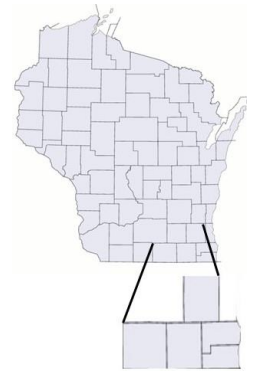




Wisconsin American Legion First District



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

Summer 2021

Greetings American Legion Family!

BLUF – July 1st and the beginning of the new membership year. I wish I had better news, but the District finished the 2021 year in 11th place, percentage-wise, and in 3rd place by actual number of members. Unfortunately, this also means that we added 668 veterans to the list of now over 56,000 First District veterans who DO NOT belong to the American Legion. I'd really hoped to stop our membership slide this year, but it was not to be. Hopefully, we can hit on the right formula to accomplish this goal next year. I'm open for suggestions from **anyone** as to how we can reverse this trend. Our organization depends on it. As I've share with you in the past, if there is to be an American Legion to carry us to our final resting place and offer the 3-volley salute, we simply must figure this out. I now have a pretty good idea of what doesn't work, so I'd love to hear your suggestions for what might work.

I am very pleased with our reporting for 2021. As of this writing, I am awaiting the final CPR report from one of our Posts, which will then put us at 100% reporting for the District. Thank you to the County Commanders for working with their Post Commanders and Adjutants to get this important information turned in to Headquarters. We also improved our C&Y and VA&R reporting this year. This will be one of my points of emphasis for the coming year. Until we can get National to include all 3 reports in one document, we will have to deal with 3 separate documents. I did get the Department to create a fillable PDF of the VA&R report, which means that now all 3 reports can be done on the computer and e-mailed right to Carol at HQ. I do know there were some issues with the CPR process through myLegion.org. I want to thank the Posts that ended up having to submit reports twice because of it, for getting those in. Hopefully, this resource will be fixed before the next reporting period, but I will make sure you all have copies of the fillable PDFs early on, just in case. As I suggested at last year's fall conference, Post Commanders should consider having one of their officers (maybe the 3rd Vice, etc.) be in charge of tracking activity for these reports throughout the year. This makes filling out the paperwork so much easier in the spring. Everything is already written down; it just needs to be totaled up and the blanks filled in.

I hope to see many of you at the upcoming summer Legion events. Department and National conventions offer you the opportunity to meet and interact with other veterans from around the state and the country. We can learn so much from each other, and just having the chance to commiserate with our fellow veterans can be invaluable. The First District Christmas in August family picnic looks to be a relaxing and fun event. It's open to any Legion family member in the First District, and I hope you can make it. See the flyer that came out with the newsletter for more information.

For all of those whom I miss this summer, I look forward to seeing you in September as we start our meeting cycle once again. District Conferences and County Councils are important information gathering events for Post officers. I hope to see as many of you as possible at these events throughout the coming year.

Have a safe, sane and enjoyable summer, and **GO RECRUIT THE NEXT YOU!**



Commander
Karl Stuvengen
orfywi@t6b.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

Introducing Sergeant – at – Arms Carl Bogar, Jr. – Carl Bogar, Jr. was born and raised in Chicago. He moved to Oldsmar, Florida in 1986. He graduated from Countryside High School in Clearwater, FL in 1988 and entered the United States Marine Corps.

As an infantry Marine, he found his MOS closed for re-enlistment in 1994, after just over six years of active service. Moving back to Illinois, he saw a sign stating that “sometimes Marines make better soldiers”, and enlisted in the United States Army Reserves as an instructor in the 84th Division. In 1997, he was assigned to teach MS102 at the United States Military Academy located at West Point, New York. In 1999, Carl transferred to the Wisconsin Army National Guard to attend OCS class 42. In May of 2000, he failed his commissioning physical, being declared physical unable to continue military service due to injuries and operations he had undergone in 1992. His service concluded with thirteen years of active duty and reserve service.

Carl is a graduate of Norwich University where he holds a Masters of Arts in Military History. He also holds undergraduate degrees in Marine Biology, Criminal Justice and History, and Certifications in Public History and Criminal Justice for Law Enforcement.

Carl worked for the Department of Workforce Development where he held the position of Lead Worker for Work Force Development Area One, (Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties.) for three years. Prior to that, Carl was the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) for Racine and Milwaukee from 2005 to 2010. In 2007, Carl was the recipient on The American Legion’s Veterans Employment award for his role as the Racine LVER.

