on the Department Auxiliary website: **vfwauxwi.org**. Please gather up and submit the information about that very special Auxiliary member who qualifies for this honor with their dedicated, "above and beyond" service to your Auxiliary. It is a wonderful way to thank them for their years of service.

Remember:

- Nominations received after the deadline will **NOT** be considered.
- A completed nomination form and supporting documents **MUST be submitted**. Names written on a plain piece of paper do NOT constitute a completed nomination.
- Previous *recipients and Past Department Presidents* are NOT eligible.

Thank you in advance for the *many wonderful nominations* I know I will receive!

AUXILIARY

MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT

Happy New Year. We are approaching our Mid-Winter Conference on February 2-3, 2024, and our celebration of our Mid-Year Membership Awards. The Auxiliary Membership Awards are for the following goals: 80% by 9/30/2023 - ten (\$10) Awards; 90% by 11/30/2023 - ten (\$10) Awards; and 100% by 12/31/2023 - three (\$75) Awards. **Districts** that reached 95% by 12/31/2023 will compete in a drawing

for the 1 (\$25) Award. Six Districts met this goal – 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

The other Mid-Winter Award is for Recruiting three (3) new or reinstated Auxiliary Members, and it is available to both VFW and VFWA members. The **Recruitment Award Deadline is January 15, 2024**. There will be two (\$25) Awards for Member Recruitment.

As of December 31, 2023, Wisconsin is at 97.89% Paid Percent, is second place in the Big Ten Conference and 13th place Nationally. Wisconsin needs **171** more members to reach 100% in Membership for the 2023-2024 Year. Make sure you include all your cast and crew members in scouting for new members, which is so important to keep your Auxiliary fun and alive with innovative ideas.

Let's talk Recruiting Resources. The **VFW Auxiliary Fact Sheet** and the **VFW Auxiliary National Programs: An Overview** both provide members with useful information to share with *potential* new members and/or *educate* new/old members. These and other resources are on the *National website*: **vfwauxiliary.org**.

The **VFW Auxiliary Fact Sheet** is on the **main website**: click on **WHAT WE DO** at the top of the page, then scroll down to the **Fact Sheet link** to open the .pdf document.

To find the **Overview**, you need to LOG IN to **MALTA**, then click on **Member Resources**, then **Miscellaneous Resources**. The **VFW Auxiliary National Programs: An Overview** is the fifth item in the top list. You can also request copies from National – along with other brochures and forms – by looking under Membership (in MALTA) and locating the **VFW Auxiliary Brochure Order Form**. These resources are useful when you are recruiting in person and/or for sending with a Membership Application.

Our Dept. Membership as of **December 31, 2023:**

Auxiliary	Current Total	Deceased	Paid Total	Prior Total	Current Percent	Paid Percent
Total-Non-District	109	3	112	107	101.87%	104.67%
Total-District 1	382	6	388	465	82.15%	83.44%
Total-District 2	1201	20	1221	1212	99.09%	100.74%
Total-District 4	303	1	304	301	100.66%	101.00%
Total-District 6	516	15	531	529	97.54%	100.38%
Total-District 7	1287	15	1302	1325	97.13%	98.26%
Total-District 8	856	19	875	884	96.83%	98.98%
Total-District 9	777	11	788	773	100.52%	101.94%
Total-District 10	665	7	672	715	93.01%	93.99%
Total-District 11	460	3	463	492	93.50%	94.11%
Total—At-Large	1282	1	1283	1307	98.09%	98.16%
Total-Dept of WI	7838	101	7939	8110	96.65%	97.89%



Vicki Newbauer
Chief-of-Staff
715-257-2099
vnewbauer1950@
gmail.com



EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION

READ

- ★ President's General Orders
- ★ Chairmen Bulletins
- ★ Bylaws and Ritual
- ★ VFW Auxiliary Magazine

NO RED
FLAGS!

LISTEN

- ★ During meetings
- ★ Blogs
- ★ Online Training
- ★ To Veterans

IMPLEMENT

- ★ Be realistic
- ★ Be specific
- ★ Choose measurable goals
- ★ Have supports & accountability
- ★ Make an action plan with deadlines

COMMUNICATE

- ★ "BEE THE CHANGE"
- ★ Use social media
- ★ vfwauxwi.org
- ★ Report
- ★ Join the "Honey Sweets Band"



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, it does not necessarily reflect the year of their passing.

Aux.	Name	City	Aux.	Name	City
328	Pam Griggs*	Stoughton	6377	Mildred M. Wierl	Brookfield
721	Catherine Kramer	Waukesha	6550	Lena Drinkwine	La Crosse
1621	Roxane Webb*	Janesville	6550	Yvonne A. Thorson*	Mondovi
1638	Arlys M. Bourdage*	Merrill	6705	Eunice Larsen	Madison
1908	Irma Draves	Fond du Lac	7929	Joyce M. Anderson*	Amery
2204	Vera Bender*	Rice Lake	8239	Max J. Paap	Bayfield
2260	Doris L. Jans*	Pensacola, FL	8733	Darlene Cartwright*	Mosinee
3709	Dorothy Schwefel*	Watertown	9156	Rosemarie Robinson	Sheboygan
5729	Ethel "Rusty" Garbacz*†	Apache Junction, AZ	10331	Phyllis Gillett*	Cameron
5729	Clara D. Hackbart*	Appleton	10519	Charlotte Jeske*	Hartland
5970	Ethel Passer	Necedah			

* DENOTES LIFE MEMBER
† DENOTES PAST DEPT. PRES.

LILLIAN CAMPBELL MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Lillian Campbell Medical Scholarship (LCMS) honors Wisconsin Past Department President (1954-1955) Lillian Campbell, who went on to serve as National Auxiliary President in 1963-1964. Scholarships of \$1,000 each are offered annually to students in a wide variety of medical fields, along with one \$750 Scholarship to an eligible First-year Paramedic student. These awards are presented at the State Convention in June.

The total number of Medical Scholarships awarded each year depends on the amount of donations received in the fund by May 1. Please send donations in any amount to Dept. Treasurer Lenore Otto.

If you have not yet distributed information on this program to eligible students in your area, PLEASE do so at once! ALL applications and required documents must be to me by April 1, 2024! The LCMS Application and detailed Instructions and Guidelines can be found on the Department website – vfwauxwi.org. (This is a Wisconsin program – it is NOT on the National site/MALTA.)

Please familiarize yourself with the eligible medical programs – and PLEASE review the applications and documents you receive BEFORE you forward them to me. It is heartbreaking to have to disqualify an applicant because some required item was missing! I'm looking forward to receiving MANY great qualified applications!

Jennifer Mauritz

Dept. Scholarship Chair

715-383-8628
jmauritz922@gmail.com

DONATIONS TO:
Lenore Otto, Treasurer
1383 W. Wisconsin Ave.
Oconomowoc, WI 53066
DEADLINE: May 1, 2024

APPLICATIONS TO:
Jennifer Mauritz, Chairman
606 N. Wood
Marshfield, WI 54449
DEADLINE: April 1, 2024

"BEE IN THE MONEY" RAFFLE WINNERS

Many thanks to all who supported the Auxiliary Department "BEE IN THE MONEY" Raffle. A complete list of winners is posted on vfwauxwi.org. Congratulations to:



DATE	TICKET	NAME, CITY	AMOUNT
Nov. 13	0023	Karen Baumann, Madison	\$50
Nov. 15	1198	Jen Tischendorf, Medford	\$75
Nov. 17	1244	Molly Harris, Milton	\$100
Nov. 20	0740	Danielle Wincentsen, Eland	\$50
Nov. 22	0185	Todd Severson, Janesville	\$75
Nov. 24	1122	Corrine Burcalow, Tomahawk	\$200
Nov. 27	0542	Kathy Ott, Hilbert	\$50
Nov. 29	0214	Carol Welch, Evansville	\$75
Dec. 1	0348	Linda Nellen, Madison	\$100
Dec. 4	0926	Kellie Benson, Oshkosh	\$50
Dec. 6	0268	Ben Bowman, Fort Atkinson	\$75
Dec. 7	0726	Cindy Zvolena, Loyal	\$300
Dec. 8	1038	Teresa Steinke, Augusta	\$100
Dec. 11	1109	Shirley Thompson, Amery	\$50
Dec. 13	0688	Betty Hetto, Antigo	\$75
Dec. 15	1220	Jarrid Petersen, Pardeeville	\$100
Dec. 18	0468	Jean Kunding, New Berlin	\$50
Dec. 20	0733	Janice D. Wieloch, Mosinee	\$75
Dec. 22	1173	Jenny Anduser, Deer Park	\$100

BEE A WAYS AND MEANS SUPPORTER!

