

WAR MEMORIAL CENTER

2023

HONOR
THE
DEAD

SERVE
THE
LIVING

ANNUAL REPORT





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Dear Friends,

Recently, we were honored to give a tour of the War Memorial Center to retired Air Force General Robin Rand. General Rand's distinguished career includes leading Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Education and Training. He told us he was deeply touched by what he saw here. He said he has visited memorials in Washington, D.C. and around the world and had never seen anything as unique and impressive as our War Memorial Center.

Wow.

But the real mic drop moment came when he said that *"learning about our history makes us smarter, learning about our heritage makes us prouder."*

General Rand told us he felt prouder and more grateful after visiting the War Memorial Center.

Sometimes it takes an outsider to put the perfect spotlight of appreciation on what you have. We know how special the War Memorial Center is to Wisconsin, because you showed us! When Milwaukee County was going through its 2024 budget process, we put out a call to action for public support, and you responded.

Your emails, letters and phone calls to Milwaukee County Supervisors made a difference. Thank you! We still have a long road ahead, but with your help we will keep the War Memorial Center a vibrant beacon of heritage for our community.



Learning about our history makes us smarter, learning about our heritage makes us prouder.

— Robin Rand, General (Ret.) U.S. Air Force

This past year has been an exciting one at the War Memorial Center. We exceeded our goal for Phase Two of Operation Advance, the War Memorial Center's campaign to enhance our exhibits. Thanks to your generous support, in June 2024, we will be opening an exhibit honoring Wisconsin's POW/MIA, our second permanent exhibit. Our education programs and traveling exhibit, *I Am Not Invisible*, set attendance records in 2023. This success is leading us to take a fresh look at our visitor experience throughout the entire Center. Stay tuned!

General Rand told us there is nothing more admirable than to honor our fallen heroes and support those families and loved ones who carry on their legacy. Thank you for helping us fulfill that mission.

Onward!

With much gratitude,

Daniel Buttery,
President & CEO

Andy Gordon,
Board Chairman



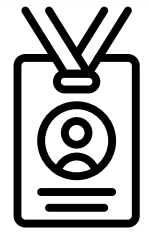
WAR MEMORIAL CENTER IMPACT



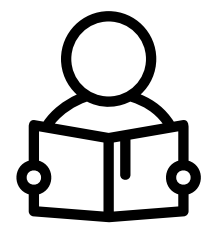
HEROES ARE HONORED

The War Memorial Center is an experiential space unlike any other where our heroes are honored, history is taught, warriors are healed, events are celebrated, and memories are made.

Thanks to you, we lived our vision statement in 2023. Our impact is making a difference through community events, mental health awareness and educational outreach.



184,000 VISITORS



56,000 STUDENTS



\$576,000 SERVICES



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

15,015 AMERICAN FLAGS
DISPLAYED IN FIELD OF FLAGS

400
DEAR HERO LETTERS
WRITTEN TO VETERANS

184,000
TOTAL ATTENDANCE

37,000 VIEW
I AM NOT INVISIBLE
TRAVELING EXHIBIT

\$576,000
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES TO
VETERANS & NONPROFITS

700 ATTEND JULY 3RD
CELEBRATION
OF FREEDOM

4TH COMMEMORATIVE ORNAMENT

3RD ANNUAL
TREE LIGHTING

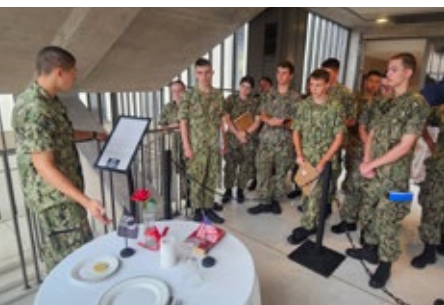
56,000
STUDENTS & COMMUNITY
EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS

300
ATTEND
FROST FEST

500 RUNNERS
AT VETS DAY 5K

“Your programs are very much appreciated as we strive for our students to be engaged in our community with integrity and leadership. There are no finer leaders than those in our military.”

