



# 10<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024



## PRAYER FROM DISTRICT CHAPLAIN

Heavenly Father  
Help all of us to stop and think about the true meaning of Christmas  
and help us all to be thankful for all that you give us each day

As we celebrate Advent may we find the anticipation for the true meaning of Christmas  
and as we prepare for our gathering of family and friends  
let's take a moment and think about our homeless veterans out in the cold  
and say a special prayer that he or she can find a warm place  
to get a piece of joy from all of us who are very fortunate to have a nice place to be warm

I want to wish all our district Members a Very Merry Christmas and A happy New Year

Jean Erlewine – 10<sup>th</sup> District Chaplain

## DISTRICT 10 AUXILIARY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Merry Christmas and many blessings to you!

As I reflect on 2024, I am so thankful for God, Country, and family. This includes my Legion Family. This past year I have traveled to unit meetings and various events. I have met many wonderful Auxiliary members and have learned how their unit works the ALA Mission. Thank-you all for your hospitality! Moving forward into 2025, I encourage you to keep the focus on enhancing the lives of our veterans, the military, and their families. You can do this by incorporating the ALA Programs into your unit plans. Try one new program or event next year! Keep moving forward!

Thanks for all you do to serve others!

Mary Townsend -10<sup>th</sup> District President – Department of Wisconsin  
(715) 234-5155 [getmet77@hotmail.com](mailto:getmet77@hotmail.com)

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

President Mary and I have received several messages from Andrea Stoltz, at Department Headquarters, regarding new membership submittals. Apparently, there have been numerous errors, most of which are simply oversight errors

- **Missing signatures of the new member**
- **missing signature of the Post Adjutant**
- **Missing Unit # and Location**
- **Missing Eligibility Information**

The Membership Application **MUST be filled out completely** and **signed by the new member** and the **Post Adjutant** AND **the appropriate dues amount must be submitted** or the application will be rejected and returned to the Unit. This causes undue stress and added work for Andrea.

**PLEASE!! Double check every new Membership Application to ensure every line has been filled out COMPLETELY before you send it to Andrea!**

**If you have any questions, or need help, please do not hesitate to contact me, I am here to help!**

**For God and County,  
Teresa Steinke, Tenth District, Department of Wisconsin Membership Chair**



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## LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERTS (GRASSROOTS)

One way to advocate for our veterans is through the Legion Action Alerts. They are currently asking members to contact your senators to support Senator Elizabeth Dole 21<sup>st</sup> Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act. This Act has passed in the House and is now in the Senate for consideration. The Dole Act is a comprehensive veteran’s package. That includes several important provisions, including support for home and community Based services, authority to award grants for mental health support to family caregivers, and Veteran directed care. The American Legion supports this legislation. To be a part of the Legion action alerts, go to <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative> and check out Grassroots Action Center and the Advocacy Toolkit.

Thank-you for advocating for our veterans!

## CASINO DAY AT CHIPPEWA VETS HOME

The Chippewa Veterans Home host a Casino Day event for the residents. The events featured Blackjack tables, Poker tables, Roulette, and Slot Machines etc. A fun day with snacks, cake, live music, prizes, and a photo booth. American Legion volunteers Included Harry Bauer, from Post 77 and Jerry Townsend from Post 98. Auxiliary volunteers included Nancy Randen – Chippewa Vets Home Representative and Mary Townsend – 10<sup>th</sup> District President.



Betty Dodge with her Christmas Cactus – from Barron Unit 212 – showing it to District President Mary when she visited her in Rice Lake.



## HIGHLIGHT OUR HERO’S

Missy Hildebrandt – Post 121 River Falls Missy served in the U.S. Army for 8 years as a Military Police Specialist. Missy was stationed at Fort Leavenworth, a maximum Military prison. She was also deployed to Bosnia for a Peace Keeping Mission. We salute Missy for her military service and commitment to her Post and Community.



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## HIGHLIGHT OUR HERO'S

**NAME: Richard Miller**  
**BRANCH OF SERVICE: Army**  
**RANK: LTC**

**PLACES SERVED:** Germany, Iraq, Fort McCoy, Fort Worth, Fort Riley, Afghanistan, Fort Sheridan, Fort Leavenworth and Korea. **LEGION POST:** American Legion Post 121, River Falls,

**TIME SERVED**  
30 years active-duty Army  
8 yrs Reserves  
1 yr National Guard

**MILITARY OCCUPATION:** Staff Officer and much, much more



Why did I join the service? Love of country, family tradition and adventure. I am retired but I still go out and do exercises as a nasty contractor.

