

# Auxiliary News Letter, Unit 437

Greetings to All!

We enjoyed an amazing year, and a fantastic beginning to 2026. First things first, we were the first Unit in Dane County and the 3<sup>rd</sup> District to reach 100% membership year 2026. Wow, that is fantastic, plus we have been able to add new members also, 2 new Juniors and 2 new Senior's members. Keep them coming. Let's get those renewals in; we are still missing, a few members yet. National will be sending out another renewal form this week, get them in please. The holidays are a time for being together and enjoying the spirit of the season, as we were on Saturday. A wonderful day for our veterans and military families. We were able to honor 2 veterans with a quilt of valor, and we had one of our active military families with us. The Ruland family has a long-standing presence as veterans and members of our legion family. And we honored this family with a Blue Star Banner, this banner lets everyone know they have family members currently serving in our armed forces. Bill Sr. served in Viet Nam and his wife a long-time member of the Auxiliary, their youngest son Dan has just retired after a life in the National Guard, and many deployments, Dan met his wife while they both were serving, Brianna continues to serve today and is presently stationed in Madison. BJ and Leslie are the proud parents of William, and William is the grandson of Roxanne and Bill. He has many deployments also and is currently at Camp Lagune waiting for his next orders. We also presented Blue Star banners to the families of Jonathon Holcomb and Tyler Bass. Jonathon is currently at Camp Lague waiting for deployment. Tyler is home after a 6 month stay in Kuwait. The Gradel family will also be awarded a Blue Star banner and like Roxanne and Bill, their banner will have 2 stars as they also have 2 members currently serving. I will update information on our military members as I get the information.

We presented Marc Mickelson and Clyde Kaikuaana appreciation awards for all the help they lend during the year, we can't ask for better non-member volunteers, Cheers to these two. Legionnaire Phil Haas was also recognized by the Auxiliary for all he does, and it's a lot of behind-the-scenes stuff no one ever sees. He's amazing, top-notch fellow and we love him. Another Amazing group we honored were our Officers and outstanding member Linda Brunner, her unwavering support is refreshing, she has been all in on helping with our Christmas ornament project, our juniors and a creative game for our Christmas party, she has earned the distinguished honor of our 2026 Poppy Queen elect, we welcome her back in the fray with open arms. It's hard to commit with a fulltime job, kids and life, so we are thrilled that she has dedicated her time to our organization in her retirement work.

The officers of our Unit are irreplaceable and play an integral part in keeping this organization going. It takes us all to make the auxiliary go around. We are Honoring Doreen Wages, Vice President, she has been everything in this unit and is currently the oldest officer in our unit and one of the longest serving officers. She has forgotten more than I will ever know and is a constant guide to us and moves us into the future. She leads to way to change, not stuck in the old ways but more forward thinking than most veteran members. Doreen, you are loved, respected, and appreciated every day. (I forgot my speech and your award) I didn't have Suzi by my side, (he- he). You'll receive it in March. Enjoy the warmth of my little snowbird...

Our Secretary/Treasurer Suzi Mickelson is not just a member that takes minutes and keeps the checkbook, she is the backbone of this unit, never afraid to step in and help, be a leader, a

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supervisor, a disciplinary but most of all my best friend and right hand (literally right now). She has been, self-taught, to create the most amazing posts for our Unit, create articles for the unit that the community, and The legion family needs to know about critical information and events. She is the best of the best and one of the most valuable players. Suzi, much love, and respect to you. God Blessed me when he gave me you as a friend.

A unit needs faith to get through some of the trying times, health related, conflicts between members, financial, leadership trials. Our unit has been under the faithful care of our chaplain Sarah Smith. She seems to know just the right prayers to help us all one way or another. She does her own donations to children's funds throughout the world, and sends many cards and prayers to our veterans, and she leads our meeting with our always short but sweet prayer (just for Ben) for dinner, the opening and closing of our meetings. Never fail Sarah is always keeping the - faith for us. All our love and caring goes out to Sarah. Thanks, Sarah, for keeping us safe in prayer. When you return from Hawaii, you have an award coming. Enjoy the trip, so well deserved.

Who better to keep everyone in line, but the Sargent in Arms, Erleen Hankins. Erleen goes about her duties with barely a whisper; she exemplifies that quite strength we all need. Her constant smile makes us feel all warm and cozy. She has many talents but a remarkable talent for quilting and has many quilts to honor. As a member of several quilting groups, Erleen has crafted many quilts of valor for our veterans. An amazing talent and generous gift. She can always be counted on to attend any, and all events auxiliary, only missing this year's Christmas party and her award. Erleen, thank you for your steadfast dedication to this organization and everything veterans, you're an amazing member.

Now on to our storyteller Kathy Robichaud, this outstanding member is ranked pretty, high on our list of top-of-the-line humans. Always there to record our unit high and lows, picture taking, keeping our unit scrapbook for the future members and community members to enjoy. Kathy is another dedicated officer, only missing meetings and events to fulfill family needs and events. Kathy just plain rocks, she is talented, open minded, shares what's on her heart during meetings, opens her house to us for various card writing projects and just loves to have fun, she fits this organization like a glove. She's a keeper, as an ole-timer would say, and we plan on doing just that, keeping her near and dear. Thank you for all you have and continue to do, thank you to each of you!!! You make being president a piece of cake and a joy able learning experience, and I'd never want to do it without you all!!!!

**A SUPER-DUPER BIG SHOUT OUT TO ALL WHO VOLUNTERRED AND DONATED WILD WEST DAYS HOURS TO THE AUXILIARY, OUR VETERANS THANK YOU!!!**

Upcoming events and things to put in front of your thoughts. January 28th, American Legion Post 437 Annual First Responders Dinner 6pm, we need to know how many will be attending so Virgil can inform Grandma Mary's. Every year we donate \$100 to Fire, EMS, and Dane County Sheriff. I forgot to get you all together to ok this Saturday. I'm going to give Suzi the green light as soon as possible. Only reply if you vote no.... please

It's that time of year to look at fundraising, do we want to do meat raffle/pie auction in Feb, This would be at Jax or Rookies, I was talking with Laura, at the Shack and they may start meat raffles in March there, I expressed interest and I try to go to eat there once every couple weeks. And so should you, they have excellent food. We need to start planning Memorial Day; most of

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the changes the unit voted for last year will be implemented this year. In February committees will be adjusted and a final draft of who's where by April.

Suzi and I will do fundraising together or at least we will have a list of who is checking with which business, so we do not double up on our requests, and maybe we will get a few of our bigger donors back. It's a doggie dog world out there and only going to get worse. We will not be doing a general fund donation until after Memorial Day, to ensure plenty of funds to purchase what we need. I will start looking at pork butts and will purchase them as I find them on sale. Please note this year will be more expensive than previous years, we will need extra funds. Phil suggested we have a meeting to get events for 2026 squared away, so we are all on the same page, what a novel idea.

Keep your suggestions coming and we appreciate you bringing your concerns to the meeting, the only place it can get worked out to everyone's approval. Keep up the fantastic work and dedication. Many units are looking at our successes to use in their units, now that's a compliment to all.

If for whatever reason you are not happy with the ways things are performed by this Unit, feel free to come to a meeting so it can be addressed, if you do not feel you can do that, then you can at least stop your public rebuke of our organization. Trust us we do hear from others, and if it continues may we suggest you transfer to a unit that more suits you, bad mouthing the Auxiliary is very disrespectful to us all, including our Veterans and our founding members, shame on you...

So blessed to have you all. Thank you again for all your support.

Shelley