— Kathleen McCurdy, St. Mary Catholic Schools



ANNUAL PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- ★ **VETS DAY 5K**
- ★ **FIELD OF FLAGS**
- ★ **JULY 3RD CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM**
- ★ **DOORS OPEN MKE**
- ★ **FLAG OF HONOR WITH MILWAUKEE BREWERS**
- ★ **HOOPS FOR TROOPS WITH MILWAUKEE BUCKS**
- ★ **MEDAL OF HONOR BENEFIT MOTORCYCLE RIDE**
- ★ **2023 COMMEMORATIVE ORNAMENT HONORS POW/MIA**
- ★ **DEAR HERO LETTER CAMPAIGN & TREE LIGHTING**



We would like to extend our appreciation for your hand-written letters to the Veterans. It is through the efforts of community partners like you that allow us to continue the quality care and services we seek to provide for our deserving Veterans.

— Sara LeClaire, Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center

SPOTLIGHT

FIELD OF FLAGS | MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

4th annual Field of Flags displays 15,015 American flags to remember Wisconsin service members killed in action since World War I.



FLAG OF HONOR | MILWAUKEE BREWERS HOME GAMES

WMC partners with the Milwaukee Brewers to recognize Veteran families during select home games of 2023 season.





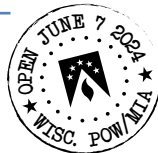
OPERATION ADVANCE

PHASE I
WISCONSIN MEDAL OF HONOR EXHIBIT
64 STORIES OF COURAGE



OPERATION ADVANCE is our march toward a new direction of enhancing the visitor experience. In 2022, we opened the first permanent exhibit in our history honoring the 64 Wisconsinites awarded our nation's highest military decoration.

PHASE II
LEST WE FORGET
REMEMBERING WISCONSIN POW/MIA



In 2024, look for our second permanent exhibit honoring Wisconsin's POW/MIA.

PHASE III
VISITOR EXPERIENCE
LEADERSHIP LAB & EDUCATION

In Phase III, we will continue to evolve to teach and preserve for the next generation the freedoms we cherish. Students and adult learners will be challenged to explore the characteristics of military exemplars throughout history.



LEST WE FORGET

OPEN JUNE 2024



LIFE AS A PRISONER OF WAR

This powerful new exhibit includes a prison cell experience where visitors will peer into the prison door to view a POW cell from the infamous "Hanoi Hilton."

Visitors will also learn the "tap code" prisoners used to communicate with each other.



DOG TAG CHANDELIER

In Veterans Gallery, there will be a stunning "dog tag chandelier" comprised of 530 dog tags (each dog tag represents 10 prisoners of war from Wisconsin) going back to the Civil War.



MAJOR SUPPORT OF OPERATION ADVANCE PROVIDED BY:

- ★ Chris Abele
- ★ Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation
- ★ Michael W. Grebe
- ★ Melitta S. & Joan M. Pick Charitable Trust
- ★ We Energies Foundation

JOIN US

The War Memorial Center Board of Trustees invite you to join us at the opening of our latest exhibit, **LEST WE FORGET**, honoring Wisconsin's service members held as prisoners-of-war and those classified as missing-in-action on Friday, June 7, 2024 at 10 am.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Since 2020, the War Memorial Center has taken a very active role in supporting organizations working to improve Veteran mental health. We provide valuable meeting space and sponsor events to help in the critical work of eliminating Veteran suicide.



Events held in partnership with the SE Wisconsin Veteran Suicide Prevention Task Force with funding from Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs.

LOST IN TRAUMA
Painting and other unique therapy workshops

LAST OUT: ELEGY OF A GREEN BERET
Gary Sinise Foundation play hosts workshop at WMC

VETFEST
With Milwaukee VA promotes PACT Act

FROST FEST
Winter fun for families

MUSIC IN THE GARDEN
Free, family-friendly outdoor music series

SERVICE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER
Military service dogs visit WMC Beer Garden

MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM
Partnered with U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs

PAUSE FOR PEACE
Community holiday gathering to help those struggling with world events



EDUCATION
NEW RECORD FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- Education programs held both on and off-site
- Service Experience Days held in spring & fall
- STEM programs launch
- Digital Lesson Plans downloaded nationwide



I AM NOT INVISIBLE

37,000 people saw this traveling exhibit in 2023 highlighting local women Veterans and current military personnel from WWII through the present. The bios provide an honest look at what it means to serve, and the opportunities open to women – and the challenges they face – in the U.S. military.