In 2013, Carl retired from traditional employment to focus on the full time running of his business, *Historic Military Impressions*. He founded this business in May 2000 to provide educational supportive service “to honor the past by educating the future”. This is accomplished by building and staffing short term museum-quality exhibits that add value to public events like the Moving Vietnam Wall. In 2007, The United States Small Business Administration, (US SBA) named him the Veterans Business of the Year for Wisconsin, for his leadership in the development of the Racine/Kenosha Stand-down, then called Racine Project Reach-out. In 2013, the US SBA, named him the home-based business of the year for the five states that compose SBA Region Five for his traveling educational museum exhibits. Carl has provided exhibits for public events ranging from single day programs to six-month attractions like the Vietnam exhibit featured at the *Highgrounds Veterans Memorial*. In 2015, Carl bought *Kenosha Military Surplus* from Marine Corps veteran Michael Schumacher, and combined day-to-day operations for both businesses out of that location.

Carl was a member of United States Speaker of the House Paul Ryan’s Veteran and Small Business advisory boards. When Speaker Ryan retired, Carl was invited to continue in those roles for Congressman Bryan Steil.

Carl is a member of Paul Herrick Post 21 in Kenosha, where he has served as Vice Commander and Commander. He is currently Kenosha County 1st Vice Commander and in his first term as 1st District Sergeant – at – Arms. He is also a member of Squadron 21 of the Sons of the American Legion.

Carl has been married to his wife Susan for twenty-four years. They have two children, Elijah, 17, who is the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 21 commander, and Rachel, 10, who helps with war-gaming Saturdays. Carl and his family operate both businesses and have seen overwhelming growth the last eight years because his passion for history has become a family adventure.

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 final totals as of June 30, 2021.

1. Walworth County (770) (goal) 723 (paid), 93.90%
 2. Rock County (811) 726, 89.52%
 3. Racine County (729) 647, 88.75%
 4. Kenosha County (613) 537, 87.60%
 5. Waukesha County (2996) 2563, 87.15%
- First District (5864) 5196, 88.61% (11th place in the Department)

2021 100% POSTS

Ingalls – Koeppen Post 102, Walworth
Devins – Teehan – McGuire Post 237, Footville
Moser – Ortman 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
McKinney – Hatlevig Post 35, Evansville
Pewaukee Post 71, Pewaukee

What's News?

1. **102nd Annual Department Convention** – The Wisconsin American Legion announces that its 102nd annual Department Convention will take place July 14 – 18, 2021 at the Madison Marriot West, 1313 John Q. Hammons Dr., Middleton, WI 53562. All Posts recently received a packet containing all of the resolutions to be acted upon, and the Post's Delegate strength form was also included. REMINDER: You **do not** need to be a delegate or alternate to attend convention, ALL ARE WELCOME!

The Marriott has informed us they have a room for YOU! Department Convention is for ALL Legion Family Members, and is a great weekend to learn more about YOUR organization. You can be part of the change through the resolution process, voting on your new leadership, and learning how the organization works.

You will be entertained by dynamic speakers and recognition of those within the organization, and outside of the organization, who are impacting our Veterans, their families and their communities. Saturday Evening come join us for the band *West on 12*, led by Rocco of the Wisconsin National Guard.

2. **Camp American Legion Announces New Director** - James Klement will be taking over as the new Camp American Legion Director following Don Grundy's retirement. James is an experienced Operation Manager and Training Specialist with a demonstrated history of working in the military industry. He has 23 years of military experience as a human resource or operations team member. Welcome to the Team, James!
3. **PNC Denise H. Rohan Educator of the Year Award** – The Department of Wisconsin announces the winner of the 1st Annual PNC Denise H. Rohan Educator of the Year Award. This year's awardee is **Amy Adam** of the Coon Valley Elementary School in the Westby School District. Amy teaches 4K and has been the contact person for The American Legion Post 116 in organizing the Veterans Day observance in the school, as well as involving the Post in other activities throughout the school year. Amy graduated from Central high school in La Crosse, and attended UW La Crosse. She met her husband Al (a Legion Member) when he was stationed at Fort McCoy as a military policeman. Together they raised two sons. Several of her family members, including her husband, have served in the Military.

- 4. Predatory Claims Companies** - The American Legion and other Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) are quite concerned about the predatory behavior of for-profit companies offering their services to veterans. They give veterans the illusion that a paid service will yield better service and results, while most of these companies are not even able to file claims as they are not accredited; some are charging veterans as much as 10 percent of their compensation for the rest of their lives.

One example of a company that charges veterans for its services is *Veterans Disability Aid, Inc.* which states on its website: “Why rely on a Veterans Service Officer (VSO) who may not have your best interests in mind? Go with the professional advocates who are committed to you and have a vested interest in your success”.