The BEE in the Money Raffle was a success. Thank you to all VFW and Auxiliary members that purchased or sold tickets. The Auxiliary will not have a sweepstakes this spring, so we have another idea to raise funds.

Please join us at the Mid-Winter Conference in Wisconsin Rapids for the PIE IN THE FACE Fundraiser! Who is getting "pied" you ask? Our amazing volunteers are President Sherrie, Commander Ron, Chief-of-Staff Vicki, and Judge Advocate George.

Here's how it will work:

If an Auxiliary (or individual) donates \$250, they will automatically be given the opportunity to pie one of our awesome participants. For donations under \$250, when there is a cumulative total of \$500 raised, we will have a drawing from those donors to see who gets pied, and who gets to fulfill it. Here's hoping we will have several drawings!

You may send donations in advance of the Conference to Dept. Treasurer Lenore Otto. Be sure to note which Officer is your "target". OR, you may wait to donate right at the Conference. We are keeping track of all donations, and hope this fun competition will raise a GREAT amount of much needed income for our Department Auxiliary. Please consider donating either as an individual or as an Auxiliary.

The date and time for the PIE IN THE FACE will be announced on Friday afternoon of Mid-Winter. Our Ways and Means volunteers will also have Raffle baskets, a quilt raffle, and 50/50 raffles at Mid-Winter, so bring your spending money! See you in Wisconsin Rapids!

Alicia Weix & Barbara Stillman
2023-2024 Dept. Ways and Means Co-Chairs



YOUTH ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Art, Music, Literature – These three creative outlets are just some of the ways the Youth Activities Program encourages boys and girls to express their patriotism. If your Auxiliary hasn't reached out to your area youth yet, it's not too late! There is still time to promote and distribute information about our patriotic contests and literacy program.

ART: The Illustrating America Contest is a terrific way to get students in grades K-8 excited about patriotic artwork. Their two-dimensional art will be judged on patriotic theme and technique. Any type of art media may be used, and entries can be submitted on a canvas stretcher frame, canvas board or paper. Paper entries can be matted in white (if desired) and must be reinforced on the back with heavy white paper. National and Department prizes will be awarded – see my October Youth Activities Bulletin on our Wisconsin VFW Auxiliary website (www.vfwauxwi.org).

MUSIC: The Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! National Anthem Singing Contest lets students sing their solo version of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Their video entry (MP4 format) will be judged on vocal ability, mastery of lyrics, originality or interpretation and entertainment value. They can sing a cappella, with backing tracks or instruments and in any music style they wish. However, they may NOT change the words or lip sync. There are National and Department awards – check out my November Bulletin on our Wisconsin Auxiliary website.

Applications for both of these contests need to be in to your local Auxiliary by March 31, 2024 and the winning entries in each grade

Patty Jansky

Youth Activities Chairman

715-723-0408
pajansky@charter.net



level should be sent to me for Department judging by April 15, 2024. Wisconsin's overall first place winners will then advance to National. See our 2023 National Second Place K-2 winner in Illustrating America elsewhere on this page!

LITERATURE: Our Patriotism Through Literacy Program introduces youth to our nation's history while creating a lifelong love of reading. Your Auxiliary can donate books, volunteer to read to kids, host a young writer's workshop and so much more. Check out my December/January Youth Activities Bulletin for more information. (Do you see a common theme here? Our Department website is full of valuable program information!) Also, this year's National Youth Activities Award for Auxiliaries involves our Patriotism Through Literacy Program. Why not give it a try? As our Youth Activities National Ambassador Joyce Caldwell said, "One of the easiest ways to promote patriotism is through reading among our youth."

Art, Music, Literature – Three great ways to instill patriotism in our kids while letting their natural talents shine. Don't miss your chance to be part of the future of our youth!

National Winner for "Illustrating America"



Surrounded by his awards, a very excited six-year-old Carter Wittwer proudly holds his winning entry in the 2022-2023 "Illustrating America" Patriotic Art Contest, a part of the Youth Activities Program. Carter, sponsored by Chippewa Auxiliary 1038, took First Place at the Local and Dept. levels and Second Place at the National level in the Grades K-2 Division. Each part of Carter's painting holds a special and personal significance to his family. Carter's family recently moved to Florida, so Wisconsin's loss is Florida's gain. Congratulations again to Carter - we hope you keep making your beautiful artwork! Submitted by Youth Activities Chairman Patty Jansky.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Caring and Sharing

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

There was no end to the generous ways we “cared and shared” with our communities around the Department of Wisconsin in 2023. These are just some of the resourceful ideas carried out over the course of the year to support a variety of causes and projects. Feel free to “borrow” these ideas to make them happen in your town too!

Christmas Gifts at Zablocki VAMC



Our VFW and Auxiliary VAVS office volunteers are poised and ready for the annual gift distribution at Zablocki, just before Christmas. Seated is Hospital Representative John Dahl, PSC and standing (from left) are Deputy Ken Kieck, Auxiliary Rep. Nancy Ustruck and Deputy Ellen Crass. All are members of Greendale VFW Post and Auxiliary 10519. Looks like some nice notebooks and back-scratchers! *Courtesy of Nancy Ustruck.*

Auxiliary 8478 “Blankets” Veterans with Love



Hand-tied fleece blankets are a labor of love and Goede-Smith-Ramsey Auxiliary to VFW Post 8478 in Augusta was proud to make 17 of them to distribute to Veterans at the Annual Veterans Day Luncheon. After a delicious meal at the Augusta Senior & Community Center, the recipients were asked to choose the blanket they would love to have. Treasurer Peg Connelly said, “It warmed our hearts to make these blankets for our Veterans!” Here, unidentified Auxiliary members are shown hard at work on some of the gifts. *Courtesy of Peg Connelly.*

Handmade Cards Give Love to Our Veterans



By now, you have figured out that Chippewa VFW Auxiliary 1038 in Chippewa Falls EXCELS at spreading holiday cheer to Veterans at the WI Veterans Home, the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program, and the Chippewa Manor Nursing Home. And their creative and talented President Patty Jansky EXCELS at enlisting the help of others too! In addition to cute “Button Tree” Christmas cards made by the Auxiliary, she also recruited grades K-5 students at Holy Ghost School to make some wonderful special cards for Veterans Day. We suspect even 4th-grade granddaughter Eastyn can’t say no to her former teacher grandmother. Job well done to all – I’m sure Patty will share some of the secrets to success if you ask! *Thank you Patty Jansky.*



Post 10262 Retires Worn Flags in Plover



Plover Area Memorial VFW Post 10262 conducted an American Flag retirement ceremony in early December. The event was held at the home of Post member Donald Mugridge, who we understand couldn’t be present, as two days before the scheduled event, he fell in his garage and broke his right hip. We offer our good thoughts for his continued recovery! Following the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer by Post Chaplain Frank Raschka, a Flag inspection and committal ritual was conducted by Post Commander Norb Strasser, “This Flag was inspected, and along with the others, is condemned as unusable as an emblem of our country. Old Glory, we give you to the flames and the ground from which you came.” Approximately 1200 Flags were retired and Strasser commended Mugridge for his dedication to picking up worn Flags from several locations in the area. The Post also has a Flag collection box in front of the Post home. From left are John Herek, Post 10262 Commander Norb Strasser (white hat) Tom Bredow, Chaplain Frank Raschka, Fred Gburek and Mike Zynda. Auxiliary members in attendance (not pictured) included Cindy Bredow and Debbie Manthey. *Thanks to Debbie Manthey for the photo and info.*



Caring and Sharing



“Pink Out” in Cochrane

Members of Cochrane VFW Post and Auxiliary 10406 showed their support for October’s Breast Cancer Awareness Month at their Charcoal Chicken and Brat event, the final one for 2023. Pink Ribbons were also handed out to everyone who came through the door. An added bonus event was the successful Popcorn Fundraiser held by Cub Scout Pack 310. The “Kitchen Crew” decked out in pink included (front, l-r): Mary Lou Comroe, Sharon Kamrowski, Kathy Kochenderfer, Vicky Kamrowski, Kimberly Goss, Diane Bossert, John Dehnke, Jeff Hanson, Brad Lyga. In back (l-r) are: Jessica Averbeck, Steve Schiffli, Laura Schiffli, Lance Averbeck, Deb Kujak, Romie Kujak, Gary Krause and Jim Goss. The next Chicken & Brat event is January 13, 2024. *Courtesy of President Kimberly Goss.*



