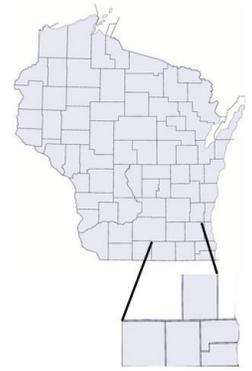




Wisconsin American Legion First District



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

April 2021

Greetings American Legion Family!

BLUF

Ah, April and the dawn of Spring and rebirth. The Winter of Our Discontent is passing and soon we will be bewitched by the crack of the bat, and the beginning of another baseball season. Baseball and the American Legion have a long and storied history. With more than 3,400 teams and over 55,000 youth participating, this American phenomenon is gearing up for another summer of excitement, sportsmanship and life-long memories.

From History of American Legion Baseball, American Legion Baseball is a national institution, having thrived through a world war, several national tragedies, and times of great prosperity as well as great despair. It still stands behind the traditional values upon which it was founded. It has taught hundreds of thousands of young Americans the importance of sportsmanship, good health and active citizenship. The program is also a promoter of equality, making teammates out of young athletes regardless of their income levels or social standings. American Legion Baseball has been, and continues to be, a stepping stone to manhood for millions of young men who have gone on to serve their country or community, raise families or play the sport at the highest level.

Born of a resolution passed at the Department of South Dakota's 1925 department convention, the idea was conceived and promoted by Maj. John L. Griffith, who was at the time the commissioner of what would become one of college's preeminent conferences, the Big Ten. In his address to the convention, Maj. Griffith stated, "The American Legion could well consider the advisability of assisting in the training of young Americans through our athletic games. Athletic competition teaches courage and respect for others, fostering their growth into active citizens".

Many of the Legion's Americanism programs are modelled after this premise. They pride themselves on teaching many of these life skills to our nation's youth. These values are as important today as they were in 1925, and our youth continue to look to us for the opportunity to learn.

As with most American Legion programs, this starts at the local Post. Many of our 1st District Posts conduct one or more of these fundamental activities, and often see their candidates succeed at the higher levels of these contests. Two-time Department Oratorical Champion Braiya Nolan of Williams Bay is a fine example. The experiences and training the Oratorical program provided her will serve her well in the future. The American Legion can be proud of the impact we have had on her life.

Sadly, some of our Posts no longer conduct Legion programs in the community. It is disappointing that all of our Posts don't provide these opportunities in their local area. Our youth desperately need these outlets and for the most part we have the perfect vehicle to provide them. Does it require effort? Does it require an engaged membership? Yes, on both counts. But re-establishing and promoting these programs can often boost membership as well as visibility in the community. This is especially true with younger veterans. They want the same things for their children that we did. They want their children to learn about



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sportsmanship, respect for the flag, weapons safety, our Constitution and many other values. What a perfect opportunity to engage them in our programs and eventually entice them into membership in our organization.

So, as we enter this season of re-birth, I urge you to consider starting or expanding one of the many Americanism programs we have available. Let those younger veterans provide you access to your local schools. Let them take the lead in promoting, coaching and running the programs. All you need to do is provide some guidance. Don't dwell on membership in the beginning. That will come as they discover what we have to offer.

Our nation's youth are calling. Step up, and answer that call. PLAY BALL!!

Introducing Service Officer Richard Strehlow

Richard was born in Milwaukee WI and raised in New Berlin WI. He attended the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee School of Engineering.

He joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Richard was assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment of the 32nd Division. He served as an Infantry Platoon Sergeant. His unit was mobilized five times for various riots and civil disturbances which occurred during his 6-year enlistment period.

Richard retired after 43 years in the printing industry and joined the Brookfield American Legion Post 449. He has been a member for 16 years and the Post Service Officer for 13 years. He also serves the Post in other capacities as Honor Guard Commander, Parliamentarian, Constitution and By-Law Committee Chairman, Database Coordinator and member of the Nomination Committee.

Richard has been happy to have been appointed as the 1st District Service Officer under Commanders Babb, Latimer and Stuvengen. He enjoys publishing the monthly updates and information regarding Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation for our District members who have shared their e-mail address with him.

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 each Post. These are totals as of March 25, 2021.

1. Walworth County (770) (goal) 709 (paid), 92.08%
 2. Rock County (811) 712, 87.79%
 3. Racine County (729) 625, 85.73%
 4. Waukesha County (2996) 2504, 85.14%
 5. Kenosha County (613) 519, 84.67%
- First District (5864) 5069, 86.44% (10th place in the Department)

Upcoming National target dates: 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
Frank Kresen Post 24, Lake Geneva

Wells – Davis – Young – Neal Post 209, Orfordville
Ralph Amundson Post 30, Edgerton
David Leet Post 552, Somers
Schultz – Hahn Post 293, Silver Lake

What's News?

