

MILITARY★★

SALUTE

2024

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE VILAS COUNTY NEWS-REVIEW
AND THE THREE LAKES NEWS



★ MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTES ★ SOLDIERS' STORIES ★
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Memorial Day services set throughout North Woods

Memorial Day services will commence in communities across the North Woods to honor and remember individuals who died in military action while fighting for their country.

Veterans, area residents, government officials and North Woods visitors are invited to attend the ceremonies.

Veterans organizations in Eagle River, Three Lakes, Land O' Lakes, Phelps, Conover, St. Germain, Rhinelander and Presque Isle have provided the following information on Memorial Day weekend programs.

Eagle River

The Vilas County Veterans Service Office holds its annual Memorial Day Program Monday, May 27, at 11 a.m. in front of the Vilas County Courthouse in Eagle River.

The ceremony includes a guest speaker, presentation of colors and remembering the fallen.

Other highlights include recognition of the military's branches and performances by the Northland Pines band and choir, along with the Boys and Girls Scouts being in attendance.

Three Lakes

Memorial Day in Three Lakes will be observed Monday, May 27. The program will start at 10 a.m. with a traditional solemn procession from Gogebic Street down Superior Street to the Three Lakes Cemetery. The Three Lakes American Legion Post 431 Coor Guard will lead with only sounds of drum beats from the Three Lakes



Eagle River will again stage its annual Memorial Day program at 11 a.m. Monday, May 27, on the Vilas County Courthouse grounds.

—STAFF PHOTO

High School band. The ceremony will begin at 10:15 a.m. on arrival of the procession, and a memorial wreath will be placed at the foot of the flagpole. Several seniors from Three Lakes High School will offer present-day perspectives on the meaning of Memorial Day. The Three Lakes High School band will provide music.

St. Germain

The town of St. Germain will hold a Memorial Day service on Sunday, May 26, at 1 p.m.

The service will include a guest speaker and other ceremonies.

Contact the St. Germain Area Chamber of Commerce at 715-477-2205 for more information.

Phelps

There will be a Memorial Day service in Phelps, Monday, May 27, at 1 p.m. at the cemetery.

There will be a roll call for the dead and flags will be presented to families of deceased service members.

For updated information, contact the town of Phelps at 715-545-2270.

Conover

A memorial service will be conducted Monday, May 27, at

10 a.m., at Hildegard Cemetery, located three miles east of Highway 45 on Highway K. Services include a prayer service officiated by Rev. Peggy Rose and two musical selections played by Mark Hovel.

Land O' Lakes

The VFW Post 8400 will have a Memorial Day service at the Land O' Lakes cemetery on Monday, May 27, at 11 a.m. For more information, contact the VFW Post in Land O'Lakes at 715-547-3314.

Rhinelander

Memorial services throughout Rhinelander

will take place over the Memorial Day weekend.

A service will be held at Union Grove Cemetery at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 25.

A Memorial Day service on Monday, May 27, occurs at the Hodag Dome at 10:30 a.m. and the North Woods National Cemetery at 2:30 p.m.

Honors ceremonies will take place as follows on Monday, May 27: Newbold Cemetery at 8 a.m.; Northland Memorial Park at 8:30 a.m.; Forest Home Cemetery and Nativity of Our Lord Cemetery at 9 a.m.

Presque Isle

The American Legion Post 480 in Presque Isle will host Memorial Day services on Monday, May 27.

The services are as follows: 10 a.m. at the Winchester Memorial Cemetery, 1124 West Harris Lake Road; 11 a.m. at the Presque Isle Cemetery, 12080 Highway W and 11:30 a.m. at Wilderness Veterans Memorial Flame.

Attendees are welcome to visit American Legion Post 480 after the ceremonies.

For more information, contact 715-686-2541.

Veterans Service Office sheds light on veteran assistance

BY BRIAN THOMAS
VILAS COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

For this national day of remembrance, the Veterans Service Office once again invites everyone to attend our Memorial Day Program at the Vilas County Courthouse on Monday, May 27, 2024, at 11 a.m.

The ceremony consists of a guest speaker, presentation of the colors, recognition of the military's branches, remembering the fallen and more. We will be joined by the Boys and Girls Scouts and the NPHS Band and Choir.

In addition to honoring the fallen during this period of reflection, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone what our office is here for.

There are way too many benefits to list in one news article but we're here to help connect veterans, their dependents and

survivors with the benefits they've earned or the resources they need.

We want to make sure that you're using your healthcare benefits so that you're living healthier lives.



We fight hard to ensure that you're compensated for any disabilities from service or help apply for VA pensions and/or survivors' benefits.

We also want to make sure you're living the highest quality of

life possible so please don't hesitate to lean on us to help you pursue that.

Aside from just assisting with federal and state benefits, we're here to help in any way possible even if it's just to listen.

While there may not be a benefit to cover every need or scenario, we work with so many agencies and organizations that it's rare that there isn't at least some sort of relief that can be provided.

We work very closely with other Veterans Service Organizations throughout the North Woods and together we're here for all our veteran families.

If there's anything you need, would like to learn more about, or just have general questions about how we can help you or a loved one, please give us a call at (715) 479-3629 to schedule an appointment. We'd love to work with you.



Because of the Brave

BY: CONGRESSMAN TOM TIFFANY

This Memorial Day and every day, it is important to pause and honor those who have paved the way for the freedom we enjoy today: Our veterans and fallen heroes.

Millions of brave Americans have been willing to put their lives on the line to protect our flag, our loved ones and our way of life.

It is because of their heroic sacrifices that we are here today.

Our nation's resilient spirit is a reflection of the resilient spirit of our veterans, and I will not allow that to be forgotten.

Therefore, if you or someone you know is having trouble receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or obtaining military records, my district office is ready to assist you.

Give them a call at (715) 298-9344 to see how we may be able to help. Just this year, we have assisted over 250 constituents with their casework requests, ranging from help with the VA, Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service and more.

Although we may never be able to fully repay our nation's veterans, it is my goal in Congress to ensure that they are receiving the care and benefits they've earned.

This is why I helped introduce the Major Richard Star Act, which would provide combat-disabled veterans with less than 20 years of service with both their disability compensation and retirement pay without reduction.

Currently, veterans serving fewer than 20 years and holding a disability rating below 50% experience a dollar-for-dollar reduction in their retirement pay corresponding to their disability compensation.

These retirees put their lives on the line, and ensuring they receive their

full retirement and disability benefits is a small, but important, token of our gratitude.

So let us come together on this Memorial Day to not only honor the fallen but all service members who stood tall in the face of adversity – displaying valor and dedication to a cause greater than themselves.

We are the home of the free because of the brave.