Quilts of Valor
Awarded
at Post 9392

Two more beautiful Quilts of Valor were awarded to deserving Veterans at the November meeting of Schoenwetter-Fraser VFW Post 9392 in Lowell. Displaying the cherished quilts are (from left): Post 9392 Commander John Stanton; recipients Tom Rosinski and Earl Winker; QOV Seamstress Sandy Firari and Post 9392 SVC and District 2 Cdr. Karen Singer. *Submitted by Karen Singer with thanks to Post 9392 QM Craig Seaver for the photo assistance.*

Post 2112 Supports Sparta School Backpack Program



Concerned teachers in the Sparta School District started the School Backpack Program six years ago to address the need for nutritious food for some students on weekends when they aren’t in school receiving meals. The need continues and community members continue to support the project, with 186 backpacks distributed every Friday this year. Here, (from left), Dr. Mike Pace and Christi Heitman representing the School Backpack Program accept a gift of \$500 from VFW Post 2112 members Tim Lawrence and Sara Fischer. *Thanks to Tom Schauer with photo assistance from Sara Fischer.*

Family Fun Day at
Post 8338 in Barron



Barron VFW Post and Auxiliary 8338 and Barron Girl Scout Troop 3117 had a Family Fun Day at the Post in early December. The order of the day included decorating nearly 600 sugar cookies baked by Auxiliary members. The cookies were packaged for distribution to local Veterans. Following the cookie decorating, attention was turned to painting Santa faces on rocks and decorating the Post’s two Christmas trees. Looks like a great day! *Thanks to Post 8338 QM Greg Roth.*

VFW MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Please see the 2023-2024 Commander's Program Book, pages 18 – 19 for this info and the Nomination Form for the VFW Member of the Year. (On vfwwi.org – LOGIN, then MEMBERS ONLY – to access the Program Book.

Purpose: The award is to recognize a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who has exemplified in their actions and accomplishments, the true spirit of our Organization in serving the needs of their Post, and Community, and who has dedicated themselves in a professional manner to addressing the Pillars of our Organization. Department leaders are encouraged to submit to VFW Programs office a narrative write-up on a comrade from their Department that is leading from the front and supporting one or more of the purposes of our Congressional Charter.

Eligibility: This award is intended to recognize a member in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who has been a member a minimum of one full

Randy Engness
VFW Member of the Year Chair

VFW

715-651-0263
engnessr@gmail.com



membership year, and has received a nomination for their activities during the award Year according to the Award guidelines. Departments are encouraged to submit their winners from their own contest if they have a current Member of the Year process. **Award candidates holding any of the following elected or appointed Office during the award year are not eligible: Commander, QM, Adjutant, Service Officer or Chaplain. In addition, Past State Commanders and Past National Council members are ineligible from nomination.**

Type of Recognition: The award will consist of a National Cap with title of

Member of the Year and Citation presented at National Convention by the Commander-in-Chief. The award winner will additionally receive full room and travel for the duration of the National Convention for the award presentation. Each Department winner will receive a citation from the Commander-in-Chief.

Criteria: This award recognizes exceptional performance as a member of the VFW. Examples of service that would be considered in judging the nominee include the following:

- Nominee presents themselves in a professional and helpful manner within the Organization and within the Community.
- Nominee shows an active interest in their Department by attending meetings and showing a willingness to consider leadership roles.
- Nominee participates in activities and events within the Department to help raise awareness of the Organization in the Community.
- Nominee has shown a willingness to work together with other VFW, Auxiliary, and Riders Members in a spirit of cooper-

ation to accomplish the same goals.

- Nominee volunteers for and participates in activities and events that address the needs of target groups and individuals in the Community.

- Nominee has demonstrated actions which contribute to improving the quality of life for those we are intended to serve, whether they are children or adults, and whether they are homeless, hospitalized, handicapped, in need of a job or education.

- Nominee encourages members of the Community to support VFW programs and continually encourages others to become members.

- Nominee must have been submitted for #StillServing campaign recognition at <https://todaysvfw.org/>

Process: Any VFW member in good standing may be nominated as a Member of the Year candidate using the Member of the Year Nomination Form, by the Post, District, or Department Commander.

NOMINATIONS ARE DUE TO THE CHAIRMAN BY MARCH 30, 2024.
Questions? Call or email Randy!

Wisconsin Remembers: A Face for Every Name

A collaboration of Wisconsin Public Radio, WI Public Television and the WI Veterans Museum (WVM), this traveling exhibit features a photo for each of the 1,161 Wisconsinites officially listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The indoor, easy-to-assemble, pop-up banners are available to local libraries, historic societies, schools, community spaces, etc. There is no cost to reserve; the only costs are shipping costs.

To find out more and to reserve the exhibit, contact WVM Curator of Exhibits Gregory Krueger, at 608-261-0541 or email at Gregory.Krueger@dva.wisconsin.gov. Editor photo.



Dear Veterans,

We are pleased to announce that all Veteran members of the Department of Wisconsin, have a no-cost **\$2,500 Accidental Death & Dismemberment** benefit. This AD&D benefit and other items listed below are provided through American Income Life Insurance Company (AIL), a company servicing working families for more than 70 years.

American Income Life currently has over 880,000 members of veterans organizations covered under AD&D policies at no cost. Since 1990, more than \$18.9 million in life, health, and no-cost AD&D benefits has been paid to over 5,700 members of veterans organizations and their families.

Please return the enclosed card so you may receive your certificate of coverage and name your beneficiary. If you do not name your beneficiary, the \$2,500 would be paid to your estate and may be taxable.

Those who return the card can also receive a no-cost membership in the recently introduced **AIL Plus program**, your connection to convenient discounts on dental care, prescriptions, diabetic supplies, vision care and supplies, telemedicine, chiropractic care and more.

You can also receive Child Safe Kits for your children and grandchildren at no cost. These kits help you gather vital data, photos and fingerprints for authorities in the event of an emergency.

Sincerely,


Adam Wallace
State Adjutant

An AIL representative will call on you to deliver your certificate of coverage, witness your beneficiary designation, register you for the AIL Plus program and provide your Child Safe Kits. AIL has other supplemental insurance benefits that may be available to you and your family. If you have questions, please call American Income Life Insurance Company at 1-800-495-1213.

To respond online and see a message from your Association, scan the QR Code or visit mybenefits.aillife.com and enter access code: SGP6M



You may also return the enclosed card via mail.

REMINDER!

If your fiscal year ended
on December 31,
your **990** must be filed
with the IRS by **May 15!**

2024 Mid-Winter Conference

Friday, February 2 and Saturday, February 3, 2024

Hotel Mead and Conference Center • 715-423-1500
451 E. Grand Ave., Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

As this paper is mailed to you, we are just four weeks away from the 2024 Mid-Winter Conference. If you have not yet made a hotel reservation, you may still call the Hotel Mead to see if rooms are available in the room block at the special rate of \$82 + taxes. Hurry! The deadline is **January 10, 2024 or when the room block sells out!**

As for Registration and Meals Reservations, the **deadline is January 15**, so visit **vfwwi.org today** to register!

Tentative Agendas for the VFW and Auxiliary are shown here and as usual, they are packed with lots of business and events. Hope you are planning to attend and join in the fun!

2024 Mid-Winter Conference
VFW Auxiliary Agenda

Schedule of Events subject to Change

Friday, February 2, 2024

(Dress Code: Business Casual)

Registration open 9:30 am – 5:00 pm (Outside of Grand Ballroom)
Vendor Tables open 8:00 am – 4:00 pm (Outside of Grand Ballroom)

12 Noon **Dutch Treat Luncheon with Nat'l. Rep NDCM #11 Laurel Ann Wiese** (Centralia)
(Open to ALL Auxiliary Members – must reserve by January 15, 2024.)

1:15 – 3:15 pm **Council of Administration Meeting** (Riverside) Sherrie Rosenau, President

3:30 – 5:00 pm **Training Session**

5:00 pm **Dinner and evening on your own**
(See info on Open House at VFW Post 2534.)

Saturday, February 3, 2024

(Dress Code: President's black & yellow shirt/Business Casual)

Registration open 8:00 am – 5:00 pm (Outside of Grand Ballroom)
Vendor Tables open 8:00 am – 4:00 pm (Outside of Grand Ballroom)

8:00 – 9:45 am **Joint Session with VFW** (Riverside)
• PTSD Seminar by Tomah VA; Sierra Delta Joint Project; Humana

9:45 am **VFW returns to Grand Ballroom**

10:00 – 11:45 am **Call to Order and Opening, Program Reports** Sherrie Rosenau, President

12 Noon – 1:45 pm **Student and Teacher Awards Luncheon** (Grand Ballroom)

2:00 – 4:30 pm **Program Reports continue** Sherrie Rosenau, President

5:30 – 6:30 pm **Cocktail Hour** (Grand Ballroom) **Cash Bar**

6:30 pm **Red Carpet Awards Banquet** (Grand Ballroom)
• Dinner music and post-Banquet entertainment provided by Ace Entertainment For You

2024 Mid-Winter Conference
VFW Agenda

(Schedule of Events subject to change.)

