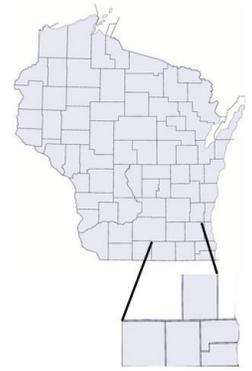




Wisconsin American Legion First District



*Serving 60,000+ veterans from the shores
of Lake Michigan to the idyllic Sugar River*

March 2021

Greetings American Legion Family!

BLUF

As we start into the backside of winter, things seem to be on the mend. Posts and Counties are starting to meet again in person, retaining a virtual option for those members who wish to attend from a distance.

I have missed attending County Councils throughout the District and I am glad that those are starting up again. I enjoy meeting with fellow veterans and talking about the great things the Legion does, and face to face attendance allows me to keep my finger on the pulse of the First District.

Our membership is moving in the right direction, but we still have work to do. As I attend County meetings, I am distributing lists of lapsed members to each Post. I am attempting to provide you with enough member contacts to get you to 100%. In most cases, there are enough members to accomplish this. If not, I have provided a list of 2930 members from 2020 and 2021 to supplement the list, and give you the contacts you need to achieve goal. National Commander Oxford recently issued a Call to Action, urging all of us to contact all of our lapsed members and try to get them to come back. I know that sometimes, this can be a difficult conversation to have, especially if something happened that caused that member to lose the desire to belong. Even so, I implore you to make those contacts. You may still be able to convince the veteran to renew, and possibly discover a problem or an issue that needs to be addressed. That member may even be willing to help solve whatever issue caused the lapse in the first place. You won't know unless you ask.

I am also providing the County Commanders with a 2930 list, sorted by cities, for their respective county and those are also available to the Posts that want them. There are a lot of veterans out there who already belong to the American Legion. We just need to offer them the opportunity to transfer into one of our Posts, which allows them to have a closer relationship with their fellow veterans. As I've said before, these are veterans who don't need to be sold on the Legion. They already belong. We only need to show them the benefits of belonging to a local Post.

As we head into spring, it is time to begin assembling our annual reports. The Consolidated Post Report (CPR), Children and Youth (C&Y) Report and the VA&R report are of vital importance to our organization. Each year, The American Legion must submit a report to Congress detailing our activities from the past year. This reporting is a requirement to maintain our national charter, and more importantly it tells our story to the world. These reports give us the opportunity to showcase our programs and the effect they have in our communities. Any activity, no matter the scope should be reported. While you may view something you do as insignificant, it may mean a great deal to someone on the receiving end. Additionally, you may provide a spark of an idea that can help a struggling Post to take steps toward revitalization and better serve their community. Every program of the American Legion started at the Post level and was noticed by other Posts, Counties, Districts and Departments and grew into what we know today. A great example of this is the Poppy program, which was started by ALA Unit 1 in Milwaukee in 1919, and by 1923 it had grown into a National program. (Sweet, G. E., *The Wisconsin American Legion*, 1992, Pg. 12 -13)



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You will notice that the CPR contains some information that is also on the C&Y and VA&R reports. The two latter reports simply go into a little more detail. Consider having the 3 reports side by side and do them all at once. These reports can be filled out and submitted to Department on-line or done by hand and mailed to Portage. Please contact me if you have any issues. Let's have 100% reporting for the 1st District in 2021.

I hope to see you out at a County meeting. Until then, THINK SPRING!!!

Introducing Communications Officer Allen Morris

Allen Morris was born in Janesville Wisconsin, and grew up in Orfordville. In 2005, he graduated from Parkview High School in Orfordville, where he participated in a wide variety of athletics, as well as all of the performing arts, highlighted by a Show Choir performance on Broadway.

Allen enlisted in the United State Marine Corps and reported to MCRD San Diego in August 2005. He completed Boot Camp October 28th, 2005 and was then sent to Camp Pendleton for Marine Combat Training (MCT) at the School of Infantry. Upon completion of MCT, he was sent to MOS School at Camp Lejeune. After graduating from Admin School, he was then stationed at Expeditionary Warfare Training Group, Atlantic (EWTGLANT) at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia. He left the Marines in 2009, as a Corporal.