NAMES OF THE FALLEN VILAS COUNTY VETERANS

CIVIL WAR

Samuel Odell

WORLD WAR I

Lyman E. Barnes

Emil H. Gherke

Olaf Thompson

John S. Chicog

Joe Grazis

Frederick J. Walsh

Willow Trapp

Albert C. Goranson

George Micholowski

WORLD WAR II

Edward A. Weber

William C. Ament

Ervin Matteck

Earl M. Esque

Arnold E. Simon

Robert E. Brooker

William A. Manbeck

Heino F. Busch Jr.

William L.

Neumann

Careld J. Blackburn

William J. Wepfer

Harry E. Karwoski

William H. Weber

Reynold Soquist

Cecil S. Snow

Louis R. Hall

George E. Strong

Walter R.

Hermanson

Edward A. Croker

Chancy A. Rogers

Clayton O. McLain

Harold E. Evenson

Norman E. Wegner

Joe Skye

Edward B. Kalous

William E. Jolly

Lyle W. Hawks

Joseph C. Trinkka

Herbert H.

Walbruck

Martin L. Bloom

Joseph C. Rowinsky

Nilo J. Albertson

Norman C. Schlarp

Robert F. Sayner

KOREAN WAR

Roland W. Kubinek

Charles W.

Newberry

Carlton C. Valliere

VIETNAM WAR

Paul S. Gee

James H. Page

Chester A.

Myers Jr.

Larry S. Jensen

John A. Mietus

Sheldon J. Burnett

PANAMA

John M. Price

WAR ON TERROR

Tyler Kritz



Three Lakes fundraising for Veterans Memorial project

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

Fundraising continues for a Veterans Memorial project in Three Lakes, which will be located between the town's municipal building and the Edward U. Demmer Memorial Library on School St.

Town of Three Lakes officials said recently that roughly \$25,000 has been raised, up roughly \$5,000 from mid-April, and that in-kind donations total around \$120,000.

Bids for the \$485,000 project were scheduled to be awarded this month.

The memorial will include three granite monuments, an Entrance Monument, a Prisoner of War and Missing in Action Monument and a Killed in Action Monument.

There also will be a granite Veteran's Wall with names of veterans and their branch of service, along with flags posted for each area of service, plus a U.S. and state of Wisconsin flag.

Donations are being accepted via credit card in person at the Three Lakes Town Office or online at townofthreelakeswi.gov.

The town also noted no decision has been made on a groundbreaking ceremony for the memorial.

According to the eight-person Three Lakes Veteran's Memorial Committee, the mission

of the group is to honor past, present and future veterans, and to preserve the memory of those who have served their country.

The committee mailed out 2,500 brochures to town residents on Feb. 21, which included information about the memorial site, as well as how people can donate to the cause.

Students at Three Lakes High School, under the guidance of Nathan Koch, created a 3D rendering that is on display at the town hall. The rendering was moved to the American Legion for its birthday party celebration March 16.

Four granite benches and a stamped concrete walkway are also planned.

The committee is working to finalize plans and specifications with hopes to break ground in spring. The project may be completed in phases, with grading, concrete walkway and flags going up first, followed by benches and monuments, and then the veteran's wall of names.

Donations are being accepted via credit card in-person at the Three Lakes Town Office or online at townofthreelakeswi.gov.

All donations are tax-deductible and will be receipted accordingly by the town office.



The 3-D rendering of the planned veterans memorial was created with the help of students and staff at the Three Lakes School District fab lab. It is currently on display at the Three Lakes Municipal Building. —Contributed Photo

Veteran Service Offices are here to assist

BY TAMMY JAVENKOSKI
ONEIDA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

County Veterans Service Offices in Wisconsin always say every day is Veterans Day to us, and unfortunately, every day is Memorial Day to us, too. Not only have we lost great men and women in service to our country, but we continue to lose veterans, many of whom pass away from injuries or illnesses they had due to their military service. Our veterans and their families are our families.

I've worked with many surviving spouses who were able to receive VA benefits even though their veteran spouse wasn't receiving any at the time of their death. It's so important to my Assistant CVSO, Jason Dailey, and me that every veteran receives the benefits they've earned. I encourage you to call your County Veterans Service Office and ask questions. You

never know what you may be eligible for that you didn't know about.

And please, call your County Veterans Service Office before you contact the numerous companies out there that offer to help file claims. First of all, most of them are not accredited with the Veterans Administration but County Veterans Service Officers are. That means we go through extensive VA training to receive accreditation, and we're required to maintain accreditation by getting 16 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) each year. It also means we have access to your VA file, so we can watch the status of your claims with the VA. Second, they're going to charge you a substantial amount of money for something we can do for free. I'm not implying those companies are shady; I just want you to save

your hard-earned money plus work with people right in your county, not several states away.

The County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin had our spring conference the week of April 15 in Green Bay. I've been doing this job for more than 18 years now and I still learned new things that week.

Programs, policies, and forms change constantly so training and accreditation are very important.

I hope everyone has a safe Memorial Day weekend. If you can, please take time to honor the men and women who gave their lives for our freedom whether it's by attending a ceremony or in your own private way. And don't forget the reason for Memorial Day. I believe it's the most significant day of the year.

NAMES OF THE FALLEN

ONEIDA COUNTY VETERANS

WORLD WAR I

Carl Aasland
Alex Ahlborn
Fred Anderson
Alban Asmundson
Charles Bissonnette
Frank Blaschka
Carl C. Boden
Anton Botozeski
Edward Carley
George W. Chapman
Sam J. Charpie
Abner Dahlberg
Raymond Dawson
Calbert DeLapp
Lloyd W. Dolan
Arnie F. Duhn
Frank
Dziewiatkowski
Walter Evenson
Ernest J. Fay
Harry W. Felon
Henry Folker
Emil H. Gehrke
Louis A. Grill
Leon Holewinski
Alva Howard
John Hughes
Clarence Johnson
Hjalmer Johnson
Joseph F. Katariski
Harry H. Labug
Carl J. Madson
Reginald Rice
Arthur Rousseau
Ray Rousseau
Albet H. Rozell
Edwin Samuelson
Charles Saxe
Maurice Stafford
Joseph Szuminski
Ingewald Tallackson
Leno Tate
Douglas A. Taylor
Walter E. Thomas
Ora N. Tidd
Carl Weight
Frank J. Wines

WORLD WAR II

Stanley Ahlborn
William Ament
Charles R. Ashton
Joseph C. Belanger
Orvia H. Belongia
William F. Boelter
Charles S. Brown
John N. Brown
Anton Burzynski
Edward R. Cairnes
Charles T. Ceronsky
Duane P. Cook
Francis J. Craig

