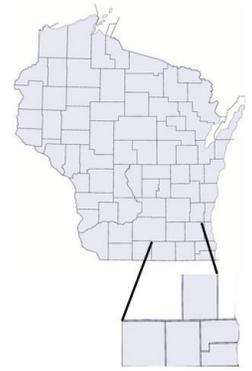




Wisconsin American Legion First District



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

March 2022

Greetings, American Legion Family!

BLUF – March in Wisconsin! Things are starting to thaw, and we are seeing grass again. It appears that March is coming in like a lamb this year, so the end of the month may get a little sketchy, as spring in Wisconsin is wont to do.

As I attend Post and County meetings, I am hearing about all of the great things that 1st District Posts are doing. We are starting to move into the spring and summer program season, and it's an exciting time. Make sure you are tracking all of these activities, as the report season is fast approaching, and you will want to tell your stories.

Badger Boys State is finally emerging from a two-year hiatus. As you know, this year's program is taking place at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, and looks to be a wonderful opportunity for our youth to learn about our government. We are currently surveying District Posts to determine the feasibility of having a bus to transport the students from the District to Eau Claire. District Chair Michelle Adams is collecting information on that, and she needs your input. If your students express an interest in this type of transportation, please let her know, as we need at least 50 students willing to ride the bus to and from the campus to justify the cost. The District is in a position to cover the costs on this, but would certainly take any monetary help from the Posts and Counties that is offered.

The Department Oratorical contest was held on February 12, 2022 at Ripon College. Our 1st District contestant, Marshall Griffin from Elkhorn, placed third. As is always the case, competition was stiff. Congratulations to Marshall for a fine effort, and good luck in your future endeavors. Once again, I want to recognize District Chair Lisa Fauster for all of her hard work in making the District contest a success again this year.

On to membership. The District is not quite where I would like to see it in terms of renewals, at this point. We are over 300 members behind where we were last year. To that end, I have furnished your County Commander with a list for your Post of lapsed members for the last two years. Most Posts, if they renew those members will be at or very near 100% for this year. I have also provided a 2930 list for each County. If you have not yet seen that list, contact your County Commander and have it sent to you. Please contact your members and ask them to support your Post in the great work you are doing. I wish it wasn't all about the numbers, but in most cases, that is how we show our strength. When we approach Congress or the Legislature with Veterans concerns, the stronger we are, the more likely we are to effect legislation that is beneficial to Veterans. Numbers speak loudly, and we have already seen how our shrinking membership is affecting our ability to successfully lobby our elected representatives on Veterans' issues. This month also kicks off the *March Madness* membership drive in the Department. Buddy Checks, new member sign-ups, renewals, and 2930 transfers will all count as points for the Posts in this contest. The winning Posts will receive \$300, the winning Counties will receive \$200 and the winning District \$100. This is real money that you can use for just about any purpose to benefit your Post. Contact your members today, and urge them to return to the family. There is something for everyone in The American Legion, we just need to find out what that something is. So, let's get after it, and show the Department how it's done! **GO RECRUIT**

THE NEXT YOU!!



Commander
Karl Stuvengen
orfywi@gmail.com
608-295-5959

1st Vice Commander
Nathan Bond
nmorganbond@gmail.com
262-215-3481
Waukesha, Rock Counties

2nd Vice Commander
Candace Rothering
rothering.candace@yahoo.com
262-676-9568
Racine, Walworth Counties

3rd Vice Commander
Tom Visintainer, Sr.
county_commander@sewivets.org
262-620-5646
Kenosha County

Lastly, I want to remind everyone of the upcoming District Spring Conference, set to occur on Sunday, May 1st in Kenosha. This is an election year, so it is vitally important that your Post send a full complement of delegates to this meeting. This is your opportunity to set the tone and direction for the 1st District for the next two years. Don't let it pass you by!

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 the totals as of February 24, 2022.