Friday, February 2, 2024

(Attire for Council of Administration members: Business Casual)

Registration: 9:30 am – 5:00 pm (Outside of Grand Ballroom)
Vendor Tables: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm (Outside of Grand Ballroom)

9:00 – 11:00 am **Committee Meetings** (Grand Ballroom) Cdr. Ron Ramos

11:00 am – 12:00 noon **District Commander Reports**

12:00 – 1:30 pm **Past Commander's Club Lunch (Pre-registration required)** (Atrium)

1:30 – 5:00 pm **Post Training/Workshops/Seminars** (Grand Ballroom) Cdr. Ron Ramos

- Tomah VA Whole Health Presentation
- National Membership Training (Recruiting)
- All-State Workshop
- State Online Dashboard Familiarization

6:00 – 8:00 pm **Post 2534 Open House – 2711 Reddin Rd., Wisconsin Rapids**

- Shuttles will be provided from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm
- Dinner and refreshments available for purchase (See flyer)

Saturday, February 3, 2024

(Attire for C of A members: Business)

Registration: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm (Outside of Grand Ballroom)
Vendor Tables: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm (Outside of Grand Ballroom)

8:00 – 10:00 am **VFW/Auxiliary Joint Session** (Riverside) Cdr. Ron Ramos

- PTSD Seminar by Tomah VA; Sierra Delta Joint Project; Humana

10:15 – 11:30 am **VFW reconvenes** (Grand Ballroom) Cdr. Ron Ramos

12:00 noon – 1:45 pm **Student and Teacher Awards Luncheon** (Grand Ballroom)

2:00 – 4:30 pm **VFW General Session Resumes** (Grand Ballroom) Cdr. Ron Ramos

- Committee Reports
- Council Business Session
- Line Officer Reports

5:00 – 6:30 pm **Red Carpet Reception** (Centralia Room) **By Invitation Only**

- Red Carpet Recipients must arrive by 5:30 pm

5:30 – 6:30 pm **Cocktail Hour** (Grand Ballroom) **Cash Bar**

6:30 pm **Red Carpet Awards Banquet** (Grand Ballroom)

- Dinner music and post-Banquet entertainment provided by Ace Entertainment For You

VFW DEPT OF WISCONSIN
Mid-Winter Conference
Friday Night Open House

Join Buckley-Baldwin Post #2534
for an evening of food, drink and fellowship
Donald J. Knuth Memorial Hall
2711 Reddin Road, Wisconsin Rapids
Friday 02 February 2024
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Shuttle Bus will run from the Hotel Mead & Conference Center to Donald J. Knuth Memorial Hall every half hour from 5:30 - 8:30

Bar will be open for drinks

Chicken Dinner Buffet by Two Hearts Catering will be available for \$18/plate

Herb Roasted Chicken Leg Quarters

Mashed Potato Bar with sides

Farmers Market Vegetables

Salad Station Dinner Rolls

Please RSVP Dinner Attendance to:
715-600-0401 vfwpost2534wisconsinrapids@gmail.com

Mid-Winter

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Laurel Ann Wiese represents Iowa and Wisconsin on the National Council of Administration, which governs the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of the United States Auxiliary between National Conventions. She was installed at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, AZ, and is in the first year of her 2023-2025 term.

A resident of Horicon, Laurel Ann is a Life Member of Solveson-Moos-Abrahamson Auxiliary 2260 in Oconomowoc, joining on the eligibility of her father, Loran F. Patten, who served in the U.S. Air Force during World War II in the South Pacific. Loran served as Wisconsin State Commander in 1965-1966 while Laurel Ann's mother, Lorene Patten, was Auxiliary Dept. President in 1961-1962.

Laurel Ann has served the organization in many capacities, including Auxiliary and District President, as well as two terms as Department President in 1993-

1994 and 2018-2019. She has also held many appointments at all levels, including Patriotic Instructor and a wide variety of Chairmanships. She currently serves as our very capable Department Audit Chair, putting that Associate Degree in Accounting from Moraine Park Technical College to great use.

Now retired, Laurel Ann enjoys reading and doing jigsaw puzzles. A member of St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Horicon, she enjoys being in the vocal choir as well as the hand bell choir. She has also served on the Horicon City Council as an Alderman and on the Library Board. Laurel Ann's family includes two daughters, eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Please plan on attending our 2024 Mid-Winter Conference to meet and greet National COS Carey Pritchett and Auxiliary Council Rep. Laurel Ann Wiese, to recognize our awesome student and teacher winners and to enjoy some great times with good friends. See you in Wisconsin Rapids!

Cootie Corner

Hello Lousy Cooties,
Happy New Year. Hopefully your holidays were blessed with family and friends. This past year flew by in a hurry. I was able to finish up Hospital Visits just before Thanksgiving and then it was on to the National Home for Cootie Christmas. What an experience to see as Wisconsin Cooties and Michigan Cooties put on an excellent Christmas party for the children living at the National Home. If you are ever given an opportunity to attend one of these, please don't pass it up. I am looking forward to handing off all of my hippos there next year. A special thanks to Tracy and Wayne Woodman for getting me to and from the National Home.

December had its fair share of down sides with the death of Tom Welch (Pup Tent 41) and another fellow Cootie and friend Joe Baumann, getting sick and

**Michael
A. Woodards**
MOC Grand
Commander
608-692-4967
michaelwoodards11
@gmail.com



spending over a month in the hospital. I am happy to say Joe is on the mend.

The MOC and MOCA Grand Mid-Winter is right around the corner (January 12-14) and I hope to see a number of you in attendance. I had hoped to have done some Pup Tent visits by now, unfortunately, my wife's knee replacement kept me close to home. As all is going well now, expect me to pop in soon.

Always remember to Keep 'em Smilin' in Beds of White.

Michael A. Woodards
WI Grand Commander



Hello, everyone,
The holidays have knocked at your doors. I hope everyone had safe travels and joyful celebrations.

Every year, the Grand of Michigan hosts and sponsors the "Cootie Christmas Party" for the children at the National Home. Commander Michael and I with others from Wisconsin, got the pleasure of sharing this experience with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the home in Eaton Rapids, the first weekend in December. We shared the Christmas spirit and helped with presents and entertained the children living on campus. Fun was enjoyed by all!!!

REMINDERS:

- Audits for October to December are due now to Grand Treasurer Dolores Sorensen.
- Elections of new Officers should be held between January 1, and March 31, 2024.
- Continue with Membership, it

Linda Moran
MOCA Grand
President
920-337-9922
loopylin1950@
gmail.com



would be great to be 100% this year.

• If you haven't donated to our Special Project "Quilts of Valor" yet, please do so if able.

THANK YOU for what you are doing for our Veterans and their families. God Bless Everyone. May the New Year find you happy and surrounded by the love of family and friends. Hugs to all!

Linda Moran
WI Grand President

COOTIE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 12-14	MOC/MOCA Grand Mid-Winter Conference – Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, Onalaska.
April 19-21	MOC/MOCA Grand Convention – AmericInn by Wyndham in Merrill. (Watch Cootie e-mailings and March/April 2024 WI VFW NEWS for details.)
July 31-August 4	105th MOC Supreme Scratch and MOCA Convention – Louisville Marriott East, 1903 Embassy Square Blvd., Louisville, KY 40299 (Visit lotcs.org for registration and info.)



MOC Grand Raffle Tickets Are Available NOW

Tickets are \$2 each or 3/\$5
Seven prizes totaling \$1,000
will be drawn on April 20, 2024 at the
WI Grand Convention in Merrill

Contact MOC Raffle Chair Bill Hustad at
608-527-3025 or wfhust1@tds.net for tickets.

COOTIE CORNER

A Very Cootie Christmas



WI Grand Commander Mike Woodards and Grand President Linda Moran pause with "Rudolph" during the 2023 Cootie Christmas at the VFW National Home. Courtesy of Pat and Linda Moran.



A very festive delegation from Short Arm Pup Tent and Auxiliary 23 made the trek to the VFW National Home to celebrate with the families residing there. Courtesy of Bruce Sorensen.



MOC and MOCA members help Santa deliver gifts to each of the residences at the National Home. Here, WI Grand President Linda Moran and Past Grand Commander Wilfred "Twiggy" Johnson pause outside of the Wisconsin home. Courtesy of Pat and Linda Moran.