Returning home to Orfordville, he attended the University of Wisconsin – Rock County, where he earned an Associate's Degree. He then transferred to UW – Madison where he studied Pre-Law and Criminology. Allen left college and began a career in Real Estate, initially joining forces with his father. He eventually expanded his business to include taking photos of homes for other realtors. That business has now expanded to include events, portraits, etc. Obtaining his drone license, he also now does ariel photography.

Allen is a member of Wells – Davis – Young – Neal Post 209 in Orfordville, where he was the centennial Commander. He also has the distinction of being the youngest Commander in Post history. He is currently Communications and Public Relations Chairman for Post 209, and a member of SAL Squadron 209. He is 2nd Vice Commander of the Rock County Council, as well as 1st District Communications Officer. He is a Free Mason with Commonwealth 325 in Madison and an Officer in the Lodge.

He resides in Orfordville with his wife, Bailey and son Matthew, both of whom are members of the American Legion family.

Membership Report

In the interest of saving space, I will only publish the totals for the 5 Counties. Your County Commander will have the numbers for the individual Posts. These are totals as of February 25, 2021.

1. Walworth County (770) (goal) 698 (paid), 90.65%
 2. Rock County (811) 694, 85.57%
 3. Racine County (729) 622, 85.32%
 4. Waukesha County (2996) 2473, 84.09%
 5. Kenosha County (613) 499, 81.40%
- First District (5864) 4986, 85.03% (10th place in the Department)

Upcoming National target dates: 90% by 3/20/2021, 95% by 4/14/2021, 100% by 5/12/2021

2021 100% POSTS

Ingalls – Koeppen Post 102, Walworth
Devins – Teehan – McGuire Post 237, Footville
Moser – Ortmann Post 130, Sharon
Kelley – Gardner – Katzman – Stoflet Post 45, Elkhorn

What's News?

1. **Mid-winter Conference** – The 2021 Mid-winter Conference, originally scheduled for January 14 – 17, 2021 has been rescheduled to May 6 – 9, 2021 in conjunction with the Department spring meetings. The conference will take place at [Ho-chunk Convention Center, Baraboo](#). The training that was slated for January will take place virtually, and will also be offered in person in May.

If you have reservations, and have registered for any parts of the conference, you will have the following choices:

1. Transfer everything to the May Conference
2. Donate the money to the Programs
3. Request a refund

If you choose option 2 or 3, make sure to let HQ know if you had a room reservation so that they can cancel that also. Headquarters will be reaching out to everyone in the coming weeks. Please share this information with your Post, County and District.

2. **Taps** – Past Rock County Commander Dave Burrow passed away February 8, 2021.

David Lee Burrow, 72, of Evansville, died on Monday, February 8, 2021 at his home.

He was born on June 10, 1948 in Watertown, the son of the late Harold and Marie (Lemke) Burrow. In 1966 he graduated from Lakeside Lutheran High School in Lake Mills.

On April 23, 1968 he was drafted into the U.S. Marine Corps, served in the Vietnam War and was honorably discharged in 1972. Before retiring in 2013 he had been employed as a welder by Baker Manufacturing in Evansville since 1976.

David was the current Commander of the American Legion Post 35 in Evansville and served on their Funeral Honor Guard. He served in the past as Commander of the Rock County Council of the American Legion, past American Legion 1st District Public Safety Chairman, a life member and served as past 1st Vice Commander of Evansville VFW Post 6905, a life member of the MCL South Western Wisconsin Detachment 623 (Marine of the year 2005), member of MCL 3807 of Beloit, member of Vietnam Veterans of America, Rock River Chapter 236 of Janesville, and many other local civic organizations.

Survivors include his brothers, Eugene (Cheryl) of Lake Mills, Alvin (Phyllis) of Janesville, Stanley (Cathy) of Lake Mills, and Philip of Hartland; his twin sister Donna Mundt of Marshall; sisters Lois (Steve) Baird and Anita (Tom) Freeman of Fort Atkinson; his uncle, John (Elsie) Lemke of Oconomowoc; his aunt, Arlene Lemke of Watertown; many nieces and nephews; great nieces and nephews; other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by two brothers-in-law, Richard Rauber and Robert Mundt; one niece, Cheryl Vander Velden; and one great niece, Kacey Burrow.

Funeral services were held on Thursday, February 18 at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lake Mills.

Burial with military honors will be in the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Union Grove. If desired memorials would be appreciated to Lakeside Lutheran High School.

