



NEWS 2024



VOL. 41 NO. 5

MISSION FIRST, FAMILY ALWAYS

MARCH/APRIL 2024

WI STRONG IN D.C.

By all accounts, the 2024 VFW Washington Conference was another success, with hundreds of VFW leaders from around the country visiting Capitol Hill to lobby their respective lawmakers, and discuss the VFW's Priority Goals. As is customary, the events culminated with Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento's testimony before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, on behalf of all Veterans. And according to Wisconsin's National Legislative Chairman, PSC Jason Johns, "A packed room of Comrades were present in full force!"

Attendees also witnessed the Annual Voice of Democracy Parade of Winners, hearing the First place winner Sophia Lin's powerful essay, as well as that of the Patriot's Pen First place winner, Bryant Day. Those winners took home \$35,000 and \$5,000 Scholarships respectively.

Please see page 6 for the Chairman's report and additional photos, as well as page 11 for our Wisconsin Student Essay results and photos.



This year's Wisconsin Delegation, meeting here with Senator Tammy Baldwin (center) included (from left): Brent Hibbard, Post 11038; Ken Smith, Post 328; AAQM Steve Eisenhauer, Post 1318; Curtis Lemke, Post 5470; PSC Mike Furgal, Post 2312; Sen. Baldwin; Cdr. Ron Ramos, Post 10818; JVC Ty Letto, Post 1163; Jim Cairo, Post 11038; Adj. Adam Wallace, Post 328; PSC Cory Geisler, Post 721 and PSC Jason Johns, Post 328. Jason Johns photo.

Farewell to PDP Madge Murphy



Madge B. Murphy
2012-2013 Auxiliary Dept. President

Another Auxiliary Past Department President has been taken from us with the passing of Madge B. Murphy, 74, in Janesville. Madge served as our 88th President of the then-Ladies Auxiliary VFW in 2012 - 2013, alongside State Commander Dewitt "Woody" Woodworth. Her theme "Generations Serving Our Veterans" was reflected in the service ribbons in her yellow rose "President's pin". The left side ribbon honored her father David Benzie's U.S. Air Force service in the European Theater in WWII, and the right hand ribbon honored her husband William "Bill" Murphy's service in Vietnam.

While Madge joined the Auxiliary officially in 1967 at Kienow-Hilt VFW 1621 in Janesville, she learned early on that Veterans are to be honored, joining her mother Hazel and stepfather Ray at many Cootie cookouts at WVH-King



and even making signs for Parade cars when the State Convention was held in Janesville in 1966. She quickly became very active at the Auxiliary and District levels, serving as Auxiliary President, followed by District President in 2004-2006. She also held many Department Chairmanships, among them Rehabilitation, Veterans & Family Support, and Bowling. Madge's first term in the Dept. Line was as Conductress in 2008-2009.

President Madge's very busy year started right after the 2012 Installation in Green Bay, and the first part of the year was packed with the Hospital Workshop; Auxiliary Training workshops; King Day; the National President's Homecoming in Iowa and a Joint Testimonial and Fall Council meeting.

SEE MADGE MURPHY, PAGE 7

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County Veteran Service Officers Association of Wisconsin (wicvso.org)

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

Your local Veteran Advocates, serving you since 1935



Greeting comrades,
It is with great pride and gratitude that I extend my heartfelt congratulations and thanks to this year's Red Carpet recipients. Your unwavering dedication to our mission is truly appreciated. It was truly an amazing sight to see the turnout and participation during the Mid-Winter training sessions, which truly made them a success.

In early March, our presence at the National Legislative Conference was not only impactful but also highlighted by the honor bestowed upon your President and me to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown. The experience was humbling and unforgettable.

As we enter election season, I encourage each of you to embody the change you desire. Consider running for a leadership role if you believe in the positive evolution of our esteemed organization. Your leadership is the cornerstone of our continued progress and changes begin with every individual's effort.

Let us also keep our momentum in the membership drive, aiming for a landmark achievement of 102% membership this year. Your connections, especially those from your time overseas, can play a significant role in this

Comrades,
I hope this article finds you healthy and doing well in this new year. I am amazed at the fantastic work that is being done at the Post and District levels. Your efforts statewide are very evident and I cannot thank you enough for the work you do to make a difference in the life of a Veteran every day!

Things are picking up again for me as the Junior Vice Commander now that the holiday season is over. I had the pleasure of attending a District 6 meeting electronically in January. Commander Buehler exercised his creativity and quick-thinking skills after a January snowstorm hit central Wisconsin. He was able to continue to conduct the meeting, in spite of the weather, and is working with Department Headquarters in setting up virtual capabilities for his District in the future. Great work Bob!

I also had the pleasure to present a 75-Year Anniversary Certificate to Howards Grove Post 9924 in January. Commander Bender and Quartermaster Schukow rolled out the red carpet for me including a great burger. I congratulate them on this milestone and thank them for all the fantastic work they continue to do in their community to make a difference in the life of Veterans.

Lastly, I had the opportunity to attend the Mid-Winter Conference in Wisconsin Rapids. It was my first time staying at Hotel Mead. The Conference went well with a lot of business being conducted and some fun in between. I had the honor of representing PSC Joel Walker as acting News Committee Chairperson. In this meeting, we had a good discussion on the newspaper budget and some Bylaw changes needed to help position the Department strategically to meet the future needs and demographics of our membership. The changes include changing Section 805 to create a Communications Committee to address all forms of communication and better coordinate how we communicate with our members. Committee representation would include the Newspaper Editor, Social Media Editor, and possibly a Marketing Administrator. My hope is to use this Committee to meet our future strategic needs regarding how we communicate. I look forward to hearing from you on this idea in the coming months before the State Convention as I travel throughout the State.

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!

Greetings Comrades,
It is that time of year to start the election process for the 2024-2025 year. Post Elections take place in April. Immediately following the election, the Post Quartermaster or Adjutant are required to submit a Post Election Report. The recommended and preferred method of doing this is to log onto the Online Membership System (OMS) on the National website. **If a Post Election Report is not submitted prior to the State Convention, that Post will not be eligible to vote at the State Convention.** If a Post Election Report is not submitted by June 30, National will automatically place the Post on suspension.

In addition to electing Post Officers and submitting the Election Report, Posts are required to submit to the State Quartermaster their Department Delegate Election Report and Dues. **Again, if the Department Delegate Election Report and Dues are not received prior to the State Convention, the Post will not be eligible to vote.** The 2024 Department Delegate Election Report and Dues form can be found in the Commander's Program booked mailed to all Post Commanders and Quartermasters

Ron Ramos
State Commander



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endeavor. With modern communication tools at our disposal, reaching out has never been easier.

Looking ahead, the State Convention this June at the Tundra Lodge is an excellent opportunity for networking and enhancing our capabilities. I eagerly anticipate meeting many of you there and I encourage you to consider submitting an All-State package as outlined in the Commander's Program Book.

Your devotion to VFW's cause is remarkable, and it is with deep appreciation that I commend your efforts. Let's redouble our commitment as we approach the year's end, to leave an indelible mark on our Veterans' lives. Thank you for all you do. **Mission First, Family Always!**

Ty Letto
State Jr. Vice
Commander



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as well as the State website (vfwwi.org). **Log into Members only.** The form is located under Programs/Districts Programs, Manuals, and Form. This form is now also available to fill out online and submit your payment electronically.

Speaking of Dues – to try and eliminate any confusion, a Post typically pays three separate dues:

- District Dues
- State Delegate Dues
- National Dues

All three dues are **required** to be paid. If you have any questions or need clarification and assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Headquarters.

STATE OFFICERS

Congratulations to the Posts that received the Red Carpet award! It was truly a joy to witness the recognition of your outstanding efforts, and I must say, the event was made even more special by the presence of familiar faces from my old Reserve unit, the 397th ENG. Seeing friends and comrades in such a celebratory setting added a personal touch to the occasion.

The commitment it takes to sign up or reinstate members is commendable, and your dedication to the Veterans of Foreign Wars is truly inspiring. The strength of any organization lies in its membership, and your unit exemplifies this truth. The VFW in Washington, DC works tirelessly toward passing bills that benefit all Veterans, and it's the unwavering support of members like you that propels these efforts forward.

If you tried your best to win the Red Carpet award for your Post, it's important to recognize that success goes beyond accolades. Your Post is equally successful in the meaningful impact it has on Veterans and the community. Congress may pass bills, but you bring those benefits home, making a tangible difference in the lives of Veterans.

Your commitment goes far beyond the spotlight of awards. Your contributions, such as helping Veterans with doctor's appointments, providing assistance with groceries, and distributing gas cards, are the true markers of success. You bring the spirit of the VFW to life in your community, and that, in itself, is a significant victory.

So, don't dwell on the award that slipped away; remember that your Post and its members are winners in the hearts of Veterans and the community. Your actions speak louder than any trophy, and your impact is immeasurable.

Mary Ann Christopherson
State Sr. Vice
Commander



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Spring is here? Or on its way!
I want to recognize the team members that work at both of our offices, and let you know they have big hearts and a strong passion to help Veterans. Thank you, Adam, Steve, Tim, Bonita, Mary, Desiree, and Noel. I also wish Mitch, our previous Department Service Officer, luck with his new endeavors. And congratulations Tim on your promotion as our new Department Service Officer!

The upcoming State Convention in June will be at the Tundra Lodge in Green Bay. Make your reservations early - I hope you all can attend. I can't wait to see which Posts make All-State this year and encourage every Post that participates in our programs and are out in their communities to apply.

A special thank you to all who donated to any of our programs, especially our Unmet Needs. The Unmet Needs grants we give out have exceeded our donations. Meaning we are providing help to more Veterans faster than we can raise the money. Look for the Spring Sweepstakes enclosed in this

Tom Heath
State
Quartermaster



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paper and the Summer Sweepstakes soon. It is a great way to donate and have a chance to win some spending money. (That is the fun part!) I want to thank you for all your much-appreciated support.

The next time someone asks you about why we do all this, you can give a great answer: "To help our Veterans, Veterans' families, and our communities, to include our Unmet Needs program."

I hope this information helps and again, if you need any assistance do not hesitate to call the Headquarters at 608-221-5276.

Greetings Comrades!

It was great, as always, to connect with those in attendance at the Mid-Winter Conference in Wisconsin Rapids. Thank you to those that were able to come out, and I hope that the training and information provided was worth your time to be there. As someone who works full-time, Commander Ramos is always looking to add value to our events to make our time together as valuable as possible.

I would like to use my article to make a simple request to all members, but especially Post Commanders, Quartermasters, and Adjutants: **Please update your contact information, especially to include email addresses, with National.** If you joined the VFW **BEFORE** you started using emails, you more than likely do not have an updated email address with National. Emails have become our lifeblood of instant communication with each other. Not every event or piece of information comes out in enough time to publish in the Newspaper.

How do I update my contact information? If you are a user of the National VFW website, simply go to **www.vfw.org** and login. Then go to Online Membership System (OMS), and on the left-hand side, click "Personal Services" which will show a dropdown menu, and click on "Contact Information." There you can update all of your information. If you are unable to utilize the self-service online option, you can call National Member

Adam Wallace
State Adjutant



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Services at 1-833-839-8387 and update your contact information over the phone.

If you are a Post Commander, QM, or Adjutant that does not have an email address, you are missing a lot of important information being sent by your State Commander, District Commander, and State HQ like online training sessions, Department events, registration links, local events, and the list goes on. I am trying to improve our organization's communication abilities, and communication is a two-way street. So please, get your email addresses updated.

As we are on the homestretch for the program year, I wish you all continued success in your local endeavors. As Spring approaches, we must make sure we get back out and visible in all the fun community events that will be happening, and constantly remind everyone that the VFW is still out working hard for Veterans, their families, and their communities.



Support Our Troops

Greetings Comrades! We have finally made it to the final installment on Whole Health in the VA!

Last time, we finished discussing the eight areas of self-care. The darker circle surrounding the eight areas of self-care is **Prevention and Treatment** and **Conventional & Complementary Approaches** – or professional care.

Once you have paid close attention to, and exhausted all eight areas of self-care, it is time to turn to professional care. The prevention and treatment of illness and disease can be done using what we call traditional medicine, or it can be done using complementary and integrative health (CIH) services. Traditional medicine is just as it sounds: you see a medical provider for your issue, they evaluate you, and devise a treatment plan. Treatment could include physical therapy, medication, or some counseling. CIH services within the VA look at you as a whole individual, not just your illness or disease. CIH services vary from VA facility to VA facility.

I can tell you what services are offered by the Whole Health Department in the Tomah VA Medical Center. Still, please check with your local facility to see what they have to offer. The CIH services offered in Tomah

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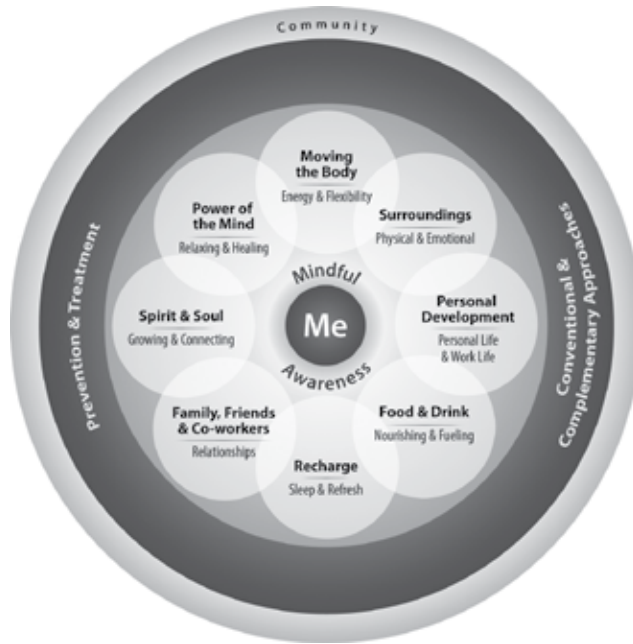


(and the outreach clinics) include traditional acupuncture, battlefield acupuncture, massage therapy, and chiropractic. The Whole Health Department in Tomah also offers Whole Health coaching, aromatherapy, healing touch, meditation, and emotional freedom techniques. Tomah VA also provides multiple movement classes: tai chi, yoga, spin, and resistance band classes, in person or virtually. If that isn't enough, the facility has partnered with Millennial Health and Fitness – an online fitness platform with on-demand or live classes for almost anything you can imagine.

If you want to learn more about any of these services, please contact your primary care provider, your Whole Health Department at your local facility, or me!

Finally, the outermost ring in the Circle of Health is **Community**. For some, their community is close; for others, it is far away. Your community is more than the places where you live, work, and worship. It includes all the people and groups you connect with, who rely on you, and upon whom you rely. Just like there is a “me” at the center of the circle, there is a “we” that enfolds it. Nothing we do for our health can be done well without support from others!

Thank you for hanging in with me as we discussed the



Whole Health Circle of Health. I hope that you found this information useful. For more information, please schedule an appointment with your VA primary care physician or visit va.gov/wholehealth.

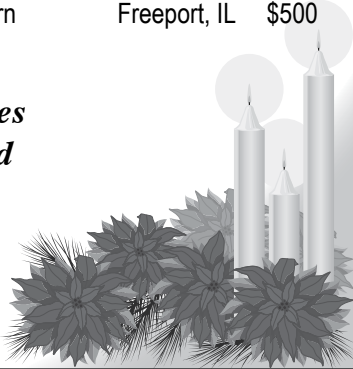
Until next time, stay happy and healthy!



2023 VFW CHRISTMAS SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

Name	City	Prize	Name	City	Prize
Thomas Meredith	Racine	\$500	Mary Neuman	Beaver Dam	\$500
Daniel Lampman	Deerfield	\$500	Roger Evans	Neenah	\$500
Keven Greening	Chippewa Falls	\$500	Dennis Rockwell	Union Grove	\$500
Karen Blashka	Manitowoc	\$500	Alexander Kaleta	Wauwatosa	\$500
Richard Markiewicz	Green Bay	\$500	Andrew Cider	Burlington	\$500
John Long	Cuba City	\$500	Delbert Reuter	Lancaster	\$500
Manda Norman	Merrill	\$500	Harold Henkel	Weslaco, TX	\$500
Richard Hause	Baraboo	\$500	Roger Kage	Mosinee	\$500
Ronald Wonsil	Kronenwetter	\$500	Audrey Tessmer	Wausau	\$500
Michael Hughes	Pulaski	\$500	Connie Sorn	Freeport, IL	\$500

***Congratulations to these winners
of our 2023 VFW Holiday Sweepstakes
and THANK YOU to all who donated
to this Ways and Means program.
We appreciate your support
of our Department very much
– Happy New Year!***



Fellow Comrades,

Hope this winter has been treating you and your family well. The Mid-Winter Conference was a nice one. It's always good to see everyone. Congratulations to all.

Hope all Chaplains received an email from their District Commander a few months back about the Chaplain training we've been having on Zoom. The remaining sessions for this year are scheduled for March 20, April 17 and May 15, all starting at 7:30 pm. These excellent sessions are conducted by VFW Past National Chaplain Peter Hook of Pennsylvania. If you would like to attend, please contact me through a call or email, so I can forward you the Zoom link. If you cannot attend, they record the training and I could always forward it to you.

Our current VFW National Chaplain is Dave Frei from the State of Idaho. Another upcoming exciting event for all Chaplains is a Chaplain Retreat in Gettysburg, PA, May 17-19. Please contact me and I will forward you the email with all the information. To all Post and District Commanders, if your Chaplains are able to attend this Retreat, please consider supporting them in all ways possible, especially financially.

For support, prayers and listening ears, please know I am available anytime through a call, email or text. You all will be in my prayers for your health, your homes, your Post, District and community. Take care of yourselves – God bless you!