Visiting Minneapolis VAMC



A delegation of comrades from Post 10818 in New Richmond accompanied State Commander Ron Ramos on his official visit to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center in mid-December. The group toured the state-of-the-art new Specialty Clinic and here, Cdr. Ramos gives a donation on behalf of the Department to Rachel of Volunteer Services. Looking on (from left) are comrades Ken House, Dave Sharretts and David G. Green. Photo courtesy of State Cdr. Ron Ramos.

Tomah VAMC: Brutus the Therapiggy

An unexpected special treat during State Commander Ron Ramos' November visit to the Tomah VAMC, was a "delightful encounter" with Brutus, the Mini Pig, who is an AMPA (American Mini Pig Association) certified therapy pig. Oh, and there was also a tour of the ongoing changes, expansions and improvements at Tomah with Associate Director Dr. Bryan Prah, as well as a donation to the facility on behalf of the Department. Brutus is quite the hard-working celebrity – check him out on Facebook! Photo courtesy of State Cdr. Ron Ramos.



Visiting the WWH at Chippewa Falls



A large group of VFW, Auxiliary and Cootie Hospital volunteers and Officers accompanied Auxiliary Dept. President Sherrie Rosenau on her official visit to the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls in mid-November. Unfortunately there was some COVID present, so all needed to "mask up". Life Enrichment Director Aarica Humke (far left) led a tour of the facility, and the Auxiliary and Cooties both made donations. The delegation also checked out the "happy hour" (live music and refreshments) going on in the Activity Room. Photo courtesy of Patty Jansky, Auxiliary Dept. Hospital Rep. at WWH-Chippewa Falls.



PDPs Rusty Garbacz (left) and Jean Hoium made very rough and tough bikers during the PDP skit at the conclusion of the 2009 Auxiliary Convention. File photo.

Garbacz

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

With 400 departed Sisters memorialized at State Convention, the membership year concluded with 19,196 members. Twelve Auxiliaries surrendered their Charters. Rusty's team volunteered with love in a big way, and at National Convention, there were First Place Awards in Americanism; "Buddy" @ Poppy; Extension and Hospital. President Rusty was a Runner-up President in her Membership group, along with the Historian, and the Community Service and Voice of Democracy Chairs. In addition to helping Wisconsin Veterans, Rusty worked extensively on behalf of a variety of groups in her community over the years, among them the Red Cross; the American Cancer Society; Weyerhaeuser

Community Club; Weyerhaeuser PTA/PTO; and Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. Volunteering with Love, indeed. Moving permanently to Apache Junction, AZ, a climate much more favorable to her arthritis, in 2013, Rusty maintained her many Wisconsin contacts and friendships in the ensuing years, never more than a phone call or note away from her home state. She is survived by a daughter, Mary Garbacz (Michael Twaddell) of Tenino, WA, two granddaughters and four great-grandchildren. And an extensive VFW and Auxiliary family. Services for Rusty will be held in Weyerhaeuser in the spring. Rest in peace, good and faithful servant. Many thanks to Mary Garbacz for photo and information assistance.



Then-Historian Jean Hoium captured three PDPs contemplating the day's proceedings at the 2009 Department Convention. From left are: Rusty Garbacz (1997-1998); Joyce Hoffman (2007-2008) and the late JoAnn Simek (1987-1988). File photo.

Upcoming Patriotic Observances

February 1	National Freedom Day
February 3	Four Chaplains Day
February 12	Lincoln's Birthday
February 19	President's Day (George Washington's Birthday observed)
February 22	Washington's Birthday
March 1	Asiatic Fleet Memorial Day
March 29	National Vietnam War Veterans Day

2024 Publications Contest Now Open

Calling all VFW Post and District Newsletter Editors in the Department of Wisconsin - we want to honor and recognize your hard work! There are a lot of really good publications out there in the State – I receive many of them in my email and snail mail each month and quarter – but some are never entered in the Annual Publications Contest. Please consider competing – you and your Post deserve the recognition for what you are doing to stay connected to your members!

Here’s how the Wisconsin Contest is set up for this year, based on the *expected* National Contest:

- The Basis of Judging for District and Post Level publications will be **Overall Content and Design**.
- Publication frequency should also be noted: 1-4 times per year or 5+ times per year.
- State Competition is further divided by Post size - see the entry form at right.

• **ALL entries received for the State Contest will be submitted to the National Contest**, regardless of the State results – this is in keeping with the “open submissions” portion of the National Contest.

NO MATTER WHAT CATEGORY YOU ARE ENTERING, please select the *best* of your Post or District Newsletters *published in calendar 2023*, print a good clean copy – **DOUBLE-SIDED PLEASE!** - and mail as directed on the Contest Entry form. **NOTE:** *If your publication is distributed electronically by email, you will still have to PRINT one hard copy to send for submission to the contest.* This is a really good time to double-check spelling, grammar and other errors too . . . Please be sure to include the completed entry form!

Remember: **YOUR ENTRY MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE EDITOR NO LATER THAN MARCH 9, 2024! NO exceptions.** The form will be available at the Mid-Winter Conference and on the State Website if you want a full-size form to use. Good luck to all! Questions? Contact WI VFW NEWS Editor Marla J. Morgan at wivfweditor@gmail.com OR 715-384-2500.

WE NEED YOUR POST
to Support the VFW NEWS!

Only \$250 for a 2” x 2” space in six issues per year.
 Promote your Post AND support YOUR *WI VFW NEWS*!

Larger spaces available in 2” x 2” increments.
 The new year has begun –
 contact Editor Marla J. Morgan at
wivfweditor@gmail.com TODAY!

Thank you to these Wisconsin Posts
for their support of the *VFW NEWS*.

For more information on Post Booster Ads, contact
 Editor Marla J. Morgan at: wivfweditor@gmail.com.

PEWAUKEE
MEMORIAL
POST 9537

Meetings — Third Wed. of the month
 Post open 4:00-8:00 p.m., Mon-Wed-Fri.
 HOME OF THE STATE HONOR GUARD
The greatest little Post in the State

11/21

GROSS-YAKSH
Post 6498

Home Post of
 Past Cdrs-in-Chief
 Walter G. Hogan
 and the late
 Tommy “T” Tradewell

11/21

VFW Post 305 Supports the NEWS



1300 Starr Ave., Eau Claire, WI

“Overlooking the beautiful Chippewa River and Dells Pond.”

715-552-8438

Post meetings – 7:00 pm, Third Tues. of month

We are OPEN for business! Come see us for great food
 and hospitality. Open daily; visit us on Facebook for info!

11/23

Department of Wisconsin VFW
2024 Publications Contest

Entry Form

Check ONE:

_____ POST Entry _____ DISTRICT Entry

Post Name and Number: _____

District # _____ Post Commander's Name _____

Post Membership Size (**as of June 30, 2023**): _____

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

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

Print stock: _____ Coated “magazine” stock _____ Uncoated “bond” paper

Publication Name: _____

Editor Name: _____ Phone: _____

Editor mailing address: _____

City/ST/ZIP _____

Editor email address: _____

Please include ONE clean issue of your publication, *published between January 1 and December 31, 2023*. (Padded envelope or cardboard inserts are suggested.)
ENTRY MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN MARCH 9, 2024!