3. **Department Oratorical Contest** – The Department Oratorical contest was held on February 13, 2021 at Post 70 in Oshkosh. First District winner Braiya Nolan won at the Department level for the second year in a row. Unfortunately, National has again decided to cancel their contest and awarded all Department winners a \$5,000.00 scholarship. Braiya is a senior this year, so this was her last opportunity to compete. She will be attending Yale next semester, majoring in bio-medical

engineering. She is an excellent speaker, and the things she learned from this American Legion showcase program will serve her well in the future. I plan on inviting her to our spring conference to give her oration one last time. Congratulations and good luck in your future, Braiya!



TOP ROW : ORATORICAL CHAIR – ROBERT STONE,
SAL DETACHMENT COMMANDER ROBERT
SIROVINA, JR. , COMMANDER DAVID WISCHER,
DISTRICT 1 COMMANDER KARL STUVENGEN,
DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER GREG EIRICH,
DISTRICT 2 COMMANDER JULIE MUHLE,
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT NATHAN GEAR

BOTTOM ROW: 1ST RUNNER UP FROM DISTRICT 2 –
HASTI GHASEMI-VAGHAR, WINNER FROM DISTRICT
1 BRAIYA NOLAN, 2ND RUNNER UP FROM DISTRICT 6
– LEVI HARPER

PICTURED LEFT: WINNER BRAIYA NOLAN AND
DEPARTMENT ORATORICAL CHAIR ROBERT STONE

(Photo courtesy of Wisconsin American Legion)

- 4. Announcement from Team Wisconsin Chair Julie Muhle** - PDC Dan Seehafer has been moved up in the running for National Commander after the unfortunate passing of another candidate. This means things are going to be moving fast after the National Convention in August as he will be able to fund raise in other states.

In light of this, there are a couple of things that we now need to consider:

- Fundraising. Fundraising suggestions are: \$300 for Posts, \$2000 for Counties and \$500 for Districts. It is understood that this doesn't work for everyone. It is a suggested starting point. For those who have already donated, thank you.
 - Events - dinners, parties, brat fries, etc. from which the monies could be donated to the campaign.
 - Donations for hospitality rooms - soda, liquor, gift cards/checks, etc.
- Spokespeople - it would be beneficial to get a couple of people from each District who could be part of Team Wisconsin to help get to Post and County meetings to share information regarding Dan's journey.

Please remember that all candidates running for National Commander are required to raise their own money for campaigning. This means travel to as many states as possible for continued fund raising.

We have been fortunate to have two candidates for National Commander so close together. As with Past National Commander Denise's campaign, it will take everyone's efforts to help Dan be successful.

Thank you in advance for your help!

5. **Badger Girls State cancelled** – The Covid-19 pandemic has forced BGS to cancel its 2021 program. Unfortunately, this program suffered the same fate as BBS, and is now planning its 2022 session. If you have questions about sponsorship fees or need other information, please contact Bonnie Dorniak at ALA Department Headquarters, deptsec@amlegionauxwi.org or 608-745-0124.
6. **Department Standing Committees** – Each year the Department Commander is tasked with filling the many seats on the Department Standing Committees. If you are a Legionnaire that is interested in learning more about the different Committees and Commissions, go to wilegion.org, click on the 'Get Connected' Tab, then 'Committees & Commissions' and then click on any of the Committees/Commissions you may be interested in. On each committee/commission page, you will find a toolkit with the Standing Committee Application. If you are interested, please complete the application and submit it to your District Commander. Think about your military and civilian careers and where you could be an asset to Legion Wisconsin. If you have any questions, please contact your District Commander or Department Headquarters at (608) 745-1090.
7. **Troop and Family Support Fund** – The pandemic has brought loss of jobs, isolation, depression and more to our Veterans and their families. The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin's resource to help those in need is the Troop & Family Support Fund. This fund is in need of support so we can continue to help veterans with rent, utilities, the holidays and more. If you have the resources, please consider donating to the Troop & Family Support Fund. It has been used to keep families from homelessness, repair their transportation so they can get to work to continue to support their families, keep their utilities on and much more. To donate go to wilegion.org and choose Troop & Family Support.
8. **Legion posts affected by COVID can apply for \$1,000 grant** – Public health mandates in response to the coronavirus included stay-at-home orders and business closures. Those mandates financially impacted American Legion Posts nationwide as member and community outreach efforts were limited, resulting in a loss of revenue. To provide some relief during these challenging times, financial grants are now available for eligible American Legion Posts.

