

V.F.W. NEWS

Published Four Times a Year by Marion C. Cranefield Post 1318
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vol 26 No. 1 January/February/March 2026



Greetings Comrades,

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays with family and friends. Another year has come to a close—one that marked an important milestone for Post 1318 as we celebrated our centennial. It was a busy and successful year that included impactful fundraising events, continued support of our adopted unit, the 115th Fighter Wing, participation in their Family Day event, support of the City of Fitchburg emergency services during Fitchburg Night, and the honor of hosting the National Commander-in-Chief for a meet-and-greet breakfast. I'm sure I've missed a few events along the way, which only speaks to how active our Post has been. Check out all the Past Post Commanders pictures on our web page: www.vfw1318.org and click on "About" and then click "Gallery".

As we begin 2026, I ask that we keep our mission at the forefront of everything we do: to foster camaraderie among U.S. veterans of overseas conflicts; to serve veterans, the military, and our communities; and to advocate on behalf of all veterans to ensure they receive the benefits and recognition they have earned. Our vision remains clear—that veterans are respected, receive their entitlements, and are honored for their sacrifices—guided by our enduring principle to *honor the dead by helping the living*.

In support of this mission and vision, I have established a new committee: the **Walk for Warriors Committee**. The purpose of this committee is to continue the important work of Operation Ruck 22 in the Madison area, which held its final ruck in September 2025. Through Walk for Warriors, we aim to raise awareness of veteran suicide and continue efforts to end this tragedy by increasing public and veteran awareness, while helping connect those at risk with the resources they may desperately need. Details regarding our first Walk for Warriors event will be announced soon.

I look forward to another year filled with meaningful events and service. As always, please reach out if you have ideas or suggestions on how we can better serve our community, our veterans, and their families.

In Comradeship,
Steven Eisenhauer
Post 1318 Commander



Commander Steven Eisenhauer

UPCOMING EVENTS

January

5th – Post Meeting – 6:00 pm
6th – Auxiliary Meeting – 6:00 pm
10th – Rolling Thunder – 10:00 am
13th – Walk for Warriors – 7:00 pm
24th – Meat Raffle – 3:00-5:00 pm
25th – Pancake Breakfast – 9:00 am
27th – Events Committee – 6:00 pm
House Committee – 6:30 pm

February

2nd – Post Meeting – 6:00 pm
3rd – Auxiliary Meeting – 6:30 pm
10th – Walk for Warriors – 3:00 pm
14th – Rolling Thunder – 10:00 am
22nd – Pancake Breakfast – 9:00 am
24th – Events Committee – 6:00 pm
House Committee – 6:30 pm
28th – Meat Raffle – 3:00-5:00 pm

March

2nd – Post Meeting – 6:00 pm
3rd – Auxiliary Meeting – 6:30 pm
7th – Extravaganza – 12:00-4:00 pm
10th – Walk for Warriors – 6:00 pm
14th – Rolling Thunder – 10:00 am
22nd – Pancake Breakfast – 9:00 am
24th – Events Committee – 6:00 pm
House Committee – 6:30 pm
28th – Meat Raffle – 3:00-5:00 pm

Thursday Night Trivia 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Friday Fish Fry (all day) and Karaoke 6:30 – 10:30 pm

POST OFFICERS

Commander -----Steve Eisenhower
 Sr. Vice Commander-----Venus Hilgart
 Jr. Vice Commander -----Rose Doucette
 Quartermaster-----Gundel Metz
 Adjutant -----Joseph Hines
 Judge Advocate -----Bob Evans
 Chaplain -----Sharon Warsaw
 Surgeon -----Rose Doucette
 Trustee, 3yr -----Andy Lochner
 Trustee, 2yr -----Tim Hilsenhoff
 Trustee, 1yr -----William Muether
 Officer of the Day-----Ray Trent
 Service Officer-----Steve Eisenhower
 Guard -----Karl Kleemann
 Americanism/Loyalty Day---Bob Evans
 Community Activities -----Bob Evans
 Legislative Officer -----Joe Hines
 Public Relations -----Joe Hines
 Newsletter Editor-----Gundel Metz
 Web Administrator-----Andy Mansfield
 Voice of Democracy/PP-----Joe Hines
 Historian-----William Muether
 House Committee -----Members: Bob Evans,
 Steve Eisenhower, Venus Hilgart, Ray Trent, Sharon
 Warsaw, Rose Doucette, Gundel Metz, Bill Austin,
 Joseph Hines, Justin East and Permanent Guest -
 Auxiliary Representative
 House Committee and Events Committee meet on
 the 4th Tuesday of every month at 6:00pm

