

APRIL 2026 LEGISLATIVE

Spring is in full swing –

Do you know what events are coming up for your auxiliary?

Check on the dates for your Spring District Meeting, VFW Day of Service, and opportunities to meet and greet candidates running for local, state, and federal office positions.



Most candidates are already on the campaign trail and want to meet with constituents to find out what issues matter – supporting our veterans as they transition from military to civilian life, and providing them with the resources they need for their physical and mental health, continuing education, and family support.

Be sure to:

- REGISTER TO VOTE
- Know what congressional district, ward, and county you live in and what candidates are running for which office. It can be confusing – your town clerk can help.
- Visit <http://myvote.wi.gov> to view upcoming ballots, request an absentee ballot, find your polling place, track your ballot and more.



There are two elections in Wisconsin in 2026: **April 7 and November 3**, but there are multiple deadlines throughout the year to submit address changes, request absentee ballots, and to make arrangements for overseas voting, etc.

And remember: it is up to us to **ADVOCATE** and **AMPLIFY** the message to our elected officials that effective legislation must be put in place to support our veterans – they have earned it!



PLEASE Sign up for **Action Corps** (www.vfw.org/JoinActionCorps) and **Voter Voice** (www.votervoice.net/VFWWI/home)

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

“We Rise By Lifting Others”

Gail Bensen, gsbbensen@gmail.com

(518) 209-8362 (talk/text)

STATE CONVENTION BUDDY POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST

These guidelines have been designed to place emphasis on the purpose and effectiveness of the displays. It is suggested and recommended that Department (State) contests rule be established in a like form.

RULES

(1) Displays will be presented and judged in three categories:

CATEGORY 1. Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign (Window, booth, parade, poster displays, campaign promotions, etc.)

- (a) Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message soliciting a donation for and wearing of the VFW "Buddy" Poppy.
- (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

CATEGORY 2. Memorial or Inspirational Displays (Wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes)

- (a) Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and Country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the Buddy Poppy.
- (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

CATEGORY 3. Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies (Post Home displays, table center-pieces, corsages, pictures, plaques, models, scenes, hats, novelty pieces, etc.)

- (a) Any display not meeting the qualifications for Categories 1 or 2 shall automatically be entered in Category 3.
- (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

(2) The State VFW and Auxiliary Chairmen shall have no responsibility in setting up, taking down or returning displays.

(3) Displays shall be set up in space provided in the convention facility. Prior to setting up the display, the responsible person must register with the Buddy Poppy desk and complete an entry form which will show the category of competition, the number of poppies used, the purpose of the display, the Post and/or Auxiliary number and location,

and the name of the person who will dismantle and remove the display at the close of the convention. **(Please be advised, all displays must be removed, or it will be disposed of by convention center personnel.)**

- (4) Displays may or may not be accompanied by a white card, not to exceed 4 inches by 6 inches in size, on which an explanation of the theme for the display or other information of interest to the viewers or the judges, should be written in black ink.
- (5) Post name, number, city or state (including the shape of your state) must **not** be visible on the displays. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.
- (6) (NEW) Any use of non-VFW trademarks or copyrighted material on your display must have prior approval from the trademark or copyright holder. These include, but are not limited to, names, logos, audio/visual graphics, images and/or props. The VFW and Buddy Poppy logo and name is authorized but use of any outside organization trademark or copyrighted material and/or logos must have prior approval through their respective organization.

JUDGING

Judging of displays will be based on effectiveness, purpose, clarity of theme, suitability, originality, beauty and number of poppies used. Where a sample of a large number of identical items (such as corsages or wreaths) is entered, full credit shall be given for the total number of poppies used. Judging will be completed Thursday evening and the winning displays will have the appropriate ribbons placed on the display on Friday morning.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN



Journey to 100 Years



The 100th Anniversary Committee would like to make a brief history booklet about the Department of Wisconsin and the Auxiliaries that make it what it was and is today. An example could be how auxiliary members hauled cans of water to wash the floor as they didn't have water at the club or another auxiliary held lunches at farm auctions and worked out of milk houses and garages with no heat in the winter.

In order to do this, we need your input. A brief paragraph about past and current auxiliaries are needed. Information should be sent to Rita Byers on or before May 15th at rabyers66@gmail.com with 100th Anniversary Booklet as the subject.

Also, members who advised they have past uniforms and mannequins or dress forms to display them, please be sure to bring them to the convention.

Thank you.

100th Anniversary Committee

WISCONSIN VFW NEWS

In case you haven't heard, The March 2026 VFW News is published. This is an electronic Edition. Please let your members know that they can see the newspaper through our Department of Wisconsin website by going to: www.vfwauxwi.org and then click on NEWS and then click on WI VFW NEWSPAPER to bring up the latest news.

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Fisher
House



PAGE 15
Red, White
& Blue



PAGE 17
Portraits
of Service



VFW WISCONSIN

NEWS 2026

VOL. 43 NO. 5
MAKE IT COUNT
MARCH/APRIL 2026

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

The annual VFW Washington Conference (FKA the VFW Legislative Conference) is, as they say, "where the rubber meets the road". Or in the case of this year, where the week's events saw many, many wonderful highs, and one huge, disappointing low.

Utilizing the weekend before the Conference for business of the National Council of Administration and other Committees, the activity really ramped up on Monday with hearings for all attendees and the start of Capitol Hill visits to Legislators. A new activity on Monday evening – complete with much lower temps and light snow – was the Re-enactment of the March of the Bonus Army. (See page 15.)

Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore's Testimony before the Joint House and Senate VSO Hearing was exceptional. And then the "roller coaster" took a steep dive. After the hearing, Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) went to the Senate floor to move for unanimous consent, to pass



The Wisconsin Delegation is ready and raring to go at the Hart Senate Office Building. Adam Wallace photo.

the Major Richard Star Act. Unfortunately, Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) rose to object and blocked a vote. A devastating blow to all Veterans, especially those witnessing it, including the Wisconsin Delegation, and we suspect, the 77 Senate Co-Sponsors of the Bill.

National and Department levels will keep us apprised. In the meantime, please see more coverage of Wisconsin's "Advocacy in Action" on pages 10 and 15.

Stay tuned. Our Legislative Teams at

Honors at Arlington

The Saturday wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery is always a moving reminder of why we are still serving, advocating for those who have given so much.



ABOVE: Cdr. Ty Letto and Pres. Kim McWilliams salute the wreath following placement at the Tomb. Photo @ Jeff Thorne Photography / Headshots Today – we are very grateful to Mr. Thorne for sharing his incredible photography with us!

AT LEFT: The ribbons stayed still just long enough for Comrade Tina Flanagan of Post 664 to catch this beautiful shot. Thank you Tina!

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