Wayne E. Cabbage
Thad S. Cyzak
Roger Dery
Warner B. Dinger
Lloyd T. Dolan
Edward J. Dolejs
Alex J. Dominski
Roy A. Dumas
Donald Durkee
Mark J. Ebert
Raymond J. Edwin
Donald A. Empey
Erwin L. Erickson
Joseph L. Eternicka
Thomas H. Flanicon
John J. Ginzl
Howard Goldstone
Warren E. Gorgas Jr.
Donald F. Griffin
Edward A. Gruett
Roy W. Haney Jr.
Paul R. Hahn
Edward F. Harvey
Robert Hayhurst
Edward E. Helgeson
Forest Johns
Harry Karnowski
Clarence A. Keso
Earl C. Khoury
Robert J. Kuehn
Erwin C. Kunze
Merwin Laddusire
Gerald A. Lemke
Gayhart Laroche
Frank W. Luce
Cleon G. Lucia
Raymond Lyannas
George Mahner
Peter Makris
George M. Mattson
Samuel A. Melton
William Nuutinen
John J. O'Keefe
Robert M. O'Melia
Edward J. Panko
Dennis Paquette
Edward A. Perry
Joseph L. Phillips
David Rice
Daniel Rice
Melvin E. Richter
Edward Riordan
Robert W. Sager
Ervin E. Schield
John T. Schilling
Gordon Schirmer
Joseph P. Schock
Joseph Jr. Schooley
Robert Simons
Harold Skottestad
Joseph L. Skubal
Andrew Slivinski

Eugene W. Smith
Paul A. Smith
Robert M. Snyder
Eino Soumi
Charles G. Stelle
Arthur Steiner
Rene J. Stimart
Leonard Swanmann
Albert Swearingen
Kenneth Thorn
Russell Tilton
Lafey Wales
Glenn H. Ward
Theodore Wardwell
Harry Waubiness
James F. Welk
Frank J. Wines
William Zelechowski
Harold M. Zerrenner
Norman J. Zinda
Arthur Zurt

KOREAN WAR

Roy S. Boach
Lloyd J. Bosben
Billy E. Buck
Carlton G. Gahler
William A. Gilson
Gene M. Ingram
Marvin J. Johnson
John W. Longwitz
Mannie L. Loshaw
Kenneth Lundberg
Robert Mervicker
Edwin Mode
Robert A. Olson
Donald J. Priebe
Eugene C. Rhode
Colin F. Shultz
Andre J. Swanmann
Valent Warrichaiet
Martin E. White

VIETNAM WAR

William Bodenhausen
Robert J. Davies
Henry Duellman
Harry W. Ehmann
Donald B. Lowe
Richard A. Roesler
Gary B. Gehrke
Gustave Gudleske
Duane Helmick
Arthur R. Henning
James R. Taplin
Donald D. Watson
Wm. S. Hurkmans Jr.
Robert Kotarski

WAR ON TERROR

Stephen G. Martin
Ryan C. Adams

**MEMORIAL
DAY** 
REMEMBER AND HONOR

Veterans Resource Center hasn't looked back since VFW disbandment

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

The Veterans Resource Center of Eagle River, formerly known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 8637, has seen nothing but good come away from the transition from the national charter to a community-minded Veterans Resource Center (VRC).

Dennis Geiseman, president of the board for VRC, said the decision made to move on from the national charter last summer was “the best thing for this community that ever happened,” in his opinion.

Intending to assist more veterans in a shorter amount of time,

without the need to wait on the national charter for authorization, the board said the way things have gone is amazing.

“The transition’s been awesome. We’ve been able to do more for veterans than we were ever able to do as a VFW.” Geiseman said.

The VRC has also worked closely with the Vilas County Veterans Service Office being able to refer veterans to Service Officer Brian Thomas.

“We’ve been interactive between the two organizations,” stated Geiseman.

Thomas, also vice



VRC President Dennis Geiseman and Vice-President Brian Thomas stand outside of the Veterans Resource Center.

—STAFF PHOTO



The board of directors holds its April meeting in the Veterans Resource Center on Highway 70 west, with President Dennis Geiseman in the foreground.

—STAFF PHOTO

president of the VRC board, said sometimes the relationship between VFWs, American Legions, other veterans service organizations and the county veterans service offices can be tough, but the trust is there with the VRC.

“I think we’ve all come together and there is a lot of trust. The referrals are where we’ve seen

the biggest uptick, just by word of mouth,” said Thomas.

Getting people from all over, which they have gotten, can be good and bad, but helping veterans is the main priority.

Issues vary based on the veteran’s needs.

“The bottom line is we’re helping a lot more veterans in the North Woods than we ever

have,” Thomas explained.

The interest in the VRC has also grown, with Geiseman talking with many veterans about the change.

“The thing I’ve noticed with our community is the fact that we’re not a national organization,” explained Geiseman.

“I’ve talked to a lot of veterans at our fish fry’s, at all of our other events,

they come up to me and tell me that they’re glad we’re not a national organization because we can get things done. They don’t want to belong to a national organization.”

Geiseman noted that the scholarships and essay competitions have increased, being able to reach more kids, especially children of veterans.



**Thank You Veterans
and Active Military Personnel!**

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Eric Jacobson



Eric Jacobson enlisted in the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 1990 and began his active duty as a 19D Cavalry Scout in 1993. After serving as a scout in Baumholder, Germany for two years, he decided to apply for Special Forces Assessment and Selection. Upon completing the SF Qualification Course (SFQC) as an 18C, Jacobson was assigned to ODA 595, 3rd Battalion (BN), 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). In 2000, Jacobson successfully completed Officer Candidate School and the Infantry Officer Basic Course, where he was then assigned as a rifle platoon leader in the 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. He served as a scout platoon leader and support platoon leader in successive assignments in the 101st. During his time there, he was deployed to Kosovo and Iraq. Jacobson completed the Armor Officer Advanced Course and the Officer SFQC, before being designated as a Detachment Commander in 2nd BN, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). He deployed to Najaf, Iraq for both Operation Iraqi Freedom III and IV while serving there.

Michael T. Busha



Senior Master Sergeant Michael T. Busha is Superintendent in the Tradecraft Division, Directorate of Intelligence (A2) at Headquarters Air Combat Command (HQ ACC), Joint Base Langley-Eustis (JBLE), Virginia. Busha oversees all combat airforce-wide analysis, collections, intelligence and targeting requirements. He enlisted in the Air Force in December 1998 before completing his Intelligence Operations technical training at Goodfellow Air Force Base in 1999. He has deployed for support in Operations Southern Watch, Northern Watch, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Before his current position, Busha was First Sergeant for the 325 medical group from March 2020 to May 2021 at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. He was also the First Sergeant for the Det 1 823rd Red Horse, 325th Operations Group and 325th Maintenance Group, from December 2016 to March 2020.

