

THIRD DISTRICT FAMILY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026



Third District Legion DEC Meetings
Mar-Tues 3/24 - Verona Legion Post
May-Tues 5/26 - Barneveld Legion Post
June-Tues 6/23 - Fennimore Legion Post

Start at 7pm

Legion and Auxiliary Meetings:

Feb-Sat 2/21 Holiday Party – Verona Legion Post –
Meeting to follow FLYER IS INCLUDED RSVP BY February 7

Apr-Sat 4/25 - Spring Conference - Dodgeville High School



Dan O'Brien – 3rd District Commander

As I started to write this letter for the Informer I looked at my weather app on my phone, and it is -5 degrees outside. This is cold with really no relief in sight for a while.

I just returned from the Mid-Winters Conference in Green Bay. It was a good turn out of Legion members with over 500 members coming to the conference. Great Training on Saturday. I took two courses. The first one was Post Adjutant Course. I have been in the Legion and a Post 214 member for over 50 years, but I just became our Post Adjutant. I can't tell you what a good choice it was to take this course. State Adj. Julie did a wonderful job teaching the course and a lot of questions were asked and answered. I also took the NEW Post Finance Course. This was the first time this course was offered to Legion members. I have been our Post Finance Officer for several years and I can tell you I learned a lot of new things I didn't know before. This is why we have Training at the Mid-Winters. It is always an opportunity to learn something new. Both courses were attended by more Legion members than I thought there would be there for the Training. I learned about ways to make sure our Post is operating correctly and to ensure that our Post is protecting itself from outside entities including the IRS. I must add that it is always nice to see other Legion members you don't get to see that often. I do enjoy talking to them and hearing how their Districts, Counties and Posts are doing. So many good things happening within The American Legion. I sat in on the Camp American Legion meeting, and I can tell you we are doing amazing things at Camp. It makes you proud to be a Legion Member and supporting what we do for all Veterans at Camp American Legion. Remember the State Raffle Tickets every Post was given to sell helps support Camp.

With Membership we are in First Place so far. Thank you to all the Posts that are working hard to get your members retained, for Posts bringing in NEW members and for those Posts that have brought in Headquarter 2930 (Legion) members into your Posts. We still have a long way to go with 663 members left to meet our goal.



Shelley Drager 3rd District President

Winter Greeting to All in the Fighting 3rd,

We have just returned from a very informative Department Mid-Winter. We learned about the new online reporting system; it is so easy, EVEN, I can do it. The Department Officers have worked very hard on this so please let us all honor their efforts and report this year. This should cut the time in half; great thing is if you do not participate in the programs, you can report those now by just answering no and forward it right on to the program chair. The demo was fantastic; it showed how quickly the report was sent from Amy (reporter) to Sandy (program chair).

Emphasis on American Legion Family working as one, I hope this actually comes to fruition, but I have my doubts. If your units have an open dialog with your Post, and S.A.L. everyone benefits. Working together is a tough go for some, and I understand that not all have good relations with the AL Family, now is the time to improve these relationships. Please invite your County, District, and Department leaders to help open the door. Some legion posts do not realize just how important the Auxiliary can be to their Post being seen and their reputation for being active, caring and community focused. Keep in mind a close relationship with your legion family should help with membership. The Auxiliary can recruit for the Legion and reap the benefits of family members joining. Yes, the Legion also has to be willing to help, and that is not always the case. Please do not get frustrated, just keep trying to open those lines. Find a compatible program and jointly fundraise to reach your goals. Have a couple of joint meetings or send a representative to visit the Legion meetings and give them updates on events and offer your units help in any compacity. Ask your Legionnaires to help with your fundraising events, Veterans and kids bring em in, use them.

The Fighting 3rd has a holiday party Feb 21st that is rapidly approaching, I would certainly love to see every unit in 3rd District send a member or two to attend, Verona is very close to most, and I want to see a nice turn out. Doors open at 9:30 and we will have projects for our members to do until we get started. Cards to sign, pocket flags to fold and whatever else I can find to do.



Going out and getting your members retained is a priority, but we cannot forget the other aspects of membership. Bringing in new members. At this time of year, how do you bring in a new member with half the membership year gone. Think about what you can do differently to get veterans to join. Can your Post afford to offer a discount or pay their dues? If they come and work at events, could you take the time the supported your Post into account? Just look at what incentives your Post might be able to offer a veteran and of course let them know of all the good things your Post and The American Legion does for Veterans and your Communities.