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

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

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

Raffle Calendar Winners

Date	Ticket	Name	City	Prize	Date	Ticket	Name	City	Prize
Nov. 3	2536	J. Seering	Denmark	\$400	Dec. 8	10766	R. Miller	Mauston	\$50
	2735	P. Newbeuarg	Sheboygan	\$50		1229	C. Cooper	Burlington	\$50
	8665	M. Barber	Cudahy	\$50		7145	K. Crary	Wyocena	\$50
	12577	L. Haberman	Janesville	\$50		329	D. Jung	Plymouth	\$50
	3007	P. Gerondale	Oconto	\$50		1990	D. Wenninger	Freedom	\$50
	9447	D. Kober	Kenosha	\$50		11210	E. Lockington	Genoa	\$50
	6614	R. Cranford	Oconomowoc	\$50		6846	B. Kortte	Oregon	\$50
Nov. 10	3002	A. Paul	Sturgeon Bay	\$500	Dec. 15	6849	J. Burkeland	McFarland	\$500
	11053	T. Soma	Necedah	\$50		1879	A. Peters	Appleton	\$50
	8928	J. Joecks	Milwaukee	\$50		12919	J. Schoorover	Beloit	\$50
	1497	T. Hayes	Stratford	\$50		9824	K. Kendzior	Rice Lake	\$50
	4567	D. Fischer	Appleton	\$50		5898	G. Helmers	North Prairie	\$50
	8774	A. Meyer	Milwaukee	\$50		10317	H. Hurlburt	Eau Galle	\$50
	6090	T. Keller	Monroe	\$50		5049	O. Blackman	De Pere	\$50
Nov. 17	2333	S. Thalacker	Briggsville	\$1,000	Dec. 22	2217	S. Church	Barron	\$500
	12791	L. Tripp	Barron	\$50		888	D. Crowley	Wis. Rapids	\$50
	11199	R. Simpson	Camp Douglas	\$50		6373	C. Blehovde	Fond du Lac	\$50
	12145	L. Boedecker	Howards Grove	\$50		6671	T. Henning	Stoughton	\$50
	1157	J. Kuzmic	Wind Lake	\$50		10195	D. Osborn	Cornell	\$50
	6117	M. Marzullo	Oregon	\$50		385	VFW Post 7896	Benton	\$50
	5448	B. Moore	Sturgeon Bay	\$50		2795	S. Springstroh	Iola	\$50
Nov. 24	2	J. Lauersdorf	Reeseville	\$50	Dec. 29	4061	C. Hartman	Green Bay	\$50
	3092	C. Schenvar	Reedsville	\$50		9647	T. Dugan	Chilton	\$50
	8724	J. Johnstone	Cudahy	\$50		5097	S. Perkins	Brodhead	\$50
	1797	Post 388 Auxiliary	Wausau	\$50		6727	D. Evenson	Cambridge	\$50
	2309	C. Castellanos	Wausau	\$50		13409	J. Prosa	Lodi	\$50
	2765	J. Meyer	Appleton	\$50		1018	J. Hammerstrom	Marathon	\$50
	4767	S. Foth	Appleton	\$50		12078	A. Bettenhausen	Cambridge	\$50
Dec. 1	9477	B. Raddemann	Hartford	\$50	Raffle Winners are also posted on the VFW State Website – vfwwi.org – following the Friday drawings at VFW State Headquarters. On the website home page, click on NEWS , then scroll down and click on VFW RAFFLE CALENDAR NEWS .				
	1435	T. Schoenherr	Stratford	\$50					
	11423	VFW Post 8123	DeSoto	\$50					
	4956	B. Webber	Genoa City	\$50					
	8800	M. Kirschbaun	Milwaukee	\$50					
	7190	VFW Post 11244	Waunakee	\$50					
	1758	T. Sillars	Wausau	\$50					

WISCONSIN VFW
FOUNDATION UPDATE

It is the mission of the Wisconsin VFW Foundation Inc. (501c3), to help fulfill America's promise to its military personnel and Veterans, through support of Wisconsin's Veterans Homes, VA Medical Centers, Veteran Cemeteries, residents of the VFW National Home – Wisconsin House and other worthy entities. The Foundation also supports VFW programs that foster patriotism and scholarships among Wisconsin's youth.

Grant Applications are now being accepted for consideration at the annual VFW State Convention in June. All materials must be received by the Foundation Secretary, either by email or regular mail, **by May 15, 2024, NO EXCEPTIONS**. A complete narrative of the necessary information, along with the required application form can



be found at on the State VFW website at vfwwi.org, or by request from the Foundation Secretary-Treasurer.

We are now also accepting applications for the **2024 Wisconsin VFW Foundation Mentorship Grant**. This grant is for mentors within the VFW that are providing outstanding support to other VFW members with mentorship. This award goes directly to the "mentor" to award their efforts for the betterment of the VFW. Two grants will be awarded based on input from the 2023-2024 Foundation Board Members.

The application form is also available on the State

Renee
Simpson
Foundation
Sec.-Treas.

608-343-3906
wivfwfoundation@gmail.com



James Bond

Secretary,
Wisconsin
Department of
Veterans Affairs



Every new year brings us more opportunities to better serve our fellow Veterans and one another. I hope you have had a chance to enjoy some relaxing and enjoyable celebrations with friends and family over the holidays, as well as time to reflect on the great collective work we've done on behalf of our Veterans in Wisconsin.

This past year we've been able to accomplish so much for the Veterans in the Badger State. My focus this year has been to reinvigorate our strong partnerships with those who deliver for our Veterans across Wisconsin. To that end, I've visited with leaders from all 11 Wisconsin Tribal nations, and I have stopped to personally greet our CVSOs whenever I am traveling through their area. Thanks to Governor Evers' \$10 million investment in support of Wisconsin Veterans, we've also been able to administer more Veteran-focused mental health grants to community organizations, nonprofits, and mental health care providers than ever before. I am proud of the difference we have been able to make for all who depend on WDVA to assist them get back on their feet, or simply need help with filing their VA claims.

During our annual Veterans Day celebrations, I was pleased to announce alongside Governor Evers, our 2023 Woman Veteran of the Year Award recipient, retired Army National Guard Command Sergeant Major Kerry McAllen. She served over 31 years in uniform including two deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Kerry was nominated by her peers and recognized for her

exceptional volunteer work on behalf of Veterans and for her outstanding efforts in her community and beyond.

As cold winter months set in, I always think of our Veterans living at our homes in Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove. My heartfelt thanks goes out to all who have chosen to live at our Homes, and especially our dedicated, caring employees who make it a comfortable and enjoyable place for our members. If you have a loved one living at one of our Homes, I hope you had time to reconnect with them, send a holiday card or a message of appreciation. Those kind words and cards from someone who cares about them can mean so much to our members.

As we look to the opportunities and challenges that await us in the new year, I am deeply appreciative of the great collaborative partnership between VFW and WDVA. Together, we will continue to serve and deliver for our Wisconsin Veterans and families. I wish all of you a very happy and healthy 2024!

EVENTS AND DEADLINES

January 12-14	MOC/MOCA Grand Mid-Winter Conference – Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, Onalaska.
January 13	District 6 Meeting – VFW ONLY – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:30 am) – VFW Post 5612, 337 Stafford St., Plymouth, WI 53073
January 15	Deadline for Mid-Winter Conference Registration and Meals
January 20	District 1 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary! – VFW meets at 9:30 am; Auxiliary meets at 10:00 am. BOTH at VFW Post 1621, 1015 Center Ave., Janesville, WI 53547
January 20	District 7 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary! – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:30 am) – hosted by Post and Auxiliary 1866 at the Eagles Club, 1104 S. Oak Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449 (Noon meal reservation of \$23 per person due by January 10.)
January 20	District 11 Meeting – VFW ONLY! – 8:30 am (Regis. 8:00 am) – Mauston Park Oasis Restaurant, 1102 State Rd. 82, Mauston, WI 53948
January 27	District 9 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary! – 9:00 am (Regis. 8:30 am) – Liberty Christian School, 17250 Cty. Hwy. J, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. VFW will hold a regular District meeting; Auxiliary will hold a Training and Learning session, both concluding with the Awards Luncheon to honor students and teachers. Luncheon reservation due to Leroy Jansky by January 20!
January 27	District 8 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary! – 11:00 am (Regis. 10:30 am) Meal at Crivello's, 818 Main St., Oconto, WI 54153 (\$20 per person, Reservation due by January 17.) Meetings follow meal; Auxiliary mtg. at Oconto Elks Club, 310 Farnsworth Ave., Oconto, WI 54153
January 31	Deadline for Post Audits to State Headquarters
February 2-3	VFW/VFWA 2024 Dept. Mid-Winter Conference – Hotel Mead, 451 E. Grand Ave., Wis. Rapids, WI 54494
February 16	Deadline for March/April 2024 <i>Wisconsin VFW NEWS</i>
February 17	District 2 Meeting – VFW ONLY! – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:00 am) – VFW Post 6614, 115 S. Monroe St., Waterloo, WI 53594
February 17	District 10 Meeting – VFW ONLY! – 9:00 am (Regis. 8:30 am) – VFW Post 2687, 203 S. 4th St., Tomahawk, WI 54487
February 18	District 3 Meeting – VFW ONLY! – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:00 am) – VFW Post 5274, 110 E. Mineral St., Platteville, WI 53818
February 18	District 4 Meeting – VFW and Auxiliary! – 12:00 noon (Regis. 11:30 am) – Joint Voice & Pen Program, followed by social time, then separate meetings – Clifford's Supper Club, 10418 W. Forest Home Ave., Hales Corners, WI 53130
March 3-7	National Legislative Conference – Washington, D.C.
March 4	Voice of Democracy Parade of Winners (from Washington, D.C.) – visit vfwwi.org for info on the Live Streaming of this event!
March 10	Daylight Saving Time Begins – move clocks ahead one hour!
April 30	Deadline for Post Audits to State Headquarters

PROGRAM DEADLINES

As we start 2024, there are a number of upcoming Program Deadlines to be aware of so your candidates don't miss out! Please see the 2023-2024 State Commander's Program Book for the necessary forms and/or links. If you don't have a printed copy, the Book is on the state website – vfwwi.org – login in to the Members Only section.