I leave you with this Bible verse: “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.” — Psalms 28:7 NIV

Ilein Taipe
State Chaplain

VFW
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VFW DAY OF SERVICE - LEADING THE CHARGE TO SERVE -

American's Veterans are #StillServing in communities across the country. The third annual VFW Day of Service is May 4, 2024 – marking the start of Veteran-led community service projects throughout the month.

VFW Posts, VFW members, community advocates and Veterans of every stripe are invited to band together for this historic event.

Find more details and sign up at todaysfw.org

Wisconsin VFW News Production Schedule

May Issue	Vol. 41, No. 6	Deadline to Editor: April 5, 2024
Department Convention • June 12-15, 2024		
July Issue	Vol. 42, No. 1	Deadline to Editor: June 21, 2024
September Issue	Vol. 42, No. 2	Deadline to Editor: August 9, 2024
November Issue	Vol. 42, No. 3	Deadline to Editor: October 11, 2024
Jan. 2025 Issue	Vol. 42, No. 4	Deadline to Editor: December 6, 2024
Mid-Winter Conference • February 14-15, 2025		
March 2025 Issue	Vol. 42, No. 5	Deadline to Editor: February 7, 2025

Wisconsin VFW News

Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars News is published six times per year by the Department of Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, P.O. Box 6128, Monona, WI 53716-0128. Periodical Postage Paid at Madison, WI and additional office: Stevens Point, WI. Subscription rates \$15 per year for VFW members; \$10 for non-members and VFW Auxiliary members.

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
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Kansas City, MO 64111.

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Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars

Planning for Upcoming Meetings

- **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
Oshkosh Waterfront Hotel • \$106 + 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.

Greeting Comrades,
Being or getting involved! This statement has many different interpretations, and I would like to address one that is becoming more common today than it was ten years ago.

As your Judge Advocate, one of my collateral duties involves being assigned as a member of an Administrative Committee when the Department identifies a struggling Post. Usually, when an Administrative Committee is created, it means that the Department Commander is considering whether to suspend the operations of a Post in accordance with section 211, paragraph 3 of the Manual of Procedures, for one or more deficiencies or violations of the laws and usage of the organization.

There are myriad reasons why a Post might face a suspension, such as: failure to submit quarterly audits; failure to hold at least one regular meeting each month; failure to elect the required Officers or establish a meeting quorum, or failure to attend District Conferences, among others.

If it is determined that a Post is unable to fulfill the required obligations, and is eventually suspended, I want everyone to understand what the intent is for the suspension. The Administrative Committee is there to:

- Help determine the viability of the continuation of the Post and whether it is capable of renewing its commitment to duties under the Charter and purposes of the VFW.
- Assist the Post to be able to restart and continue as a VFW entity fully compliant and in good standing with the Department.
- Determine the best course of action for

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VFW
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the Post and the Department.

I want everyone to know that the committee is NOT there to shut the Post down, nor is it there to take over the Post! The committee is there to ASSIST the Post, through mentorship and guidance, toward reestablishing itself as a participating and viable entity.

So, what can you do? First and foremost, if you are not actively engaged with the Post, please make it a point to attend your Post meetings. If you are already attending regular meetings, but not necessarily involved outside of the meetings, consider getting involved. If you are involved, but not an Officer, consider taking on a position of leadership within the Post. I'm sure there are members of your Post who are ready to hand over the responsibilities to a new generation of Post leadership.

Through your involvement you will ensure the viability and success of your Post. Finally, I want to assure everyone that our Department Commander takes zero pride in suspending a Post. It is his desire and mission, to make every Post within the Department of Wisconsin VFW as successful as they can be!

Greetings comrades,
I hope you are all staying safe. The Service Office Team and I are working hard to make sure all our Veterans' needs are being met. As I'm sure you all know, in December our former DSO Mitch Woytych left for a new opportunity and position more conducive for his family situation. He will be missed! I am pleased to serve you as the next DSO.

We are working with Headquarters and the Veterans Service Committee to fill the vacant Claims Consultant position as soon as possible. In the meanwhile, we are trying to deal with the influx of PACT Act related claims. We are grateful for the invaluable work of our part-time employees, which allows Bonita Curry and me to focus on the more intricate details of claims.

The Milwaukee VA is adding a new clinic in Oconomowoc. The opening date has not been set, but operations should begin in early 2024. In other news, here is an overview of some issues affecting Wisconsin Veterans:

- **PACT Act Claim Status** – There are 7,127 claims pending for Wisconsin residents. The number of completed claims is 14,987, with an ADC of 158.1 days. Grant rate is 80.0% with retroactive benefits paid of \$63,210,377.78.
- **Blue Water Navy Update** – There are 432 claims pending for Wisconsin. 4,123 claims have been completed with retroactive benefits of \$49,063,229.57.
- **Blue Water Navy Nehmer Claims** – There are 7 claims pending for Wisconsin. A total of 1,327 claims have been completed with retroactive benefits of \$9,467,939.41.
- **Agent Orange – 3 new presumptive disabilities added** – bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism. There are 54 claims pending for Wisconsin. 2,821 claims have been completed with retroactive benefits of \$27,381,922.26.
- **Gulf War Particulate Claims** – a number of rare respiratory cancers affecting the larynx, trachea, and lungs have been added as presumptive service-related. There are 498 claims pending for Wisconsin. 1,905 claims have been completed with retroactive benefits of \$7,805,073.58.

There are of course, many more details on other types of claims and cases too numerous to address here. Please remember to call me and my team if you have questions on the process and claims, or there is any specific information you need. We are here to serve you!

Tim Neary
State Veterans
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**Where do I find
the VFW Event
Photos on the
Website?**

Note: ALL photos of a particular album may be downloaded all at once from the Album Cover using the down arrow. They may also be "shared".

Suggested credit if you submit these to a publication:
Photo courtesy of Wisconsin VFW
State Photographer Sherri L. Smith

- ➔ Open **vfwwi.org**
- ➔ Click on **ABOUT**
- ➔ Click on **GALLERY**
- ➔ Select **"Click Here to View all Photo Albums on Flickr"**
- ➔ Select Album by name (e.g. **2024 Mid-Winter**)
- ➔ Scroll to a photo you want.
- ➔ **OPEN** it on your computer
- ➔ At the lower right, next to the photo in the black field, click on the **DOWNLOAD ARROW**

Then select the size you want – **SMALL** will be about 40-50 kb, good for electronic display. **ORIGINAL** will be about 2-3 MB, excellent for printing.

STATE OFFICERS

Hello Comrades!

Congratulations to all the Red Carpet winners. Considering the weather we have been having this winter, it should have been called the Mid-Spring Conference. It was nice to see that the Conference was well attended. Thank you to all who attended the classes as well. I thought there was a good variety of subjects to choose from. As the planning for the State Convention is underway, if you have something that you would like more information on, please let the Department Headquarters know.

Remember the old saying "Give credit where credit is due?" We all know that Posts are taking it to the streets and sharing the message of the VFW. As we do the mission, we need to make sure the paperwork gets done. I know you hate to hear this but, go on the State website – vfwwi.org - and enter the Community Service hours. We need to document our work to give ourselves credit. It is the way that you can show us and anyone else that we are active in our communities. For every Post that is going to submit an All-State packet, this is extremely important. The title of "Captain of the All-State Team" may hinge on the hours and money you have contributed to the community during the past year. If you are having trouble, please contact Headquarters for help.

As we enter the last quarter, let us keep going strong. There is plenty of time left to get some things done. Open the Commander's Program Book and check to see when the deadlines are scheduled. Let's not forget the Commander's Special Project, Sierra Delta. Did your Post have a Poppy and Membership drive? You can have one before Memorial Day. Schedule one before May 1 so it will count for the program year. These are just a few suggestions.

Let us not grow weak or falter. Let us run the race to completion. Remember our motto: **Mission First, Family Always!**

Mitch Cline
Chief-of-Staff
VFW
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Greetings Comrades:

Attention, Inspectors! All inspections need to be completed and submitted to Headquarters **by April 1, 2024**. There are approximately 10% still outstanding.

Considering the Audits we've seen issues with so far this year, I believe that transferring the correct quarterly ending balance to the next quarter's beginning balance has improved greatly. This may be partially due to the use of spreadsheets that are designed to do this automatically. No matter the size of your Post, I recommend the use of such spreadsheets as they increase accuracy and the printouts are very legible.

One Audit issue that really slows down the whole process and greatly increases review time is when a Trustee's or Commander's signature is missing. A few years back, it was acceptable to submit an Audit form with only two Trustee signatures. I believe at one time we may have even accepted pro tem Trustees as well. However, the Bylaws require the **three elected Trustees** to review the quarterly Audit and no other variation is considered acceptable or complete. When we receive unacceptable Audits, they tend to get two to three times as much attention as they deserve, since several contacts need to be made per Post requesting corrections. Sometimes we never get the corrected report and then a personal visit may be necessary. This is not an efficient use of time and there is only one way to fix the problem: **don't submit incomplete Audits**. If you lose a Trustee, conduct a quick election at the meeting to fix the problem. Just make sure to amend your Election Report.

Leroy Jansky
State Inspector
VFW
715-723-0408
inspector@vfwwi.org



Another area of concern in Audits is completion of Section 16, "Operations". Many Posts don't need to complete this section because they don't have a Post Home or business like a canteen/bar. However, those Posts that do, *absolutely* need to complete this section. Again, if it is not completed and needs to be, we'll be sending it back for additional information. The Commander, Trustees and Quartermaster need to make sure all required information is included on the Audit form before it is submitted – **that is their duty**.

Lastly, Posts whose finances are on a calendar year (Jan.-Dec.), need to submit their IRS 990 form before May 15. There are a dozen things a Quartermaster might forget to do but filing the 990 should not be one of them. Even if it is late, get it filed as soon as possible. I am pretty sure the system will allow late filings.

Let's take the March Audit reports seriously and review them thoroughly one last time for accuracy and completeness, before sending them to Headquarters. Your diligence is appreciated.

Greetings Comrades!

I hope this article finds Wisconsin starting to warm up for the spring and everyone is starting to get outdoors. As an organization, the VFW needs to think outside the box when it comes to getting our message out to not only our younger Veterans, but Veterans of all ages. I was proud to see that we have started to move in that direction with two items that will bring more exposure to what the VFW is and how it continues its mission of helping our Veterans, active service, Reserve, and National Guard units.

The first initiative is that the VFW is getting back into NASCAR. Ryan Roulette Racing will be representing the VFW in the ARCA Menards Series. What makes this significant is that Ryan Roulette is an Air Force Veteran who is also a VFW Life Member. He approached the VFW and wanted to promote the organization. The VFW will be supporting him by paying for his tires for this season. In exchange for that, the VFW name and logo will be on the hood of his car, some other spots on his car, and the uniforms for the pit crew and Ryan will have the VFW logo across the front. This is a huge win for the VFW to get its name out in front of Veterans and their family members.

The second initiative is online gaming. The VFW has designed its own online gaming league called Combat Tested Gaming. On an annual basis, over 3 billion people will play video games in a year. The goal of Combat Tested Gaming is to bring Veterans together through E-Sports. This will again help the VFW get its name out to Veterans, both young and older, through a platform that we have never explored.

These are exciting times in the VFW. We are thinking more outside the box when it comes to reaching out to Veterans. While these initiatives will be helpful in recruiting new members, the more important part is that it exposes the VFW to a much wider range of people than ever before.

Keep up the great work for Commander Ramos and I look forward to seeing everyone at the State Convention.

Cory Geisler
National Council
Member
VFW
262-853-1811
corygeisler@hotmail.com




MEMBERSHIP

Current Membership Totals By District								
Dist.	Life	New	Reinstate	Continuous	Total	Prior Year	Percentage	N/R LM
1	2270	53	39	298	2660	2845	93.49%	31
2	3241	23	9	352	3625	3846	94.25%	25
3	730	5	0	112	847	897	94.42%	2
4	1196	14	2	131	1343	1421	94.51%	9
6	1713	11	2	152	1878	1963	95.66%	15
7	2156	24	12	244	2436	2528	96.36%	24
8	1814	17	3	186	2020	2166	93.25%	15
9	2560	42	8	134	2744	2851	96.24%	32
10	1313	18	12	210	1553	1616	96.10%	21
11	1626	19	14	157	1816	1961	92.60%	14
99	1425	58	13	193	1689	1902	88.80%	26
Totals	20044	284	114	2169	22611	23996	94.22%	214


Totals as of February 29, 2024
321 Legacy Life Members

Recruit, engage,
inspire, retain!




NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.


COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE



It's that time of the year when we're all filling out our brackets for the tournaments, but it's also time for the VFW to focus on our own goals for growing our membership?

For the month of March, we've divided our 52 Departments into six divisions based on size. The Department that leads each division at the end of March will receive a special commemorative championship belt, and will continue on to our Championship Bracket in April!





In addition, any Department that reaches 97% membership by the end of March will earn a special championship ring to commemorate that glorious achievement!

Division 1

California
Florida
Illinois
Michigan
New York
Ohio
Pennsylvania
Texas
Virginia

Division 2

Arizona
Georgia
Indiana
Minnesota
Missouri
New Jersey
North Carolina
Washington
Wisconsin

Division 3

Colorado
Europe
Kansas
Kentucky
Maryland
Massachusetts
Nebraska
South Carolina
Tennessee

Division 4

Alabama
Arkansas
Connecticut
Iowa
Louisiana
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pacific Areas
West Virginia

Division 5

Alaska
Idaho
Maine
Mississippi
Montana
Nevada
New Mexico
South Dakota

Division 6

Delaware
Hawaii
New Hampshire
North Dakota
Rhode Island
Utah
Vermont
Wyoming

It's time to make a full-court press and prove that when it comes to making a championship effort for membership, we're all determined to do our best and

MEET THE CHALLENGE!

This contest will count total membership percentage as of close of business on March 31, 2024. Applications and payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to membership@vfw.org.

Greetings Comrades,
The VFW Year has only a little more than 4 months remaining. Our goal of 102% in Membership is reachable if we all pull together and put in some extra effort. At the time of this writing, our numbers are at 94.22%. We need 1,865 more members to make our 102% goal! We can do this! Yes, it will take some effort, but it is obtainable and with the help of each and every one of you it can be done! Just think, if every one of us brought in one new member we would be at 200%.

Congratulations to those Posts that have done the work and reached 100% or more. There are 48 Posts above 100% and of those, 15 have exceeded the 102% goal. Many Posts only need one or two members to reach their 102% goal! A lot of work has already been done as seen by these great numbers, but there is still work to be done and I know that you can do it!

Recently, I sent out several lists of Un-pays and Expiring Officers. These are tools that District Commanders, Membership Team Members and Posts can use to reach out and ensure that each of the members on the lists are contacted, reminded and requested to renew their membership. We want them to know how important their membership is to us. These tools are very useful and make our goal much closer. By renewing current members, we need fewer new members to reach 102%. Use the tools available, contact your District Commanders or me for help.

Membership is much more than just a number, but one voice, that gives us power as we speak to our State and National Representatives and work to protect or gain our Veteran benefits. We need to build our membership to ensure that our voice is recognized! Do not let any opportunity to reinstate, renew, or recruit go by without doing all you can to make it happen!

The race for top recruiter continues to be a tight one, with 7 members recruiting 10 or more new members. And 222 members have recruited 1 or more new members. There is still time to recruit that first new member or even take that top recruiter spot for Department. I remind you again of the ongoing individual membership incentives, available to ALL who recruit new or rein-stated 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.

Randy Engness
State Membership Chairman

715-651-0263
engnessr@gmail.com



TOP RECRUITING POSTS through 3/1/2024		
Post	District	Recruits
11038	1	42
305	9	32
1621	1	24
10818	9	24
7308	1	21
1318	2	16
2112	11	13
8280	7	10

TOP RECRUITING UPDATE through 2/29/2024			
Recruiter	Post	Dist.	Recruits
David A. Zien	305	9	24
James A. Cairo	11038	1	22
Steven J. Eisenhower	1318	2	16
Peter A. Pemrich	1621	1	15
Jason T. Coffey	11038	1	14
David G. Green	10818	9	14
Tricia L. Flaig	2112	11	10
Patrick E. Pierce	8280	7	7
John D. McCoy	7308	1	5
Phillip D. Allen	7308	1	5
Robin L. Drogsvold	328	2	5
Christina F. Flanagan	664	7	5
Kevin J. Bertetto	305	9	5
Ronald Ramos, Jr.	10818	9	5
William S. Vach	5729	10	5
Wayne A. Georgeson	1916	11	5

- 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. For the complete list see the Commander's Program Book, pages 22-24.
- Building up our strength at Post level helps our District, Department and National! We need 102% to grow and remain vital to the men and women that have served and are still serving this great country. **Recruit, Engage, Inspire, Retain!**

LAST CALL!

Just about six weeks remain until the

April 30, 2024 DEADLINE

for your Post's OR District's

ALL-STATE PACKET!

You've done the work. NOW,

re-check pages 26 – 34 in the

2023-2024 Commander's Program Book,


and make sure you have "crossed the Ts" and

"dotted the Is" for a **complete** submission.

Packets DUE TO VFW State HQ by

the close of business Tuesday, April 30!

Questions? Call HQ at 608-221-5276.





A portion of the Wisconsin Delegation met up with National Sr. Vice Commander Al Lipphardt (center) on Wednesday evening. Jason Johns photo.



Rep. Scott Fitzgerald was not available, but delegates met with his Legislative Assistant, Thomas Blanford (center). Cory Geisler photo.

Comrades, Sisters and Brothers,
There were four major legislative priorities discussed with Congress during this year's Washington Conference: **Cracking Down on Predatory Claims Companies** ("Claim Sharks"); **VA Benefits Data for Suicide Prevention**; **Transition from Service**; and **Retirement and Military Personnel**. More on those topics in a bit.