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

President -----Rose Doucette
 Sr. Vice -----Elizabeth Moore
 Jr. Vice -----Michael Rowland
 Treasurer -----Melissa Crary
 Conductor-----Gundel Metz
 Secretary -----Adajo Forester
 Trustee, 1 yr-----Elizabeth Moore
 Trustee, 2 yr-----Michael Rowland
 Trustee, 3 yr-----Ray Rung
 Chaplain-----Ellen Evans
 Guard-----Ray Rung
 Historian-----Rose Doucette

Find us on FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/vfw1318

EVENTS

If you have an idea for the Events
 Committee, please send an email
 to:

VFW1318events@gmail.com

WEB ADDRESS

VFW1318.ORG

Telephone: 608-255-5955

Email: vfw1318qm@gmail.com

V.F.W. NEWS DEADLINE IS
 DECEMBER 30TH. IF YOU HAVE A
 STORY, AN IDEA, A WEBSITE TO
 SHARE, PLEASE SEND THE
 INFORMATION IN AN EMAIL OR
 THROUGH THE POST OFFICE TO
 THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR.



CANTEEN

CANTEEN HOURS

Monday – Closed
 Tuesday: 11 am to 8 pm
 Wednesday: 11 am to 8 pm
 Thursday: 11 am to 11 pm
 Friday: 11 am to 11 pm
 Saturday: 11 am to 11 pm
 Sunday: 11 am to 8 pm

Canteen Information:

Food Specials:

Taco Tuesday
 Burger Wednesday
 Trivia Thursday
 Friday Fish fry

Happy Hour Specials:

Tequila Tuesday
 Top Shelf Whiskey Wednesday
 Thirsty Thursday
 The Boyle Fridays

Trivia every Thursday at 7:00 pm and
 Karaoke every Friday at 7:00 pm

Plus, we have the weekly draw on
 Fridays.

WACKO – Every Sunday 3:00-5:00 pm

Stop on by and meet our staff, Kate,
 Erica, Allison, Nicole, AP, Michael,
 Anna Marie, Flip, Janelly, and others.

Saturday evenings we may have a band,
 singer or paint night.

As always call the Post if you want to
 know what is going on that day.

V.F.W. NEWS OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

V.F.W. NEWS is the official publication of
 Cranefield VFW Post 1318. V.F.W. NEWS is
 published quarterly by V.F.W. Post 1318,

Annual membership in VFW Post 1318 includes
 subscription to the V.F.W. NEWS through email
 or postal mail.

V.F.W. Post 1318
2740 Ski Lane
Madison, WI 53711

Questions or comments about the Newsletter?
 E-mail: VFW1318QM@gmail.com

POST MEETINGS:

First Monday of each month @ 6 p.m.

AUXILIARY MEETINGS:

First Tuesday of each month @ 6:30 p.m.

DANE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

1709 Aberg Avenue – Suite 2
 Madison, WI 53704
 Phone: 608-266-4158 TDD 608-266-4157
 Legislative HOT-LINE 800-362-9696

**If you want information for the
 on-line Post meetings, please
 contact the Post Quartermaster
 at vfw1318qm@gmail.com. All
 Post meetings are hybrid, some
 members at the Post and the
 others via internet.**

ROLLING THUNDER®, INC.

WISCONSIN CHAPTER 5

BY WILLIAM MUETHER

Rolling Thunder Activities This Quarter:

- Chapter Vice President Keith Forst and Board of Director Chairman John Barghusen attended the annual Rolling Thunder Conference in DC on October 31st to November 1st.
- Mr. Chuck Konsitzke, Team Lead for the UW MIA Recovery and Identification Project (UW MIA RIP), provided us a mission update of their summer trip to Papua, New Guinea at our November 8th chapter meeting. The difficult jungle site environment posed challenges to team members, several of whom suffered from serious health issues. They were on site for close to two months and Chuck reported the time spent had a positive outcome but could not disclose the results. The team plans to return to the site next year.
- On November 15th, the chapter held a meat raffle at the post, raising \$852.
- Our annual donations this year in support of the UW MIA Recovery and Identification Project, Custom Canines, Rock Valley Community Programs, and Edgerton Community Outreach totaled \$11,000.
- This holiday season, the chapter contributed \$2,025 to our annual initiative supporting local veterans in need.
- The chapter will be hosting the pancake breakfast at the post in February.