March 30	JROTC Cadet of the Year nominations due to Chairman Cory Geisler.
March 30	VFW Member of the Year nominations due to Chairman Randy Engness.
April 1	Scout of the Year entries due to Chairman Tina Flanagan.
April 1	Service Officer Award nominations due to State HQ.
April 30	Frank N. Brown Scholarship applications due to Chairman Wayne Woodman.
April 30	All-State Packets due from Post to State HQ.

Questions? Call State HQ at 608-221-5276!

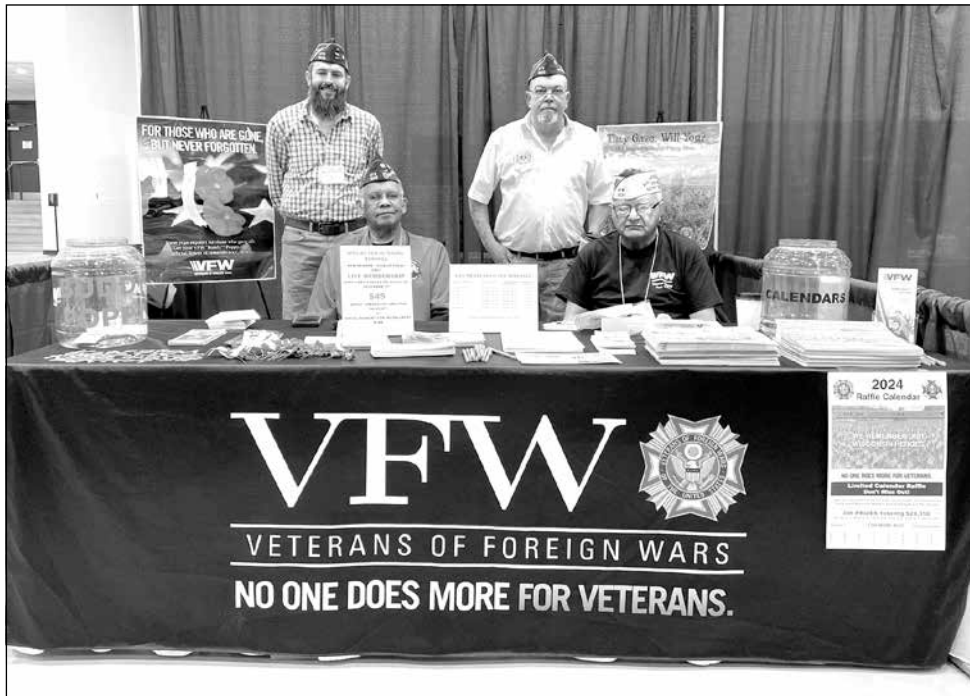
Auxiliary 8584 Craft Fair a Success



Cashton Community Hall was the site of another successful Craft, Vendor and Bake Sale in late November, sponsored by Dickman-Speth VFW Auxiliary 8584. The 38th Annual Sale counted over 200 attendees and it looks like the action spilled over to the mezzanine level, with all kinds of beautiful items offered to eager shoppers. It "takes a village" and Cashton came through again. Nice job!

Submitted by PDP and Auxiliary 8584 Treasurer Rita Byers.

District 11 Participates in Vets Bonanza



District 11 VFW was well-represented at the Tri-State Veterans Bonanza held in La Crosse in early November. Veterans attending the Bonanza were able to make contact with all Federal, State and County VA Medical Agents; Veterans Service Officers; Social Security; Veterans Service Organizations and other private and public vendors who serve the military and Veterans.

On hand to answer questions about the VFW and Auxiliary were (standing, from left) Holmen VFW Post 7908 Commander Matthew Barbour and Post 1530 member Vann Zimmerman. Seated in front are District 11 Cdr. Willie E. Stokes (left) and PSC and Past District Cdr. Dewitt "Woody" Woodworth. Not pictured is Laura Coffin, District 11 Auxiliary Treasurer and Auxiliary 2112 President.

Submitted by D11 Cdr. Willie E. Stokes.

Congrats to All-American Post 7692



Immediate Past State Commander Michele Rathke (left) completed her visits to our 2022-2023 All-American Posts just before Thanksgiving, with a visit to Freedom VFW Post 7692. Accepting the award items at the Post's monthly meeting are 2022-2023 Cdr. Gerald Weyers (center) and Post QM Jim Reader. Photo courtesy of PSC Michele Rathke.

AROUND THE STATE

FROM THE EDITOR

*"May the father of all mercies
scatter light, and not darkness,
upon our paths,
and make us in all our several
vocations useful here,
and in His own due time and way,
everlastingly happy."
~ George Washington, 1790*

Marla Morgan
Editor



715-384-2500
wivfweditor@
gmail.com



As we usher in 2024, this prayer of our Founding Father and first President seems to transcend the ages to this particularly difficult time in our history. Let us strive to be useful as we pursue peace, contentment and happiness in 2024.

As noted on page 13, we are just four weeks away from the 2024 Mid-Winter Conference, slated for February 2 and 3 at the Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids. There is not much time to reserve your hotel room and register for the meals, so call the hotel directly and visit either State website to save your place. The "Mid-Winter" is always a fun weekend – don't miss it.

You will note there are a number of Program Chairmen articles included in this paper. Now that we are in the second half of the year, many deadlines will be here before we know it. Please review those items and make sure you are taking an active role in working our Programs, to benefit our Veterans and communities. What better way to be useful.

Based on the warm reception to the 2024 VFW Department Raffle Calendar, featuring many Wisconsin Veterans Memorials, we are again calling for more photos for the 2025 calendar. Please review the notice at the bottom of page 6 for the details. Deadline is March 20, 2024!

Finally, a gentle reminder: when you submit photos for possible publication in the *WI VFW NEWS*, please remember that we need photos AT LEAST 1-2 MB in size to make them suitable for the printing process. Photos on social media are typically fine for that electronic display, but they are usually too small of a file to print. Thank you to those who continue to accommodate that requirement. If you are unsure of what to send, please contact me.

Best wishes for good health, peace and contentment, and safe travels in this bright and shiny new year! And let us continue to *Inform, Inspire, Invite*.

Post 2895 Says "Thank you Jen"



Jennifer Clark, Owner/Operator of Jen's Sweet Treats in Cudahy, is a long-time supporter of numerous groups, far and wide. One of her most recent donations was to benefit the VFW National Home Halloween Party last fall. Here, at a Post 2895 meeting, Commander Bradley Smith presents Jen with a beautiful Certificate of Appreciation, on behalf of the Post, to recognize her important contributions to the community.

Courtesy of Brad Smith.

Marine Veterans Celebrate the Corps



The Marine Corps Birthday is always a special event, but number 248 this past November 10 was extra special at Maplewood Village in Sauk City. WWII Marine Veteran Eldor Fruehling, 98 years young, (seated) was the center of attention as he celebrated with other area Marines. Joining the fun were Lachmund-Cramer VFW Post 7694 members including (from left): Marine Gene Parlow (Vietnam); Navy Corpsman Thomas "Tom" Murphy (Vietnam) and Marine John Gillespie (Vietnam). Sounds like there was the usual good-natured "trash talking" since Murphy allowed as he was assigned as a medic to the Marines and it was okay for him to attend since "the Marines are part of the Navy." Parlow and Gillespie of course pointed out that "the Marines were formed ahead of the Navy." All in good fun, to celebrate with comrades. Thank you ALL for your service!

Submitted by Post 7694 Service Officer Bart Mauch.

Thank You from the Children's Christmas Team

From Rod Fifield and Audrey Dotzauer, our Department VAVS Representatives at Oscar G. Johnson (OGJ) VAMC in Iron Mountain:

We want to thank those who donated to the "Children's Christmas" at Oscar G Johnson VA and its branch clinics. Do you know that one of the largest Clinics is in Rhinelander? We think these comments from Veterans and Voluntary Services Staff speak volumes:

FROM VETERANS:

- Veteran in tears of happiness as family was really just having a rough time. They were down to 1 car, that needed work, so funds were low. They were so very grateful for this boost to be able to give their kids and family a much merrier Christmas.
- Veteran going through a divorce and had to find a new place to live. Was very thankful for this gift to be able to get kids a little something.

