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COMMANDER'S CORNER: Happy 250th Birthday USA! Reading Across America! TUFT golf outing! Memorial Day! Tractor Days! Celebration of Freedom! Christmas in July! What a year so far!! Very busy, but a lot of great things going on! Two weeks ago, we wrapped up the 2026 Wisconsin American Legion Convention in Appleton and I sat in amazement again – as we came home with 8+ Post and individual awards! I want to thank each and every member of our Post 477 family for your commitment in supporting our mission! Whether you're volunteering at one of our fundraisers or community events, mentoring our youth, helping with behind-the-scenes administrative tasks, or proudly serving on Active Duty, in the National Guard, or the Reserves to protect our freedom, your dedication makes a difference. Thank you for all you do to support our Post, our community, and our nation. Keep up the outstanding work! God bless each of you, and God Bless America!

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING OUR NEWEST MEMBERS TO POST 477:

Brian Hartman – Army GWOT Veteran
Marshall Kirkpatrick – USMC Veteran
Scott Manlick – USMC GWOT Veteran

Jessica Huss – Army GWOT Veteran
Gordon Lofland - Army Veteran 1989-1995

We're glad to have you as part of the Post 477 Family!

A NOTE FROM POST MEMBER JOSH, WHO'S DEPLOYED WITH B BATTERY 1/121 FA: “....I received the care package this morning from the American Legion. I want to thank you, it means the world to me and definitely made me smile ear to ear and made my day. Can't wait to be home and finally meet everyone at Post 477!”

SPECIAL FEATURE: CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM ON AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

On July 4th, the Legion 477 Family hosted our Celebration of Freedom in recognition of America's 250th Birthday at the historic Meeme Liberty Pole. More than 30 members of the 477 Family participated in the ceremony, with another dozen members joining us for this historic celebration.

The ceremony featured a six-flag line representing the United States, POW/MIA, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and America 250. One of the notable moments was the narration of the “13 Folds” as members carefully folded a large American flag.

We shared the story of Norbert Lenz, who, as a young boy, attended the dedication of the Meeme Liberty Pole in 1922. Norbert served in the US Army during WWII and was awarded the Purple Heart & the Silver Star for Valor. As he passed in 2010, Norbert requested in his will that his casket flag

someday fly from the Liberty Pole. During our Celebration of Freedom, that wish was honored as his slightly tattered flag proudly flew over the historic site.

Wendy Jacobs performed both the National Anthem and "America the Beautiful," while Faye Billmann, a former Kiel High School teacher, presented "Reflections of 250 Years," offering a perspective on our nation's 250-year journey. The ceremony concluded with a three-round volley by the Post 477 Honor Guard.

Following the program, several dozen local residents joined the Legion 477 Family for brunch and fellowship, a fitting conclusion to a very special celebration of our nation, our history, and our community.

We are both honored and humbled to have played a part in this historic moment in American history. Our heartfelt thanks go to each and every person who helped make the day special, whether working behind the scenes, serving in the Honor Guard, standing proudly in the crowd, capturing the day in photographs, preparing and serving the meal, or lending a hand wherever needed.

It truly was a perfect day, made possible by the dedication and support of so many. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who helped make our Celebration of Freedom a day we will remember for years to come.



Photo above: Many of the Legion 477 Family members who participated in the Celebration of Freedom.

POST 477 DOING BIG THINGS IN OUR COMMUNITY:

1. Our Tee It Up Fore Troops golf outing benefitting Old Glory Honor Flight in May was an amazing success! 244 golfers, 70+ volunteers, 50+ sponsors, 100+ Veterans & Military members were sponsored to golf. Thank you to each of you who participated in any way, golfers, volunteers, donors, sponsors.

We presented an amazing \$71,433 to Missions of Honor Old Glory Honor bringing our total for the past four years to more than \$188,000!



2. The American Legion 477 Honor Guard teams conducted Memorial Day honors at 17 area cemeteries. This marked our 80th year of rendering honors on Memorial Day and continues to be one of our most sacred traditions. Thank you to all our Legion Family members who participated and a special shoutout is extended to Joe S. and Shadows who provided a nice 'grab and go' breakfast! Many of you were also able to join us for our traditional lunch at Meat's.

3. The Factory & Farm Feed and Tractor Day were also success stories. Over 1000 brats were grilled up and served and we were pleasantly surprised that our new menu item, chicken sandwiches, were also a bit hit. The tractors showed up! The community showed their support! And, whether working the grill, food or raffle tickets sales, providing a shuttle, helping with parking, taking part in the tractor parade or helping up with cleanup, you, our dedicated Volunteers made it happen.