Jack Uhrine



Jack Uhrine, a specialist in the Army Reserves, is a 2019 graduate of Northland Pines High School. Uhrine received basic training in 2021 at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Lee in Virginia. He currently belongs to the 445th Transportation Company in Waterloo, Iowa. His Military Occupational Specialty is a Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic and is also an Army Certified Combat Lifesaver. Uhrine resides in Merrill with his fiancée, stepdaughter and son and is the son of John and Jennifer Uhrine of Conover, and is the brother of Jenna Uhrine.



A Day of Remembrance

BY REP. ROB SWEARINGEN

Today is a day steeped in patriotism, a moment to cherish, but above all, an occasion to honor the sacrifices of our fallen soldiers who have ensured the preservation of the freedoms bestowed upon us since our country's founding.

Memorial Day is a time for the country to come together and remember the heroes who protected our freedom and provided us with the possibility of living our lives with opportunity and hope.

Throughout our nation's history, Americans have answered the call of duty with courage and conviction. In the face of adversity, they stood firm, confronting the darkness of tyranny and oppression with unwavering resolve. From the beaches of Normandy to the jungles of Vietnam, from the deserts of Iraq to the mountains of Afghanistan, our soldiers have fought courageously to preserve the ideals

upon which our nation was founded.

But the legacy of our fallen heroes extends beyond the battlefield. It lives on in the hearts and minds of those they left behind—families shattered by loss and communities forever changed by their absence. On this solemn day, we stand in solidarity with them, offering our unwavering support and gratitude for their sacrifice.

The annual traditions on Memorial Day are drastically different from one family to the next; however, whether it is going to a parade, visiting a cemetery or memorial, or hosting a large family gathering, this day unites Americans and allows us to recognize a tradition we all have in common. It gives us an opportunity to pay our respects and reminds us of how grateful we are to have brave soldiers who place their lives on the line every day to protect our

families and freedom.

This day allows us to celebrate our triumphs across the world. We celebrate those who put an end to communism during the Cold War, silenced fascism in Japan and Germany and continue to fight terrorism today. If it were not for our veterans and the United States military, the opportunities that we have as Americans on a daily basis might not be a reality today.

To our active-duty service members and veterans from Wisconsin and the North Woods, we stand with you in remembrance of your brothers and sisters who are no longer by your side. Their sacrifices will never be forgotten, and their legacy will continue to inspire generations to come. Furthermore, we offer our deepest appreciation for your selfless dedication and unwavering courage.

God bless America.



Three Lakes American Legion Post 431 will host a Memorial Day service next Monday, May 27, starting at 10 a.m. with a procession down Superior Street to the Three Lakes cemetery.

—STAFF PHOTO





Memorial Day

BY STATE SEN. MARY FELZKOWSKI

This day is not a time to reflect on our nation's triumphs. This day is set aside for the solemn, observance and reflection on the immeasurable debt that we owe to those who have gone before us.

Today we honor generations of sacrifice. We honor men and women who loved their country and their countrymen so much that they were willing to give their lives.

At Gettysburg, 157 years ago, Abraham

Lincoln famously observed that words are at times inadequate. Those who died in defense of our nation are the silent testimony of honor and devotion. You, the survivors, our veterans, are the living witnesses of valor. These words of gratitude and appreciation will most certainly fall short. We cannot adequately reflect on all of the lives that were cut short and the lives that were forever altered by the ravages of war.

The battles are too numerous to consider, and the lost lives too great to enumerate. From the American Revolution to the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, the Boxer Rebellion, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, the First Gulf War, Somalia, Kosovo, and the War on Terrorism and the countless skirmishes and unnamed military engagements throughout our history. More than one million American soldiers gave their lives

to secure for us the blessings of liberty and freedom - millions more risked their lives, and survived unspeakable horrors.

Imagine, if Abraham Lincoln did not feel he could give the proper honor at a battlefield cemetery during the middle of the Civil War, how can we now properly honor the many more brave men and women who have fallen since? Our simple words can never be enough for them, nor for the men and women who fought and lived. They have honored us - we are indebted to them, and can never properly acknowledge what they have done.

That is the message that Abraham Lincoln delivered at Gettysburg. We have a responsibility to dedicate ourselves to the unfinished work. The cause of Liberty and preservation of this great American experiment is an unending task. Lincoln said, "It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead, we take increased devotion to that cause, for which they

gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve, that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from earth."

That is our call to action - that is our solemn duty. We strive to make ourselves worthy inheritors of the nation that so many men and women valiantly fought to secure. I often wonder if we have lived up to this inheritance of Liberty - if we have shown ourselves worthy. Do we still have the same love of freedom, and will future generations keep that faith? I hope we do - and I hope we always will.

Democracy, Freedom, Liberty, Opportunity - these are the values that Americans fight for and are willing to die for. These are the values that cause ordinary men and women to do extraordinary things in battle. This is why our nation still stands tall and why our foes have been defeated. We don't fight for conquest - we fight

to defend our way of life and freedom. We fight for justice, and we fight to restore peace.

I pray that we will always be worthy of their final sacrifice. I hope that we will always remember the incredible cost of freedom, and always treasure the value of liberty. We must keep the faith with those who were willing to put themselves in harm's way for our sake.

We must dedicate ourselves to their unfinished work. That is our duty - that is our obligation.

Let us continue the fight, and preserve this government and our way of life for generations to come.

We must make ourselves worthy of those who honored us with their courage and their lives.

May God bestow His blessings of Peace and Comfort to all who mourn the loss of our fallen heroes.

God bless all of you and May God Bless the United States of America, and all who have defended her in the past, present and future years to come.

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Wortham Achievement Award namesake inducted into Army Guard Hall of Honor

BY VAUGHN R. LARSON

WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

First Lt. Thomas E. Wortham IV was inducted into the Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor during a joint ceremony last fall at the Wisconsin National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters.

Wortham was a combat veteran as well as a member of the Chicago Police Department, president of the Cole Park Advisory Council in Chicago, vice president of the Chicago Chapter of the Men of Iota group and an active member of the Project Jeremiah youth mentoring group.

He was tragically killed in Chicago in 2010 fighting off an armed robbery attempt, and the Wisconsin National Guard and the Chicago Police Department each developed an award to honor his legacy.

Selection into the Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor is one of the highest recognitions the Wisconsin National Guard can bestow upon a former soldier

or, with limited exception for heroic or extraordinary actions, a present member of the organization.

Likewise, the 1st Lt. Thomas E. Wortham IV Achievement Award is given annually to the Wisconsin National Guard Soldier or Airman who best represents the Citizen Soldier ideal through selfless military service and servant leadership in their communities.

The ribbon is green for Army and blue for law enforcement, separated by a black stripe signifying a fallen officer.