I started my career in Fort Sill, Oklahoma for artillery training. Then to Germany, and the night I had staff duty, is when the Berlin Wall came down. Went back to Fort Sill and went into the Reserves and basically did operations for logistics experience. Went back on active duty and was sent to Fort McCoy to help Units deploy. Was then reassigned to Headquarters US Army Europe. Was assigned to Fort Worth as chief of operations. Was in Fort Riley for RTC training. Deployed to Iran and helped to develop a sharepoint for a lot of different tactical products for the division. Went to Afghanistan and started working with the Deputy Command for the police and had the responsibilities for patrol customs. From there went to Fort Sheridan and became a brigade staff officer. Then to Fort Leavenworth and was in charge of global simulation capabilities. From there went to Korea and was the exercise Chief for the eighth Army doing ransom exercises. From there I took a position as an exercise director back in Germany where I started my career and where I finished my career. I retired in 2022.

## 10<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT UNIT DUES

### Article III Sec. 1 of the 10<sup>th</sup> District ByLaws states:

That Units pay annual dues into the District Treasury to defray the District expenses, at the rate of \$15 (fifteen) per Unit. Such dues must be in the hands of the District Treasurer at least 30 (thirty) days before the Spring Conference. Members from Units not having dues paid will be denied the privilege of voting on District business.

Form is attached – must be paid by March 25, 2025 to be allowed voting at the Spring Conference and if not paid by June will have no vote at Department Convention in July 2025.



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## DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN TRUNK OR TREAT

Department Legion Commander Jim Johnson (The Brawny Man) left is pictured with Barron County Commander Jerry Townsend (center) and 10<sup>th</sup> District President Mary Townsend (right) at Department of Wisconsin Headquarters for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Trunk or Treat event. Many families braved the cold windy evening and enjoyed treats and S'mores. District President decorated their car as the "Cookie Monster".

2<sup>nd</sup> picture is Commander Jim, Secretary Bonnie and Bookkeeper Linda at the Trunk and Treat

3<sup>rd</sup> picture is Adjutant Julie at the Trunk and Treat



## POPPY ORDERS DUE DECEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>

This is a friendly reminder that poppy orders are due by December 15<sup>th</sup> ([Poppy Order Form](#)). Orders received after that date will incur an additional \$25-\$50 processing fee, depending on the size of the order.

The purpose of the processing fee is to ensure Department has enough poppy kits on hand to fill all the orders and/or allow time to order additional kits if necessary. Unfortunately, Emblem Sales increased the price of poppy kits (again!) and that increase has to be passed along to keep the Poppy Shop solvent.

We appreciate your understanding and suggest you submit your poppy order ASAP if you have not already done so. Please share this message with any Legion Family member who may be interested in purchasing poppies.

Thank you! Bonnie Dorniak, Executive Secretary-Treasurer/Executive Director

## DISTRICT MEMBER YVONNE HILL FEATURED IN HIKING THE ICE AGE TRAIL

A tribute to all Trailside businesses: Here is Yvonne at her wonderful Village Grocery in Haugen, Wisconsin. She has been welcoming Hikers for years. She's holding a trail coffee book that features a two-page spread on her. Well-deserved. Hats off to author Cameron Gillie for his "Around Wisco: Hiking the Ice Age Trail." Thank you Yvonne and all the trail friendly business folk who treat us so well.





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## HELPING HURRICANE VICTIMS - CUMBERLAND UNIT #98 AUXILIARY

Members participated in the “Farmers Helping Framers” event in Barron County. They donated needed Supplies to hurricane victims. Items included paper goods, baby supplies, pet supplies, food, and farm supplies. The approximate value was \$700.00.



## RIVER FALLS UNIT 121 – 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL VETERANS’ BREAKFAST

Sunday, November 10, was the 2nd Annual Veterans' Breakfast held at the River Falls Am Legion Hall. This event is open to the public and all veterans & their families are welcome. This event is put on by the Post Honor Guard and the local Travis Manion Foundation Pathfinders Youth Club. Mel Hoffman, retired Army Sergeant Major is the Honor Guard Commander and the Mentor to the Pathfinders. I was there as the Unit President to greet and answer questions about the ALA. It was such a wonderful event. We arranged for several of the young people to interview our veteran guests about their time in the military - it touched my heart to see the generations mingling, talking and laughing together! I was very proud of my Special Veteran, hubby Troy Singletary, as he greeted people and helped with sampling the pancakes! I spoke with several people about joining the ALA and made a couple of key community contacts. Thank you to everyone involved; makes me proud to belong to the American Legion Family!



## MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

The American Legion Auxiliary will be holding a session at the Legion Mid-Winter Conference in Appleton January 18, 2025. You must register with the Legion (Form attached). Legion Mid-Winter January 16-19, 2025

**9:00am – 12:00pm** Leadership & Report Writing Workshop - Junior Activities Patch Program - ALA Badger Girls State Presentation

**1:30pm – 3:00pm** Veterans Needs Collection – Socks, Shampoo, Toothpaste, Alcohol-Free Mouthwash, Body Wash and Lotions (large sizes) - Valentine’s Card Service Project - Legislative & Strategic Planning

**3:30pm – 4:30pm** UW MIA Recovery & Identification Project – special Guest Speaker and Presentation



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## INDEPENDENCE AUXILIARY UNIT 186 CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

One hundred years ago in 1924 The Independence Wisconsin American Legion Auxiliary Unit 186 became a charter member. The first officers were. President Ava (Frank) Tubbs, Vice President Agetha (Albert) Marsolek, Secretary Irene (Sydney) Briggs and Treasure Monica (L.F.) Tubbs. Going through old member roster's, minutes from meetings, and notes on just about everything we were able to find 380 former members. 179 are buried at SS Peter and Paul cemetery, 19 are buried at Bethel cemetery, 23 are buried at Greenwood cemetery and the remainder members who have passed are buried throughout the United States.

As a giving organization we've decided it's time to recognize these great ladies with a bronze grave marker similar to those placed on our veteran graves. Placement of markers, in our local cemetery's, will start with the most current then systematically go back to all those who have been identified as members. Why you wonder recognize these women? One answer ... unselfish generosity. During the hard years of the depression, they contributed to the school milk program for children in need along with food baskets and clothing drives for needed families.

The war years brought purchasing War Bonds to support our troops. Donations of supplies for the brave souls in the Veterans hospitals at Wood, King, Madison, Tomah, and our local hospital in Whitehall WI. They have supported: The State Rehabilitation Fund, Child Welfare Fund, Easter Seals, The Red Cross, Gifts for Yanks Blood Drive, The Salvation Army and the U.S.O.

As The American Legion Auxiliary *this is what we do* and in 2024 100 years after our mentors started this organization, we continue to support the Badger Girl State, the Veterans Poppy Drive, our community, our schools, our veterans, area nursing homes and the needs of others along with supporting the State Veterans Home in Chippewa Falls. With the grave markers costing more than \$50.00 each we have indeed taken on an ambitious project. But with a plan and positivity all our goals have become attainable. Thanks to all the kindness and support of our Auxiliary families and our community our grave marker placement has now begun.

On September 4th prior to the regular monthly meeting Auxiliary members placed 20 Auxiliary markers on grave sites at SS Peter & Paul and Greenwood cemeteries. Our current President Debra Kampa placed the first marker on the grave of Agatha Benigna Marsolek (Mrs. D.A.), our organization's first Vice President. At the present time we have reached 50% funding of are goal of 222 markers.

Pictured members Joan Sosalla, Joan Gunderson (Historian), Jane Matchey, Barb Sylla (Secretary), Rita Olson, Charlotte Gamroth (Vice President), Kathy Smieja, Debra Kampa (President) and Doris Mish. Not pictured Becky Thomas.



### Meaning of the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution

**For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes ...**

The American Legion recognizes the influence of Almighty God in all worthwhile endeavors and declares the allegiance of Legionnaires to both God and nation.



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## MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

First of all, I want to say “Wow, where has this year gone?” I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving Day, filled with a thankful spirit for all of the blessings that God has bestowed upon each of us here, simply by being citizens of this great country! The membership is fast coming to an end, which means we need to pick up the pace on getting our memberships sent in before they lapse. There is still time to get those memberships in before the final “Checking Your Pulse” award—but do not procrastinate! That final drawing will be on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Your memberships must be received by Department prior to that date so you will be included!

Congratulations to the following units, who have attained membership of 100% or more, and who have submitted your Officer form: Spring Valley, Hammond and Eleva. You will be entered into the drawing for the \$100 Checking Your Pulse Award—and also will receive two entries for the Pulsation Pass award for the 2025 Department Convention!!

New Auburn also has 100% membership, but needs to submit their Officers form to get into each of the drawings as well.