Please contact the chapter at rtmadison5@gmail.com if you would like to join us or participate in future events, or if you have questions about Rolling Thunder®, Inc. You do not need to be a veteran or own a motorcycle. All we require is an earnest desire to help raise POW/MIA awareness and assist our local veterans in need.





AUXILIARY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Rose Doucette

Dear Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters,

As the 2025 calendar year comes to an end, I would like to reflect on the past six months while also looking ahead with optimism. I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments of our Auxiliary and the dedication shown by our members.

This year, we had a record number of members attend the State Convention in June. Throughout the summer, many members participated in car and bike shows at the Post. In August, we had the opportunity to tour the 115th Fighter Wing base, and in September, we proudly helped serve a picnic lunch during their Family Day. That same weekend, we supported Operation Ruck 22 by staffing a snack and water station along the route.

Auxiliary members also assisted at the meet-and-greet for VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore. Our second fundraiser for Shop with a Cop was a pancake breakfast held on October 26, which raised more than \$300. In November, both Auxiliary and Post members volunteered at a Badger game brat stand sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. We also hosted a successful craft fair at the Post, raising additional funds for Shop with a Cop. This year, the Auxiliary donated 24 child-sized blankets to the Dane County Sheriff's Office to be distributed to children in need of comfort and support.

Every event—whether large or small—demonstrates our continued commitment to veterans and our community. Looking ahead, I am hopeful that we will continue to build on this momentum. There will be additional fundraisers and celebrations, and we will continue to explore opportunities to work alongside the Post on joint projects, including support for the VFW Foundation's Mental Health Support Fund.

We are looking forward to an upcoming visit from National Auxiliary President Lois Callahan. We will be hosting a special dinner for Lois on April 7, 2026 at the Post. Please mark your calendar. More information will be sent out, once we have all the details identified. We remain committed to honoring veterans who have sacrificed to keep our nation free and to serving as a positive and active voice within our community.

I encourage all Auxiliary members to find areas that inspire them and to bring forward ideas for future events and initiatives. I truly enjoyed hosting the Operation Ruck 22 water station and organizing our Shop with a Cop fundraiser, just as others find fulfillment in projects such as donating blankets to those in need. Our support for the community is demonstrated through every act of service, carried out with care and compassion.

As the new year begins, let us make 2026 a year of growth—trying new things, learning together, and developing the potential within each of us. Together, we are strong. May this year bring wisdom, inspiration, and great joy.

Rose Doucette
Auxiliary President

115TH FIGHTER WING UPDATE

COLONEL DANIEL STATZ

Happy holidays from the 115th Fighter Wing!

Despite the initial budget uncertainties of fiscal year 2026, the resilience of our forces and the strength of our community shone through, ensuring our mission's success. The direct impact on our federal employees was significant, and the incredible outpouring of support from our corporate partners, area businesses, the Badger Air Community Council, Post 1318, and our families and friends was a powerful testament to our collective spirit. This unity not only uplifted our members but also reinforced that together, we can confidently overcome any challenge we may face.

Highlighting its critical role in national and continental defense, the 115th Fighter Wing and its F-35 Lightning II aircraft were key participants in a recent NORAD-led Dynamic Force Employment exercise in Greenland in October 2025. This rapid deployment to the strategically vital Pituffik Space Base demonstrated the wing's ability to project advanced airpower into demanding Arctic environments on short notice. Operating alongside U.S. Air National Guard F-16s, Milwaukee's KC-135s, and the Royal Danish Air Force, the 115th's F-35s showcased their adaptability and reinforced NORAD's capacity to monitor and respond to emerging threats, underscoring Greenland's crucial position in the defense of North America.

The holiday season also brings a time for Wing members to relax and recharge as they take well-deserved time with friends and families. During December's Guard drill, families and friends visited the Fighter Wing for some holiday fun and a photo with Santa. Thanks for all the Post 1318 volunteers that helped make this event a success again this year!