Brig. Gen. Matthew Strub, Wisconsin's deputy adjutant general for Army, shared some attributes about the young leader who deployed to Iraq in 2004 and again in 2009.

"Those who knew 1st Lt. Wortham during his brief but brilliant career can testify to his courage, integrity and excellence as a combat leader," Strub said. "I've spoken to officers and non-

commissioned officers that knew him well. Every single one of them spoke positively about him with fond memories for his selflessness, natural leadership and contagious personality."

Strub spoke of sensitive security missions Wortham led — he and his soldiers dressed in civilian gear and driving low-profile vehicles — in southern Iraq during his 2009-10 deployment.

Wortham received the Bronze Star for leading more than 200 combat missions. The general relayed details of one such mission from Wortham's commander on that deployment, Lt. Col. Matthew McDonald, then a captain in the 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment.

"Minutes before crossing the border, they encountered a convoy traveling on the same route that had just been caught in a fierce ambush," Strub said. "All their vehicles were thoroughly shot up."

Wortham collected



Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp, Wisconsin's adjutant general, presents Master Sgt. Charles Eells with the 1st Lt. Thomas E. Wortham IV Award. The award recognizes excellence in military and community service. —Contributed Photo

information from the returning convoy, and then briefed his men.

"Tommy was in control," Strub said. "Calm and confident — he clearly had the respect of

his sergeants and soldiers as he briefed them, developed the plan, then checked and rechecked their preparation to go into the unknown. He showed no fear in that

moment."

Strub said that McDonald knew Wortham had passed a crucial test all combat

Turn to **HONOR**, pg. 19

Honor Flights for veterans occur four times annually

The Never Forgotten Honor Flight hosts four one-day trips to Washington, D.C. each year for World War II, Korea and Vietnam veterans to honor their service.

Recently, Mission No. 47 departed on April 22, bringing over 100 veterans, many of whom served in Vietnam.

Mission No. 48 departed on May 20, and two flights

will follow later in the fall.

The Never Forgotten Honor Flight is a Wausau-based volunteer organization that flies out of northcentral Wisconsin to Washington, D.C. to visit memorials honoring the veterans' service.

The organization is a part of the national Honor Flight Network, which connects veterans with regional "hubs"

with opportunities to visit the memorials in Washington, D.C.

As of Dec. 31, 2023, the Honor Flight Network has flown 295,787 veterans, with 4,399 of them flying through the northcentral Wisconsin hub, Never Forgotten Honor Flight.

To be selected for a flight, veterans who served before May 5, 1975, must first

apply through an application form or via online (<https://neverforgottenhonorflight.com/application/>). The flights are run during two seasons: spring and fall.

Veterans selected for the April and May honor flights will be notified in January and February, and those chosen for September and October flights will be notified in June and July by postcard.

Upon returning, family and friends are encouraged to honor the veterans with a "Welcome Home" celebration at the Central Wisconsin Airport in Mosinee. Family and friends must arrive at the airport between 8 - 9 p.m. on the day the veterans return. It is recommended to bring chairs to the "Welcome Home" celebration.

Ironwood VA Medical Center praised for best practices

BY JENNIFER MAXON

The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Ironwood, Mich. received praise from The Joint Commission during an in-cycle triennial survey completed earlier this year.

The survey reviewed three areas: the main hospital facility, the home care accreditation program and behavioral health care and human services. Several strengths were highlighted, such as zero findings in behavioral health care and human services, and implementation of best practices in many service

lines. Additionally, no widespread or high-risk findings were noted.

“The triennial assessment is always a learning opportunity for our facility and staff,” said Stephanie Ahonen, medical center chief of quality management. “We appreciate the collaborative nature of The Joint Commission helping us create a safer environment of care for Veterans.”

Several members of the survey team commented on the overall cleanliness of the

Turn to VA, pg. 15



Here's an exterior photo of the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Ironwood, Mich.

—Contributed Photo

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Wisconsin's WWII lost sons and daughters will not be forgotten

BY STORIES BEHIND THE STARS

A Wisconsin WWII Fallen project to write a story about the lives of over 8,300 service persons who died during World War II has been underway for the past two years.

More than 1,500 stories have been successfully completed by 20-plus dedicated volunteers.

The volunteers come from all walks of life and not only live in Wisconsin but other states as well. All are connected to Wisconsin in some way and are driven to make sure that Wisconsin's fallen heroes are remembered.

The public can help tell these stories. The stories will be posted on Fold3.com and can be accessed through a Find A Grave App so that anyone can read the stories of Wisconsin WWII fallen heroes.

The project is part of a national non-profit organization called Stories Behind the Stars. SBTS was founded by Don Milne, who started writing stories about those who died in World War II.

"The daily writings have always been fascinating and well worth the effort. It never got old to find another story about World War II fallen — as a group, they are a microcosm of the America of the mid-20th century. Highly representative of rural and blue-collar America, coming from large families, and usually with less than 12 years of

education," said Milne.

"They also reflected the vast, diverse melting pot that is America. Barely a few days went by without one of the fallen being an immigrant, a child of an immigrant, or a grandchild of immigrants," he said. "They came from dozens and dozens of countries to live the American Dream and tens of thousands from these immigrant families gave their lives for their adopted land."

Stories such as 2nd Lieutenant Julia Hermina Schmid Barnes, who was the valedictorian of her high school class in Plymouth in 1932, she went on to attain her nursing degree and served with the Army Nurse Corp.

She was declared missing in action on March 4, 1945, when the plane on which she was a passenger crashed killing 27 on board including 15 Army nurses.

<https://www.fold3.com/memorial/657825954/barnes-julia-hermina-schmid-2lt/stories>

Or the story of Seaman First Class Earl Lloyd Merchant, a farm hand from Monroe County. He joined the Navy and was assigned to the USS Hancock.

In April 1945 he was killed when a Japanese kamikaze pilot crashed the plane into the Hancock causing a bomb that the ship was

carrying to explode killing 62 men and wounding 71 more.

<https://www.fold3.com/memorial/529998554/earl-l-merchant/stories>

Or Captain Benjamin Louis Saloman Jr. of the Milwaukee area who served with the Army Dental Corp. He was working in an aid station as a surgeon in Saipan in the Marianas Islands when it was overrun with Japanese soldiers.

Captain Saloman jumped into action protecting the wounded American soldiers by engaging in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. He fought his way to the outside of the tent where he took control of a machine gun and fought bravely until his life was taken.

He was found draped over the machine gun with 98 dead enemy soldiers piled up in front of his position.

<https://www.fold3.com/memorial/664255511/saloman-benjamin-lewis-jr-cpt/stories>

These are just a sample of the thousands of brave Wisconsin sons and daughters who fought for our freedom in World War II. Volunteer writers can tell stories for those who never could.