These companies have been aggressively lobbying members of the U.S. Senate, and when VSOs address this issue, many senators don't understand the harm these companies are inflicting. **Veterans should not have to pay for what they have earned.**

- 5. Tips for Veterans before, during and after COVID-19 vaccination** - As of July 1, 2021, 3.3 million Veterans have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 through VA. We thank each of these Veterans for taking this important step to protect themselves, their families, and their communities. The VA has created an information clearinghouse to assist Veterans searching for follow-up care, updates on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, how to sign up, safety concerns and much more. View the entire clearinghouse [here](#) or call toll-free: **800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411)**.
- 6. Cost-free mental health care now available for Veterans** – The US Department of Veterans Affairs announces that any Veteran, regardless of discharge status, can receive cost-free mental health care at any Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic in the country. In a recent podcast episode of *Borne the Battle*, Army Veteran Dr. Anneke Vandenbroek, a board-certified clinical psychologist discusses changes in treating Veterans in times of COVID, cognitive behavioral therapy, and the importance of mental healthcare. The podcast can be viewed [here](#).
- 7. Wreaths Across America** – The *2021 Wreaths Across America* campaign announces the details for this year's program. Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at more than 2,100 locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad. This year's wreath-laying is on December 18, 2021.

To sponsor a wreath, means you'll honor an American hero at one of more than 2,100 locations nationwide. It's a day that's been set aside to lay wreaths at the places where we remember, honor and teach about our veterans: cemeteries, monuments, parks, 911 Memorial, Pearl Harbor. Anywhere we can pay tribute to the sacrifices of the many who served.

We can't do this without your support. Your sponsorship will ensure that a wreath is laid at each grave. The wreaths are hand-crafted of all-American balsam and hand-tied with a red velvet bow in Columbia Falls, Maine. From there, they are sent to participating locations, where a volunteer will place it on the marker of a fallen hero. That volunteer will then “say their name” to ensure that the legacy of duty, service and sacrifice of that veteran is never forgotten. It means you have the opportunity to join a grateful nation in saying “thank you” to our veterans.

The Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (SWVMC) located in Union Grove, WI is one of those locations and provides a final resting place for eligible veterans, spouses and dependents and creates a lasting memorial to their achievement and sacrifices. There are over 20,000 gravesites in Union Grove. In 2020 we raised nearly \$11,000 and covered 1,822 gravesites.

Contact Fund-raising Coordinator Mary-Ellen Crandall at dabs1951@yahoo.com or (262) 894-5420 for more information. Donations can be submitted until November 1, 2021.

8. Concurrent Receipt Legislation Again Introduced in Congress - Legislation to expand concurrent receipt has recently been introduced by Senator Jon Tester (MT) that extends concurrent receipt to Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP) retirees (20 or more years of service) rated less than 50 percent disabled. The *Retired Pay Restoration Act* (S. 1147) is similar to legislation (H.R. 303) introduced by Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL) with the same title. Earlier, Rep. Sanford Bishop (GA) introduced the *Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act* (H.R. 333) which is comprehensive concurrent receipt legislation that would also give concurrent receipt to CRDP retirees whose disability ratings are below 50 percent and Chapter 61 retirees with less than 20 years of service. In February Rep. Bilirakis and Sen. Tester introduced the *Major Richard Star Act* (H.R. 1282 /S. 344, respectively) that expands concurrent receipt to include Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) beneficiaries who are medically retired with less than 20 years of service. Legionnaires are strongly urged to contact their legislators to ask them to support these bills.

9. Three Agent Orange Presumptives Added - Three conditions will be added to the list of those presumptively associated with exposure to Agent Orange. Those conditions are bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism.

Vietnam War era Veterans and their survivors, who previously filed and were denied benefits for one of these three new presumptive conditions, will have their cases **automatically reviewed** without the need to refile a claim. For more information, click [here](#).

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. VA Cuts Claims Backlog - The number of backlogged veterans' disability claims has been cut by about 10 percent in recent weeks but likely won't return to pre-pandemic levels until late 2022, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officials acknowledged June 10, 2021. VA officials warned that number could grow again if Congress passes pending legislation granting new disability benefits to tens of thousands of veterans exposed to burn pits while serving overseas in the recent wars. As of this week, a little more than 191,000 disability claims were considered backlogged, meaning they have been pending for four months or more.

13. Veterans Suicide Continues to be a Plague – Military Times is reporting that a study has found that 4 times as many troops and vets have died by suicide as in combat. Read about it [here](#).

14. 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/>.