1. **First District Spring Conference** – The First District Spring Conference will be held on Sunday, May 2, 2021. The conference will be hosted by Ingalls – Koeppen Post 102, Walworth, and will take place at the Abbey Springs Country Club, 1 Country Club Dr., Fontana. Registration will begin at 8:00 AM, church services at 8:30 AM and Call to Order at 9:00 AM. **Registration is \$15 in advance and \$20 on the day of the event.** Mail registrations and number of attendees to: **Post 102, PO Box 457, Walworth, WI 53184.** For questions contact **Peter Kahl, 262-275-5161.** Please

bring a bottle for the District Bottle Raffle. A Post Ever-lasting memorial service will be conducted prior to lunch. Delegates should bring the names of those members who have passed away since the 2020 Fall Conference. Scheduled to appear are: Department Commander David Wischer, Department Vice Commander Ray Pasbrig, SAL Detachment Commander Bob Sirovina, 1st District ALA President Lylette Smith, and Wisconsin's candidate for National Commander, PDC Dan Seehafer. There will also be a special guest appearance by Department Oratorical Champion Braiya Nolan, who will deliver her winning oration one final time, before heading to Yale University this fall. Delegates will also hear reports from the various standing committee chairs, which will provide updates on American Legion programs and other Department and District Activities. National Convention delegates will be selected at this conference. Locations and hosts will be determined for the 2022 District Oratorical Contest, and the 2022 Spring Conference. If your Post desires to host a District event, be prepared to submit a bid when asked. Brochures are available, if a Post wishes to see what is involved in hosting a District event. Contact District Commander Stuvengen if you would like one.

2. **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. For more information including registration forms and class schedules, click [HERE](#).
3. **Moving Wall coming to Waukesha** – *The Moving Wall* is scheduled to visit the City of Waukesha at Frame Park, May 27 through 6:00 am June 1, 2021. *The Moving Wall* is a half-sized replica of the Washington DC Vietnam Veterans Memorial. An Opening Ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, May 27 at 6:00 pm. During the ceremony, the names of our Brothers lost from the City of Waukesha will be read aloud. Family members of the Waukesha Servicemen will be recognized if they so choose. For more information click [HERE](#).
4. **National announces 100 Miles for Hope** - The second annual American Legion 100 Miles for Hope kicks off April 1 and runs through Sept. 6. The challenge encourages American Legion Family members and friends to regularly engage in wellness and fitness activities of at least 30 minutes in length. All proceeds from registrations, donations and purchases of gear at Emblem Sales go toward [The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation](#). For more information click [HERE](#).
5. **Save Lives Act signed into law** - President Joe Biden recently signed into law a sweeping new measure that supercharges the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#)' ability to vaccinate millions of Americans against the COVID-19 virus.

The *Save Lives Act* will allow the VA to vaccinate all veterans, veteran spouses, caregivers and Civilian Health and Medical Program recipients, regardless of their VA eligibility. However, patients enrolled in VA care will get priority. About half of all 18 million living U.S. veterans are enrolled in VA care, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. "This new law expands options for where veterans and their families can receive the COVID-19 vaccine, ensuring that every veteran, spouse, and caregiver will have access to the protection they need from VA," Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee said in a statement. "This bipartisan bill follows through on our shared goal of getting more shots into the arms of as many veterans as possible." As of mid-March, the VA has fully vaccinated more than 1.5 million people, including veterans and employees. Previously, only veterans enrolled in VA could get vaccinated.

The bill's signing comes during a massive concerted effort from the Biden administration to give vaccine access to as many Americans as possible, with the goal of the country starting to return to relative normalcy by Independence Day. "COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on all Americans including veterans and their families," Veterans of Foreign Wars National Legislative Director Pat Murray said in a statement. "The end may be near, but we will not come out of this until everybody possible has vaccinations."

- 6. DAV in need of volunteer drivers** – Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity helping veterans? Our brothers and sisters of the DAV are looking for drivers to transport veterans to appointments at the Milwaukee VAMC. Drivers must pass a physical provided by the VA Medical Center and have valid car insurance. Pick-up ambulatory patients and drop them off at the VA Medical Center. Take them home after appointment is completed. Knowledge of city streets preferred but not required. Counties serviced include Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Washington, and Waukesha. Hours of service are 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Volunteers are encouraged to volunteer as little or as much as they desire. We offer flexible schedules and have a team ready to assist if additional needs arise. Our dedicated volunteers come from all walks of life but all of them have one goal in mind, and that is serving veterans. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact Linda Pfeiffer at 262.784.2807 or Patty Davis (DAV Transportation Coordinator) at 414.384.2000, ext. 45715. We look forward to working with you!
- 7. Selective Service System in need of help** - The Selective Service System (SSS) is seeking volunteer Local Board Members to fill an important community role connected with our nation's defense. In the event of a draft, approximately 2,000 Selective Service local boards would decide which registrants in their communities receive deferments, postponements, and/or exemptions based upon established criteria. Several Wisconsin Legionnaires have already stepped up and volunteered, but there are still many vacancies around the state. To meet the minimum requirements for serving as a Local Board Member, you must be at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen who registered with Selective Service. Further, you must not work in law enforcement (e.g., police officer or judge), must not be an active or retired career member of the Armed Forces, Reserves, and/or National Guard, and must not have been convicted of any criminal offense. To apply, fill out a volunteer application online (<https://www.sss.gov/volunteers/>) and (after some processing) you will be contacted.
- 8. 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.
- 9. 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.
- 10. 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.