1. Kenosha County (545) (goal) 498 (paid), 91.38%
 2. Walworth County (753) 670, 88.98%
 3. Rock County (758) 645, 85.09%
 4. Racine County (691) 564, 81.62%
 5. Waukesha County (2765) 2225, 80.47%
- First District (5512) 4602, 83.49% (8th place in the Department)

2022 National Targets: 90% – 3/9/2022; 4/13/2022 – 95%; 5/11/2022 – 100%

2022 100% POSTS

Ingalls – Koeppen Post 102, Walworth
Ralph Amundson Post 30, Edgerton
Kelly – Gardner – Katzman – Stoflet Post 45, Elkhorn

What's News?

1. **Badger Boys State** – District Chair Michelle Adams reports: This year for Badger Boys State, we are considering bus transportation. Please reach out to your respective Posts to find out how many boys would be interested. They must commit to traveling to and from the event via bus travel. Our preliminary quote, given 50 filled seats, would cost \$54 per person, round trip. Please report your findings to me as soon as possible. There are currently two quotes from bus companies in the District to provide this service. The most important factor in arranging this transportation is the number of riders that commit to taking the bus. Please discuss this option with your students and pass that information on to me. The District, Counties and Posts are willing to cover the cost, so that students can participate without undue financial obligations. However, without a full bus, we will not be able to justify the expense. For more information contact Chair Adams at liberty1776george@gmail.com or 414-975-6914.
2. **1st District Spring Conference** – The 1st District Spring Conference will be held on Sunday, May 1, 2022, hosted by Paul Herrick Post 21, 504 58th Street, Kenosha, WI 53140. Registration will begin at 8 AM, Church Service at 8:30 AM, Call to Order at 9 AM. District Adjutant Ken Zilisch is currently sending each Post a written invitation, containing each Post's allotted delegate strength. Each Post is entitled to have as many delegates and alternates as were allotted for the 2021 Department Convention, which was based on total paid membership as of June 15, 2021. Posts are welcome to send as many attendees as they like, however, only delegates will be allowed to vote. All attendees must register with Post 21 prior to the event. Registration is \$20 per attendee, and can be paid by check, sent to the above address, or can be paid on-line [here](#). You may also scan the QR code to the right, on your smart phone to be taken to the registration site.
3. **Calling All First District Legionnaires** – This is your biennial notice that in two short months, it will be time for the Spring Conference, and with it, election of officers. The District will elect one District Commander, three Vice Commanders, one Finance Officer and two Sergeants-at-Arms. Nominations and elections for all District offices will take place during the afternoon session. Art. IV, Sec. 3 of the District By-laws reads in part: *The District Commander shall call for nominations,*



*beginning with the office of District Commander. Nominating speeches for all officers shall be limited to two minutes and the seconding for all officers shall come from the floor. Any Legionnaire who holds a current (2022) membership in a First District Post is eligible to be elected to a District Office. There is no automatic succession, meaning persons are required to be nominated and elected for all offices. Contact District Commander Stuvengen or District Judge Advocate Ted DeMicchi for more information about the process or the duties and responsibilities of the various elective offices. ***A Note to Candidates*** – I will publish in the April newsletter brief (Name, Post, Position Sought) announcements for any 1st District Legionnaire who wishes to run for a District Office for 2022 – 2024. E-mail your information no later than March 29, 2022 to orfywi@gmail.com.*

- 4. District Chaplain** - Chaplain David West has resigned his position, effective February 11, 2022, due to health and personal reasons. Thank you, David, for your service to the First District and the Wisconsin American Legion.

I have appointed Past Department Chaplain Julia Atkinson of Sussex Post 495 to fill the remaining portion of his term. She has accepted this appointment. Chaplain Julia's contact information is:

Julia Atkinson
W152N8707 Margaret Rd.
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051
(262)993-1230
julia@britproductions.com

Welcome aboard, Chaplain, we look forward to your guidance and mentorship!

- 5. From Wisconsin AL Baseball Commissioner Roger Mathison** – It's time to think about the 2022 and 2023 seasons of American Legion Baseball!