NEW IN 2023

2023
Field of Flags on cover of Vietnam Veterans of America calendar



MARCH
20th anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom ceremony



JUNE
Until They are Home temporary POW/MIA exhibit opens



JULY
Harley-Davidson 120th anniversary reunion visits WMC



SEPT.
National POW/MIA Day marks announcement of funding secured for new exhibit to honor Wisconsin's POW/MIA

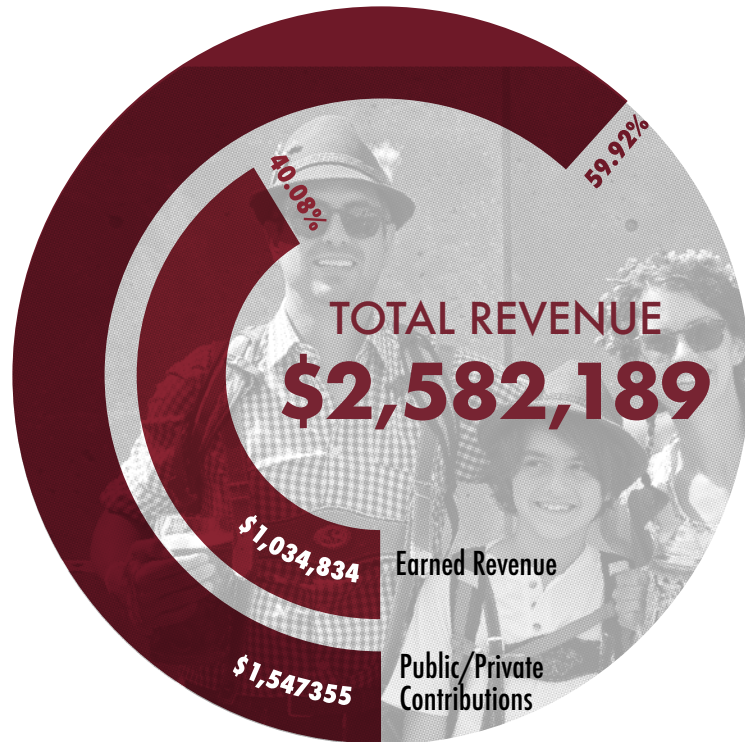


3X
Retired Army Col. Chris Kolenda 3-part leadership series



FINANCIALS

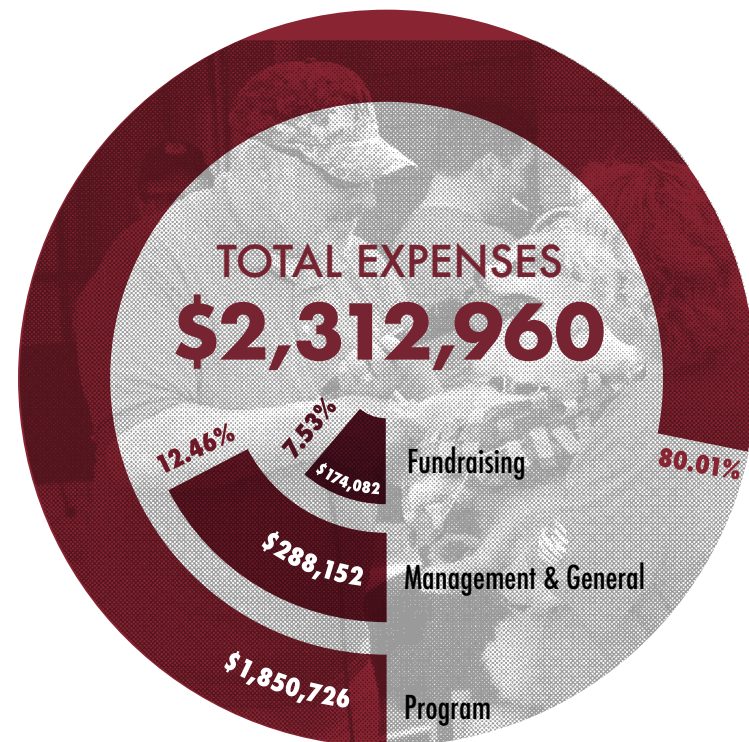
WMC FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023



TOTAL ASSETS
\$13,634,370

TOTAL LIABILITIES
\$311,770

TOTAL NET ASSETS
\$13,322,600



“ Glad we could help out the great team at WMC. Great cause. Great team. — Robert Garvin, We Energies

A complete copy of the War Memorial Center's financial statements is available upon request. Find our IRS Form 990 at warmemorialcenter.org/about

DONOR IMPACT



Thanks to you, we remain the place where our heroes are honored, history is taught, and warriors are healed. We are grateful for the loyal, long-standing support of so many outstanding organizations.