11. **News from the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King** – Are you a hospitalized veteran? A spouse of a veteran? A widow of a veteran? Or a Gold Star parent? Call the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King as we have beds available and would be happy to assist you! Please call 715-258-5586 and ask for the Admissions Department.
12. **US Department of Veterans Affairs publishes list of discounts** - This [LIST](#) of Veteran and military discounts is good all year round and will be updated as we learn of more benefits. These discounts are being shared so that Veterans, military members, their families, caregivers and survivors are aware of all resources available to them. (**The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products and services on part of VA. Verify information with the organization offering.*)
13. **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. County Commanders will be tracking this progress and will be contacting Posts to urge submission. **Deadline for submission to Department is June 1.** If you have any questions or need assistance, contact Commander Stuvengen.

New myLegion.org roll-out April 1 – A newly designed myLegion.org and mySAL.org will go live on April 1. There are many new features available for Post, County and District officers. National provided training on the new changes on March 30, and a recording of that training is available [HERE](#). Post Membership Chairs/Adjutants/Commanders are urged to review this training. While much has changed about this important tool, it will be quite a bit easier to use in the long run. Contact Chris at Department HQ or the National staff at myLegion@legion.org or 833-253-9995 with questions or to get more information.

Legion Baseball Registration - Registration for the 2021 Legion Baseball Season is now open and closes May 15, 2021. Go to <https://wilegion.org/legion-baseball/> for more information.

Veteran Golfers Association - The VGA is dedicated to enriching the lives of Veterans and their family members through the camaraderie and sportsmanship of golf. Annually, the VGA hosts more than 450 local tournaments across the country, culminating in a VGA National Championship each fall. For more information and to see a list of Wisconsin tournaments, click [HERE](#).

It's Awards Season - Each year Posts, Counties and Districts have the opportunity to recognize individuals, within the organization and outside the organization, who are working on behalf of Wisconsin's Veterans. This is also an opportunity to show the Department what your Post is doing in the way of Legion programs. All award forms and criteria can be found at wilegion.org.

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.

Dues and the 21st Century – Electronic dues payments, automatic dues payments, and electronic transfer of your Post transmittal to HQ are the modern way to process dues. 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. You will receive your membership card in the mail in a few days. Contact Chris at Department HQ for more information.

14. What's happening around the First District

Congratulations and Thank You to **Ron Buttchen** for stepping up to take command of McKinney – Hatlevig Post 35 in Evansville after the death of Post Commander David Burrow. Feel free to contact me or Rock County Commander Jeff Johnson, if we can be of any assistance.

First District Commander Karl Stuvengen presents a 60-year continuous membership citation to Past Rock County Commander Harry Crusan at the 2021 Post 440 Birthday Dinner.



(Photo courtesy of Post 440)

First District Vice Commander and Racine County Commander Candace Rothering presents a 60-year continuous membership citation to Pete Christofferson at the 2021 Post 494 Birthday Dinner.



(Photo courtesy of Post 494)

15. **Calling all Junior Auxiliary Members** - The Department Junior Spring Conference is scheduled for Saturday June 12, 2021 in Oshkosh. This is a great opportunity for our Junior Members to meet and make friends from across the state. The Juniors will elect their Honorary Officers for the next year. Junior events are so important as they develop these young members into the future leaders of the Senior Auxiliary.
16. **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 make right the master of might ... Many wars have been started by dictators who wanted their might to be the right. If human freedom is not to perish from the earth, right must always be master of might. The rights of small nations must be protected against the tyranny that powerful neighbors may seek to impose on them, just as the rights of minorities in our society must be protected and respected. Legionnaires are pledged by this clause always to stand with the right, protect the weak and preserve the liberties of the individual. This concept is the basis of The American Legion's continued advocacy of a strong national preparedness so as to achieve the ideal situation that right will be backed by adequate might.



Until next time, **recruit, retain and engage**. I hope to see everyone at the Spring Conference.

Go recruit the next YOU!