2022 is going to be an exciting year for The American Legion in Wisconsin, hosting the National Convention in Milwaukee. This will be a chance to highlight our state to the rest of the members of The American Legion Family. For American Legion Baseball, we are looking for a return of a normal baseball season in Wisconsin, and while we have just begun our registration process for this season, we already have 12 new teams that joined us this year.

We will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of our Wisconsin American Legion Baseball All-Star Game. The All-Star Weekend will begin with a Banquet on August 6th at the Brookfield Sheraton and National Commander Paul Dillard (TX) will be a speaker for the event. The All-Star Game itself will be played on Sunday, August 7th following the Brewers game vs the Reds. We are looking to make this year's celebration the best one yet and we are looking for ideas from you.

PNC Denise Rohan has compiled a listing of all the past participants in the All-Star Game by the locale they represented. (**Sent with the newsletter**) We need help from you to spread the word to these All-Stars to join us this year. After 50 years we do not have contact info for the players and we would like to honor them in some way. Please check the list and see who is in your area. On the Department website there is an 'Alumni Contact' tab on the baseball page to supply info on past All-Star players and coaches. You can also access by <https://bit.ly/allstaralumni>.

We are looking at ideas to enhance the celebration this year and if you have ideas, please forward them to us. One thought has been to have a tailgate party prior to the Brewers game that day in the parking lot. We are looking at the cost, but we would like to know if fans from your area would be likely to attend.

As you are aware, we are planning to offer an **American Legion Softball program** in Wisconsin for the 2023 season. This would be a Department-administered program mirroring that of American Legion Baseball and would be governed by a sub-committee of the Baseball Association. The softball committee would report to the Americanism Committee as part of the Baseball Association report. It would be played under high school rules for those softball players under the age of 19, as is American Legion Baseball, and with the same requirements for

background checks and abuse training for coaches and managers to comply with Federal law concerning contact with minors. Program Coordinator Jen Swenson has developed a Softball page on the Department website with more information and a page for contact information for those interested in being a part of the program. Once the sub-committee is in place, we would then be able to move forward with program development with an updated report at Convention. We have had interest from some who wish to become part of the committee, and we are asking for input from you for qualified individuals from your area with high school softball experience and good organizing skills who would be good candidates for committee membership. These committee members do not have to be members of the American Legion or even veterans. Ideally committee membership would be geographically diverse.

We represented The American Legion recently at the high school baseball coach's clinic and annual meeting and the interest for baseball and softball was exciting!

Thank you for your support of The American Legion Baseball Program and we look forward to your support for The American Legion Softball program.

6. News from the US Department of Veterans Affairs – The following articles were recently published by the US DVA:

- **Free Resources to Help Veterans, Military Spouses Find Jobs** – AARP's new job center includes a suite of resources to help Veterans and military spouses find jobs, explore new career fields, get advice, take a job training course and more. Learn more [here](#).
- **Lower Your Mortgage Payments with VA** – Do you have a VA-backed home loan and want to reduce your monthly mortgage payments? An interest rate reduction refinance loan (IRRRL) lets you replace your current loan with a new one under different terms. [Find out if you're eligible and how to apply](#).
- **Donate Blood to Help Critical Shortage, Receive \$10 Amazon Gift Card** – The American Red Cross needs more people to donate blood to recover from its worst blood crisis in more than a decade. Donors are eligible to receive a \$10 Amazon gift card. Learn more [here](#).
- **Shop Big Game Savings at Your Local Commissary** – Your Commissary is here to help with everything from ingredients for those favorite recipes to party platters, plus special savings off already low prices. Veterans with a 0% or more disability rating are eligible to shop at defense commissaries worldwide. Learn more [here](#).
- **Recognize VA's Health Care Heroes** – Have you encountered a VA employee doing something noteworthy, in words or action, and making a positive difference to the Veterans we serve? If so, recognize these heroes by nominating them for an I CARE Award. Learn more [here](#).
- **Connect with Fellow Women Veterans, Learn About Available Veteran and Women-centered Health Care Resources** – It's never too late to enroll in VA health care services. If you're looking for women-centered health care, sign up for the VA Women's Health Reengagement Training (heaRT) to gain a better understanding of how VA can support your health care needs. Read more [here](#).