Jason Johns
Nat'l Legislative
Chair
VFW
608-209-0805
fightin4vets
@gmail.com



The advocacy does not stop with our in-person meetings. It is vital that Wisconsin's Congressional delegation hears from **YOU** as a member of the VFW and/or Auxiliary. State Commander Ramos and I urge everyone to take a few minutes to call to your U.S. Representative and both Senators, share the info on our priorities, and ask them to sign on as co-sponsors of our legislation! **Visit: House.gov** and enter your zip code in the upper right. The search will automatically find your specific Representative. When you contact them, be sure to thank them for their support. We need everyone engaged to succeed, so make the calls today!

And now, some info on our four priorities:

• **Cracking Down on Predatory Claims Companies** ("Claim Sharks")

The VFW is concerned that bad actors have been preying on Veterans by seeking to access their earned Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. Claim Sharks charge thousands of dollars in fees for their services, and even request VA credentials to track when Veterans receive future ratings increases. If a Veteran receives a disability percentage increase years later, these companies often return seeking more money. Furthermore, they routinely obtain medical opinions from affiliated medical



Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R, WI-3) conducted a private tour of the Capitol on Wednesday night for the Wisconsin attendees. Here, they are looking at a Daniel Webster quote above H130 which reads, "When Tillage begins and other Arts follow, the Farmers therefore are the Founders of Human Civilization." Jason Johns photo.

providers, which raises ethical concerns, and has triggered fraud alerts by the VA.

The VFW believes that penalties need to be reinstated to already existing law that would require anyone who assists Veterans with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA claims adhere to established reasonable fee caps or be subject to these penalties. A bipartisan coalition of 44 Attorneys General

agree and sent a letter to Congress expressing their support for the GUARD Act.

• **The VFW urges Congress to pass H.R. 1139/S. 740, GUARD VA Benefits Act.**

• **VA Benefits Data for Suicide Prevention**

The VFW has advocated for years that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must incorporate more Veterans Benefits Admin-

istration (VBA) usage data into its suicide prevention efforts. This should include complete information on disability compensation; use of benefits for education, employment, home loans, and foreclosure assistance; and participation in housing and food insecurity programs. We must identify, study, and utilize information regarding economic opportunity benefits and leverage that information to successfully prevent suicide among Veterans.

• **The VFW urges Congress to pass H.R. 4157/S. 928, Not Just a Number Act.**

• **Transition from Service**

Leaving service is often complicated by service-related ailments, family needs, loss of identity and support networks, and the required training to enter a new career field. Sadly, the initial year following discharge also comes with increased suicide among Veterans, heightening the need to ensure all transitioning service members are connected to post-service benefits and resources as quickly as possible. One of the best resources to have during this period are accredited representatives who can help file VA Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claims.

Unfortunately, not all service members going through the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program (TAP) have access to BDD accredited representatives, resulting in lost opportunities to receive timely care and benefits upon discharge. The VFW believes there is immense value in incorporating these accredited representatives into the TAP curriculum itself. It will not only assure more Veterans receive their earned benefits but will help save lives in our fight against Veteran suicide.

• **The VFW urges Congress to pass H.R. 3933/S. 2888, TAP Promotion Act.**

• **Retirement and Military Personnel**

Reform to retirement pay and disability compensation policy is long overdue. Congress has not passed substantive concurrent receipt legislation for military retirees in nearly two decades, leaving scores of service-connected disabled retirees in challenging predicaments. The VFW has long argued that Department of Defense (DOD) retirement pay, and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) service-connected disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits, earned for different reasons. Currently, only those retirees who served at least twenty years and are at least 50 percent service-connected disabled are allowed to concurrently receive their full benefits. All others must forfeit all or part of the other, known as "offsetting." Veterans who were medically retired under Chapter 61 before serving twenty years, are required to offset their retiree pay with the amount of VA compensation they receive. Currently, more than 50,000 Chapter 61 retirees with combat-related disabilities do not have full access to their vested retirement pay **and** service-connected disability compensation. These Veterans are unjustly being denied the benefits they earned and deserve. 326 cosponsors in the House and 71 cosponsors in the Senate understand this injustice.

• **The VFW urges Congress to pass H.R. 1282/S. 344, Major Richard Star Act, either as a standalone bill or via the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025.**



The weather was wretched, but the steady downpour did not dampen the honor and meaning of the wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington. A memorable experience for our Commander and President. Kim McWilliams photos.



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	Kenneth Anger	Eau Claire	2306	Andrew Schulz	Glendale, AZ	7534	Elmer Kozelek	Green Bay	9464	Michael Wetzel	Holcombe
305	William Germann	Eau Claire	2336	Juel Anderson	Baraboo	7591	Joseph Baumann	Madison	9511	Glenn Stensby	Blue Mounds
305	Lawrence Risler	Eau Claire	2534	Donald Crotteau	Gloucester, VA	7591	Gerald Maly	Waunakee	9511	Peter Strube	Mount Horeb
305	Clare Waldenberger	Ridgeland	2534	Donald Hetzel	Wisconsin Rapids	7591	John Reis	Madison	9537	Julian Bates	Pewaukee
305	Larry Wyss	Chippewa Falls	2534	Robert Schmid	Wisconsin Rapids	7692	Dale Rouse, Sr.	Pharr, TX	9677	Harold VandenAvond	Green Bay
388	Laurence Jastinski	Wausau	2653	Lloyd Steckbauer	Aniwa	7694	Lester Prchal	Mazomanie	9719	Francis Ullmer	Pulaski
659	Daniel Furdek	Milwaukee	2653	James Teal	Deerbrook	7784	Nathan Smith	De Pere	9924	Ronald Plocar	Howards Grove
987	Robert Klingemeyer	North Freedom	2687	James Likwarz	Tomahawk	7896	Richard Belken	Cuba City	10195	Roger Hintz	Eldorado
1038	Carl Miller	Eau Claire	2723	Ervin Bartz	Shawano	7929	Richard Pelc	Amery	10262	James Mozuch	Stevens Point
1039	Maurice Hagen	Minnetonka, MN	2723	Edward Jeske	Shawano	8021	Darryl Kocimski	Coon Valley	10262	James Sachs	Stevens Point
1039	Hugh Mulheron	Elmwood	2778	Gerald Jochman	Slinger	8092	Terry Gokey	Ripon	10272	David Hammersley	Oregon
1318	Kenneth McConnell	Madison	2925	Jarold Barth	Neshkoro	8171	Timo Kallio	Muskego	10272	Chad Sturdevant	Blue Mounds
1382	Ronald Wagner	Tomah	3032	Veryl Gerdl	Viroqua	8216	James Beyer	DeForest	10393	James Hendricks	Tomah
1391	Edward Hood	Mount Pleasant	3032	Leroy Wang	Camp Douglas	8216	Charles Larson	Middleton	10394	Antonio Fucci	Santa Rosa Valley, CA
1391	Wolfgang Wagener	Racine	3143	Leonard Bauman	Crystal City, MO	8320	Alvin Bucheger	Brookfield	10394	James Helminski	Greendale
1530	Robert Maier	La Crosse	3392	William Doperalski	Kewaunee	8337	Leon Kellum	Ellison Bay	10394	Howard Hingiss	Grafton
1530	James Schumacher	La Crosse	5158	Charles Kasprzak	Oconomowoc	8337	Robert Tidball	Milwaukee	10394	Victor Ruka	South Milwaukee
1621	Richard Goth	Janesville	5373	Norbert Lohuis	Oostburg	8342	Gary Luebbe	Schofield	10406	Clarence Auseth	Fountain City
1621	John Keller	Orfordville	5373	Harold Olson	Saukville	8342	Clarence Przybylski	Schofield	10406	Robert Baures	Fountain City
1621	James Lien	Janesville	5612	John Slomka, Jr.	Adell	8400	Fredrick Caskey	Rhineland	10533	Donald MacNaughton	Shullsburg
1621	James McCalmont	Janesville	5716	Thomas Becker	New Berlin	8400	Warren Hintz	Brookfield	10818	Tyrone Patterson	Ramsey, MN
1621	Terry Nordness	Janesville	5729	Ronald Bremer	Medford	8482	Gordon Voss	Mukwonago	10818	George Perry	Granite Falls, MN
1621	Paul Suchanek	Janesville	5778	Donald Flietner	Phillips	8483	Mickey Horrocks	Otsego, MI	10818	Rodney Zinser	Burnet, TX
1621	Edward Trace	Janesville	5778	Donald Schultz	Phillips	8483	Patrick White	Madison	11244	Raymond Maly	Dane
1621	Vincent Treinen	Evansville	5780	James Weyek	Milwaukee	8483	Edward Wisener	Madison	11346	Donald Dombrowski	Stevens Point
1638	Jack Grawien	Merrill	5828	Dennis Bliese	Deer Park	8491	Jeffrey Hueckman	Prentice	11346	Donald Shulfer	Amherst
1638	John E. Harder	Merrill	5828	Richard Hillstead	Clear Lake	8512	Jerome Gores	Almena	15051	Frank Abbott	Superior
1638	Allen Olkives	Chippewa Falls	6003	Michael Driscoll	Oxford	8512	Alfred Koser	Minneapolis, MN	15051	Deborah Anderson	Spooner
1638	Kennann Purdy	Gleason	6279	Tilden Mattox	Hancock	8512	Lowell Wohlk	Almena	15051	Wayne Dutkiewicz	Wautoma
1638	Dennis Schmidt	Merrill	6375	Lawrence Buldak	Lake Geneva	8514	David Henthorn	Fairchild	15051	Wayne Gabriel	Neenah
1865	Donald Kirschbaum	Kenosha	6375	Stewart Sizemore	Delavan	8813	John Clark	Peshtigo	15051	Mark Gauthier	Neenah
1866	Adolph Kraus	King	6498	Marie Reith	New Berlin	8813	Alan Kelly	Gadsden, AL	15051	Paul Johnson	Superior
1866	Robert Nikolay	Marshfield	6550	Donald Hanson	Altoona	8834	Benjamin Thorn	Oconomowoc	15051	John Kahling, III	Saint Germain
1904	Thomas Rumbuc	Fond du Lac	6705	Norman Sengbusch	Kaukauna	9156	August Glazer	Haddonfield, NJ	15051	Nathan Krisp	Appleton
2037	Chris Bennett	Turners Station, KY	6707	James Schirmer	Plymouth	9156	Michael Hiebing	Sheboygan	15051	Lou LePage	Fayetteville, NC
2037	Peter Neveu	Appleton	6709	Paul Abresch, Sr.	Waupun	9156	Arthur Lloyd	Sheboygan	15051	Dennis Love	Milton
2037	Kenneth Schroeder	Green Bay	6709	Vernon Farley	Waupun	9156	Alphonse Reiter	Sheboygan	15051	Mark Makela	Green Bay
2113	Eugene Coonen	De Pere	6709	Tom Thill	Waupun	9202	Daniel O'Toole	Germantown	15051	Eugene Nordby	Madison
2119	Loren Marcusen	Wausaukee	6769	William Chapman	Cumberland	9336	Lester Baker	Arena	15051	Ronald Sarbacker	Black Earth
2204	Bruce McDonald	Rice Lake	6856	Joseph Demulling	Osceola	9387	Michael Swansby	Wisconsin Dells	15051	Joseph Scaccia	Brule
2219	Richard Barnett	Fall River	7233	Dan Dahlstrom	Hayward	9387	Duane Wilcox	Wisconsin Dells	15051	Carl Seefeld	Fond du Lac
2260	John Bohrman	Oconomowoc	7300	Fred Hildebrandt	Glidden	9392	Kenneth Fischer	Watertown	15051	Robert Soma, Sr.	Necedah
2267	John Bruni	Briggsville	7485	James Gruenewald	Oak Creek	9392	Dale Sennhenn	Columbus	15051	Andrew Stashek	Junction City
2267	Gerald Willison	Madison	7534	John Havey	Green Bay	9392	David Westlake	Reeseville	15051	John Williams, Sr.	Hugo, CO

Deadline for the May 2024 issue is April 5.

Madge Murphy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Fall wasn't without some difficulty though. Madge was unable to attend the Big Ten Conference in Green Bay due to the death of her brother-in-law Dennis Severson in mid-October. Madge's sister Marie notes that "Madge always looked out for her sisters".

Just days later, the Annual Statue of Liberty Celebration was cut short thanks to Cat. 3 Hurricane Sandy hitting the mid-Atlantic coast in late October. President Madge and Dept. Secretary Rita Byers got back on the road just in time, making a hasty retreat to the west! The remainder of 2012 was just as busy with hospital visits and many District inspections. The second half of the year finished strong with the National Mid-Year in Florida; the Wisconsin



“Over the Rainbow to Support Our Veterans” - 2016-2018



Mid-Winter; District visits; Cootie events, Loyalty Day and the like, culminating with another Convention in Green Bay.

Following her term as President, Madge continued to serve at all levels of the Auxiliary. She helped with the Auxiliary Cookbook commemorating our 90th year in 2014 and teamed up with husband Bill on a variety of activities at Post 1621 in the ensuing years. Also active in the Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary (MOCA), Madge served two terms as President of the Wisconsin Grand in 2016-2018 under the theme “Over the Rainbow to Support Our Veterans”. [LOVE that Ruby Slippers pin!]



The Madge we remember rose to the challenge of raising additional funds for the Dept. with a “No-Bake Bake Sale” fundraiser. The “ad” in the March 2013 WI VFW NEWS asked, “Would you buy her cake?” We know she and her “grands” had a great time making this creation!

Photo courtesy of the Berlin Journal archives.

In addition to her busy VFW Auxiliary life, Madge was an active member and Treasurer of the Janesville Noon Rotary Club, as well as President of the Rock County Historical Society, serving as RCHS Interim Director on two occasions.

Left to cherish Madge in their hearts and memories are her husband of 52+ years, Bill; two sons, Ryan (Cristina) and Andrew (Liz); grandchildren, Benzie, London,

Macy and Gavin; two sisters, Marie Severson and Patti (Kevin Householder) Benzie; and numerous nieces, nephews and other relatives. And of course an extensive VFW and Auxiliary “family”. Visitation and a Celebration of Life were held on February 9 and 10 in Janesville.

Rest in peace, good and faithful servant. We miss you.

Many thanks to Marie Severson for information.

THE BUZZ

I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for your help with our membership program. As of March 9 we are at 98.94% in paid membership. I did take a pie to the face at our Mid-Winter Conference, since we met the challenge and reached 98% by February 1. Our Membership Chairman Linda Schluter has put forth an additional challenge: If we reach 100% in paid membership by April 1, I get to return the favor and put a pie in HER face! I know we can do this! I enjoyed attending the National Mid-Winter Conference. It is always nice to get together with the other Presidents from all around the states and swap ideas, stories, and laughs. The last couple of months have been spent visiting various Auxiliaries. Everyone has been so welcoming. I have visits planned right up until our Convention in June. If you'd like me to come and visit your Auxiliary and I haven't already contacted you, please reach out to me and I'll try my best to meet your wishes. Spring District Meetings are coming up. Make sure you fill out and send in your District Delegate forms. Delegates and Alternates hold their positions for the whole year. Department Delegate forms were included in the March General Orders mailing. These need to also be completed and

EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION

To: All members of the Department of Wisconsin Auxiliary
Date: April 2024
Place: Your town
Purpose of meeting: Election of Officers

As a member of the VFW Auxiliary, it is important that you have the opportunity to know first-hand what is happening at the Auxiliary the next few months.

Do you know that your Auxiliary has the ability to be the best in the Department for helping Veterans? It is hoped that your love of and for America's heroes — our Veterans — is so strong that you will want to know about the opportunity to “Bee the Change” for these heroes by coming to the meeting and stepping forward to become an Officer or Chairman! There can be no doubt that supporting Veterans and our community takes members with a caring heart. We ask that you show you do CARE by attending this important Auxiliary meeting so that you and your fellow members can be an instrumental part in the revitalization of the organization. Pledge to do your part in our community to make sure that America's finest are revered. Who is it that protects our freedoms? Why, it is those Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines on land, on sea and in the air whose sacrifices we cherish! Are we doing all that we can to preserve our country? Do we advocate for the entitlements Veterans are due because they put themselves in harm's way for YOU?! *Take part in keeping your Auxiliary healthy. You can “Bee the Change” by taking a leadership role!*

MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP

We are now in the second half of our program year. Mentoring is the responsibility of all of us. What does it mean to be a mentor? Being a mentor is a significant responsibility that entails guiding and supporting individuals in their personal and professional development. A mentor acts as a trusted advisor, providing guidance based on their own knowledge

Sherrie Rosenau
Department President
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littlemama6@yahoo.com

sent in so that your Auxiliary has a voice in all elections in the next year as well. Our Convention will be June 12-15, 2024, at the Tundra Lodge in Green Bay. Registration forms were included in the March General Orders mailing and are included in this paper. We will be filling several positions at the Department level. If you are interested in becoming a Department Line Officer, please consider running for one of the open positions. We'd love to have you. The theme for the banquet is “Military Ball”. The dress code is formal. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone all dressed up! Thank you so very much for all that you do for our Veterans, their families, and our communities. You matter. You make a difference. You are appreciated. Keep up the great work. It doesn't go unnoticed. Please remember to “Bee the Change” while “Banding Together for our Veterans”!