This statement comes up at meetings. If your Post and the Legion Family weren't in your community, would you be missed? If you are an active Post, of course you will be missed. The Hazel Green Post was just revived just over a year ago and they are making an impact already. They are re-vamping their Legion Post which has sat idle for a long time. Due to their work at the Post, they are now renting it out for community events. This past December they worked with two families to make sure they had a good Christmas. Food, toys and clothing. Making an impact locally. They have also revived their Auxiliary which was a big part of taking care of families at Christmas time. When I was at their last meeting, they already had enough names to start up a SAL Squadron this next year. Their Legion and Auxiliary are already planning events throughout 2026. These are the things that the Legion is all about. Being involved in your community and making a difference. There are so many stories like this the American Legion is doing, and we should be sharing them. Send the positive things your Post is doing to Jenni Syftestad (Informer) syftes@chorus.net or to the Badger Legionnaire at badger@wilegion.org Letting everyone know what good things we are doing gives other Posts ideas to improve what they are doing. Every time I hear of the good things we do as The American Legion Family, it makes be proud to be a part of this great organization.

I believe in Communication as a huge tool to help us talk about the good things we are doing. Good communication will help your members know what is going on within your Post, but it can be a tool to let your community know what your Post is doing. A good example of Communication is the newsletter that Post 501 sends out. If you would like to see a good way to communicate with all your Post members, you must see this newsletter. If you have not seen this newsletter, let me know and I will forward it to you.

At the Mid-Winters Conference, we were reminded that our CPR (Consolidated Post Reports) are due to Headquarters by April 2nd. You can do these reports by hand, or you can do them online. Every Post MUST fill out a CPR, because every Post does something. All County Commanders should be in touch with all your Posts to make sure they are doing their reports and have them sent in Headquarters. If anyone has a question about CPR's give me a call.

I am asking all Posts to do Buddy Checks. Once your Post starts doing them you will find out how rewarding it is to make that call or make that visit to a fellow Legion Member.



Bring your ideas for Spring Conference, share your success stories. We will have a member from Department in attendance along with several former Department Presidents, District Presidents, and former and current County Presidents. All available to answer questions and listen to concerns. We need to make a quorum so please make an effort to send in your registration and attend this meeting. I would love to hear your plans for the summer. The Fighting 3rd has a great Facebook page we should all be utilizing. if you bring your event plans with you I'm sure Nicole would love to create an eye catching post for you. Send registration to Jenni Syftestad, 205 Thompson St, Verona, 53593-1043, only \$15 per member.

Don't forget our challenge to contact our representatives, our voices matter, make sure you send in your units support of Badger Girls State, read the unit mailing, there is so much information in there for every unit small or large.

Make plans now to send a member to Department Convention it is vital to show your support, share your successes, and so much to learn from so many talented leaders.

Thank you for all you do to make our organization the largest Veterans organization in the world.



MEMBERSHIP

Nicole Welsh

Third District Momentum: Let's Finish Strong and Grow Together

As we begin the new year, I'm excited to share that Third District has reached 85% of our membership goal! This is an incredible accomplishment and a true testament to the dedication of our units and membership chairs. Thank you for the time, energy, and heart you continue to pour into our mission.

As we push toward 100%, it's important to remember that members who have not yet renewed are currently not considered covered members and are not eligible for membership rewards or benefits. Our mission, our programs, and our ability to serve veterans, their families, and our communities depend on active, renewed members. Reaching out now can make all the difference in ensuring individuals remain connected and protected.

Please continue to reach out personally to members who have not renewed. A simple phone call, email, or friendly reminder can be the nudge someone needs. Let them know how much they matter and how their membership directly supports the work we do every day. At the same time, let's not lose sight of the importance of growth. Welcoming new members strengthens our organization, brings in fresh ideas, and ensures the long-term success of the Auxiliary. Every new member is another visitor to our Everglades. That equals another voice, another helping hand, and another advocate for our mission.



As we enter 2026, I am hoping that we will be strong and grow our Legion Family. Continue to do positive things for our Veterans and in our communities and good things will happen.

COMMUNICATION-INVOLVEMENT-VISIBILITY-
ACCOUNTABILITY-Be the One to Make this happen at your Post.