7. Military Paperwork – Do you know where all of the important documents are that relate to your military service? More importantly, do your family members know where these papers are? Veterans Service Officers often face the daunting task of locating a deceased veteran's DD-214 and other important documents to be able to provide burial benefits and other survivor's benefits for veterans and their families. In some cases, family members did not even know that a decedent had service in the military. At the very least, a veteran's DD-214 should be filed with the County Register of Deeds for safe keeping. Other important papers should be safely kept together in an

envelope or binder and plainly marked as to their contents. Veterans are urged to discuss these matters with family members ahead of time, so that earned benefits can be provided when the time comes. Contact your County Veterans Service office **today**, to find out what documents you should keep and have available to your survivors.

- 8. Dogs2Dogtags (D2DT)** – Dogs2DogTags (D2DT) is a Wisconsin-based non-profit which matches trained emotional support service dogs to Veterans experiencing post-combat stress or anxiety. There are no associated costs to the Veteran.

Dogs2Dogtags is committed to reducing the Veteran suicide rate ‘one dog at a time.’ As you’re aware, in the US we average 20+ daily veteran suicides and this number increased during the pandemic and after the troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. Our dogs provide Veterans a purpose and a loving companion dog who’ll provide unconditional and emotional support.

D2DT covers all expenses, the Veteran incurs no out-of-pocket expenses. This includes training & costs for the dog, Veteran’s travel, lodging and 7-10 days of personal training with their new best friend. We also cover the costs of a kennel, leashes, bowls, dog food for a year, veterinary medical expenses, along with canine monthly medication costs (i.e., flea/tick and heartworm) and immunizations for the life of the dog. We believe that no Veteran should be withheld an emotional support dog due to their financial situation.

For us to be successful in our mission, D2DT needs your assistance in spreading the word to Veterans and their families. We want to ensure that all Veterans are aware that trained emotional support dogs are available and that they also know about maintenance grants from Laika’s Fund, if they already have a support dog. This can be accomplished by having us speak to your membership about D2DT. You could also highlight our mission in your newsletter or on social media. Another idea is to invite us to your events such as brat fries and fun runs where we can set up our information and talk to attendees and they can meet one of our dogs.

If you want to learn more about our mission or would like us to speak to your group, please check out our Facebook page: [dogs2dogtags](#), our website: [dogs2dogtags.org](#) or email Director of Veteran Outreach Nancy Schnell Rivera at: nancy@d2dt.org.

Your support will help us get the word out to Veterans and their families in your community, provide trained support dogs to Veterans and ultimately, help reduce the number of Veteran suicides, ‘One Dog At A Time!’

- 9. Honoring Our PACT Act (H.R.3967)** – The *Honoring our PACT Act* is a comprehensive solution to provide access to VA health care and benefits to toxic-exposed veterans. This historic legislation would help millions of veterans by establishing a permanent presumptive framework to address any toxic exposure, foreign or domestic, past, present, and future. It would provide VA health care access for all veterans exposed to hazards, create a concession of exposure for airborne toxins, and establish a list of presumptive conditions associated with burn pits and other exposures. This legislation would help Post-9/11 veterans, K2 veterans, Atomic veterans, and Vietnam veterans, including those who served in Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. This bill was reported out of committee on 2/22/2022. Contact your representative and urge that they vote for this important legislation as soon as it comes to the House floor. Follow the bill [here](#).

10. Notes From The American Legion National Headquarters

- **GI Bill Pilot Program Protects Against Risky Schools** – A six-state pilot program to evaluate risk among schools that accept GI Bill education beneficiaries has “demonstrated that the bipartisan action taken to protect students and taxpayers can and does work. Read the report [here](#).
- **January 2022 Membership Impact Report** – Read the January Impact Report and download a copy to present at your Post meeting [here](#).