Jean Cookle, Wisconsin WWII Fallen Project Director, is asking for help in joining the mission of writing all the Wisconsin WWII fallen stories.

"Those who gave



The volunteer-authored stories of Wisconsin's World War II veterans often come with old photos of fallen heroes and the loved ones they left behind. —Contributed Photo

Turn to WWII, pg. 17

"Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices."

- President Harry Truman



State Senator Mary Felzkowski would like to give a special thank you to all former, current, and future members of our armed services.



Camp American Legion is a place for veterans and their families to be able to enjoy the tranquility of the North Woods in a stress-free environment with all the amenities. —Contributed Photo

Camp American Legion is secret paradise retreat

BY JACKI GOEBEL

On the shores of Big Carr Lake in Lake Tomahawk lies a secret paradise. Camp American Legion (CAL) is a healing retreat built in 1925, open to Wisconsin veterans and active military and their immediate families.

The camp was designed for families to come together in a safe and comfortable environment for camaraderie, support, sharing and learning. Programs throughout the year offer different experiences, including sports tournaments, legion chaplains retreat, Healing Warrior Hearts and Camp Serenity.

The camp offers support groups and activities, but military families can stay at the resort just as a getaway.

Applications can be filled out and submitted to reserve a cabin. American Legion posts throughout Wisconsin sponsor the cabins, most of which are complete with kitchens and located on the lake. The camp offers paddleboats, pontoons, games, and

other recreational situations to provide a relaxing escape.

Veterans and military find it easy to connect with each other because they often have shared life experiences. CAL is more than just a resort or fishing camp, although the point of the camp is to enjoy the outdoors and commune with nature.

In 2022, veterans from Wisconsin Operating Engineers Local 139 and other volunteers worked on handicapped-accessible paths. In January 2023, Marshfield American Legion Post 54, with help from Marshfield Elks Lodge 665 and other supporters, built a new cabin for CAL.

One particular retreat is Camp Serenity. In early fall, families of fallen soldiers get together and share stories of their loved one. Patriot Guard Riders of Wisconsin come in to serve a lunch buffet and provide a fun day for the children, playing games and putting on a colossal water balloon fight. A flag line is held while the families pay tribute at water's edge to

their fallen loved one.

Wisconsin Hero Outdoors, a nonprofit organization to connect veterans, first responders and their families, held its annual winter event at CAL in January. The fishing tournament brings families from all over Wisconsin out on the lake for a fun weekend.

Qualifications to stay at the camp include being a Wisconsin resident; being honorably discharged or active duty or being their spouse or caregiver, and dependent-aged children; or being immediate family of a fallen member. A schedule of programs available and more information on staying at this peaceful wonderland can be found at wilegion.org/camp-american-legion-2, or links on its Facebook page.

Although there are staff at CAL, the camp relies on volunteers and donations to continue. Veterans and their families are invited to the camp at no cost to them. To find out what volunteer opportunities are upcoming, email caloffice@wilegion.org.

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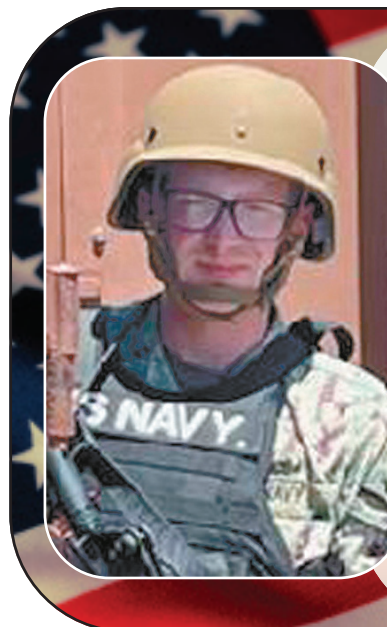


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Phelps will honor America's fallen heroes with a Memorial Day service next Monday, May 27, starting at 1 p.m. at the cemetery. —Photo By Sharon Gifford



Adam J. Schubring

Adam began his Navy basic training at Great Lakes, Ill., and graduated in the top 3% of his class.

He was an honor graduate of Fire Control "A" School. Adam finished C school in Dahlgren, Va. He successfully completed Spy Baseline 7.

Currently, Adam is stationed in Pearl Harbor. He is an FCA3 Spy Tech on the USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110).

Adam earned his ESWS and ribbons for Humanitarian Aid, Rifle Shooting and Deployment.

He recently returned from his second deployment. Adam ranked up to E5 Petty Officer 2nd Class and earned a ribbon for his outstanding work on the William P. Lawrence.

He lives with his wife, Ali, in Hawaii.

Adam is the son of Brian Schubring and stepson of Lori Schubring of Eagle River.



Christian Hudgins

Christian Hudgins entered active duty in the United States Air Force in February and currently serves at NAS Pensacola. Perry will attend Combat Systems Officer Training School.

Before active duty, Hudgins was a member of Colorado State University's Air Force ROTC program, Detachment 90, the "Mighty 90."

Hudgins is the son of Chad and Chelle(Renberg) Hudgins. Chelle is a 1986 graduate of Northland Pines High School.

Hudgins and his wife, Emily, are living in Pensacola, Fla.

VA FROM PAGE 12

facility and its significant impact in creating a safe environment for patients.

The survey team also commented on the excellent customer service that the Supply Chain Management team provides in the facility.

The Sterile Processing Service received kudos for their processes. The

survey team commented that they were impressed with the diligence of the medical center in creating strong processes that incorporate manufacturer instructions for use in sterile processing of medical equipment.

The survey highlighted a best practice in the service of pharmacy, where pharmacists provide veterans with prescription counseling prior to the prescription

being issued versus after the prescription is issued to ensure the patient knows what is being prescribed and how to properly take the medication.

The facility was also given praise for the implementation of the Lynx system, a computer-based emergency response system that allows employees to request immediate emergency support.

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Boulder Junction Veterans Memorial Triangle designed as 'symbol of respect for our veterans'



A bronze statue of an active duty soldier saluting the boots, gun and helmet of a fallen soldier is featured at the Veterans Memorial Triangle. — STAFF PHOTO



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BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

Richardson-Michaud American Legion Post 451 of Boulder Junction recently marked the 10th anniversary of \$25,000 in upgrades to its longtime downtown memorial.

A Boulder Junction fixture for decades, Veterans Memorial Triangle is located on the west end of the downtown district at the junction of highways M and K and Ada Street.

The memorial serves as the gathering point for Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Veterans Day observances conducted by Boulder Junction-

based Richardson-Michaud American Legion Post 451, which also serves neighboring Sayner and Star Lake.

The post is under the leadership of longtime Post Commander James "Hammie" Hamilton, a 23-year U.S. Army veteran. Other post officers include Dennis Reuss, finance officer; Otis Voeltz, adjutant; and John Scapes, chaplain.