New myLegion.org roll-out – The new myLegion.org (aka Personify) continues to experience problems. National insists that these problems are being resolved, albeit, very slowly in many cases. We understand and appreciate your frustration with this new program. It is important for you to understand that the Department is in the same boat with you. We ask for your patience as we wait while National works the bugs out of their program. Please continue to encourage those experiencing problems to send information about the problem to cs2@legion.org.

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](#).

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.

Utility Assistance - With the Utility Disconnection Moratorium ending, here are some resources for those in need:

- Alert your CVSOs and work with partner agencies to help support those who are affected.
- WHEAP <http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov/>
- Heat for Heroes <https://heat4heroes.org/Apply-For-Assistance>
- <https://wiscap.org/wera/>

WI Veterans Museum to Re-Open to Public July 1 - Just in time for Independence Day, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum will re-open July 1 with enhanced exhibits and an increased focus on diversity and inclusion, accompanied by new branding and signage throughout the galleries.

3rd Annual Celebration of Freedom – The Wisconsin American Legion announces the *2021 Celebration of Freedom* event. This year's gala will be held on September 24 – 25, 2021, and will again take place at Department Headquarters at 2930 American Legion Dr., Portage. In the first 2 years, this statewide community event has raised over \$70,000 for Legion Wisconsin Programs. What can we do with \$70,000? It could sponsor over 140 Veterans to Camp, help thousands of Veterans and their families meet their financial needs during hard times, annually send 54 Legion All-Stars to play at Miller Park or send over 200 Boys to Badger Boys State to name a few.

This is a STATE-WIDE LEGION FAMILY community event that will feature New York's 9/11 Never Forget Mobile Exhibit, live entertainment, food and drink, obstacle course and more.

For more information and a schedule of events, click [here](#).

Work for the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs - The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has many exciting employment opportunities currently available. We are looking for talented individuals to join our team.

The Public Affairs team is looking for outgoing individuals to serve as the Department's [Tribal Liaison](#) and [Women Veterans Coordinator](#). The Veterans Benefits team is seeking a [Program and Policy Analyst](#).

Our Wisconsin Veterans Homes at Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove have positions that range from direct care staff such as nurses to employees who provide supportive services such as housekeeping, maintenance, food service, and groundskeepers.

Take a look at these and other opportunities for you to serve Wisconsin veterans. [Apply Today](#).

2022 Membership Cards Now Available – Membership cards have been distributed to your County Commanders and should be in the possession of Post Adjutants shortly. Additionally, a note from National states that PUFL cards normally sent to members at the end of June will be delayed until late July due to testing needs of the new computer system. Cards are not lost in the mail, just delayed.

A True American Golf Outing Fundraiser – Wisconsin's endorsed candidate for National Commander, Dan Seehafer is hosting a *Best Ball Scramble* at **9:00 AM on Saturday, July 24, 2021** at the Horicon Hills Golf Club, 3000 Main St., Horicon. Cost is \$75.00 per person, or \$20.00 per person, if you just want to participate in the post-tournament meal and raffles. For more information and to register contact Campaign Manager Julie Muhle at juneapost15@yahoo.com or 920-382-4028 or Dan Seehafer at danseehafer@gmail.com or 920-382-9655.

15. What's happening around the First District

Ralph Amundson Post 30 in Edgerton dedicated their Veterans Memorial this past Memorial Day. Attending the ceremony were Department Vice Commander Paul Beseler, District Commander Karl Stuvengen and Rock County Commander Jeff Johnson. The ceremony was well attended by the community. This is a nice addition to Edgerton's Central Park. A YouTube video of the ceremony can be seen [here](#).



(Photo courtesy of Post 30)

Harry Hauri, a 93-year-old, WWII veteran and member of Richard Ellis Post 205, Janesville, receives his high school diploma from Parkview School District Superintendent Steve Lutzke on May 29, 2021.



(Photo courtesy of Charly Studios)

District Commander Karl Stuvengen administers the oath of office to the new officers of Dary – Paulsen Post 440 Clinton.



(Photo courtesy of Post 440)

Past Detachment Commander Chris Sherman installs the officers of Community Squadron 375 of Mukwonago.



(Photo courtesy of Squadron 375)

- 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 safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy – On this ideal of safeguarding and transmitting the principles of justice, freedom and democracy, all of the youth programs of The American Legion are built. All Americans can be proud that in our international relations we have tried to live by the golden rule, the mark of justice. We have granted to others, as we prize it ourselves, the great boon of freedom. Through the Monroe Doctrine, we called a halt to foreign imperialism in the western hemisphere. We gave freedom to the Philippines. These principles are part of the American heritage. Legionnaires are pledged to protect and preserve that heritage.

Until next time, **recruit, retain and engage**. Have a great summer, everyone!

Go recruit the next YOU!