4. So, we raised the money—but how did we put those funds to work? This year, Post 477 sponsored three Badger Boys State delegates and awarded two scholarships to deserving students. Supporting these young people is more than just a financial contribution—it's an investment in their future, our community, and the next generation of leaders.

Photo: Kiel HS Graduate, Ava with her parents, received our first ever Post scholarship.

POST 477: WHAT'S NEXT:

1. Upcoming Parades:

- Sunday, August 9 – Kiel Picnic Parade – Lineup no later than 11 am near 12th Street and Fremont. Step-Off: 11:30 a.m. Distance: Approximately one mile with a downhill grade.
- Saturday, September 12 – Meat's Fest Parade (St. Nazianz) - Lineup: No later than 5:00 p.m. on Highway A on the south side of town. Step-Off: 5:30 p.m. Distance: Approximately one mile with a gentle downhill grade.

Parade Uniform - Color Guard/Flag Bearers: White shirt, tie, black slacks, gray vest (blue for SAL), and Legion/SAL cap. Walkers, Vehicle & Float Riders: Legion uniform, red, white, and blue attire or Veteran/Military-related apparel are encouraged.

All Legion Family members are welcome to participate in the parades. We will have vehicles to ride in if you're not able to walk the entire parade route. We aren't allowed to toss candy from the vehicles, but we will have candy and America 250 items available for the walkers to share with parade watchers.

2. The County Fair is right around the corner! Post 477 will staff the American Legion information booth on Saturday from 10 a.m.–9 p.m. and again on Sunday, August 30, from noon–3 p.m. The fair booth is a great opportunity for our Legion Family to share the Post 477 story—to talk with our neighbors and friends about who we are, what we do, and the many great things our Legion Family is doing for Veterans, Military members, youth, and our community. Come help us showcase why we're proud to be "Doing BIG Things in OUR Community!"

Please reach out to Commander Kevin and let him know what hours you are available to help. We'd like to schedule two-hour shifts so everyone still has plenty of time to enjoy the fair with family and friends. The Fair "uniform" is the orange volunteer polo with your Legion hat or ball cap. If you don't have an orange polo, we have a limited number of shirts and sizes available, let the Commander know you'd like one. Otherwise, please wear Legion- or Veteran-related apparel.



3. Post 477 sponsors a "Stories of Service" podcast Fridays at 7:45 on WCUB and Saturdays 9:45 on WOMT. The focus of the podcasts are Veterans who've been on their Honor Flight or have participated in the Freedom to Liberty Retreat. Please reach out to Nancy if you'd like to tell your story. Although we prefer to have you present in the studios in Manitowoc, we are able to do the interviews by phone.

Photo: Post members Nancy & Wayne with Terry of WOMT Radio.

BEYOND THE POST:

Post 477 will once again sponsor a team of hikers and walkers for the Boots on the Ground Veteran Suicide Awareness Walk on Saturday, November 7. Whether you walk one mile, five miles, ten miles, or the entire 17.5-mile route, every step helps raise awareness of Veteran and Military suicides and reminds those who are struggling that they are not alone.

The post will pay the registration fee for up to 10 team members, but everyone who joins the Legion 477 team will receive a Be The One T-shirt. Come walk with your Legion Family, invite your family and friends to join us to help spread the Be The One message. Please contact Nancy if you'd like to join the team.



Photo: 2025 Ruck March Post 477 Team

2. Our Meeme Liberty Pole Capital Campaign will continue through the end of 2026 as we work to further enhance this historic site. Future improvements include additional landscaping, a memorial stone, and possibly a bench where visitors can sit, reflect, and appreciate the significance of the Liberty Pole and those it honors. Donations may be mailed directly to Post 477; please write "Meeme Liberty Pole" on the memo line of your check.



There is also an opportunity to donate through The Wisconsin American Legion Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization. The Foundation will provide the appropriate tax acknowledgment, and all of the funds will be distributed to Post 477 in support of the project. When donating through the Foundation, it is very important to include EIN 26-1582528 and specifically designate your contribution for the "Post 477 Flagpole Project." Mail donations to: The Wisconsin American Legion Foundation, Inc. P.O. Box 827 Portage, WI 53901.

Photo: A 12 x 18 US flag flies on the new 60 foot flagpole while the American 250 flag flies on the Meeme Liberty Pole. An amazing sight visible from a good distance.

3. The American Legion Family USA 250 Challenge concluded on July 4, and our Legion 477 Family did an outstanding job! The Legion 477 Family team finished in the top 10 among approximately 400 teams in four categories: # of Buddy Checks conducted, total volunteer/service hours, total fitness hours, and funds raised.