Resolution No. 36, Mission Blue Post Assistance Program, will provide \$1,000 grants to Posts that are in good standing with their respective department. These funds must be used exclusively to pay current or past due rent, mortgage, utilities and insurance. The American Legion National Executive Committee approved Resolution No. 36 Oct. 14, during its annual Fall Meetings. Funds for the approved grants will be provided through The American Legion National Emergency Fund (NEF). For more information contact Department Headquarters. American Legion Posts have until Dec. 31, 2021, to apply for an Operation Blue PAP grant.

9. **VA Addresses Concerns About Rural Vax Distribution** – Continuing to get COVID-19 vaccinations for Veterans – especially those in rural and highly rural areas – is a high priority, VA Secretary Denis McDonough told reporters Feb. 23.

More than 1 million Veterans have at least one vaccine and 400,000 received both doses, McDonough said, with numbers of shots in arms climbing daily.

Veterans are generally receiving the COVID vaccine quickly after facilities receive doses. "In many facilities, from arrival of dosages to having provided all those dosages in arms is about three to four days in some and not more than seven in any facility," McDonough said. The secretary has witnessed the urgency by VA staff to get Veterans the COVID-19 vaccine. "People have taken

really seriously the assignment to get these shots in arms,” he said. Veterans also receive shots through mobile shot clinics.

The secretary said Veterans will see continued vaccinations at VA facilities. As the vaccination program moves forward in the months to come, Veterans will see VA take that capacity on the road, too. VA will partner with federal agencies to further expand the number of vaccinators to get Veterans their shots.

McDonough said Veterans in rural and highly rural communities not receiving the vaccine is a concern. About 4.7 million Veterans live in rural and highly rural areas. Of those, about 2.7 million use VA health care. Rural Veterans enroll in VA health care at about a 58% rate, significantly higher than the 37-percent enrollment rate of urban Veterans. Urban areas have at least 30% of the population residing in an urbanized area as defined by the Census Bureau. Rural areas have less people than urban areas, while highly rural areas have sparse population. Highly rural areas have less than 10% of the working population that commutes to any community larger than an urbanized cluster. That is typically a town of no more than 2,500 people.

Compared to urban areas, rural communities tend to have higher poverty rates. They also have more elderly residents, residents with poorer health and fewer physician practices, hospitals, and other health delivery resources. Rural Veterans enrolled in VA’s health care system are also significantly older. About 55% are over the age of 65.

- 10. From U. S. Senator Tammy Baldwin** — Senator Baldwin and Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) have introduced the *K2 Veterans Care Act*. This legislation would establish a “presumption of service connection” for the veterans who served at Karshi-Khanabad Air Base (K2) in Uzbekistan and who have since been diagnosed with toxic exposure-related illnesses and diseases, requiring the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide health care and benefits.

As many as 15,000 U.S. servicemembers deployed to K2 Air Base—an old Soviet military site leased to the U.S. from the Uzbek government between 2001 and 2005—to support military operations into northern Afghanistan following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Recent media reports and declassified Department of Defense (DOD) documents released by the House Oversight and Reform Committee’s Subcommittee on National Security indicate that K2 servicemembers were exposed to multiple cancer-causing toxic chemicals and radiological hazards during their deployments. These toxins include hazardous petrochemicals, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), depleted uranium, burn pits, and elevated levels of tetrachloroethylene.

According to a September 2004 health assessment, the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine found that, “the potential for daily contact with radiation exists for up to 100% of the assigned units” at the K2 base. In April 2020, the VA announced that it would study illnesses among K2 veterans including cancers, but results from the study are not expected for at least 18 months.

The *K2 Veterans Care Act* would create a “presumption of service connection” for illnesses associated with toxic exposures at K2. This presumption of service connection would require the VA to provide health care and disability benefits to any K2 veterans who presents diseases associated with jet fuel, VOCs, particulate matter, depleted uranium, asbestos, and lead-based paint—all of which were toxins found at K2.

The legislation has also been introduced in the House by U.S. Representatives Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA) and Mark Green (R-TN).

Read more about the *K2 Veterans Care Act* [here](#), and in the March issue of *The American Legion* magazine.

11. Notes from Wisconsin American Legion Headquarters

Post Mailings – You all previously received correspondence that Post Mailings would be going virtual and bi-monthly. Post mailings can be viewed at <https://wilegion.org/post-mailing/>.