- Veterans family, both husband and wife have 4 kids. Husband is going to be losing his job at the end of the year due to changes in management. So happy to have some help.

- I can't tell you how much this helps. We appreciate it so much!

FROM STAFF:

- There were a few comments that touched my heart, but I have to say everyone was just so thankful for the help.

- My Veteran is waiting on Service Connection and the gift cards allowed him to provide Christmas for his children. I've recommended Veterans for this program



Priscilla Larson (center), of Voluntary Services at OGJ, displays \$6,000 worth of \$50 Walmart cards, as well as a \$1,200 donation from the Bobby Nelson Fund to the Veterans Canteen. Looking on (from left) are Rod Fifield, Audrey Dotzauer and District 8 VFW Commander Aaron Volling and his precious daughter.

Thanks to Rod Fifield for photo and info.

THANK YOU to these groups and individuals that made this all happen for Christmas 2023:

- VFW Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin
- VFW Auxiliary, Department of Michigan
- VFW Auxiliary, District 8
- VFW Auxiliary 659, Manitowoc
- VFW and Auxiliary 2063, Crivitz
- VFW and Auxiliary 2113, De Pere
- VFW and Auxiliary 2119, Mountain
- VFW 2778, Appleton
- VFW 6823, Laona
- VFW 7444, Armstrong Creek
- VFW and Auxiliary 7534, Village of Howard
- VFW 8337, Liberty Grove
- VFW Auxiliary 9156, Sheboygan
- VFW Auxiliary 9202, Germantown Memorial
- VFW 9677, Bellevue
- VFW Auxiliary 10544, Heart Of The Valley
- MOC Grand of WI
- MOC and MOCA Pup Tent 23, Short Arm
- DAV of Wisconsin
- DAV of Michigan
- Bryon Boehmke
- Nancy Malewiski
- Karen Blashka
- John Sarns
- Eugene Tracy

for years and seen it ease so much guilt and grief over not being able to provide a good Christmas to families. I love this program and hope it continues for many years to come.

- When we give these gift cards to the Veterans, you can almost see a weight being lifted off of them. Some of these Veterans may not have the financial means to purchase gifts or a meal for the holidays and this puts a lot of stress on them this time of year. Being able to provide them with the donated gift cards and seeing how much it means to them, to know that other people care, is really what this time of year is all about. Thank you to the VFW for providing the cards. They have helped make the holidays much happier for many Veterans.

Post 664 Holds Annual Deer Hunters' Ball



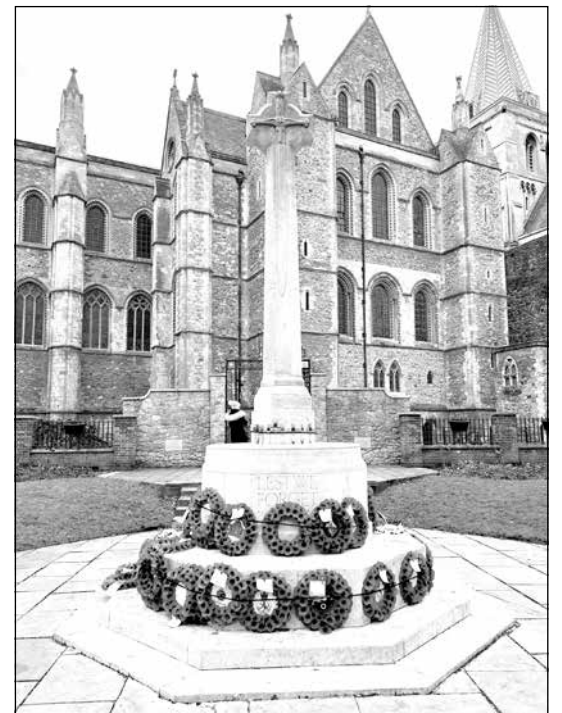
Arthur Gensler VFW Post 664 in Clintonville held another successful Deer Hunters' Ball Fundraiser this past Veterans Day at Memory Lanes Bar & Grill in Clintonville. The New Generation Band provided live music and the Post and Auxiliary provided an assortment of drawings and raffles to support their Scholarship Fund. Here, VFW Auxiliary Dept. Jr. Vice President Kim McWilliams visits with (seated from left) Post 664 members Ted Kirmse, Patrick Much, Commander LeRoy Wilken and member Jim Laabs.

Thanks to Post 664 QM Tina Flanagan.

Christmas "Across the Pond"

District 7 Auxiliary Sr. Vice President Jane Bynum of Auxiliary 6003 in Oxford sent this nice note and photo on New Year's Eve that was definitely worth sharing: "I am visiting my son and daughter-in-law in England for Christmas and New Year's, and when we went to a Cathedral in Rochester, this Veterans Memorial was out front. Since I am District Chairman for Buddy Poppy/Natl Home, I had to take a picture."

And of course, the Editor dug out "the rest of the story": Rochester Cathedral in County Kent, is the second oldest cathedral in England, after Canterbury. Founded in 604 AD by St. Justus, it is the mother church of the Anglican Diocese of Rochester. The Rochester War Memorial Cross commemorates both WWI and WWII and was unveiled in 1922. It is described as "An elongated, blind, wheel-head cross on an octagonal shaft on an octagonal drum base and three-stepped base. A sword is carved in low relief on the front face of the cross. At the centre of the wheel-head is a carving of a warship in full sail. The inscription reads: LEST WE FORGET / 1914-1918 / 1939-1945. Thank you Jane!"



Gulf War Veterans Needed

The Department of Kinesiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is conducting a research study to investigate how blood vessels in the brain respond to challenges in Gulf War Veterans. Additional eligibility criteria may apply. Remuneration is offered.

You May Qualify If You Are

- A Veteran who served in the Persian Gulf between 1990-1992
- Between 45 to 68 years of age.
- Eligible to participate in an MRI scan.
- Available for 3 visits between 2.5 and 4 hours in length.

If interested contact:

- 608-262-9572
- barneslab@education.wisc.edu



One Bike at a time. One Hero at a time.

Congratulations to our friends at Hogs for Heroes on their record-setting year in 2023 – NINE more Veterans returned to the healing wind therapy of the open road. That's FORTY Harley giftings in just seven years. Current donations raised will support AT LEAST EIGHT MORE GIFTS, but let's help them make 2024 another record breaker! Visit hogsforheroeswi.org to donate and GET INVOLVED!

★ ★ ★ **Wreaths Across America 2023** ★ ★ ★



ABOVE: A group of comrades and Auxiliary members from various Northwoods Veterans organizations gather for a photo at the Northwoods National Cemetery. It was an unusually mild December day for this year's event.

AT RIGHT: Post 1638 Commander John Rathke (left), Auxiliary 1638 President Denni Radloff and Auxiliary member Jeff Radloff await their turn to place wreaths at the Northwoods National Cemetery.



Northwoods National Cemetery in Marshfield and Hillside Cemetery in Marshfield were just two of the over 4,225 locations participating in the annual Wreaths Across America remembrance on December 16, honoring over 3 million Veterans nationwide. It was the third year of the event at Northwoods, which opened in the summer of 2020, and the first year of participation at Hillside, with about 225

volunteers placing 544 wreaths. Wreaths Across America is already organizing the 2024 event for Saturday, December 14. So mark your calendar and visit wreathsasscrossamerica.org to sponsor wreaths and/or volunteer at a location near you. **Remember, Honor, Teach.** Thanks to PSC Michele Rathke, PDP Faith Elford and Coralie Schoone/VFW Post 3143 for photos.



Opening ceremonies at the Northwoods National Cemetery's Wreaths Across America included the Northwoods Honor Guard. Led by Jerrod Olson of Rhinelander VFW Post 3143, the Guard also includes members from American Legion Post 7, DAV Post 62, and AMVETS Post 724, all of Rhinelander, the NCO Club of Rhinelander and Tomahawk, and American Legion Post 431 in Three Lakes.



ABOVE: Volunteers at the first Wreaths Across America event in Marshfield gather for instructions and the opening ceremonies on a drizzly but mild December 16.

AT LEFT: Auxiliary PDP Faith Elford and VFW District 7 Commander Doug Mauritz pause for a photo at the Hillside Cemetery Veterans Memorial.



TOP RIGHT: The volunteers at Hillside Cemetery worked diligently to place wreaths to honor the Veterans interred in the newer section of Veterans Field of Honor.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Wreaths stand in silent tribute to the Veterans buried in the Flanders Field section at Hillside Cemetery.

REMEMBER

HONOR

TEACH

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Saturday, December 14, 2024
Visit: wreathsasscrossamerica.org
for locations and information.