Vicki Newbauer
Extension & Revitalization
715-257-2099
vnewbauer1950@gmail.com

2024 DEADLINES!

Young American Creative Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Student entries due to Local Auxiliary by March 31, and to Chair Jackie Gregory by April 15

Youth Activities Contests
Student entries due to Local Auxiliary by March 31, and to Chair Patty Jansky by April 15

Lillian Campbell Medical Scholarship
Applications due to Chair Jennifer Mauritz by April 1

Year End Reports
Due to District Presidents by April 1

Jeannette Frank Award
Nominations due to Chair Marla J. Morgan by April 10

Sierra Delta Joint Special Project Donations
due to Dept. Treasurer Lenore Otto by April 15

and experience. They offer wisdom, encouragement, and constructive feedback to help mentees reach their full potential. A mentor ensures that mentees develop essential skills, gain self-confidence, and make informed decisions. They act as a source of inspiration, offering valuable insights and acting as a role model. As a mentor, one must possess empathy, patience, and excellent communication skills to establish a strong and meaningful mentor-mentee relationship. By sharing their expertise and nurturing growth, mentors play a crucial role in shaping future leaders. Remember the Mentoring awards from National. Entry forms are to be sent to me by March 31, 2024. You can find these forms on our Website, under Programs, then go to Mentoring for Leadership. They may also be found on the National website (log in to MALTA), under Resources. I know you all have some amazing person who mentored you this year. PLEASE consider them for these National Awards. God Bless and let's finish the year strong for President Sherrie - “BEE the Change”!

AUXILIARY

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Congratulations to all the Winners that received Mid-Winter Membership Awards. Since we met the challenge of 98% by February 1, President Sherrie was a good sport about taking a pie in the face at our meeting. But this is no time to stop collecting those dues and signing new members! Listed below are the Dept. of Wisconsin awards that are available for the second half of our Membership Year:
• Auxiliaries 100% by April 30
• Districts 100% by May 10
• Recruit 5 new or reinstated by May 10 (VFWA/VFW Members)
• Recruit 10 new or reinstated members by May 10
• Recruit the most “new or reinstated Members by May 10 (VFWA/VFW).
• Auxiliary with the best Recruitment Program by May 10
• New Life Member or Convert to Life Purchase by May 10

Linda Schluter
Membership Chairman
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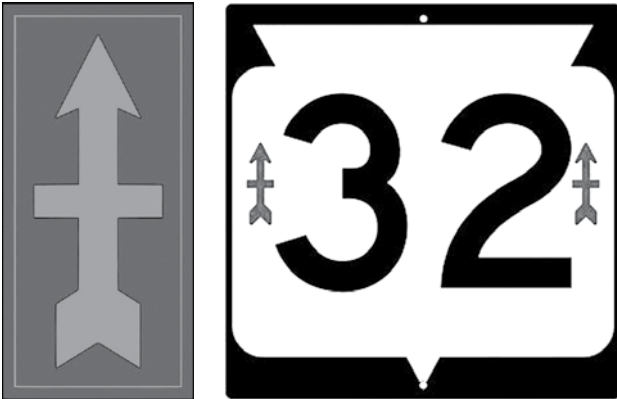
The next “challenge”: If our Department Membership is 100% by April 1, 2024, President Sherrie will get to “PIE” me at Department Convention. Our Department Membership as of March 9, 2024:

Auxiliary	Current Total	Deceased	Paid Total	Prior Total	Current Percent	Paid Percent
Total–Non-District	110	3	113	107	102.80%	105.61%
Total–District 1	389	8	397	465	83.66%	85.38%
Total–District 2	1197	38	1235	1212	98.76%	101.90%
Total–District 4	302	4	306	301	100.33%	101.66%
Total–District 6	509	24	533	529	96.22%	100.76%
Total–District 7	1285	24	1309	1325	96.98%	98.79%
Total–District 8	858	21	880	884	97.06%	99.55%
Total–District 9	798	15	813	773	103.23%	105.17%
Total–District 10	672	8	680	715	93.99%	95.10%
Total–District 11	460	6	466	492	93.50%	94.72%
Total–At-Large	1287	5	1292	1307	98.47%	98.85%
Total–Dept of WI	7867	156	8024	8110	97.00%	98.94%

AMERICANISM IS THE NAME AND ACTION IS THE GAME!

Let's get to work in 2024 and promote Americanism in Wisconsin like never before! Fly your flags proudly and correctly; wear RED on Fridays and be the face of both of our great organizations. When someone asks why you wear red, tell them about VFW and its Auxiliary and why you love it, why you support it, why you live it! Recently I reached out to the VFW comrades at the north and south points of State Highway 32, regarding the beautiful monuments honoring the 32nd Division, also known as The Red Arrow Division. The 32nd Division Memorial Highway goes from our southern border near Pleasant Prairie, WI to our northern border with the UP of Michigan, near Land 'O Lakes, WI. The five flags that have flown for decades at these two locations are: Old Glory, State of Wisconsin, Prisoner of War/Missing in Action, U.S. Army and The Red Arrow.

Sally Lamers
Americanism Chair/Patriotic Instructor
920-475-0789
sslammers@gmail.com



Your Dept. VFW Auxiliary provides those flags when needed, and VFW Comrades Phil Allen and Joseph Justice take care of replacing the tattered or faded flags. Yes, this is where your annual donation to the VFWA Dept WI Americanism Program (earmarked Hwy. 32 Flags) goes! Just one more example of working together to achieve powerful things and get the job done right! The Red Arrow Division was formed in 1917 and was made up of National Guardsmen from Wisconsin, Michigan, and a few from Illinois. The Red Arrow Division was called up aggressively during most U.S. conflicts, until its retirement in 1967. Later that same year, the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team was established (formed from the inactive Division) and is to this day, a highly respected cog on the National Guard wheel. Many people have no idea that the 32nd Division/The Red Arrow Division is commemorated in this way. The next time you travel Highway 32 in any of the twelve Wisconsin counties it crosses, reflect on the battles fought hard and long so you have the freedom to roam wherever you want. That freedom was not free. The Patriotic Instructor in me says, “Please be my Americanism Ambassador and tell people WHY Highway 32 has the red arrows on the route markers.” Thank you!

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
305	Dorothy Pfielsticker*	Eau Claire	5970	Gloria Kramer*	Reedsburg
659	Shirley Kent	Manitowoc	5970	Lorraine L. Holm*	Mauston
659	Evelyn Kummer*	Manitowoc	6003	Carmen Green	Portage
1038	Shirley Ann Harpole*	Chippewa Falls	6007	Etola D. Pingel*	King
1393	Elaine Cowell*	Atlanta, GA	6352	Sally Parr	Marshfield
1393	Ethel Carter*	West Bend	6377	Norma Mielke*	Waukesha
1393	JoAnn Fahney	West Bend	6550	Linda A. Koenig*	Mondovi
1393	Margaret Ann Goeden-Chapman*	West Bend	7232	Barbara Christenson*	Eau Claire
1621	Madge B. Murphy*†	Janesville	7534	Verla Christopherson*	Oconto Falls
1638	Doris Smith	Merrill	7591	Mary L. Murphy*	Madison
1707	Alice J. Atkinson	Portage	7591	Rita M. Salathe*	Sun Prairie
1865	Agnes M. Wilcox*	Pleasant Prairie	7591	Marjorie Rowley*	Madison
1866	Marlene K. Guden	Marshfield	7591	Arlene J. Kirchesh*	Fitchburg
1866	Carol Bandt	Phillips	7591	Delores Kiefer*	Madison
1879	Bernadine Fry*	Fort Atkinson	7591	Lila M. Eide*	Cambridge
2653	Geraldine M. Hoerman	Antigo	7591	Muriel D. Arms*	Inver Grove, MN
2778	Donna Remter*	Appleton	8483	Lois P. Fritz*	Monona
2778	Shirley Van Grinsven*	Appleton	8483	James D. Foerster	Marshall
2778	June M. Endres*	Appleton	8483	Jaetta Elliott*	McFarland
2778	Carol Kaufman*	Appleton	8483	Evelyn Peterson*	Monona
3032	Eleanor M. Oftedah†	Viroqua	8483	Beverly Stephenson*	DeForest
3153	Dorothy Bowe	Hilbert	9362	Joyce B. McGovern*	Sun Prairie
3589	Edith M. DeFraties*	Jefferson	10433	Dorothy M. Gray*	Milwaukee
5278	Kathryn Novitske*	Ripon	10519	Marie Murphy*	Milwaukee
5278	Anne M. Braun*	Ripon	10911	Nancy Duncan*	New Lisbon
5612	Marilyn Schwartz	Plymouth	15051	Erma Kaster*	Browntown
5612	Karen Degner*	Plymouth	15051	Florence J. Maaske*	Glendale, AZ
5828	Shirley J. Balog*	Amery	15051	Magdalene Sippel*	Waterloo

* DENOTES LIFE MEMBER
† DENOTES PAST DEPT. PRES.

Farewell to Edie

We remember fondly Edith M. “Edie” DeFraties of Jefferson, who passed away on December 23, 2023, just a few days after her 89th birthday. A native of Byron Township (Fond du Lac County), Edie was married to U.S. Marine Corps Veteran William DeFraties for 41 years until his passing in 1995.

A Life Member of Endl-Gruennert Medal of Honor Auxiliary 3589 in Jefferson, Edie served in many offices including Auxiliary President for eight terms. She also served in numerous offices at the District and Department levels, most recently District 2 Trustee (several years); District 2 Americanism Chairman (2018-2019); and Dept. Assistant Guard (2017-2019).

In addition to her VFW Auxiliary work, Edie also volunteered as a longtime member of Immanuel United Methodist Church in Jefferson; assisted the Koats for Kids Project; served as a Girl Scout Leader and was a member of the MOCA. We’re sure she brought her wonderful smile and kind compassion to everything she was involved in.

Left to cherish Edie’s memory in addition to her VFW Auxiliary “family”, are two daughters and one son and their spouses, six grandchildren, three great-grands, and two siblings and their families. She was predeceased by her husband, two brothers and a brother-in-law. Services to remember Edie were held on December 29, followed by burial in Milton Lawn Memorial Park in Janesville.

Rest in peace, good and faithful servant. Thank you for all of your service to Veterans. Thanks to Helen Stearns, PDP and Ann Wirth for info assistance.

Edith M. DeFraties
Dec. 14, 1934 –
Dec. 23, 2023

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

In early February, I attended the Wisconsin Mid-Winter Conference as the Official Representative for our National President. Attendance at the Dutch Treat Luncheon was very good and I was able to meet some new friends. The Council Meeting was very successful and the program reports were very well done. Thank you for all of the courtesies extended to me. I had the best time ever. A special thank you to Nancy Ustruck for being my Aide! You are awesome!

February 11-17, 2024 I had the privilege of attending the National Mid-Year Conference on board the Mariner of the Seas. This was the largest attended cruise for the VFW Auxiliary with 430 participating.

At the National Council of Administration Meeting, the minutes of the last two meetings were approved, along with the 12-month budget report, the audit report, and the 3-month budget report. The proposed Standing Rules were tabled until the National Convention. The Life Committee reported the Life Member rebate will remain the same at \$9.60. A discussion was also held on the VFW Auxiliary Pension Plan. After the meeting closed, we had the opportunity to hear the five candidates for 2024-2025 National Guard speak. The candidates are Kay Gedling and Donna Howell from Alabama; Kim Davis from Arkansas; Susan Simmons from Georgia, and Janey Feher from Kentucky. Our Program Ambassadors each presented some of the best SWAP ideas they have received from the Department Chairmen and this was very interesting.

Laurel Ann
Wiese
NDCM #11
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wiesel@charter.net



I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Wisconsin Department Convention in June! Let’s continue working together to “Bee the Change” (WI) and “Lucky and Blessed, Thanks to Our Veterans” (IA) while “Banding Together for Veterans and Families”.



ABOVE LEFT: Chippewa Auxiliary 1038 Treasurer Sue Carlson prepares the ammunition. ABOVE CENTER: The anticipation by Dept. Chief-of-Staff Vicki Newbauer is evident. ABOVE RIGHT: Bullseye! Target achieved. AT RIGHT: The satisfaction of a “job well done” overrides the fear of retribution. Sherri L. Smith photos.



BEE A WAYS AND MEANS SUPPORTER!

PIE IN THE FACE was held at the Mid-Winter Conference, raising approximately \$450. Chief-of-Staff Vicki and Commander Ron were great sports about getting pied. Thank you to everyone who donated and to our awesome members who were willing to literally take one for the team.

Other donations raised in Wisconsin Rapids include:

- Basket Raffles: \$795
- 50/50 Raffles: \$262
- Refreshments (donuts and water): \$115
- Quilt Raffle: \$165 – we have retained the entries received so far and will complete this project at State Convention at the Tundra Lodge in June.

As we gear up to finish the year strong, we are looking for completed raffle basket donations. Can’t do a complete basket? Consider gift cards to donate for a “gift card tree”. And monetary donations from Auxiliaries and/or individuals are ALWAYS welcome. Send checks to Dept. Treasurer Lenore Otto, earmarked “W&M Special Raffle”.

We are always open to new ideas – contact us! And as always, THANK YOU for your continued support of our Department’s Ways and Means projects!

Your 2023-2024 Co-Chairs:

Alicia Weix
715-370-2096
duds444@gmail.com

Barbara Stillman
414-447-1685
stillmanb@att.net



ABOVE LEFT: First place. ABOVE: Third place. AT TOP RIGHT: Second place. AT RIGHT: Honorable Mention.

“BUDDY” ® POPPY UPDATE

Thanks to all the Auxiliaries that created and brought in a Buddy Poppy Display for our Mid-Winter Conference. They were all fantastic! I picked five secret judges to make the decision of who the winners would be, so I didn’t have to make the choices. Our Mid-Winter Display winners were:

- First Place – Chippewa Aux. 1038 – \$20
- Second Place – Goede-Smith-Ramsey Aux. 8478 - \$15
- Third Place – Edwin Frohmader Aux. 1879 - \$10
- Honorable Mention – Ozaukee Cty. Mem. Aux 5373 - \$5

Thank you also to Aux. 10262 (Plover) and Aux. 2113 (De Pere) for your great entries! Please watch upcoming Auxiliary mailings and the May/June WI VFW NEWS for the details on the “Buddy” ® Poppy Display Contest for State Convention in June. Remember: the First Place winner in that contest goes on to the National Convention!

Faith Elford
"Buddy" ® Poppy/
Natl. Home Chair
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ABOVE: Our 2023-2025 NDCM #11 Laurel Ann Wiese and 2023-2024 Dept. President Sherrie Rosenau – we’ve never had Mother and Daughter in those jobs together either! *Nicole David photo.*

AT RIGHT: This vintage of “official uniforms” wasn’t very “forgiving”, but Laurel Ann, Lorene and Sherrie made a pretty sharp trio in this 1988 Convention snapshot. *Family photo.*



Three Generations of Auxiliary Presidents

Our “BEE the CHANGE” year has brought us to another *first* in the Department of Wisconsin VFW and Auxiliary: the *third* generation of one family, serving as Department President. Sherrie Rosenau is following in the footsteps of Lorene A.



**Lorene Patten
1922 – 2013**

Patten, her maternal Grandmother who served in 1961-1962, and her Mother, Laurel Ann Wiese who served in 1993-1994 and again in 2018-2019. Yes, we have had sisters serve some years apart, and we’ve had two, husband and wife teams as Commander and President, but this family legacy is a first.

Who best to tell this amazing story and the unique personal aspects of it? Here are thoughts from both Sherrie and Laurel Ann:

My Memories – Laurel Ann Wiese

I grew up in a VFW family. As a child, I remember attending so many functions with Mom and Dad. [Lorene and Loran Patten] My Mom became Department President the year I was a senior in high school.

She worked full-time and was away on Auxiliary business many nights a week. Her dedication was an inspiration to me a few years later when I became active in our local Auxiliary in Horicon. A few years later my Dad became State Commander [1965-66] and I was very proud of him as well.

Moving on and when my daughters were 16, they became members of the Auxiliary, the same as I did. We all had so much fun doing the mail when Mom was Department Secretary! Going round and round the table putting the mail together was the highlight of our day. We especially enjoyed assembling booklets! My daughters and I would assemble them and Dad had the final job of stapling. The mimeograph machine made so much noise and made it so hot in the room in the summer, and the ink smelled awful. The stencils had to be wrapped in newspaper after the copies were made.

When I became President the first time, my Mom and Dad were always there for me. Then the next time, both Mom and Dad had passed but I know that they would have been proud. Now it is my turn to be proud as Sherrie Rosenau is the 3rd generation Department President. I am a very proud Mom!



The family “Conventions together” in 1988 (from left): then-Dept. Guard Laurel Ann Kolb; then-Dept. Secretary Lorene Patten, PDP; Convention Page Sherrie Kolb and Grandpa Loran Patten, PSC. Family photo.

Sherrie’s Story

Lorene Patten, my Grandma, was my idol. She was the one person I wanted to grow up to be like. When we were kids, we would go to her house and help her make the Convention booklets when she was the Department Secretary. I remember the various colored papers and the mimeograph machine. That thing was big and bulky! We would walk in circles, collecting one paper at each station and then staple the book together at the end: my mom, my sister and me. Grandma would run the machine and fill the stacks and we would create the books. We had a blast! I remember she had a collator as well. Boy how technology has changed since then!

I was her Page one year at the Convention, and in 1989 I was supposed to come to Convention and be her Assistant Secretary for the upcoming year. I got married that May and took a honeymoon in Hawaii. I had a new employer who let me off for the honeymoon, but I couldn’t get off for the Convention, so I didn’t get to go.

I used to love listening to the stories of all the fun my grandparents had at the various

VFW & Auxiliary meetings, Conventions, and Testimonials. It seemed like a great organization to be part of. I joined when I turned 16. In the early to mid-80s, I attended meetings at the local level but when I got married in 1989, I moved about an hour away and stopped going to meetings since I then had five more sons in less than seven years. You could say my hands were kind of full! I became active again just before my Mother, Laurel Ann Wiese, became the President for the second time and she asked me to be her Historian. I attended the Convention thinking I was going to be her Historian but by the time the Convention was over, I was the new Department Guard. Five years later, here we are.