The \$25,000 in upgrades, unveiled on Veterans Day 2011, included the installations of a Military Service Wall, Fallen Soldier Battlefield Cross memorial, access staircase, decorative

perimeter fencing, lighting, and an inscribed Memorial Walkway offering space for up to 1,200 memorial pavers.

Cremation ashes of veterans can be interred under the memorial pavers on a by-request basis.

The centerpiece Military Service Wall, bearing the inscription "All Gave Some, Some Gave All," features 10-inch diameter bronze medallions for the nation's five military branches — Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy and Coast Guard.

Turn to
RESPECT, pg. 18



Post 480 American Legion in Presque Isle continues forging ahead in the North Woods offering numerous programs and fundraising events. —Contributed Photo

Post 480 maintains community ties in Presque Isle-area

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

The Veterans and families of American Legion Post 480 strive to maintain strong ties within their community.

The post, currently led by Commander Larry Gorrilla, has recently been expanding its programs and events to better suit the needs of the community. Gorrilla served three tours overseas in the United States Navy and has been a member of the Winegar Post 480 American Legion for 17 years.

“Being involved with the community to the best of our capability is important,” said Gorrilla. “We host and organize several public events and programs throughout the months we are open.”

Members feel that community involvement

is key to the success of the veteran-run organization. The club, like most of the American Legion Posts, was once private but is now open to the public during the warmer months in the North Woods.

The post is a member of the Presque Isle Chamber of Commerce, participates in community parades and festivals, and its honor guard provides services during local events.

“We have a prime location here in Presque Isle,” added Gorrilla. “It is our responsibility to utilize it to the best of our ability for the community.”

The post building is located on water and is directly off the ATV and snowmobile trails. Other community organizations work with the legion and

utilize the space to hold their own events.

The Presque Isle Lions Club annually holds its lobster dinner at the facility as a kick-off to the opening of the club each spring.

The club has also hosted community bingo each Sunday at 6 p.m. from spring through September. The proceeds from this program sponsor the post’s Good Neighbor Program. This program provides free services to citizens in need in the community. Daily phone check-ins, transportation services and meal delivery are only a few of the services this veteran-funded program assists with.

For more information on Winegar Post 480, its programs and events, contact Larry Gorrilla at (715) 686-2517.

Veterans Administration offers revised VA Caregiver Program

The Veterans Administration (VA) offers a VA Caregivers program that provides compensation, support and other benefits to people who support the health and wellness of a service-disabled veteran or a member of the Armed Forces.

Previously, a veteran had to be service-connected for a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001, or on or before May 7, 1975.

As of October 1, 2022, this program expanded to include caregivers of eligible veterans of all eras.

According to the VA, to be eligible, the veterans being cared for must have a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70% or more.

Veterans who have a single or combined 60% disability rating and are receiving Individual Unemployment benefits are not eligible, the agency said.

Veterans must also be in need of in-person care services for a minimum of six continuous months based on either an inability to perform an Activity of Daily Living (ADL) or they must require supervision, protection or instruction, which means a functional impairment that directly impacts their ability to maintain their safety on a daily basis.

To be eligible to be a veteran’s caregiver, a person must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- A family member or someone who lives with the veteran full-time or will do so if designated as his/her caregiver
- Be initially assessed by the VA

as being able to complete caregiver education and training

- Complete caregiver training and demonstrate the ability to carry out the specific personal care services, core competencies, and additional care requirements.

There are also plenty of benefits for approved caregivers.

They include:

- Education and training
- Access to health insurance, if caregiver is uninsured
- Mental health counseling
- Financial stipend
- Respite care
- Wellness contact
- Travel and per diem

compensation when traveling for veteran’s VA health care appointments.

To apply for the VA Caregiver Program, download and fill out VA Form 10-10CG and mail it to Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center, Attn: Caregiver Program, 325 East H Street, Iron Mountain, MI, 49801.

Or people can go to <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/apply-for-caregiver-assistance-form-10-10cg/> introduction and apply online; or call the office and they can assist in the online application.

For more information about the program, go to <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/> or contact our office.

Tammy Javenkoski, County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO), and Jason Dailey, Assistant CVSO, can be reached at (715) 369-6127 or cvso@oneidacountywi.gov.

WWII FROM PAGE 13

the ultimate sacrifice in serving their country deserve to be remembered, wouldn’t you want your loved one to be remembered in such a way?” she said.

Volunteering is easy and they work at their own pace from home. She

said this could also be a group project for a high school or college history classroom, genealogy or a historical society project.

“Please consider joining the Stories Behind the Stars Wisconsin WWII Fallen Project and helping us remember those who fought so bravely for us all,” said Coogle.

Volunteer writers

receive free access to research sites Fold3.com, Ancestry.com and Newspapers.com. You can contact Jean Coogle at jean@storiesbehindthestars.org for more information. You can also learn more about the project at Stories Behind the Stars website at <https://www.storiesbehindthestars.org>.



Honor flights started by two veterans' sons

BY JACKI GOEBEL

The Honor Flight Network was co-founded by Earl Morse, the son of a Korean and Vietnam War veteran, and Jeff Miller, a small-business owner and son of a World War II veteran.

Morse, a physician assistant and retired Air Force Captain, working at a veterans clinic in Ohio, asked his patients if they would ever be interested in traveling to visit the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Most of these veterans were seniors in their 80s and it simply wasn't financially or physically possible for them to make the journey. Morse asked one veteran if he could personally fly him out, free of charge, to visit the memorial. The veteran graciously accepted the offer.

Morse realized that many veterans, given the opportunity to be a part of this dream, would accept.

In May, 2005, six small planes flew 12 veterans to the memorial. The pilots accepting the request absorbed the cost and personally escorted the veterans around D.C.

And so the Honor Flight was born.

To date, there are more than 140 regional hubs across the nation. In Wisconsin, there are now six honor flights running several missions a year to take eligible veterans to Washington, D.C. for the day, and escort them to the different memorials to honor their service to their country. Each flight hub covers a different region of the state.

Every detail of their day-long trip has the veterans' best interest in mind to ensure they have a

safe, memorable trip that conveys appreciation and admiration.

On each flight, they travel with trained volunteers who act as guardian escorts, a volunteer medical team, and professional photographers. On the Washington, D.C. side, volunteers, support staff, and organizations ensure the veterans get the "red carpet" treatment.

Flights in Wisconsin include Old Glory Honor Flight, Freedom Honor Flight, Badger Honor Flight, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, Honor Flight Northland, and Never Forgotten Honor Flight.

Each hub tries to make multiple trips each year. Some flights are special missions, such as Old Glory's "Return to Pearl" flight, which took 19 Pearl Harbor survivors back to Hawaii to tour the U.S.S. Arizona and sites these veterans were at when the Japanese bombed the area.