Consolidated Post Reports – The 2020-2021 Consolidate Post Report (CPR) is now available on wilegion.org or myLegion.org. This information is important to the future of The American Legion, as it is gathered annually across the country and is a valuable tool when showing the strength of the organization and how important it is to Veterans, their families and their communities. Whether it is lobbying for Veterans Benefits, or justifying The American Legion charter, what you do in your community is important to these decisions. You can log this information monthly through the monthly forms provided in your Administrative Manual.

Camp American Legion – Do you, or someone you know, want to support Veterans and Camp American Legion but are not sure how? Sponsor a Veteran to Camp is a great opportunity. Camp is free to veterans and costs about \$500/week/veteran. This cost covers 3 meals a day, lodging in a lake side cabin, fishing, boating, camp fires (with smores), access to nature trails and most importantly a safe and relaxing place to heal.

As part of this great program, you can choose to sponsor someone you know, maybe a friend, neighbor or family member to honor their service. Or you can simply sponsor and we will make sure it is used for a deserving veteran. To sponsor, simply fill out the this [ATTACHED FORM](#) and submit with payment to:

The American Legion
Sponsor a Veteran
P.O. Box 388
Portage, WI 53901

From the Department Fund-raising Committee – The Wisconsin American Legion Foundation is here to help Posts with their fund-raising efforts. This serves two purposes. It allows the Foundation to fulfill its aims, purposes and requirements under the law, but more importantly, it allows your donors to receive the tax advantages of donating to a 501(c)(3) organization. As the Delafield Post recently discovered, most Posts are 501(c)(19) organizations and as such, donations are NOT tax deductible. Monies raised through the Foundation are returned at 100% in the form of a grant which sets the Post and the Foundation up for maximum tax-saving benefits. Contact Angie at Department Headquarters for more information.

National American Legion College – The 2021 National Legion College class will convene Dec. 12-17, 2021. The 2021 student application is now available at legion.org/college. Class of 2021 student applications are due July 31, 2021.

12. Dues and the 21st Century – Looking for a faster way to process and transmit dues? Are your members annoyed because they got a dues notice, after they already paid? Want to save time and effort when it comes to dealing with dues? myLegion.org has the answer. Electronic dues payments, automatic dues payments, and electronic transfer of your Post transmittal to HQ are the modern way. Members can now pay their dues on-line at myLegion.org, and immediately be renewed. Additionally, they can set up automatic dues payment by providing a credit/debit card in myLegion.org. After set-up, on or about July 15 every year, your dues will automatically be deducted from your account. That's it. You're done. Dues are paid, no notice will be sent, and you won't forget. You will receive your membership card in the mail in a few days.

For Post Adjutants and Finance Officers: The “**Process Membership**” feature in myLegion allows American Legion Post Officers to renew, add new members and transfer-in existing members from other Posts. This feature utilizes electronic payment methods via myLegion, and eliminates the need for Post Officers to send the National/Department portion of the (3-part) membership cards,

paper transmittal sheets, and paper checks to the Department Headquarters office. This also eliminates the delay between member payment and official renewal that result from sending your transmittals through the mail. The electronic payment method is tied directly to your Post membership account. This will save you time, paper, and postage. Contact Chris at Department Headquarters for more information and detailed instructions to set this up.

13. What's happening around the First District

Essman – Schroeder Post 20, Waterford is holding monthly meat raffles from September to May. They are having a great turn-out and lots of fun. Chair Ken Smars reports: We have our raffles the third Saturday of each month. Our next raffle will be held on March 20th. We go from 1-3 PM. Raffles are conducted at: River City Lanes, 730 Cornerstone Crossing, Waterford, 262-534-7467.



(Photo courtesy of B. Shane Morris, Post 20)

14. Training Time-out – How well do you know the Preamble? We say it before every meeting of the Legion, but do we really know what it means? In this space each month, we will explore a clause of our Preamble. Take a few minutes at the beginning of your Post meeting and read the paragraph to the membership to better understand our Preamble.

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses
... This clause places the Legionnaire on the side of right in opposing autocracy by either class or mass when this threatens. In a democracy such as ours, composed as it is of all nationalities, races, creeds and economic groups, there are bound to be both classes and masses. Indeed, the masses are composed of classes – but all groups within the mass must feel assured that in this nation, reason and fairness will prevail in all human activities and relations.



Until next time, **recruit, retain and engage**. Stay safe, everyone and THINK SPRING!!!!

Go recruit the next YOU!