My Grandma was the Department President from 1961 to 1962. My Mother served as Department President from 1993 to 1994 and again from 2018 to 2019, and I am currently serving for the 2023-2024 term. My Grandfather, Loran Patten also served as State Commander for the VFW from 1965 to 1966. I guess you could say being of service runs in the family!

My Grandma gave my Mom a special

engraved gavel when she became President the first time. My Mother then gifted it to me when I became President, and I am honored to use it. I feel as though Grandma is with me each time I use it.

I love my VFW family. I wish I had been more active at the Department level when my Grandma was still alive. She would be so thrilled to see me going up the chairs and especially as I became President. I am now the first three-generation President in Wisconsin, and I couldn’t be more thrilled. I serve in my Grandma’s honor. She was indeed a special lady, not only to me but to many of you as well.

Editor’s notes: Thank you both for your special thoughts and stories. We can almost smell the mimeograph – those of us that know what that is! And some of us still “kickin’ around” have many fond memories of Lorene in both her active years and those as “Senior PDP”. Lorene passed away in February 2013, but those of us fortunate enough to receive her mentoring and wisdom will never forget her. Thank you ALL for your service to our Department Auxiliary and Veterans!



Student Essay Winners



Meeting our Patriot’s Pen and Voice of Democracy student winners at the Mid-Winter Conference Awards Luncheon is always a fun time, and this year did not disappoint. It is also nice to thank the families of these successful students, for their part in encouraging our winners.

All of our top three Patriot’s Pen winners were with us, while other commitments and activities otherwise occupied our Voice of Democracy First and Third place winners. We were pleased though, to hear Aidan Olson’s Second place speech, and Nora Elliott’s winning Patriot’s Pen essay. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us! Word has it that we will hear First place winner Porter Tiedt’s essay at the State Convention in June, so stay tuned as we confirm that.

A nice addition to this year’s event was the attendance of several representatives of our “Silver Sponsor”, Festival Foods. (See photo on page 14.) We are very grateful for your presence and support of our VFW and Auxiliary programs for youth and education, and hope this is the start of a continuing collaboration.

While a complete list of District participation and monetary award totals for both “Pen” and “Voice” was not made available by press time, the lists of student winners by District are found elsewhere on this page. Kudos to all of our sponsoring Posts/Auxiliaries for a job well done!

And congratulations also to Nora Elliott and Porter Tiedt on your National Scholarships



Our smiling Patriot’s Pen Winners for the year include (front, from left): Nora Elliott (1st); Olivia Zimmerman (2nd); and Fiona Giese (3rd). Leadership in back includes (from left): Auxiliary NDCM #11 Rep. Laurel Ann Wiess; Auxiliary Dept. President Sherrie Rosenau; VFW State Commander Ron Ramos; Silver Sponsor Festival Foods Rep. Matt Colby and VFW National Chief-of-Staff Carey Pritchett. Sherri L. Smith photo.



Aidan Olson of Clayton presents his Second place Voice of Democracy speech. Sherri L. Smith photo.



Department Patriot’s Pen First place winner Nora Elliott of Oak Creek shares her winning essay. Sherri L. Smith photo.

earned: The \$500 Peter J. Mascetti, Jr. and Dept. of Europe Award for Nora, and the \$1,500 Dept. of Massachusetts Edward A. Nardi Scholarship for Porter. (Also of note: the \$2,000 Dept. of WI Wally Hogan/Tom Tradewell Commanders-in-Chief Scholarship went to Lillian Payne, representing the Dept. of Kansas.)

If you were not able to tune in to the lives-

stream of the March 4 Parade of Winners, it can be found at vfw.org – click on Community, then Youth and Education and Youth Scholarships. The link may be found at the lower portion of the Voice of Democracy text. And watch the website for the 2024-2025 themes in both programs. Thank you State Adjutant Adam Wallace for info and all who submitted photos as noted.



The big moment on stage with National President Carla Martinez and C-in-C Duane Sarmiento. Kim McWilliams photo.



State Cdr. Ron Ramos and Dept. President Sherrie Rosenau await their turn to escort Dept. Voice of Democracy winner Porter Tiedt of Burlington during the Parade of Winners. Courtesy of Sherrie Rosenau.

2023-2024 Patriot’s Pen District Winners

Place	Post	Dist.	Name	Grade	School
1	8482	4	Nora Elliott	6	Oak Creek East MS -
2	987	11	Olivia Zimmerman	n/a	Baraboo
3	1638	7	Fiona Giese	6	St. Francis Xavier – Merrill
4	7929	10	Xavier Komanel	7	Amery MS
5	2115	9	Emerson Byers	6	Hudson MS
6	2267	3	Isabella Brander	6	Eagle School – Richland Ctr.
7	328	2	Kira Nielsen	8	River Bluff MS – Stoughton
8	2823	1	Lottie Naber	6	Burlington Catholic
9	2113	8	Kyla Kriewaldt	7	Foxview Intermediate – De Pere
10	10171	6	Isabella Greve	n/a	Webster MS – Cedarburg

2023-2024 Voice of Democracy District Winners

Place	Post	Dist.	Name	Grade	School
1	2823	1	Porter Tiedt	10	Burlington HS
2	5828	10	Aidan Olson	11	Clayton HS
3	6705	8	Henry Pahlow	12	Denmark HS
4	8482	4	Ruby Gupta	10	Oak Creek HS
5	1039	9	Kieran Bignell	11	Menomonie HS
6	5276	3	Isaiah Groom	11	Potosi HS
7	328	2	Allie Kolberg	12	Stoughton HS
8	664	7	Kasey Roethle	12	Marion Jr./Sr. HS
9	8584	11	Lillian Sanders	12	Cashton HS
10	6707	6	Joseph Friend	n/a	Kiel HS

★ ★ ★ ★ **2023-2024 Red Carpet Awards** ★ ★ ★ ★



Division 1 – 1st: Post 328 Commander Rob Drogsvold and Post 328 Quartermaster Dennis Schwenn. 99.50%



Division 1 – 2nd: Post 1318 Cdr. Steve Eisenhower and Post 1318 QM Gundel Metz. 99.19%



Division 1 – 3rd: Post 305 Cdr. David Zien and Post 305 QM Kevin Beretto. 96.62%



Division 1 – 4th: Post 2112 Cdr. Mike Harris and Post 2112 QM Tricia Flaig. 94.40%



Division 1 – 5th: Post 1621 Cdr. Michael Zientek and Post 1621 SVC Pete Pemrich. 90.59%



Division 2 – 1st: Post 11038 Cdr. James Cairo and Post 11038 QM Brent Hibbard. 120.32%

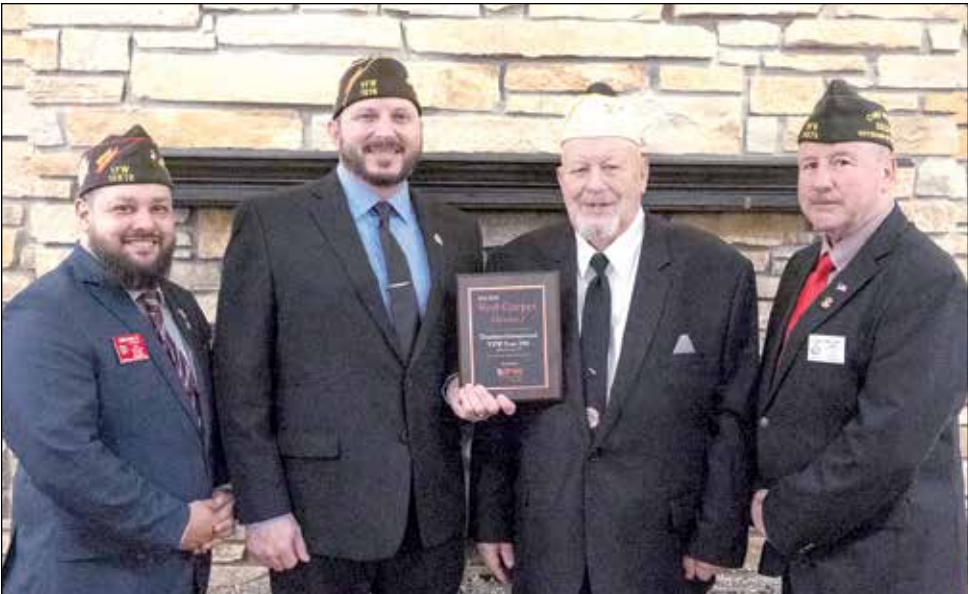


Division 2 – 2nd: Post 5729 Cdr. William Vach and Post 5729 QM Kenneth Patterson. 100%



Division 2 – 3rd: Post 2534 Cdr. Paul Morrison and Post 2534 QM Cameron Wettern. 98.02%

★ ★ ★ ★ 2023-2024 Red Carpet Awards ★ ★ ★ ★



Division 2 – 4th: Post 1916 Cdr. Wayne Georgeson and Post 1916 QM John Diny. 93.70%



Division 3 – 1st: Post 664 Cdr. LeRoy Wilken and Post 664 QM Christina Flanagan. 103.03%



Division 3 – 2nd: Post 6375 Cdr. Scott Weber. Post 6375 QM Michael Morgan could not attend. 96.96%



Division 4 – 1st: Post 8280 Cdr. Patrick Pierce and Post 8280 QM Robert Dietel. 118.46%



Division 4 – 2nd: Post 5276 Cdr. Lester Jantzen and Post 5276 QM Carla McAndrew. 106.25%



Division 4 – 3rd: Post 8338 Cdr. David Peterson and Post 8338 QM Greg Roth. 98.43%



Division 4 – 4th: D7 SVC Dale Dahlke; Post 8733 QM Benjamin Stahleck and Cdr. David Folz; D7 Cdr. Doug Mauritz. 98.41%



Division 5 – 1st: Post 10170 Cdr. Carl Benter and Post 10170 QM Dennis Hussli. 100%



Teachers of the Year



The Mid-Winter Conference Saturday Awards Luncheon always showcases our exceptional recipients of the Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year Award, and this year’s group captivated the audience with their energy and passion for their profession. All three of our First Place winners were present to share their contagious enthusiasm, during a relaxed and delightful program.

Our Elementary School First Place teacher **Jeremy Dunnihoo** started teaching at Sandhill Elementary in Stoughton (Dist. 2) in 2011. Since then, he has taught in 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms; served on committees including PBIS, building Math team and held the position of Team Leader for the 3rd grade. Jeremy continues to develop his lesson plans as new curricula are presented due to changing student needs. He encourages students to let him know how he can support them, which has turned him into a regular at other activities such as dance recitals, basketball games, wrestling tournaments and more. Mr. Dunnihoo was sponsored by Badger VFW Post 328 of Stoughton.

The First Place Middle School teacher is **Candice Perz** of Bay View Middle School in the Howard-Suamico School District, Green Bay (Dist. 8). Since 2000, she has taught English, Science and Advanced Science in both 7th and 8th grades. Candice has led many community projects including cleanup at the Suamico Cemetery, where the students learn about cemetery etiquette as well as plant flowers, clean up around headstones, and place American Flags



Our dedicated, award-winning teachers include (front, from left): HS teacher Karen Ray; ES teacher Jeremy Dunnihoo; and MS teacher Candice Perz. Celebrating their accomplishments are (back row, from left): Auxiliary NDCM #11 Rep. Laurel Ann Wiese; Auxiliary Dept. President Sherrie Rosenau; VFW State Commander Ron Ramos; Silver Sponsor Festival Foods Rep. Matt Colby and VFW National Chief-of-Staff Carey Pritchett. Sherri L. Smith photo.

by Veterans’ graves. This activity is completed each Spring and Fall. Ms. Perz was sponsored by Duck Creek VFW Post 7534, Howard.



Taking time to thank our Mid-Winter Conference Silver Sponsor is Auxiliary District 7 President Mary Lou Duerr (standing), whose son John works at the Marshfield Festival Foods. Our smiling Festival friends include (from left): Matt Colby; Donna Gullickson; Jeff Brasel; and Rachel Rebman. Courtesy of Mary Lou Duerr.

2024 Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teachers of the Year Finalists			
Elementary School			
First	Jeremy Dunnihoo	Sandhill E.S., Stoughton	Post 328
Second	Colin Hanson	Edgar E.S., Edgar	Post 10187
Third	Jonathan Awe	Freedom E.S., Freedom	Post 7692
Middle School			
First	Candice Perz	Bay View M.S., Green Bay	Post 7534
Second	Jennifer Kolberg	River Bluff M.S., Stoughton	Post 328
Third	Megan Dahlquist	Prairie River M.S., Merrill	Post 1638
High School			
First	Karen Ray	Brookfield Academy, Brookfield	Post 8320
Second	Daniel Hoppe	Bay Port H.S., Green Bay	Post 7524
Third	Craig Rogney	Marion H.S., Marion	Post 664

Earning First Place honors at the High School level is **Karen Ray** of Brookfield Academy in Brookfield (Dist. 2). Teaching at Brookfield since 2012, Karen currently covers Western Civilization II and Western Civ. Honors, as well as Middle East Studies. She developed the school’s first History Honor Society, which participates in the Voice of Democracy; planning and fundraising for Veterans Day and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day assemblies. She also designed Cold War “Spy vs. Spy Secret Missions” to help students understand the differences between Communism and the Free West.

Karen enjoys bringing in guest speakers to help students learn about ethnic, diplomatic and military experiences. The sponsoring Post was Michelle M. Witmer VFW 8320 of Brookfield.

We congratulate our winning teachers and wish them well in the National judging for this program. Visit vfw.org for more information on how you can recognize the exceptional teaching professionals in your community. Many thanks to State Chairman Tracy Woodman for your comprehensive information and excellent work in this program.

VOTE Mary Ann Christopherson

State Commander 2024 – 2025

A respectful leader who cares about preserving our traditions while promoting growth and welcoming new Veterans and their skills.

- ★ Desert Storm Veteran – 1990-1991
- ★ U.S. Army MSgt (Ret.) after 30 years
- ★ Joined VFW in 1991 – Gold Legacy Life Member, Post 305, Eau Claire
- ★ All-State and All-American Commander
- ★ Member: MOC and VFW Auxiliary

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOTE AT STATE CONVENTION

✓ RE-ELECT TOM HEATH

For State Quartermaster 2024-25

Dedicated, Qualified & Dependable Service Since 2014

Time to Register for 2024 State Convention!

Event slated for June 12-15 in Green Bay

And just like that, we are in the final quarter of the 2023-2024 Command year. Hard to believe, probably because of our almost nonexistent “winter”. It’s time to make your plans for the **June 12 – 15 Convention at the Tundra Lodge in Green Bay.** As often happens, we anticipate the hotel filling quickly, so do call Tundra directly ASAP to

make your reservation. Info is at right.
Remember: You can complete your Registration, Meal Reservations and payment online! Full size, fillable versions of these forms are available at the State website: vfwwi.org and a link to that page is available on the Auxiliary website: vfwauxwi.org. And the online payment process

is easy, with a credit or debit card or Paypal.
We’re still finalizing the agendas and other activities as we await the appointments of our National Representatives. So please look for more info to follow in the Convention Insert in the May/June WI VFW NEWS. And in the meanwhile, **MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS!**

2024 State Convention Hotel Info

Tundra Lodge
865 Lombardi Ave., Green Bay WI 54304
920-405-8700
Room Rate: \$100 Sgl/DbL. + Taxes
Call Tundra Lodge directly to make your reservations before May 12, 2024 (or before the block sells out)
Mention VFW Convention

If needed, overflow hotel is:
Aloft Hotel (by Marriott)
465 Pilgrim Way, Green Bay, WI 54304
Call: 920-884-0800 • Rates: TBD

VFW and Auxiliary Attendees!

Please make sure that all is in order with your Delegate credentials and fees (VFW) BEFORE you come to Convention!
No credentials or no audits means NO voting!

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS, DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN, AND ITS AUXILIARY

2024 WISCONSIN STATE CONVENTION

June 12th—June 15th, 2024

Tundra Lodge Resort Waterpark & Conference Center
865 Lombardi Ave, Green Bay, WI 54304 • 920-405-8700

Member: _____
Post # _____ Title: _____
☐ Check Here Amount: **\$20.00**

All registrations \$20/Advance; \$25/After May 24th

Past Commanders Lunch
Thursday, June 13th - Noon
\$30 BBQ Ribs and Pulled Pork, Coleslaw, Baked Beans or Buttered Corn, Roasted Baby Red Potatoes, Macaroni & Cheese, Cornbread Muffins

Aux Dutch Treat Lunch
South of the Border Buffet
\$27 Seasoned Rice, Tequila Lime Chicken & Seasoned Ground Beef, Beef, Chicken or Cheese Enchilada, Soft Tortillas and toppings

Thursday, June 13th ~ Past Presidents Dinner - 5:00 pm
\$25 BBQ Ribs and BBQ Chicken Drumsticks, Coleslaw, Baked Beans or Buttered Corn, Roasted Baby Red Potatoes, Macaroni & Cheese, Cornbread Muffins

Friday, June 14th ~ Aux 25 Year Club Lunch - Noon
\$20 Loaded Potato Soup and Tuna Salad

Friday, June 14th ~ Convention Banquet
\$40 Cocktails 5:30 pm, Dinner 6:30 pm
Family Style: Sirloin Tips and Maple Glazed Ham, Yukon Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Seasonal Vegetables, Coleslaw, Dinner Rolls/Butter, Assorted Dessert Bars

Saturday, June 15th, 7:30 am ~ Past Dept. Presidents Breakfast: ☐ Yes ☐ No **\$40**

VFW Reg: _____ P/C Lunch: _____ Banquet: _____ **VFW Subtotal:** _____

Aux Reg: _____ Aux Lunch: _____ P/P Meal: _____ Aux 25 YR: _____ Banquet: _____ **AUX Subtotal:** _____

Total Payment Due & Enclosed: _____ Phone #: _____ Contact: _____

REGISTRATION & RESERVATION POLICY

- ◆ This form accommodates up to 1 VFW Member and 1 Auxiliary Member, for a total of TWO registrations.
- ◆ Use additional forms for more registrations.
- ◆ Cut-off date for meal registrations is May 24, 2023.
- ◆ Registration and payment MUST reach Dept Headquarters by the **May 24th Deadline** to avoid higher registration fee.
- ◆ **No Refunds.**
- ◆ Late meal reservations, if accepted, are subject to **\$5.00 surcharge per meal.**
- ◆ Special dietary needs? Please let us know in advance.