A special thank-you to our Legion 477 Family team members Andrew, Gary, Heather, Matt, Nancy and Rebecca for representing Post 477 and our entire Legion Family so well. Great job!

4. American Legion Riders (ALR): Recently, Heather and Al participated in the ALR Cruise for a Cause, which raised more than \$92,000 with proceeds benefitting the Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF), the Auxiliary's Badger Girls State program, and the Sons' Operation A.L.F. program.

Upcoming ALR activities include: August 9 – Kiel Community Parade; August 16–20 – Fall Tomahawk Ride; and September 12 – Meat's Fest Parade and the 9/11 Ride in Eden. Interested in joining the Riders or learning more? Contact Heather, our ALR representative, at (414) 704-4191 with questions about membership or upcoming activities.

5. Have you been on your Honor Flight? Did you know that you are eligible if you served in any component (Active Duty, National Guard, Reserves), at any location, at any time, prior to 7 May 1975? Veterans fly at no cost! Ask a family member or friend to join you as your Guardian; two caveats, they must be between 18-69 years old and cannot be your spouse. Cost for the Guardian is \$500. Please reach out to Nancy at text (920) 905-6273 for assistance in completing the application or if you have any questions.



SERVICE OFFICER SPOTLIGHT: If you have questions or need assistance with your benefits of VA claim, please reach out to Rebecca at (920) 645-8102. Please take a few minutes to read the attached article from our Department Service Officer, James F., regarding the ever-changing landscape of Veterans benefits. Staying informed about available benefits, programs, and changes is important for all Veterans and their families. As you read the article, please remember that the changes will NOT affect those currently rated for a particular injury or condition.



POST MEETINGS: General membership meetings are at the St Nazianz Village Hall. The SAL meeting begins at 5:30, the Legion follows at 6:30. Our upcoming meetings are on 24 September and 22 October.

The Post Executive Committee (PEC) meets monthly to ensure that Post business/planning is completed. If you have anything you'd like to discuss, please reach out to Kevin, he'll add the topic to the agenda.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- 9 August – Kiel Community Parade – lineup at 11 – step-off at 11:30
- 26-30 August – Manitowoc County Fair (Post 477 'Days' are Saturday 10-9 & Sunday 12-3)
- 27 August – 3 September – National Convention
- 30 August – Freedom to Liberty 4 – Welcome Home – Appleton Airport
- 27 August – 3 September – National Convention – Louisville
- 11 September – National Day of Service & Remembrance
- 12 September – Meat's Fest Parade – lineup at 5 – step-off at 5:30
- 22 September – Manitowoc County United Veterans Council Meeting @AMVETS
- 24 September – SAL & Post Meeting
- 12 October – County Council Meeting – Hosted by Post 88 Manitowoc
- 22 October – SAL & Post Meeting
- 25 October – 6th District Conference
- 14 November – Manitowoc County Veterans Banquet – Seven Lakes Golf & Dining

POST LEADERSHIP:

- Commander: Kevin Nett (920) 286-3009
- 1st Vice Commander & Membership: Jeff Bronson (920) 901-6801
- 2nd Vice Commander & Fundraising: Gary Bonnett (920) 652-6811
- Adjutant & Public Relations: Nancy Rivera (920) 905-6273
- Finance Officer: Chris Bestul (920) 629-9107
- Service Officer: Rebecca Pribyl (920) 645-8102
- Service Officer & ALR Contact: Heather Bruckschen (414) 704-4191



CONTACT US:

Mailing address: PO Box 162 St Nazianz, WI 54232

Post email: americanlegionpost477@gmail.com



Photos top left, clockwise: 1) Post leadership was installed at the May's meeting. 2) Members of the post and their guests attended Sunrise through the Darkness with 9/11 survivor Will Jimeno. 3) Several Post members were on hand to accept a number of awards at the Department Convention to include the Children & Youth Ambassador Award, multiple membership awards, and the Post Excellence Award. 4) Andrew and Rebecca spent time with the families of B Battery, 1/121st Field Artillery, whose Soldiers are currently deployed. As a side note – Post 477 members, Josh & Taylor are currently deployed with B Battery. 5) Legion Family 477 members rendered honors during Senior Night for the Valders Girls Soccer Team. 6) Banners of many former Post 477 members and our namesakes were displayed on the streets of St Nazianz over Memorial Day and the 4th of July. Thank you, Steve N, for your dedicated efforts in making the banners a reality again in 2026.