There are several units in our district who only need a few more paid members in order to qualify. Please remind your members to pay their dues now, so you do not miss these opportunities! Also, it has come to my attention that some of the units are holding the dues to submit them all together—PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS! Send those dues into Department as soon as you receive them from the member. The money for those dues was paid to you, with the full expectation that you would be sending the money to Department immediately, so please get the dues sent to Department as you receive them.

If you have any questions regarding membership, how to pay the dues online or by phone, who qualifies to become a member, or any other questions regarding membership, please contact me—I am here to help you find the answers that you need!

For God and Country,  
Teresa Steinke, Tenth District, Department of Wisconsin Membership Chair

## DISTRICT PRESIDENTS VISIT TO ETTRICK UNIT 354

The Ettrick Unit #354 invited Teresa Isensee, Department of Wisconsin Leadership Chairman and Mary Townsend-10<sup>th</sup> District President to a Unit leadership meeting & Unit Meeting on Wednesday November 13. District President Mary is pictured with the Junior and Senior members. Thank you, Unit President Laura Nordie, and members for your hospitality



## MEANING OF THE PREAMBLE TO THE AMERICAN LEGION CONSTITUTION

### To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America

The Constitution of the United States is the written bulwark of our free way of life and representative government. It is our guarantee of liberty, freedom, justice and democracy. Members of The American Legion bore arms and went to war to defend and uphold this document of freedom.



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## MESSAGE FROM AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN

What is the first thing that comes into your mind when you hear the word “Americanism”? For me, it is an unwavering devotion to our nation, the love of America, loyalty to her institutions, implemented by man to secure life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and the willingness to defend our country and flag against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Why is Americanism important to the American Legion Auxiliary? Well, it IS one of the Four Pillars of the American Legion; therefore, the American Legion Auxiliary regards as a fundamental cornerstone of our organization as well. We understand that freedom is not free, it has come at a cost—and we need to honor the service and sacrifice of the men and women who fought for our freedoms. We honor them by teaching our youth the importance of Americanism.

What are you doing to promote Americanism in your community? I hope that you are promoting the Americanism Essay Contest in your schools. Sadly, Americanism among our youth and young adults has declined rapidly over the last couple of decades. We need to get into our schools and really teach our children about the importance of Americanism. This is one way to accomplish that goal. Also, ask your elementary school principal and/or teachers if your Auxiliary can do a skit on the proper flag etiquette. The students will love it, and you can have a profound affect by teaching them the importance of proper flag etiquette. It is also very important to work with your American Legion Post to promote the Oratorical Contest. Do you realize the first place winner on the National level wins a scholarship of \$25,000? Why are we not promoting this adequately so that we have students competing in every school district?

There are so many additional ways in which you would be able to promote Americanism. I hope that you are all participating in and promoting every patriotic celebration/program in your community: Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Patriots Day, POW/MIA Recognition Day, Veteran's Day. If your community does not currently have some of these programs, why not organize one? If not you, then who? If not now, then when? It truly is not as daunting as it may seem. Form a committee, google ideas, and get it started. If you do start one of these programs, don't forget to promote it—and report it! I would love to give you the recognition for all that you do to promote Americanism in your community.

Please make sure you are reporting all of your Americanism activities, so I will be able to recognize our outstanding participants in the area of Americanism. As always, if you have any questions, or need ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me, I am here to help!

For God and County,  
Teresa Steinke, Tenth District, Department of Wisconsin Americanism Chair.

## UP COMING EVENTS

December 6, 2024	Santa and Mrs. Claus and cookie decorating at the Brackett Legion Post
December 14, 2024	Wreaths Across America
December 15, 2024	Cribbage Tournament – Brackett American Legion – open at noon
January 10, 2025	Boyd American Legion Fish Fry – 135 N Clark Street – 4:00pm – 7:00pm
January 15, 2025	Boyd American Legion Hall – CVSO Outreach Event with Peter Johnston to answer any questions about Veterans Benefits - 9:00am-11:00am.
January 16-19, 2025	2025 Mid-Winter Conference at Hilton Paper Valley – Appleton, WI
February 15, 2025	10 <sup>th</sup> District Oratorical Contest 1:00pm at Eau Claire Legion Post on Water St

**Next Newsletter will be February 2025 – Deadline for articles and pictures will be January 29, 2025**

**To submit articles and events for the 10<sup>th</sup> District Family Newsletter send to: Teresa Isensee [tisensee2173@gmail.com](mailto:tisensee2173@gmail.com)**