Make all checks payable to:
VFW DEPT OF WISCONSIN
Earmark: 2024 Convention.
Mail to:
VFW OF WISCONSIN
P.O. BOX 6128
MONONA, WI 53716-0128

Scan the QR Code to register online

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS, DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN, AND ITS AUXILIARY

2024 WISCONSIN STATE CONVENTION

June 12th—June 15th, 2024

Tundra Lodge Resort Waterpark & Conference Center
865 Lombardi Ave, Green Bay, WI 54304 • 920-405-8700

VENDOR/EXHIBITOR TABLE RESERVATION FORM

\$55 for one 8-foot table for the event – WITHOUT electricity
\$80 for one 8-foot table for the event – WITH electricity
VFW Affiliated Groups - Please call HQ for special rates.
All rentals are based on first come, first-serve
SET-UP: 8:00 AM – Wednesday June 12th
TEAR-DOWN: 12:00 NOON – Saturday June 15th
DEADLINE FOR TABLE RESERVATIONS IS **MAY 24, 2024**
Pre-payment is appreciated, payment due by set-up time.

EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

Company/Organization Name: _____
Product or Service being exhibited: _____
Contact Name: _____
Indicate table needed: ☐ \$55 (no electricity) ☐ \$80 (with electricity)
Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

Payment options

To pay by check
Please make check payable
to:
VFW of Wisconsin
Mail to:
VFW OF WISCONSIN
Attn: QM Tom Heath
P.O. BOX 6128
MONONA, WI 53716-0128

Scan QR Code to register and pay online.

RE-ELECT GEORGE STOEBER

State Judge Advocate for 2024-2025

★ U.S. Navy, 1983 – 2007 (Persian Gulf Veteran)
★ Life Member since 2012
(Post 7308, Pleasant Prairie; Cdr. 2012-18; All-State & All-American 2016)
★ District 1 All-State Commander (2018-19)
★ State Judge Advocate since Feb. 2023
★ Numerous offices & appointments at all levels since 2012

I believe that both my work career and VFW experience make me well suited to continue as your State Judge Advocate.

I look forward to another year of service to our members and I thank you for your continued support.

2024-2025 Ilein TAIPE

Candidate for State Chaplain

OIF Iraq Veteran • Retired MSgt/E8 USMC
VFW Member since 2017
State Chaplain since 2023
Follower of Christ since 1989 at age 16

VOTE ILEIN AT STATE CONVENTION

★★★★★

Pup Tent 23 Bingo Clowns




We're pretty sure Short Arm PT and Aux. 23 win the Grand of WI "Clown Award" hands down. Here, the happy group takes a photo break during Bingo at the Anna John Nursing Home in Oneida last fall. Over half of the 27 residents took part in the fun. Thanks to Bruce Sorensen and Twiggy Johnson.

Family, comrades and friends are mourning the passing of Joe Baumann of Madison at age 79, following complications related to an unexplained infection. A native of Madison, Joe served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 2002 as a reservist with deployments to Long Binh, Vietnam in 1968-69, and in 1991 to Landstuhl, Germany during Desert Storm, attaining the rank of Command Sergeant Major. He was very proud of graduating from the Sergeants Major Academy in 1984.

Joe met Karen Rasmussen in college at UW-Madison and they married in 1966. He said repeatedly that marrying Karen was "the best thing he'd ever done." Professionally, Joe was a Painting Contractor, taking over Baumann Paint Company founded by his father in the 1920s.

In retirement, Joe became a "Professional Veteran." He was a member of VFW Post 7591, American Legion Post 534, AMVETS Post 151, Cooties Pup Tent 41, and Sad Sacks Sack 98 and was an active leader of several of these organizations. His military friends and activities brought him camaraderie, laughs, aggravation, and great joy and satisfaction in a job well done.

Joe is survived by his wife, Karen Baumann; son, Jason Baumann; daughter, Jennifer (Baumann) Rozinski; and son-in-law, Jeff Rozinski. And an extensive VFW and MOC family. Services and military honors were held in Madison on December 29. Rest in peace soldier.



Joe Baumann
March 18, 1944 –
December 18, 2023

Cootie Corner

Hello Lousy Cooties,
Can you believe our year is almost to an end? This year has not gone as I would have originally planned or expected. While we had a lot of highlights, we also had some lows. The loss of my good friend and fellow Cootie Joe Baumann. He will be greatly missed on so many levels. The cancellation of Mid-Winter due to winter weather, making travel a hazard for most of our members. I also have not been able to get to the Pup Tents as I had originally hoped to have done by now. Still not ruling this completely out.

As we look forward to Spring, let's not forget our Spring Convention is right around the corner, April 19-21, in Merrill, Wisconsin. Please reserve your hotel room and send in your meal registrations right away!

Hopefully, you have all been able to make your donations for the year. If not, please do so soon. Don't forget my special project – "Quilts Across America." Thank you, President Linda Moran, for your support on the Special Project and all the visits we were able to take care of together.

I would also like to give a special thanks to the staff who have tried to keep me on

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



track this year: Rod Fifield for helping in writing my general orders. Pat Moran for assistance and direction. Wayne and Tracy Woodman – for helping keep Cheryl and I informed on what I needed to do and wear for those special events, including getting me to Cootie Christmas. Ken Patterson for helping me with my reimbursements and making sure we are staying within our budget. The rest of my staff for doing what you tend to do every year extremely well. Finally, I can't forget Lewis Lindloff giving me helpful hints based on his experience from the previous year.

I wish my successor the best wishes for a wonderful year. It has truly been a pleasure to be Commander for the Grand of Wisconsin. Always Remember to Keep 'em Smilin' in Beds of White.

Michael A. Woodards
WI Grand Commander



Top of the Morning to my Cootie Brothers and Sisters!

We are in the final months of our Cootie Year. I would like to thank each and every one of you for making my year great. Also, thanks to the MOC for giving me a great Commander this year.

By the time you read this, Auxiliaries should have elected and installed all Officers. The Installation Warrant information should be sent to Grand Secretary Karen, and the Supreme Secretary Georg Jean Zimmerman. In addition, Delegates and Alternates forms should be sent to Grand Secretary Karen, so things run smoothly at the Grand Convention which is April 19-21 in Merrill.

Reminder that year-end reports must be sent to Grand Secretary Karen Johnson, to be included in the Convention Book. Deadline is April 1! And be sure to send the names of deceased members to Grand

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



Chaplain Marie Severson. Make sure you have sent all donations to the Grand and Supreme so you get credit for awards.

This is my last note to you. THANK YOU for all you have done to make this a great year for Commander Michael and me. As we move on to a new year, continue to support the new Officers. I wish you all the best. God Bless Everyone.

Linda Moran
WI Grand President

COOTIE CALENDAR OF EVENTS



April 19-21	MOC/MOCA Grand Convention – AmericInn by Wyndham in Merrill. (Info in this issue and in Cootie e-mailings!)
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.



Military Order of the Cootie & Auxiliary Grand Convention 2024 April 19-21, 2024

AmericInn
3300 East Main St, Merrill, WI / 715-536-7979
Call hotel directly for reservations – mention VetsPost24
Rooms: \$99 + tax (2 adults)
Deadline for Room Rate: 18 March 2024

Tentative Agenda

Friday, April 19	1503 hrs / 3:03 pm	Hospitality Room opens *Taco/Burrito Bar and more available for dinner
Saturday, April 20	0845 hrs / 8:45 am 0931 hrs / 9:31 am After Bingo 1339 hrs / 1:39 pm 1731 hrs / 5:31 pm 1905 hrs / 6:05 pm	Meet Up in the Lobby Bingo at the Nursing Home Hospitality Room open for lunch MOC Scratch/MOCA Meeting Social Time (Merrill VFW) Banquet (Merrill VFW)
Sunday, April 21	0936 hrs / 9:36 am 1017 hrs / 10:17 am 1119 hrs / 11:19 am	Joint Memorial Service MOC Elections (Merrill VFW) MOCA Meeting (Merrill VFW) 2024-25 C of A

MOC Registration (per person)	_____ @ \$10.00 each	=	_____
Late Registration	_____ @ \$15.00 each	=	_____
MOCA Registration (per person)	_____ @ \$10.00 each	=	_____
Late Registration	_____ @ \$15.00 each	=	_____
Saturday Banquet	_____ @ \$30.00 each	=	_____
Kids 10 & under	_____ @ \$25.00 each	=	_____
(Banquet Reservations due 31 March 2024 so meals can be ordered.)			
Total		=	_____

Name: _____ Pup Tent #: _____
Name: _____ Aux #: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Send MOCA Registration: Delores Sorenson, 2113 Rainbow Dr, Green Bay, WI 54313, payable to Grand of Wisconsin MOCA
Send MOC Registration & MOC/MOCA Banquet: Wayne Woodman, 1916 Grumann Dr, Tomah, WI 54660
608-498-1202 / 608-487-2440 Payable to: Who? What? Pup Tent 21



Joren Anderson of Auburndale High School was recognized for her incredible ongoing efforts to honor and support Veterans in her area, both in her Social Studies curriculum and as Advisor to the HS Leadership Group. From the monthly "Veterans Coffee Club" and frequent greeting card mailings to Veterans, to field trips and special recognition at Veterans Day and other programs, Joren's ability to encourage her students and help them honor Veterans is without equal in the area. She was nominated by VFW Post 2534, and received her award from D7 Cdr. Doug Mauritz at the District meeting in January. We salute you Joren!

District 7 Presents Bob Munro Awards

The District 7 Bob Munro Service Award is presented annually to a VFW/Auxiliary member in the District, as well as one nonmember in the community, who exemplify outstanding service to Veterans. It is named in honor and memory of the late Robert "Bob"

Munro who served the District as well as Department (State Cdr. 1993-94), and is remembered for his tireless service to Veterans. This year's District Chairman is Paul Morrison, Cdr. of Post 2534 in Wisconsin Rapids. Thanks to Post 664 QM Tina Flanagan for photos.



John Fandrey, a longtime member and Past Commander (1989-1991) of Arthur Gensler VFW Post 664 in Clintonville, was unable to attend the District meeting, so his Bob Munro Award was presented at a recent Post meeting. He was nominated by his Post 664 comrades for his many years of outstanding service to Veterans, their families and area communities. From left are: current Post 664 Cdr. LeRoy Wilken; Bob Munro Chairman Paul Morrison; recipient John Fandrey and Clintonville Mayor Steve Kettenhoven. Job well done comrade!

Post 2534 in Wisconsin Rapids Awards Certificates of Appreciation



Buckley-Baldwin VFW Post 2534 in Wisconsin Rapids recently recognized the ongoing support of two Rapids businesses. The local Culver's helped support Post projects by donating a percentage of profits during specific days in the fall. Meanwhile, Walmart donated desserts to the Veterans Day Spaghetti Feed, and even sent employees to volunteer their time at the event, helping to set up, assist customers, and clean up. "We are grateful for the support of Culver's and Walmart," said VFW Post Commander Paul Morrison. "Their contributions help us to provide programs and services to Veterans in our community."

Shown here at the January Post meeting with the VFW Certificates of Appreciation are (from left): Post SVC Shawn Plante; Brad Prohl from Culver's; a Manager from Walmart and Post Trustee Steve Bidwell. Photo and info submitted by Post 2534 QM Camerron Wettren.

Post 10519 Recruits at the Boat Show



Greendale VFW Post 10519 had a great spot for their recruitment/Poppy table at the Milwaukee Boat Show held in January at Wisconsin State Fair Park. Post volunteers were on hand for both weekends of the Show. Thanks to them and MANY thanks to MW Marine who shared their space! Shown here are Post 10519 member Dan Workenaour (left) and Cdr. John Ustruck who submitted the great photo and info. Nice work!

Post 8278 Supports Bangor First Responders

Clements-Anderson-Leis VFW Post 8278 continued its mission of service and community support with a recent annual donation to the Bangor First Responders. Post 8278 Adjutant Gary Althoff (right) presented the \$500 check to (from left) First Responders Char Parker and Tammy Brownell. Thank you ALL for your service, then and now! Submitted by Post 8278 Cdr. Paul Wuensch.



Auxiliary 8584 Supports Cashton Community



It is only fitting that the site of so many Auxiliary (and Post) 8584 events and activities be the recipient of support for a special project. Auxiliary President Tammy Bekkum recently presented a \$200 donation for the Cashton Community Hall Ceiling Project. Village Board member Arnie Klinkner accepted the check on behalf of the Village. Way to go! Submitted by Aux. 8584 Treasurer Rita Byers.



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

Your support is appreciated! www.USSWisconsinSub.org



Mary Ann Christopherson

Christopherson Declares for State Commander

Comrades,

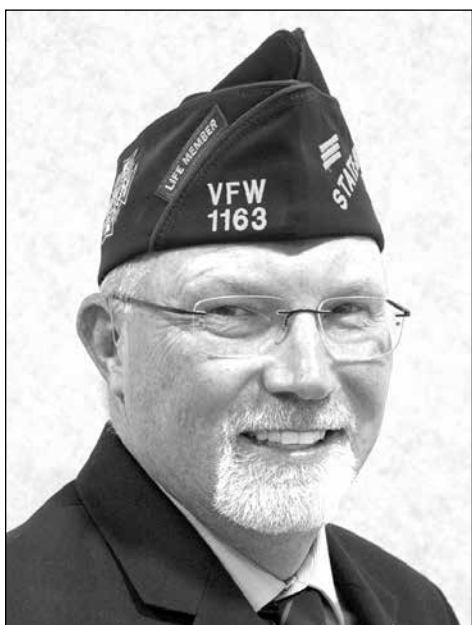
Yes, I am running for State Commander for the 2024-2025 year, despite my health issues. Before I go any further, I would like to thank all my Prayer Warriors for the many cards I have received and the prayers. Everything is going well. I should be good to go by 1 July. God is good!

I have two things I would like to see us focus on. My main focus as Commander is my Commander's Project, Mental Health and Suicide. The theme will be "Journey to Health Together". The project is to create a new Fund under the WI VFW Foundation. The competition between the Auxiliary and VFW will be to raise money for that Fund.

What is the Fund for? The noble objective is to provide financial assistance to individuals who may forego mental health therapy due to their inability to afford the associated copayments. PSC Simpson, Secretary/Treasurer of the Foundation, has meticulously designed an application process and form to ensure the Fund's efficient operation. This form will be included in the Commander's Book. Amazingly, the Fund has already received donations.

My second focus will be Community Service. Not the everyday things that we "all" do such as providing rides to the VA, grocery shopping, minor home repairs etc., but something major or big. Something that will benefit the community. I will have a list of suggestions in my Commander's Book to help you with ideas.

Comrades, I am asking for your support and vote. I am promising to do the best job possible. I am also looking forward to seeing everyone at Convention and in the ensuing year. Thank you so much.



Ty Letto

Letto Declares for State Senior Vice Commander

Dear Comrades,

I am humbled and honored to announce my candidacy for State Senior Vice Commander for 2024-2025.

This past year as your State Junior Vice Commander, I further solidified my passion for the mission of the VFW and my love for the organization and everything it stands for. My drive to help Veterans, whether community-focused, relief programs, or military honors, is even stronger.

As JVC, I had the honor of traveling throughout the state visiting Posts and Districts and let me say that I was thoroughly impressed with how you are making a difference in the life of a Veteran every day. I will, as your SVC, help empower you to continue that mission and take it to another level of making a difference every day.

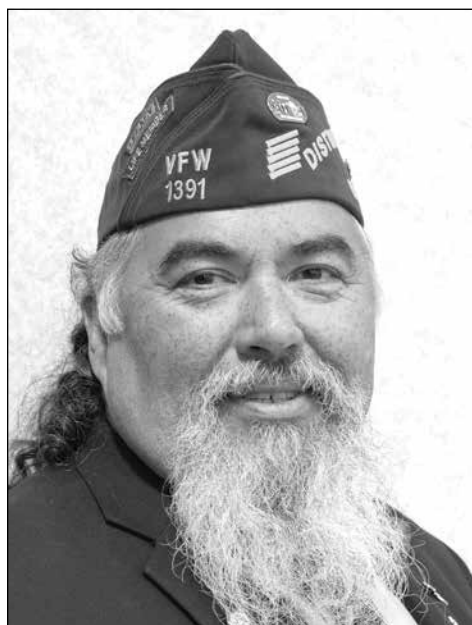
A Gold Legacy member of Clarence Keske VFW Post 1163 in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, I am currently the Post Commander. I am very proud of these achievements: All-State & Team Captain (2016-2017 and 2020-2021); All-American (2016-2017 and 2020-2021) including a #1 finish in Division 10. I was also named a National Aide-de-Camp in both of those command years. Other VFW offices held include Post SVC; Trustee; Adjutant; District 2 Surgeon; Adjutant; Community Service Chair; and State Convention Committee. I am also a member of the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans.