Let's keep building on this momentum, continue growing our Everglades visitor numbers, and work together to reach 100% as quickly as possible.

If your unit needs assistance, has questions, or would like ideas for outreach, please don't hesitate to call me any time at 608-235-9335 or email at nicolewelsh1026@gmail.com. I'm here to support you every step of the way.

Together, we can make 2026 a strong and successful year for Third District

BEAT THE CABIN FEVER DANCE 12

James P & Michael Sullivan
American-Legion Post #383 Auxiliary
in Lone Rock for VetsRoll.org*

**ADMISSION:
FREE**

SAT., MARCH 7, 2026
11:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Lone Rock (WI) Community Hall

Entertainment: Eight (8) hours of fun!!

11:00 am - 12:00 pm: Bingo

Lunch Served from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

4:00 - 7:00 pm: Crossfire Band

Fundraisers:

Live Auction at 1pm - 3pm

Raffles • 11am - 3pm

Meat paddles • 11 am - ?

*Dance proceeds will go to raise funds for
sending more WWII to Vietnam Era Veterans
to Washington, DC on May 17-20, 2026!!*

For more info contact:

Lisa Bowen at 608-929-4690

**Food...Pop...
Ice Cold Beer!!**



* VetsRoll, Inc (dba VetsRoll.org) is a WI non-profit corporation and an IRS 501(C)(3) public charity dedicated to providing safe ground transportation for our Veteran war heroes to see their memorials in Washington, DC!! Your donations may be 100% tax deductible (consult your financial advisor for more information).



3rd District

Holiday Party

February 21, 2026

RSVP by February 7, 2026

Post 385 – 207 Legion Street – Verona WI 53593

Doors open at 9:30

Lunch will start at Noon

Meetings will follow lunch

Menu: Ham and Turkey Sandwiches, Vegetable, Array of Salads, Cake



\$15.00 per person

Make checks payable to **ALA UNIT 385**



Detach and return with payment.

Jenni Syftestad – 205 Thompson St – Verona WI 53593-1043

Name: _____ Post/Unit: _____

Name: _____ Post/Unit: _____

Name: _____ Post/Unit: _____

Name: _____ Post/Unit: _____

AROUND THE DISTRICT



Darlington American Legion Post 214 decided to help support any senior student that made the decision to enter Military Service after graduation. This past June, **Juan C. Jimenez** joined the U.S. Marine Corp. Juan had already left for his Military service, but we were able to contact him and let him know the Post had support funds for him. Juan is at home on leave and we were able to have him come to the Legion Post and present him with a check for \$100 and a Membership to Darlington American Legion Post 214. With his American Legion Membership Juan has become a member of the World's largest Veterans Organization (1.6 million members) and he can go to any American Legion Post around the world and be welcomed in. Pictured are Juan and Darlington Post 214 Commander Dave Gough. The Post thanked Juan for taking this step in joining the Military and Juan's named will be added to the Veterans Memorial in Darlington. At our last meeting Post 214 voted to increase its funding to \$200 for any senior student entering the Military and completing their Basic Training. This will also include a Membership into the American Legion Darlington Post 214. This support for students entering the Military will be announced at Senior Awards Day each year

Darlington American Legion Post 214 donated \$200 to the DEMS Student in Need Fund. This fund is used to help students in need of items such as coats, shoes, boots, gloves, eyeglasses, school needs, etc. Post 214 raises the money they donated from its annual "George Hirsbrunner" Take a Brat to Work Day. The Post sells brats each fall in front of the Veterans Memorial and the money raised goes 100% into our Children & Youth Fund. This past year due to the generous donations of the people in the community we were able to raise over \$2500 to put towards our Children & Youth programs.

Pictured from left are Darlington American Legion Post Commander Dave Gough, Lori Nodorft-Middle School Guidance Counselor and Post 214 Adjutant Dan O'Brien.





The McCann-Richards Post 105 posted the colors at the Dubuque Fighting Saints Hockey match on November 21st and December 5th.