As the new year rolls in, our Aviation package will dedicate the majority of January to participating in Sentry Aloha, a premier exercise providing tailored and realistic combat training for the Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force, and other Department of Defense services. The exercise operates at an intense tempo, with our pilots generating back-to-back combat sorties daily against aircraft with different performance capabilities—a practice known as Dissimilar Air Combat Training. This demanding environment challenges our warfighters to adapt to unpredictable engagements, honing their skills to perform critical homeland defense and overseas combat missions.

Additionally, our Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high-yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) will be preparing for their upcoming Standardization, Evaluation, and Assistance Team (SEAT) inspection. The SEAT event will rigorously inspect this specialized unit to ensure it is ready to provide rapid life-saving support during major CBRNE disasters or other large-scale emergencies by observing search/extraction, decontamination, medical triage, and fatality recovery operations.

Upon everyone's return from Sentry Aloha, the Fighter Wing will recognize individual and unit level accomplishments at the annual awards ceremony in February. This is always a great time to reflect on the awesome accomplishments of our Airmen and the privilege we have every day to serve our neighbors, state, and nation.

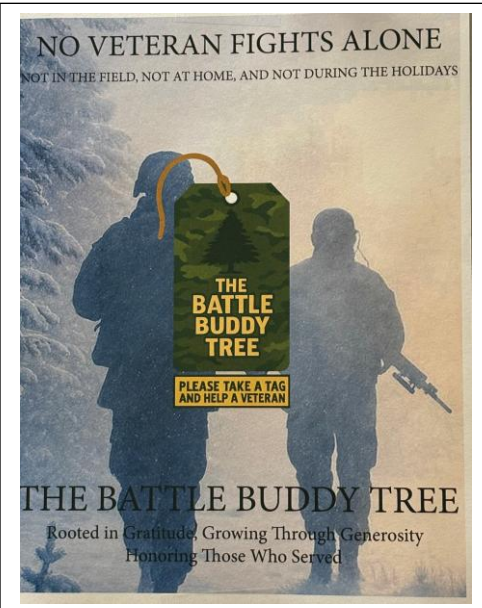


Arctic Power in Greenland Amid Rising Northern Tensions

Peter Suciu / Nov 6, 2025



Top – 115th Fighter Wing
Bottom and Right: Battle Buddy Tree



THE BATTLE BUDDY TREE

Honor a Veteran. Spread Hope. Give with Gratitude.

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Pick a Tag**
Choose an anonymous request from the Battle Buddy Tree (each tag lists one needed item).
- 2 Shop With Heart**
Purchase the requested item (new items only, please).
- 3 Wrap It Up**
Wrap your gift and secure the request tag to the outside — this makes sure it gets to the correct Veteran.
- 4 Bring the Gift**
Bring the gift to 2740 Ski Lane by 12/20 and drop off to bartender

VFW Post 1318
2740 Ski Lane, Madison

WHY IT MATTERS

Many Veterans face challenges during the holidays — isolation, financial strain, mobility limitations, or lack of family support. Your kindness fills the gap. Together, we can remind every Veteran that their community stands with them.

Rooted in Gratitude. Growing Through Generosity. Honoring Those Who Served.



EVENTS

JAMIE HERRMANN

Looking Back at an Incredible 2025 of Events

As we enter 2026, it is important to pause and reflect on what an extraordinary year 2025 was for the Post, a year made even more special as we proudly celebrated our 100th anniversary with a centennial celebration in April. Last year was not just milestone-filled; it was transformational. Our Post grew into a center for activity, community, and veteran support, thanks to dedicated volunteers and members.

Throughout 2025, our calendar was filled with events that brought people through our doors, strengthened camaraderie, and reinforced why the Post exists to serve veterans and our community while providing a welcoming place to gather.

Our weekly favorites created the heartbeat of the Post: Trivia Nights, Karaoke, and WACKO. These regular events provided consistency, drew in both members and guests, and created an environment where friendships were built and laughter was guaranteed.

We also layered in special events and themed activities that kept things fresh, creative, and engaging for all audiences, including:

- Paint Nites, Hat Burning, Chunky Blanket Workshops, Wreath Classes, and Latin Dance Classes
- Designer Purse Wacko and Drag Bingo
- Puzzle Competitions and Pull Tab Tournaments
- Monthly Meat Raffles and Pancake Breakfasts

These events drew a diverse crowd, ranging from crafters and dancers to competitive players and families, and ensured that there was always something happening at the Post for everyone to enjoy.