With a Master of Science in Management and a Bachelor of Science in Sociology, I possess over 33 years of leadership and management experience, leading organizations up to 76 staff in size. The highlights of my leadership experience include Deputy Chief Information officer, UW Shared Services, and Director of Student Information Systems, UW System Administration.

As a 21-year retired Army Chief Warrant Officer Four, Legal Administrator, my overseas tours include: Germany during the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989-1992); and Baghdad, Iraq (2005). A high point in my military career was serving as the Legal Administrator for all detainee operations in Task Force 134, Detainee Operations, Multi-National Forces Iraq. There, I was a part of a leadership team overseeing 42 Attorneys and Paralegals who were responsible for standing up the Central Criminal Court of Iraq. I am proud to know my service had a hand in the legal tool that tried and sentenced Saddam Hussein.

What will I accomplish as SVC? I will continue to implement family-focused and family-centric VFW initiatives; provide strong leadership through empowerment, inspiration, and improved communication with membership; and create a statewide VFW culture of "Make it Count", increasing awareness of how we make a difference every day in the life of a Veteran.

I humbly ask for your support and your vote at the State Convention, and I thank you for what you do every day in the lives of Veterans, because you "Make it Count".



Manny Salas

Salas Announces for State Jr. Vice Commander

Great day Comrades,

As I announced at our Mid-Winter Conference, I am a candidate for State Jr. Vice Commander for 2024 - 2025.

I am a United States Navy Veteran

serving five years on active duty and eight years in the Naval Reserves. During my active years, I earned my eligibility in the VFW on board the USS Trenton LPD 14 as a MS (cook), deploying in October 1983 to Grenada and Beirut, earning the Navy Expeditionary and Armed Forces Expeditionary as well as other medals and ribbons. In the Naval Reserves, I was part of MIUWU 213 in Milwaukee. Those duties included meal planning, procurement of all food, meal preparation and serving for 98 men and women.

I became a Life Member of the VFW on August 31, 1996 and am now a Gold Legacy Life member of Post 1391 in Racine. Currently serving my second term as District 1 Commander, I am very proud of our District earning both All-State and All-American honors in 2022-2023, with 104.02% membership.

Other positions in the VFW include: Big Ten Conference Committee; Acting Chief-of-Staff for Commander Rathke at the 2022 National Convention; Special National Aide-de-Camp (2022-2023 and 2020-2021); and Department Riders Group President (2021 - present). I am also a Life Member of the MOC (Cooties), currently serving as Seam Squirrel (Cdr.) of "Badger" Pup Tent 6 and District 1 Hide Gimlet (JVC).

A lifelong resident of Wisconsin, I am presently the Maintenance Supervisor for two residential buildings. I humbly ask for your support and vote at the 2024 Department Convention to become your next State Jr. Vice Commander. Thank you very much - see you in Green Bay.



Renee Simpson

Simpson Announces for State Jr. Vice Commander

Dear Comrades,

My name is Renee Simpson and I am humbly announcing my candidacy for State Junior Vice Commander for 2024-2025.

Since joining the VFW Post 10911 in Camp Douglas in 2003, I have been very active. Over the years I have held elected and appointed offices at each level of the VFW, including State Commander. Many wonder why, after holding the office of State Commander, would this be a journey I would want to take again. In all honesty, because I was asked to "step up" for our organization. Assisting the VFW leadership in moving forward and making the changes needed to safeguard the future of our great organization is paramount.

It is my honor to have been asked to be a larger piece of that process by running through the chairs again. Over the years, it has been a privilege to serve with amazing comrades, sisters and brothers, who continue to educate me about what it means to be "Still Serving". Nothing brings that home more than ensuring that we can provide the programs and resources that our Veterans, military and their families need. My passion is serving those who have worn, and are currently wearing, the uniform of this nation as well as the families that support them each day.

One of my favorite quotes was made by President Ronald Reagan: "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same."

To me it speaks volumes to many areas in life including the VFW. For over 100 years, combat Veterans of this great state have fought for, protected and handed on to the next group of combat Veterans to do the same. We cannot be idle in our mission. We cannot just go through the motions. We cannot wait for change. We must be the change and give our membership all the tools needed to grow our legacy.

I ask for your support at the State Convention in June. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Tom Heath

Heath Announces for State Quartermaster

Hello Comrades,

I am pleased to announce that I am running for State Quartermaster for the 2024-2025 year. As your State Quartermaster, I will continue to support the mission of the VFW.

I joined the VFW in 2007. Since then, I have been a Post Commander twice, Post Quartermaster (5th Year), Pup Tent Seam Squirrel, Cootie District Sr. Vice Commander, and Wisconsin Cootie Grand Commander. I have been the State Quartermaster for ten years.

Moving forward, I would like to continue to work as your State Quartermaster for the next five to eight years. Through my tenure, the Department has expanded our efforts in raising money through fundraising and sponsors. We continue to grow financially accountable and fiscally responsible. We have created funds and secured some of our assets so we can award more grants and grow our programs. Our financial status has remained strong.

The members of VFW Posts, Districts and this Great Department do outstanding and extremely important work for our Veterans, Veterans' families, and communities. I am immensely proud to be a part of what we do every day. Through our programs, we impact Veterans' lives in a positive way. This is what the VFW does.

Thank you again for all your great support. Be strong and be safe.

**REGISTER
NOW**
for
State Convention!
See page 15



Ilein Taibe

Taibe Announces
for State Chaplain

Dear Comrades,
I want to first thank you for your support these past few months in serving you, as your State Chaplain. I have learned from many and will continue to do so. I ask once again for your support as I am running again for the upcoming year.
I learn every day that life will continue to happen, some things seen, others unseen but Comrades one thing that is constant - is our Father Almighty! He will be present anytime you call him. Let him be your armor, prince of peace and above all, your miracle worker.
As your State Chaplain, if I have the privilege to serve one more year with you all, I will continue to abide by our Bylaws. I will continue to ask our Lord for strength and guidance to be present and available when needed.
Thank you for your vote but may our Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, place your next State Chaplain. Thank you and God bless your hearts. I leave you with this Bible verse:
“I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”
~ Psalms 91:2 NIV



George Stoeber

Stoeber Declares for
State Judge Advocate

Greetings,
I am pleased to announce my candidacy for Department Judge Advocate for 2024-2025. I have been the Department Judge Advocate since February 2023. My past Department positions include Chief-of-Staff for Past State Commander Cory Geisler during his command year 2021-2022.
A United States Navy Veteran of 24 years, I enlisted in the U.S. Navy in April 1983, and retired in December 2007. My many duty assignments found me stationed with the outstanding members of the United States Marine Corps, where I earned my

eligibility for the VFW in the Persian Gulf.
A Life Member of VFW Post 7308 in Pleasant Prairie since 2012, I have served the VFW in numerous positions at all levels, including - Post level: Post Commander, achieving All-American and All-State Commander; Junior Vice-Commander; Surgeon; and currently, Trustee. District level: District 1 Commander, including All-State District Commander; Sr. and Jr. Vice Commanders; Surgeon; and currently District Adjutant.
At the Department level, I have served as Chief-of-Staff; Deputy Chief-of-Staff; Chairman of the 2016 VFW Department of WI Loyalty Day Committee; Big Ten Delegate, and a member of the Big Ten Conference Committee. Currently, I am serving on the Department Finance Committee; Wisconsin VFW Foundation Committee; and as the Department Awards Chairperson. I have also received appointments as a National Deputy Chief of Staff for 2022-2023, and 2021-2022.
Following my career with the Navy, I am fortunate to have worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VBA and VHA) and I currently work for the Department of the Navy in Human Resources. I feel my positions in the VFW, as well as in the Navy, the Veterans Administration, and in Human Resources, provides me with an understanding of policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and insight into conducting inquiries and investigations, and adjudicating disciplinary matters when necessary.
For these reasons, I believe that I am well suited and qualified to continue as Department of Wisconsin Judge Advocate and I ask for your support and vote at the State Convention in June.



Michele Rathke

Rathke Declares for
National Home Trustee

Dear VFW Comrades, Auxiliary Sisters and Brothers,
My name is Michele Rathke, and I am asking for your vote for Trustee – District #7, on the National Home Board of Trustees, to represent Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The six-year term will run from 2024-2030.
I am a very proud “dual member” - Gold Legacy Life at Schmitt-Manecke-Donner VFW Post 1638 in Merrill, as well as a Life Member of their Auxiliary. My VFW eligibility was earned during my 12 months at Kunsan Air Base in the Republic of South Korea. I retired from Active Duty in the United States Air Force in February 2007, after “20 years, 10 days and a wake up”. My Auxiliary eligibility is from my grandfather, Vincent Ontrop, a WWII U.S. Army Veteran.
Following my retirement, I acquired licenses in the property and casualty insurance industry, working at Church Mutual for 4-1/2 years, leaving due to a medical disability. About that same time, I became more involved with Post 1638, ultimately serving as Post Commander for two terms (All-State and All-American in 2010-2011) and Post Quartermaster for four terms (All-

State in 2016 and 2017).
Progressing to District and Department leadership, I served two terms as District 7 Commander, and four years as Recording Secretary. I have also served as Chief-of-Staff and a variety of Committee assignments. Which all led to a term as State Commander in 2022-2023, culminating in All-American honors. All wonderful and rewarding opportunities to develop my leadership skills and succeed in a variety of offices.
But I can honestly say that none are more dear to me than six years of service as the State National Home Chairman. A Life Member of the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, MI, I have obtained an extensive working knowledge regarding the National Home, and worked hard to publicize this VFW and Auxiliary treasure. From information displays to planning and executing the annual trip to the Home, to encouraging donations and ongoing support of the Home in our Department’s programs, I feel that my many skills and successes make me an ideal candidate for Trustee. I know that my heartfelt love and support of the VFW National Home will help me succeed in making it an even better place for both residents and staff.
Both the VFW Department of Wisconsin and the VFW Auxiliary Department of

Wisconsin have unanimously endorsed me, and I respectfully ask for your vote during this fall’s election. How does it work, and how do you vote?
All **Life Members of the VFW National Home** are eligible to cast a vote for a candidate in their District. Your **current** email contact information **must** be on file in the Home’s database so that when it comes time for voting this fall (August/September 2024), you will receive your ballot by email. Not sure if your info is updated? Contact them at: **info@vfwnationalhome.org**, and make sure they have your current email and cell phone number.
Only **National Home** Life Members may vote. Not yet a Life Member of the VFW National Home? It’s easy to obtain your Life Membership. Visit **vfwnationalhome.org** and click on You Can Help, then Life Membership. You can apply and pay online, or print the application to mail in. PLEASE be sure to include **Michele Rathke** as the name in the “Recruiter” space. Life Memberships are \$50 each. A special “Centennial Membership” will also be available soon at \$100, to commemorate the Home’s upcoming Centennial in 2025.
Thank you again for your encouragement and support, AND your vote! Please contact me at either 715-218-0440 or **marathke@gmail.com** if you have questions.

Upcoming Patriotic Observances

March 29	National Vietnam War Veterans Day
April 6	Army Day
April 9	National Former POW Recognition Day
May 1	Loyalty Day
May 2	National Day of Prayer
May 8	V-E Day
May 10	Military Spouses Day
May 15	Peace Officers Memorial Day
May 15	Women’s Army Corps Founded in 1942
May 18	Armed Forces Day
May 27	Memorial Day (Observed)

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Kinesiology

Volunteers Needed
for Research Study on
Gulf War Veterans

The purpose of this study is to investigate how blood vessels in the brain and nervous system respond to challenges in Gulf War Veterans.

You May Qualify If You Are

- A Veteran who served in the Gulf War between 1990 and 1991.
- Between 45 and 68 years of age.
- Eligible to participate in an MRI scan.

Participation Involves

- Three visits to the UW-Madison campus.
- Visits range from 2.5-4 hours.
- Blood flow regulation testing, an exercise test and an MRI scan.

Location: 1300 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53706

Compensation will be provided for participants

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Please contact Anna Howery at
608-262-9572 or **barneslab@education.wisc.edu**

President Sherrie Visits Plainfield Auxiliary



Department President Sherrie Rosenau from Van Dyne visited Waushara Auxiliary Post 6007 in Plainfield for their February meeting, spending time with seven members of the 21-member Auxiliary. None of them could ever remember a Department President coming to Plainfield. President Sherrie answered questions, offered suggestions, and commented that the meeting was well run and enjoyable. She even stayed for dessert and conversation before heading home. Here (at right) with Sherrie, is Auxiliary 6007 President Bernadette “Bernie” Sherman who is a 52-year Charter member. She has served as President for many, many years.

Courtesy of Aux. 6007 Secretary-Treasurer Sue Zouski.

Post 7308 Supports VOW Tiny Home Village



Pleasant Prairie VFW Post 7308 provides ongoing support to the Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin (VOW) Tiny Home Village in Racine in a variety of ways. The usual quarterly expenditure of \$600 purchases food for use by the 15 homeless Veterans housed at the Village, or to help stock the shelves at the Veterans Market at the Village. They also host regular lunches for the Veterans and staff that are well attended and greatly appreciated. Here, the Post makes an additional donation of \$1,000, given to the Post by the Kenosha Noon Lions Club specifically for their outreach to VOW. From left are: Post 7308 Service Officer Paul Rusch; Post JVC Joel Eaves; Veterans Outreach Manager Michael Rambowski; Post SVC Larry Rugg; and Post Cdr. John McCoy. The flag behind them is on an exterior wall of one of the Tiny Homes.

Submitted by Post 7308 member Randy Strickland, with thanks to JVC Joel Eaves for photo help.

Post 8216 Supports UW MIA-RIP



It is great to see support for our Department Special Projects continue, after a specific command year is concluded. Many will remember the \$62,000+ raised for the UW Missing in Action Recovery & Identification Project raised during Cory Geisler’s and Inez Semington’s second Special Project, in 2022. We know many Posts and Auxiliaries continue to raise funds for the Project with special events. The latest item submitted to the NEWS is this \$1,000 donation from William “Sonny” Simon VFW Post 8216 in Middleton. Here, Project Team Lead Charles Konsitzke (left) receives the check from Post 8216 Commander Andrew Shuck, at a Post meeting earlier this year. Watch for an update from the UW MIA-RIP Team in the May/June 2024 NEWS.

Photo and info submitted by Post 8216 member Ellen G. Krenke.

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

**GROSS-YAKSH
Post 6498**

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

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!

Raffle Calendar Winners

Date	Ticket	Name	City	Prize	Date	Ticket	Name	City	Prize
Jan. 5	974	L. Wilken	Clintonville	\$50	Feb. 9	7979	S. Bitter	Kiel	\$50
	1005	J. Lewis	Edgar	\$50		10324	C. Freitag	Madison	\$50
	3121	T. Kerchner	Davis, IL	\$400		7933	T. Walvoord	Howards Grove	\$50
	8923	A. Bratz	Sun Prairie	\$50		6187	A. Wildes	Brighton, MA	\$50
	7833	M. Henzel	Plymouth	\$50		4397	R. Evans	Prairie du Sac	\$50
	12485	M. Lange	Hillsboro	\$50		3711	D. Evenson	Cambridge	\$50
	5436	K. Francisco	Two Rivers	\$50		3330	R. Galarzo	Brookfield	\$50
Jan. 12	6460	T. Tafuri	New Berlin	\$50	Feb. 16	12201	M. Luczak	West Bend	\$50
	5144	D. Hinnrichs	Waupun	\$50		9958	J. Kensmoe	Strum	\$50
	2455	J. Rathsack	Reedsville	\$50		3058	G. Stoeber	Pleasant Prairie	\$50
	10734	T. Flaig	Tomah	\$50		13203	R. Peters	Delavan	\$50
	12528	P. Jalowitz	Hayward	\$50		5510	C. Schultz	Fall River	\$50
	2843	VFW Post 10441	Waterford	\$50		1612	T. Muench	Manitowoc	\$50
	9539	J. Weber	Barron	\$50		7959	S. Stange	Howards Grove	\$50
Jan. 19	10543	D. Brooks	Rockland	\$50	Feb. 23	9681	L. Vetterkind	New Auburn	\$50
	6207	N. Wildes	New Berlin	\$50		5067	J. Heikkila	Sturgeon Bay	\$50
	3242	P. McKinney	DeForest	\$50		10580	J. Wissbroecker	New Berlin	\$50
	2439	K. Marsicek	Whitelaw	\$50		6509	M. Smith	Grafton	\$50
	3478	T. Walmer	Oregon	\$50		1154	S. Effa	Menasha	\$50
	6585	L. Jasinski	Racine	\$50		664	C. Prue	Oconto	\$50
	11648	C. Kortsch	Marshall	\$50		13046	D. Morrow	Burlington	\$50
Jan. 26	7909	C. Horness	Howards Grove	\$50	Mar. 1	2493	C. Simpson	Sheboygan	\$50
	7984	T. Sippel	Elkhorn Lake	\$50		5628	L. Weber	Cuba City	\$50
	6537	D. Kubricky	Franklin	\$50		6805	P. Schmidt	West Allis	\$50
	4559	N. Mittelsteadt	Madison	\$50		10195	D. Dutra	Janesville	\$50
	10287	D. Brandes	Venice, FL	\$50		8414	S. Colburn	Friendship	\$50
	7870	T. Olley	Mt Pleasant	\$50		1529	C. Gezella	Maribel	\$50
	6020	M. Hebgen	Highland	\$50		5998	P. Burns	DeForest	\$50
Feb. 2	7869	J. Kober	Hartford	\$300	<div>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.</div>				
	13310	J. Wynn	Kenosha	\$50					
	4054	M. Norwell	Oregon	\$50					
	8381	M. Gustin	Wis Rapids	\$50					
	9424	C. Gardner	New Auburn	\$50					
	11751	F. Zagar	Lac du Flambeau	\$50					
	13426	G. Friske	Blue Mounds	\$50					