- **Legion Sponsoring Virtual Job Fair** – The American Legion is hosting a virtual career fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT on March 9, open to job seekers and employers worldwide. Read more and register [here](#).
- **Membership renewal postcard** – A membership renewal postcard for 2022 is available for posts to send out to non-renewals. It is to be used as another reminder to delinquent members' 2022 renewal notices. The renewal postcard is a fillable PDF that posts can customize. Download a copy [here](#).
- **Not just Walter Reed** – Read National Commander Paul Dillard's response to reports of horrible living conditions at Naval Support Activity Bethesda [here](#).

11. From Department Membership Committee Chair Jim Waltich – The *March Madness Event* will take place during the month of March in twelve team, four round brackets where Districts are matched against each other. No data and status will be released until the end of the month to encourage every Post, County, District, and Vice Commanders to work their hardest. The brackets allow for EVERY District to have the ability to win the whole thing. The event will consist of four parts:

- Number of Buddy Checks events conducted
- Membership renewals and new members signed up
- 2930 Transfers
- Number of membership events held throughout the District

Points will be assigned for the listed criteria. Prizes will include \$100 to the winning District, \$200 to the winning County and \$300 to the winning Post. Contact your District Commander for more details.

12. Notes from Wisconsin American Legion Headquarters

- **Post Mailings** – Get HQ updates here: <https://wilegion.org/headquarters-updates-news/>.
- **Wisconsin American Legion Baseball** – 2022 will be the 94th season for American Legion Baseball in Wisconsin. Registration will begin on January 1 with a deadline of May 15th. [Register Now!](#)

Over 220 teams have participated in Wisconsin American Legion Baseball in the past and we look forward to having new teams adding to those numbers in the upcoming season.

Teams can begin play as soon as registration is completed and WIAA rules allow and culminate with State Tournaments in 5 classes of competition.

- **Americanism and Government Scholarship Test** – Test will be live March 14 – 25, 2022. This program provides students with the opportunity to receive recognition and scholarship awards by testing their knowledge of current events, Wisconsin and United State Government and History, and display of the United States Flag. Students compete by taking an on-line test comprised of 50 multiple choice, true and false questions followed by an essay question of 300 words or less. The program is endorsed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and is open to any Wisconsin student in the 10th, 11th or 12th grade. Scholarships are:
 - 10th Grade- 11- \$250 Scholarships awarded
 - 11th Grade- 11- \$300 Scholarships awarded
 - 12th Grade- 11- \$750 Scholarships awarded

- **From the Department Membership Coordinator** – Chet Faith recently released the following information:
 - **Tan Renewal Notices:** Some Posts have been receiving tan renewal notices from 2930 members who have requested to transfer. When you receive these, the Post still

needs to call and verify that the member is still interested in transferring. There can be a big lag time between the time the member signed that and when you get them. Once you have spoken with the Legionnaire, you can simply email or send them via USPS to me and I will transfer the member. All of these members filled out the requests when they paid their 2022 dues, so you do not need to collect dues from them at this time.

- **Exclude members from renewal notices:** If you have Honorary Members or members who do not need to receive renewal notices, please fill out form 133.127 available [here](#). This form may be submitted anytime you need to change a member's mailing status.
- **April 1st Deadline:** As a reminder, National does their data pull on April 1st for the 2023 Membership cards and Green Bar Roster. Please use the *How to Guides* so you can get into myLegion.org and update your member's information before April 1st so it is correct for the 2023 membership year.
- **Charters:** We have been receiving numerous requests lately for copies of Post Charters. The only Charters we have are those that have been sent to us in the past, which isn't many. National doesn't have them either. We do have most of the applications for Charters which seems to meet the needs of the Posts' requests. Information will be provided soon on how Posts can order new wall Charters for their Post.
- **Kimberly – Clark's Salute** – The Wisconsin American Legion has partnered with Kimberly-Clark's *Salute*, to receive donations of goods to be given to Veterans and Active duty members in need. Volunteers in Milwaukee recently received donations including diapers, wipes, depends and other paper goods. They began the outreach to Veterans and Active duty members by donating diapers and wipes to the WING 128th Refueling Wing in Milwaukee.
- **Administrative Manual 2021-2022** – The Administrative Manual is completely on-line this year. All forms can be found on the website, can be saved to your computer and are fillable. The manual can be found and downloaded on the Headquarters website. Go to the "MEMBERS" dropdown option and select "RESOURCES & MANUALS". This manual will help you see what your Post/County/District should be working on each month.