When veterans fly back to Wisconsin and debark from the plane, they are greeted by friends, family and different organizations saluting them.

Patriot Guard Riders of Wisconsin are often at the welcome home celebration, along with groups such as the Girl Scouts, Kiwanis clubs, and American Legions from the area. Emotions are often overwhelming at the greeting.

For information on honor flights, visit wisconsinhonorflight.org to find the coordinating hub and flight schedule. Flights are at no cost to the veteran, but chaperones and volunteers pay for their own costs.

Never Forgotten Honor Flights are the closest hub, based in Wausau.

Respect

FROM PAGE 16

The focal point of the Military Service Wall, on a raised pedestal, is a bronze Fallen Soldier Battlefield Cross monument, as well as a bronze plaque detailing its history.

Existing monuments at Veterans Memorial Triangle were incorporated into the project. At the 2011 dedication, a time capsule was placed containing a variety of items, including the Post 451 roster, newspaper articles about the memorial upgrade project, and plans for improvements.

"It's a symbol of great respect for our veterans and a tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives," Hamilton said of the upgraded memorial at the dedication.

"The townspeople should be very proud." Recalled Reuss of the dedication ceremonies, "It was a very emotional and fulfilling day."

The improvements at Veterans Memorial Triangle were planned by members of Post 451's Veterans Memorial Design Team, spearheaded by five Boulder Junction post members — Hamilton,

Reuss, Scapes, Voeltz and Roy Titel.

A World War II veteran, Titel died at age 88 in April 2015.

"It started out as an idea — let's build ourselves a real memorial and see what we can come up with," recalled Reuss of the collaborative group effort to upgrade the Post's memorial, which originally included a flagpole and an eagle statue, and later grew to encompass a bronze statue of a saluting active duty soldier.

"Our little group got together and everybody put pieces of the puzzle together," said Reuss. "We created an idea and came up with a plan, and John made a drawing and built a model for something to show people as we started a fundraising drive selling bricks and plaques for the memorial."

The plans for the Veterans Memorial Triangle upgrades found widespread support among Boulder Junction residents and visitors alike.

"We had no money in the kitty," Reuss recalled. "We had absolutely zero dollars. In no time at all we raised enough money to build it and maintain it. It's been self-sufficient since the day it started. I was really pleased with how it came together and turned out."

The memorial occupies a high-profile site at the intersection of highways M and K.

"I'm proud of our memorial — it's a very beautiful memorial," Reuss said. "It's the first thing you see when you come into town. It's very visible. We hold all our services there — Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Veterans Day."

Over the past decade, Reuss said the memorial has attracted attention and "gained a lot of respect" from community residents and visitors alike.

"I'm down there quite often — working on the flowers, installing new pavers and things — and people come up to me and say, 'Boy, is this ever nice,'" Reuss said.

Engraved memorial pavers and plaques are available for purchase in support of Veterans Memorial Triangle and its upkeep.

Application forms for memorial pavers and plaques are available from an application dispenser box at Veterans Memorial Triangle, located at 5501 Highway M, and at the Boulder Junction Chamber of Commerce, located at 5352 Park St. (Highway M), or by writing to American Legion Post 451, P.O. Box 221, Boulder Junction, WI 54512-0221.



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Honor

FROM PAGE 11

leaders aspire to — his men admired him, and they would follow him.

Wortham joined the Chicago Police Department in 2007, quickly gaining the trust and admiration of his peers and supervisors for his willingness to patrol the most dangerous areas in Chicago's seventh district.

"By any measure of a military and law enforcement career, Wortham's star shone brightly," Strub said. "So many fellow Soldiers who had known him for years only learned after his death of his above-and-beyond service as a citizen."

Wortham, while off-duty, served as president of the Cole Park Advisory Council, a community policing organization dedicated to reducing

the rising crime in the neighborhood. He organized neighborhood watches and conducted youth interventions to steer youth away from gangs, drugs and violence. He worked to keep local basketball courts open and safe from gang violence. He served as a mentor and positive role model.

"We are forever indebted to Tom," Strub said.

Wortham's sister Sandra spoke on behalf of his family.

"Tommy has been gone for quite a while now — it's been 13 and a half years," she said. "But the way that you remember him makes us feel like it was yesterday, and we can never thank you enough."

Sandra said her brother dreamed of serving in the military since childhood, and credited her parents, Carolyn and Thomas E. Wortham III, for developing his character.

"One thing I can take comfort in is, though he did not live a long life, he did exactly what he wanted to," Sandra said. "Listening to the stories about his time overseas — that was a dream for him."

She encouraged those serving in the armed forces and in law enforcement to carry on their work.

"Please know that there is nothing society could do without you," she said. "We count on our service members, we count on our law enforcement members, and Tommy really embodied that mix of citizen and soldier."

The Wortham family received a certificate of commendation from Gov. Tony Evers as well as a copy of the plaque which will be displayed in the Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor at Joint Force Headquarters.

The Wisconsin Air National Guard's Master

Sgt. Charles "Earl" Ells, a watch supervisor in the air traffic control tower and radar approach control at Volk Field, is the 2023 recipient of the 1st Lt. Thomas E. Wortham IV Achievement Award.

Brig. Gen. David May, Wisconsin's deputy adjutant general for Air, introduced Ells and spoke of spending time in the control tower with Ells during a Northern Lightning exercise when more than 70 fighter aircraft taxied onto the runway for the morning training mission.

"I was having heart palpitations," said May, a former commander at Volk Field. "But for Earl, it was just another day in the office. I was always impressed with how seamlessly he and his controllers were able to adjust to the extreme swings in the operational tempo in our airspace, always keeping our air crews safe."

Ells also serves as the Camp Douglas village president, where during his tenure he has overseen improvements to Main Street and utilities, won a \$750,000 grant to build a new community center, organized meal delivery for hundreds of elderly village residents, and developed and expanded the village's Armed Forces Day event.

When Volk Field's airspace complex was updated in 2019, Ells was part of the effort to engage local pilots to ensure safety.

"If you spend any time in the Camp Douglas area, you will see the good work of Earl Ells," May said. "He's a consummate people person with a vision for his community, always focused on making progress and accomplishing tangible things."

Ells organized informational field trips to Volk Field with the Tomah Area School District, emphasizing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and encouraging military service.

Ells said that, of all the awards he has received during his military career, the Wortham IV Achievement Award means the most.

Speaking without a script, Ells thanked retired Col. Jim Olson and retired Chief Master Sgt. Greg Cullen for their mentorship, and his family for their support. He shared that he is a quarter Native American, and is enrolled in the Bad River Indian Reservation by Ashland.

He closed his comments with a short statement in Ojibwe, which translated as "Many lives strengthened one."



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