WAR MEMORIAL EXHIBIT

FROM THE EDITOR

“Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world. A Veteran doesn’t have that problem.”
~ Ronald Reagan

It seems like we were just saying “Happy New Year” and now we are in the final months of the 2023-2024 Command Year. As noted elsewhere, I’m pretty sure our nearly nonexistent “winter” has a lot to do with how fast the year has gone by. As you’ll see from various “deadline”

Marla Morgan
Editor



715-384-2500
wivfweditor@gmail.com



listings and other articles and columns in this issue, we are at “LAST CALL” in many different programs. Please take some time

**Wisconsin Veterans
of Foreign Wars News**



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to ensure your Post and Auxiliary have sent in those *nominations, applications, donations and registrations* to the proper places, by the time they are required. If you miss them, I can promise a fair amount of “frustration and aggravation” will ensue. Since there will not be a formal Department-sponsored Loyalty Day event at the end of April this year, Posts and Auxiliaries are encouraged to plan some sort of commemoration in their communities. It doesn’t have to have a huge parade and lots of expense, but a simple gathering at your Post or community venue with a little music, a little “speechifying”, some good old-fashioned flag-waving

and patriotic vibes is a great way to put your Post front and center in your town. It’s not too late to put together a celebration. The next weekend after that is the **Third Annual VFW Day of Service (May 4)**. Visit todaysvfw.org and click on Day of Service to get info and ideas, and register your activity. Thank you to those who have sent in their photo contributions to the 2025 Department Raffle Calendar. I know we’ll have another great calendar to further our mission. Please continue to *Inform, Inspire, Invite* as we finish the year strong and successful. **“Mission First, Family Always”**
“BEE THE CHANGE”

FROM the National Council of Administration Weekly Update – January 4, 2024

Politics

VFW National Headquarters has recently received multiple inquiries pertaining to politics, and we would like to address them for clarification. The VFW is prohibited by its Congressional Charter and National Bylaws to endorse any political candidate at any level of office. Individual members are free to back their candidates of choice (which includes wearing the VFW cap), and VFW Posts are permitted to allow candidates the use of their meeting halls in order to present their positions regarding Veterans, service members and their families, as well as National Defense and Homeland Security. It is up to each individual Post to decide how their facility is used. We always recommend a Post open their facility to all candidates to avoid the image of favoring one side over another. Town Hall meetings are a great way for Veterans to understand and ask questions regarding issues pertaining to Veterans. We recommend your Post reviews **Section 702 of the National Bylaws** (Politics) to ensure compliance with the National Bylaws and Congressional Charter. If further guidance is needed, please reach out to your Department Headquarters for direction, to ensure no local or state statutes are violated. The VFW is one of the most respected voices in Washington, D.C., and within local governments across America. We advocate for justice for our nation’s Veterans, service members and military families on an array of issues and continue to be the voice for Veterans everywhere. We regularly testify before Congress, meet with elected officials, and rally our national network of VFW members and patriotic supporters, to ensure our lawmakers put Veterans first. When those who’ve served their country and those that support them stand together, we cannot be ignored.

Post 9924 Marks 75 Years of Service



State Jr. Vice Commander Ty Letto presented Howards Grove VFW Post 9924 with their 75th Anniversary Certificate at their January 2024 Post meeting, congratulating them on their milestone and thanking them for all they continue to do for Veterans. From left are: Alan Nohl, JVC Letto, Steve Bender, Dan Schafsky, Fred Margenau, and Tim Klemme. Info from Post 9924 QM Derek Schukow with thanks to Post Cdr. Steve Bender and JVC Ty Letto.

Sharing the Christmas Spirit



Thurber-Greenwood VFW Post 1916 member Pete Link (left); Auxiliary 1916 President Jan Wirth and Post member Wayne Unrath delivered Christmas fruit baskets, ham and gifts to six local Veterans. The recipients were very appreciative of the generosity and the visits. Submitted by Post 1916 Commander Wayne Georgeson.

LEST WE FORGET

REMEMBERING WISCONSIN'S POW/MIA

WISCONSIN'S FIRST INTERACTIVE POW/MIA EXHIBIT
DATING BACK TO THE CIVIL WAR FOR POWS

OPENING JUNE 2024

WAR MEMORIAL CENTER

Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

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

Four Critical Questions

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

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

Next Series Begins	.Get Informed	.Get Involved	.Save a Life
May 7			

Two Time Options:
11:30 am or 6:00 pm U.S. Central Time

The **R.A.C.E.** Suicide Prevention training is three one-hour sessions delivered on three consecutive Tuesdays starting 7 May 2024. The training is applicable for anyone, including you! The training prepares you to **Recognize** the often subtle signs of distress. You will learn how to **Ask** the person about any suicidal thoughts, demonstrate that you **Care** and ways to offer Hope that can help the person to choose life versus death. The last step in the **R.A.C.E.** model is learning different **Escort** options so the person receives professional care. Let's work together to Save Lives—One Life at a Time!

Register Today at
www.RACESuicidePrevention.us

Be the lifeline.

In Partnership With
HEALING WARRIOR HEARTS

EVENTS AND DEADLINES

Please see the separate Program Deadlines listing elsewhere on this page!

April 5

Deadline for May/June 2024 Wisconsin VFW News

April 6

1st District Meeting – **Auxiliary ONLY!** – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:30 am)
– VFW Post 1621, 1015 Center Ave., Janesville, WI 53547
State Rep: Aux. COS Newbauer

April 6

8th District Meeting – **VFW and Auxiliary!** – NO meal before the meetings. 1:00 pm (Regis. 12 noon) – St. Johns’s Lutheran Church, 101 W. Main St., Gillett, WI 54124
State Reps: VFW Cdr. Ramos and Aux. Pres. Rosenau

April 13

2nd District Meeting – **Auxiliary ONLY!** – 9:30 am (Regis. 8:30 am)
– VFW Post 3709, N8775 High Road, Watertown, WI 53094
State Rep: Aux. Pres. Rosenau

April 13

4th District Meeting – **Auxiliary ONLY!** – 9:30 am (Regis. 9:00 am)
– Clifford’s Supper Club, 10418 W. Forest Home Ave., Hales Corners, WI 53130
State Rep: Aux. SVP Woodards

April 13

10th District Meeting – **VFW ONLY!** – 9:00 am (Regis. 8:00 am) – Hayward Veterans Center, 10534 Main St., Hayward, WI 54843
State Rep: VFW Cdr. Ramos

April 19-21

MOC/MOCA Grand Convention – AmericInn by Wyndham in Merrill.
(See registration and info in the March/April Cootie Corner!)

April 20

1st District Meeting – **VFW ONLY!** – 9:30 am (Regis. 9:00 am) – hosted by VFW Post 11038 at River City Lanes, 730 Cornerstone Crossing, Waterford, WI 53185
State Rep.: VFW Cdr. Ramos

April 20

2nd District Meeting – **VFW ONLY!** – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:00 am) – VFW Post 9511, 2787 Erbe Rd., Blue Mounds, WI 53517
State Rep.: VFW PSC Lynch

April 20

9th District Meeting – **VFW and Auxiliary!** – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:00 am) – **VFW meets at** Post 10406, 100 Michaels St., Cochrane, WI 54622.
Auxiliary meets at Alliance Bank, 103 S. Main St., Cochrane, WI 54622
State Reps: VFW NCM Geisler and Aux. Pres. Rosenau

April 20

10th District Meeting – **Auxiliary ONLY!** – 9:00 am (Regis. 8:30 am) – Jump River Community Center, 14751 River St., Gilman, WI 54433
State Rep: Aux. JVP McWilliams

April 20

11th District Meeting – **VFW ONLY!** – 8:30 am (8:00 Regis.) – VFW Post 8584, 905 Front St., Cashton, WI 54619
State Rep.: VFW JVC Letto

April 21

3rd District Meeting – **VFW ONLY!** – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:30 am) – VFW Post 9336, 514 Willow St., Arena, WI 53503
State Rep.: VFW Cdr. Ramos

April 30

Deadline for Post Audits to VFW State Headquarters

May 4

6th District Meeting – **VFW ONLY!** – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:00 am) – VFW Post 1393, 260 Sand Dr., West Bend, WI 53095
State Rep.: VFW PSC Rathke

May 4

6th District Meeting – **Auxiliary ONLY!** – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:00 am) – VFW Post 5612, 337 N. Stafford St., Plymouth, WI 53073
State Rep.: Aux. SVP Woodards

May 4

7th District Meeting – **VFW and Auxiliary!** – 10:00 am (Regis. 9:00 am) – Hosted by VFW Post 1866 at the Eagles Club, 1104 S. Oak Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449
State Reps.: VFW JVC Letto and Aux. JVP McWilliams

May 4

11th District Meeting – **Auxiliary ONLY!** – 9:00 am (8:30 Regis.) – VFW Post 8584, 905 Front St., Cashton, WI 54619
State Rep.: Aux. Pres. Rosenau

May 11

4th District Meeting – **VFW ONLY!** – 9:00 am (Regis. 8:30 am) – **Location TBD – contact D4 Cdr. Don Lynch**
State Rep.: VFW Cdr. Ramos

June 12-15

VFW/VFWA Dept. of Wisconsin State Conventions – Tundra Lodge, 865 Lombardi Ave., Green Bay, WI 5430 (See page 3 Planning Calendar for Hotel reservation info, and elsewhere for Meals and Registration info.)

PROGRAM DEADLINES

As we conclude the 2023-2024 Program year, there are a number of upcoming Program Deadlines to be aware of so your candidates don’t miss out! Please see the VFW Dept. website – vfwwi.org – log 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!

PROGRAM DEADLINES

UPCOMING GOLF OUTINGS

SAVE THE DATE

It's time to start planning your golfing calendar – some registrations are already open!
Posts and Veterans groups: As you plan your events for Summer and Fall 2024, please send the pertinent info to wivfweditor@gmail.com.
This calendar will continue until we run out of events!

Monday, June 10, 2024

Center for Veterans Issues (CVI) 3rd Annual Golf Outing

- River Club of Mequon, 12400 N. Ville Du Parc Dr., Mequon, WI 53092
- Registration: 9:00 am; Shotgun Start: 11:00 am
- \$225 per person; \$900 foursome – includes Driving Range, Boxed Lunch, Dinner, Goodie Bag, 2 drink tickets, game card and more!
- Registration now open at: cvivet.org. **Hurry, it's almost FULL!**
- For available sponsorships, contact: Eduardo.Garza@cvivet.org.

Friday, June 28, 2024

VFW Dept. of WI – 5th Annual Unmet Needs Golf Outing

- Twin Oaks GC, 4871 Cty. Rd. R, Denmark, WI 54208
- 18 holes, Scramble format; Shotgun start at 9:00 am, RAIN OR SHINE
- \$100 per person, Veteran/Auxiliary; \$125 per person non-Veteran
- Call 920-337-9922 or email pmoran3147@gmail.com for info.

Monday, July 15, 2024

WI Veterans Museum Foundation 20th Annual Golf Outing

- The Oaks GC, 4740 Pierceville Rd., Cottage Grove, WI 53527
- Registration: 9:00 am; Shotgun Start: 11:00 am; four-person Scramble
- Proceeds support the WVM Oral History Program
- Registration opens in April; visit: wisvetsmuseum.com

Monday, August 26, 2024

12th Annual Fisher House Wisconsin Golf Outing

- Geneva National Resort & Club, 1221 Geneva National Ave. S, Lake Geneva, WI 53147
- Registration 7:30-9:30 am; Tee off at 10:00 am.
- Registration open NOW at: fisherhousewi.org.

Saturday, September 7, 2024

VFW Post 10262 9th Annual Golf Scramble

- Wisconsin River Golf Club, 705 West River Dr., Stevens Point, WI 54481
- Shotgun start: 12 noon; Registration includes dinner at Post 10262
- Contact Chairman Larry Kinyon to reserve your team’s place – 715-498-1225 or lkinyon@att.net.

Thursday, September 12, 2024

VFW Post 3319 4th Annual Golf with a Veteran

- Countryside GC, W726 Weiler Rd., Kaukauna, WI 54130-8870
- Watch: [@golfwithavet](#) on Facebook for complete info and registration

Sunday, September 15, 2024

VFW Post 9202 3rd Annual Golf Outing

- Brown Deer Golf Club, 7625 N. Range Line Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53209
- Scramble format; Shotgun start: 10:00 am
- \$500 per Foursome, includes dinner following golf.
- Sponsorships also available; contact Leah Weber (leah.weber@att.net) or David Labinski (David.Labinski@milwaukeecountywi.gov) for info and to register your team.

SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 28, 2024

WISCONSIN VFW

5TH ANNUAL

GOLF OUTING

18 HOLES



4871 COUNTY RD R
Denmark, Wisconsin

9:00 AM
SHOTGUN START

Drink Tickets
Rolls/Appetizers
Lunch on the Turn

\$100 Veterans
or Auxiliary
\$125 Non-Veterans

All proceeds go to:
Unmet Needs
And STAYS in
Wisconsin

Raffle Prizes!!

Help Support your
Fellow Veterans!!

Register today!!
Pat or Linda Moran
pmoran3147@gmail.com
920-337-9922
Wisconsin VFW

Cruising at the National Mid-Year



Behind every successful Dept. President is an erstwhile group of travelers willing to “take one for the team” to accompany her on a National Auxiliary Mid-Year Cruise. From left (behind Sherrie) and all spiffed up for another great evening are: PSC Michele Rathke; Lori Lynch; Mom/NDCM #11/PDP Laurel Ann Wiese; PSC Don Lynch; PDP Faith Elford; Dept. SVC Cheryl Woodards; Aux. 7591 President Suzan Nast; Dept. Chaplain Janey Owens; and Aux. 7591 Conductor Chris Benson. *Great photo courtesy of PSC Michele Rathke.*

Post 2112 Donation to King Home



Maj. Gen. R.B. McCoy VFW Post 2112 in Sparta delivered a little “Christmas Cheer” in the form of a \$1,000 donation to the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. Here (from left) are: WVH-King Finance Director Polly Kimball; Post 2112 member Michelle Price and an unnamed WVH-King staffer. The Post also made a recent donation of \$500 to the Monroe County Family Promise Organization, a family homeless shelter and resource. Nice job! *Submitted by Tom Schauer and Tricia Flaig.*

Warrior Beach Retreat in PCB

Warrior Beach Retreat held in Panama City Beach, FL, is a week-long program of rest and relaxation for combat wounded warriors and their spouse or caregiver to help them recharge as they heal from their injuries and experiences. Founded a decade ago by Linda Cope and her husband Philip in honor of their son, Sgt. Jonathan Cope who was injured in Iraq in 2006, the nonprofit organization holds semi-annual retreats for wounded heroes along with other events and fundraisers.

This year's February retreat in PCB included the usual mid-week parade and other events open to the public, featuring Lt. Col. Allen West as the Guest Speaker at the Salute Ceremony. NEWS Chairman Joel Walker, PSC has participated in the parade during several of his winter stays in the city. Here, he and wife Virginia Murphy pause for a photo with Lt. Col. West during the day's festivities.



Post 2204 Honors Eagle Scout Anna Garey



District 9 Commander Randy Engness (left) and Harold Nelson VFW Post 2204 Commander Jim Garey presented a VFW certificate to Anna Garey, commemorating the achievement of her Eagle Scout Rank. The recognition was given at her Court of Honor in February. Anna's project was constructing picnic tables for the local church, so that youth would have a place to meet outside. She found the plans, fund raised, purchased all materials and found volunteers to help build them. Awesome job Anna!

Submitted by proud Grandpa/Post 2204 Cdr. Jim Garey.

100 Years Young



Madison native and Army Staff Sgt. John M. “Jack” Hall tells a few war stories during his 100th birthday celebration on January 3 at VFW Post 8216 in Middleton. The event was quite festive, filled with family and friends. Enlisting in the U.S. Army in December 1942 at the age of 17, Hall served in combat with the 36th Infantry Division, in Italy and France. He was wounded in the chest below his right shoulder in mid-September 1944 and was discharged a year later, returning to Madison in October 1945. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross, the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star and the French Legion of Honor.

Besides a very large birthday cake, other surprises included a certificate from Middleton Mayor Emily Kuhn and a plaque from Wisconsin Governor Evers, presented by State Senator Dianne Hesselbein, along with a flag flown over the State Capitol. Thank you for your incredible service Jack, and all the best to you for MANY more wonderful years!

Submitted by Post 8216 member Ellen G. Krenke.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Mid-Winter Memories ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Checks always create smiles. Cdr. Ramos accepted donations for Voice, Pen and the WI VFW NEWS from President Rosenau. Sherri L. Smith photo.



The Auxiliary Council Meeting and Program Sessions were well-attended with good discussion and questions. Nicole David photo.



Wisconsin Secretary of Veterans Affairs James Bond was among several guest speakers addressing the VFW meeting on Saturday. Sherri L. Smith photo.



Kimberly Goss of Aux. 10406 in Cochrane was installed as Aux. Dept. Conductor by NDCM #11 Laurel Ann Wiese. Nicole David photo.



U.S. Representative and retired Navy Seal Derrick Van Orden (R, WI-3) was honored for “being a strong ambassador of the VFW and his VFW Post 1530”. Sherri L. Smith photo.



Staff members from the VAMC at Tomah gave an interesting training presentation detailing the VA's Whole Health Program. Sherri L. Smith photo.



ABOVE LEFT: Sierra Delta CEO and Founder BJ Ganem gave an update on the organization's programs and projects. ABOVE RIGHT: Cdr. Ramos was a great sport about “taking one for the team” at the Open House at Post 2534 on Friday evening. AT RIGHT: The State Honor Guard presented the Colors at the Saturday morning Joint Session. Sherri L. Smith photos