If you wish to receive a printed copy at the cost of \$20.00 each, contact Department Headquarters at 608-745-1090.

- **Sign up for Department Headquarters Weekly Updates** – Go to the Department website and select "GET CONNECTED" from the dropdown menu, select "Contact Sign-Up" and fill out the form. Lots of great information is passed on each week to include important information for Post and veterans, event information, Legislative & VA Updates, and more. The updates are sent out weekly via email each Friday. ALL Legion Family members are encouraged to sign up for these updates, you do not have to hold a leadership position to receive them.
 - **Department Facebook Page** - PLEASE, we need to get our word out. Go to Facebook, search Wisconsin American Legion and like our page. When we post information, please SHARE it. WHY is this important? If you share it, 10 of your friends share it, and 10 of their friends share it and so on, soon 100s of people have seen it. For example, we had a Celebration of Freedom Post that had 52 shares and it reached 8800 people. Most of our posts average 4-5 shares and only reach about 500 people.
13. **Training Time-out** – The principles that we commonly refer to as the Four Pillars can trace their roots directly to our preamble. Over the course of the last year, we examined each clause of the Preamble. Now we will put those clauses to work. The second pillar is: **National Security**. This comes from the clauses: *To maintain law and order, To combat the autocracy of both the classes*

and the masses, and *To make right the master of might*. To those who have sworn with their lives to protect America against enemies near and far, national security is a deeply held value.

Strong National Defense

A strong, adequately funded U.S. military is essential for global peace and prosperity in the 21st century. As the world's sole superpower, the United States must be able to deter aggression while maintaining the ability to fight and win wars when necessary. Our adversaries should have no doubt about America's resolve and means to respond with overwhelming force when national interests are threatened. Today, however, with the United States facing mounting debt obligations and unprecedented deficit projections, the defense budget has become an easy target. Nevertheless, The American Legion opposes any further decreases in U.S. defense spending.

Military Quality of Life

Disabled military retirees have earned and deserve full concurrent receipt of their DoD retirement pay and their VA disability compensation, which come from separate budgets for separate purposes. Today, too many disabled military retirees are still forced to choose one or the other in what has become known as the "disabled veterans' tax." Military health-care programs must be fully funded without additional enrollment fees or co-payment increases for beneficiaries. TRICARE coverage should also be made permanent for members of the reserves. Servicemembers who sustain injuries or illnesses while on active duty must be given fair and timely discharge processing, and their transition to civilian life and/or VA health care made seamless. The American Legion strongly supports a continuum of care for disabled veterans after they return to civilian life. The Legion encourages swift and efficient action to integrate various federal departments, agencies and programs to improve the transition process and sustain the continuum of care.

14. What's happening around the First District

Mukwonago Post 375 and Mukwonago Lions Club compete in an annual fund-raising tournament to raise money for Camp American Legion

Bowling Fun



Raffle Prizes



(Photos courtesy of Post 375)

Homeless Veterans fund-raiser, sponsored by SAL Squadron 209, Orfordville, March 18 – 20, 2022. For more information and to donate, click [here](#).



(Graphic courtesy of Squadron 209)

Waukesha County Council Meat Raffle Fund-raiser

**AMERICAN LEGION POSTS OF
WAUKESHA COUNTY COUNCIL
"MEAT RAFFLE"
FUNDRAISER**

SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 2022 12NOON

**OKAUCHEE LEGION POST 399
N50 W34750 Wisconsin Ave – Okauchee, WI**

Contact Committee Members below for further information:

*Rollin - 920-318-1232
Treas - 262-490-0416*

*Data - 414-704-9820
Michall - 414-975-6914*



17 Meat Raffles and a

50/50 RAFFLE - TICKETS \$1.00 EACH OR 6 FOR \$5.00



Until next time, **recruit, retain and engage.**
Think Spring!

Go recruit the next YOU!