We also strengthened our presence in the broader community through outreach and service. Highlights included:

- **Fitchburg Police Community Night Out**, where we served food to the community.
- **115th Fighter Wing Family Day**, volunteers served lunch to military families.
- **UW Badger Tailgate**, where Post and Auxiliary members served food and beverages to fans before they headed into Camp Randall to watch the Badgers defeat the Washington Huskies.
- **Operation Ruck 22 – Table stop for the final march**, marking a powerful and emotional close to ten years of raising awareness of the tragedy of veteran suicide.
- **Car & Bike Nights**, we teamed up with Rolling Thunder Wis Chapter 5 to bring together motorcycles, classic cars, and the community for evenings of camaraderie throughout the summer and early fall
- **Walk for Warriors**, planning for the 2026 event, has officially kicked off. This event will raise awareness of the tragedy of veteran suicide. More details to come on the Walk for Warriors FB page.
- **Battle Buddy Tree**, the first year of this holiday giving initiative to support local veterans in need. The tree was replenished multiple times due to overwhelming community participation, providing essential items to veterans during the holiday season by teaming up with Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Outreach & Recovery Program (VORP).

Events continued on Page 8

(Events Continued)

By the end of 2025, the Post was not just hosting events. It continued to build community, support veterans, and create memories.

Looking Ahead Q1 2026 Events

Our weekly events, **Trivia Nights**, **Karaoke**, and **WACKO**, will continue throughout 2026, providing consistent opportunities for members and guests to gather, socialize, and enjoy the Post.

January 10 | 5:00–9:00 PM 80s Drag Bingo Night: A high-energy night of bingo, performances, music, and 80s flair, with meat prizes awarded each game.

January 17 | 1:00–3:00 PM Puzzle Competition: Free to enter. Teams of up to two people race to complete their puzzle, with prizes awarded to the first three finishers.

January 17 | 6:00–9:00 PM Paint Nite Reflections of Winter: A guided painting experience led by our featured artist, perfect for beginners and experienced painters alike.

January 24 | 3:00–5:00 PM Monthly Meat Raffle: A fun afternoon of raffles with chances to win meat and other great prizes.

January 25 | 9:00 AM–12:00 PM Monthly All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast: A hearty all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast served by the 115th Fighter Wing.

February 7 | 1:00–3:00 PM Pull Tab Tournament: Teams of 2–4 compete for top winnings. Entry is \$200 per team. Registration by email at VFW1318events@gmail.com.

February 10 | 6:00–9:00 PM Designer Purse WACKO: Just in time for Valentine’s Day, guests play for the chance to win a designer purse for someone special. Pre-register with a bartender if paying cash, or text Jamie at 608-516-8079 for Venmo or PayPal options.

February 21 | 5:00–9:00 PM Drag Bingo Night: A lively evening of bingo, entertainment, and performances, with meat prizes each game.

February 22 | 9:00 AM–12:00 PM Monthly All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast: An all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast served by Rolling Thunder Wisconsin Chapter 5.

February 28 | 3:00–5:00 PM Monthly Meat Raffle: Another opportunity to go home a winner with meat and raffle prizes.

March 7 | 11:00 AM–4:00 PM Mid-Winter Blues Extravaganza: An action-packed event featuring quarter auctions, vendors, meat raffles, basket raffles, and tons of chances to win while you beat the winter blues with friends and family.

March 14 | 5:00–9:00 PM Drag Bingo Night: An entertaining night of bingo, performances, and meat prizes.

March 22 | 9:00 AM–12:00 PM Monthly All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast: A monthly all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast served by our Post Auxiliary.

March 28 | 3:00–5:00 PM Monthly Meat Raffle: Close out the month with another chance to win meat and other raffle items.

Stay Connected

Our Post thrives because of the dedication of our members, families, and community partners. We invite everyone to stay connected by following “VFW Post 1318” on Facebook for photos, event reminders, and timely updates, or by visiting our website at <https://vfw1318.org/>.

Together, we honor yesterday’s heroes, support today’s Veterans, and continue to strengthen our community.