From the Department Mid-winter Conference



Department Historian Morris provides PNC Denise with the digitized transcription of the set of cassette tapes from the 1983 American Legion Convention held in Seattle Washington. Excerpts of historical interest from the proceedings will be made available on the internet. For example, the first excerpt to be curated will be the acceptance speech of **1984-1985 National Commander-elect Keith Kreul of Wisconsin!**

DEPARTMENT MID-WINTER CON'T

Meeting, Mingling and Networking



In addition to doing real work, like deciding on propositions that will be presented to the members at the July Convention for ratification are the social aspects of the conference. Meeting long-time friends, making new friendships and getting acquainted with next year's leadership team is a major reason to attend



Mike Pook brings his photojournalism talents to the Legion Riders

Mike Pook is a busy guy. Here is a brief list of his positions: First District American Legion Riders Historian, ANEC Detachment of Wisconsin, Detachment of Wisconsin Historian, National SAL Newsletter, The Millennium staff member, and more. If I need coverage in the First District, I know who to call. Good to meet you, Mike.



The Four Chaplains, also referred to as the Immortal Chaplains or the Dorchester Chaplains, were four chaplains who died rescuing civilian and military personnel as the American troop ship SS Dorchester sank on February 3, 1943, in what has been referred to as one of the worst sea disasters of World War II. At the Midwinter Conference, Members of the Legion Family serving as Chaplains participated in the Four Chaplains ceremony. In the front row, from left, Department Historian Morris Sadicario, 4th District Chaplain Daniel Workenaour, back row, Grant County Commander Alan McCormick, Department Chaplain Virgil Smith, Detachment Chaplain John L'Huillier, and Chair, Religious Emphasis Committee, Darrel "AJ" Feucht. (photo by PDC Greg Eirich)

Mike and Dee Bass of Mazomanie were recently presented with the **Blue Star Banner** in recognition of their son, Sergeant Terrence Bass, currently serving with the US Army. Sergeant Bass enlisted in the Army on April 3, 2008, and has been deployed three times, with his most recent deployments being in Iraq and Syria. In 2019, he was also deployed in Afghanistan. Throughout his career, his primary duties have been as a 19D Cavalry Scout, and he has also become a drone operator while continuing his Cavalry Scout duties. Terrence is currently home and will be returning to his unit, A Troop 104 Cav, based out of Fort Atkinson. We thank you for your service! 🇺🇸



Sgt. Terrence Bass



Mike and Dee Bass, Shelley Drager

On Saturday, December 13th, ALA Unit 437 and Legion Post 437 in Mazomanie bestowed the Quilt of Valor upon Veterans Jim Devoe and Les Sander, acknowledging their unwavering dedication to service.

Mera O'Connell and Connie Handel from the Mazomanie Material Girls presented the quilts, paying tribute to their remarkable commitment and service.

The Quilt of Valor, crafted with love and devotion, serves as a poignant reminder of the nation's deep gratitude for those impacted by war. We thank you for your service. ❤️🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸



Les Sander, Mera O'Connell, Connie Handel, Jim Devoe

On Saturday, December 13th, ALA Unit 437, jointly with Legion Post 437, presented BJ and Leslie Ruland with the Blue Star Banner in recognition of their son, Corporal William Ruland's, service in the US Marine Corps.

Corporal William Ruland graduated from boot camp in 2022, earning the 0842 MOS designation as an Artillery Radar Technician/Operator. He is currently stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC. We extend our gratitude for his service. 🇺🇸



Shelley Drager, BJ & Leslie Ruland, Virgil Smith



Corporal Ruland

Blue Star Banner Presented to the Holcomb Family

On Saturday, December 6th, the ALA Unit 437 and Legion Post 437 came together to present Mazomanie residents Amy and Jared Holcomb with the Blue Star Banner. This ceremony was to recognize and honor their son, Corporal Jonathon Holcomb, who is currently serving with the United States Marine Corps.

Corporal Jonathon Holcomb's service in the Marines the past 4-1/2 years has focused primarily on Embassy Duties as a Marine Security Guard in both Tunisia and Kosovo. On the day of the presentation, Jonathon departed for Camp Lejeune to begin his pre-deployment preparations. The location of his upcoming assignment has not yet been released.

A Blue Star Service Banner displayed in the window of a family home is a long tradition in America. The Banner lets others know that someone from this home is actively serving in the United States Armed Forces. As the "War Against Terrorism" continues, this Blue Star Service Banner reminds us all that this war touches every neighborhood throughout our Land.



Phil Haas, Jared Holcomb Shelley Drager



Corporal Jonathon Holcomb