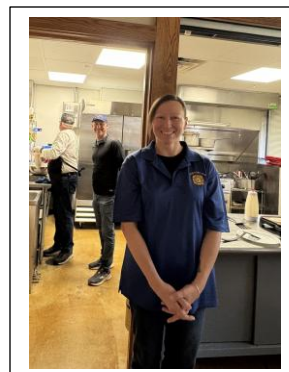
Left: Post supporters and the founders of Battle Buddy Tree Erik van Gompel and Nate Troy

Right: Erik and Nate with Jamie Herrmann



Shop with a Cop event





Above: Post member Norra Prohaska.
Left: Post members receiving plaque from Fitchburg Police Department
Middle: Post members Joe Hines, Aaron Krebs and his daughters Lily & Ella



New Members: 115th members: Lisa Pliska and Mike Lincoln



New Member: Phillip Nguyen transferred from Texas



New Member: Colonel Ben Gerds, 115th Wing Commander

The "V" Post 1318 Presents:

PUZZLE challenge

January 17th
1 - 3 pm
FREE ENTRY

Teams of 1 or 2 people compete to complete a 300 piece puzzle within 2 hours. PRIZES for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places

Food and Beverages available for purchase

Limited puzzles, go to <https://tinyurl.com/vfwpuzzle> or use the QR below



scan to sign up



January MEAT RAFFLE

Saturday, January 24
3 PM - 5 PM

2740 Ski Lane,
Madison WI

COME FOR THE MEAT
STAY FOR THE FUN!





115th Fighter Wing

HOSTS:

Sunday Morning Breakfast

January 25th, 9am - 12pm

Includes:

- All U Can Eat Pancakes
- 2 Eggs
- 2 Sausage
- Coffee, Milk, Juice
- 1 Mimosa (*+21)

\$10 Adult
\$5 Kids (<6)

2740 Ski Lane, Madison




The "V" Post 1318 Presents:

PULL TAB tournament

SAT FEB 7th 1:00 PM

Top 3 teams win per round!

\$200 ENTRY PER TEAM OF 2-4

2 Rounds | 100 tix per team per round

You must register by emailing
VFW1318events@gmail.com
*minimum of 10 teams

2740 Ski Lane, Madison





The "V" Post 1318 Presents:

Designer Purse WACKO

February 10th

Check in 5:30 pm
WACKO starts at 6 pm
8 GAMES for \$25
Extra game cards and purse raffle tickets available for purchase

Win a Designer purse just in time for Valentines day!

Register NOW!

To register:
Venmo/paypal text: 608-516-8079
Cash: sign up with a bartender

2740 Ski Lane, Madison






February 28th

3pm-5pm

MEAT RAFFLE

2740 Ski Lane, Madison





ROLLING THUNDER WIS CHAPTER 5 PRESENTS

PANCAKE Breakfast

ALL YOU CAN EAT PANCAKES AND
2 EGGS, 2 SAUSAGE, 1 MIMOSA*, COFFEE, MILK, OJ

FEBRUARY 22ND
9AM - 12 PM

THE "V" POST 1318, 2740 SKI LANE, MADISON

*must be 21 or older for mimosas




Beat the MID-WINTER BLUES EXTRAVAGANZA!

Quarter Auction • Meat Raffle • Basket Raffles
50/50

SATURDAY, MARCH 7 • 12 PM - 4 PM

The "V" Post 1318 • 2740 Ski Lane, Madison





MEAT RAFFLE

MARCH 28TH
3-5 PM

2740 SKI LANE, MADISON





MEMBERS CORNER



Left: Post welcomes
Commander-in-Chief Carol
Whitmore.



Right: CiC Carol Whitmore,
Karl Kleemann and Post
Commander Steve Eisenhauer



Post Member John Barghusen
presenting check to Marine Corps
Toys for Tots program.



Post Commander, Steve
Eisenhauer, with State Chief
of Staff Keith Lauth and State
Adjutant Adam Wallace



Senior Vice CiC Cory
Geisler with Gundel Metz

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY

Please notify the Post if you have moved or have a new email address so
that we can keep you informed and plugged into Post Activities

Please send your email address
to the Quartermaster so we can
send you the Newsletter
electronically. Thanks.
vfw1318qm@gmail.com