11 YEARS	10 YEARS	9 YEARS	8 YEARS
Johnson Controls	THE LYNDY & HARRY BRADLEY FOUNDATION	E.C. STYBERG FOUNDATION	FRANCIE LUKE SILVERMAN FOUNDATION
			GREEN BAY PACKERS GIVEBACK
7 YEARS	6 YEARS	5 YEARS	
We Energies Foundation	Northwestern Mutual	PIEPER POWER	LINCOLN CONTRACTORS SUPPLY
Humana	Cargill	STELLA H. JONES FOUNDATION	Kegel's Inn

“ We should be thanking you for the outstanding work being done there! We continue to be impressed by the information we get from you. We are such proud supporters of what you do providing for the Veterans of our community! — Joseph Gardetto, Francie Luke Silverman Foundation

WMC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Charles A. (Andy) Gordon, Chairman, Trustee since 2016

Andy Gordon graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and was commissioned as an infantry officer in the 101st Airborne Division. Andy spent seven years in the Army, deploying twice to Iraq. Andy earned his law degree cum laude from Marquette University and is now a litigation attorney at Godfrey & Kahn, S.C.



Mary B. Read, Vice-Chairwoman, Development & Governance Committees

Trustee since 2019

Mary Read graduated from Smith College and earned her law degree from Marquette University. A retired attorney, she serves on several nonprofit boards. Mary comes from a long line of West Point graduates beginning with her great-great-grandfather, a Major General in the Civil War.



Michael B. Koszuta, Secretary, Governance Committee Chair, Trustee since 2018

Mike Koszuta served 30 years in the U.S. Army retiring as a Command Sergeant Major. Before the Army, Mike served in law enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard. Mike continues to serve by volunteering with the USO (along with his service dog Winston) and performs with the Milwaukee Police Band.



Michael Gibson, Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair Trustee since 2016

Mike Gibson served 22.5 years in the U.S. Army with deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Haiti. He was commissioned an Engineer Officer and ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate from Xavier University in Cincinnati. Mike led Marquette University's Army ROTC program commissioning 99 second lieutenants in four years. He's currently a Construction Project Manager for J.H. Findorff & Son.



Michael W. Grebe, Immediate Past Chairman, Governance & Development Committees, Trustee since 2016

Michael Grebe is an American philanthropist, lawyer, and businessman. He was Chairman/CEO of Foley & Lardner law firm and President/CEO of the Bradley Foundation. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and earned his law degree magna cum laude from the University of Michigan. He was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge and two Bronze Stars for his service in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War.



Candee Arndt, Development Committee, Trustee since 2020

Candee Arndt is an event services professional and proud daughter of a World War II veteran. Candee serves on boards for the Milwaukee Armed Services Committee, Navy League and Milwaukee Air & Water Show. She developed and runs Milwaukee's annual Armed Forces Day Dinner and was on the commissioning committee for the *USS Milwaukee*.



Berdie Cowser, Personnel Committee Chair, Trustee since 2020

Berdie Cowser has a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and is Vice President of Housing & Development with the Center for Veterans Issues. Berdie began her military career in high school, eventually becoming a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army and Army Reserves. She is featured in our *I Am Not Invisible* traveling exhibit.



Joshua Davis, Personnel Committee, Trustee since 2022

Josh Davis is a leader on the Global Service Team for General Electric Healthcare. Josh had a 28-year-career in the U.S. Army serving in all three Army components. He was an Army sniper and received cross training in emergency medicine becoming a combat medic and served in direct support of Special Forces. Josh was an advisor to the Brazilian Ministry of Defense for the 2016 Olympic Games.



Robert "Bert" Garvin, Development Committee, Trustee since 2018

Bert Garvin is VP of External Affairs for WEC Energy Group. He leads the company's legislative and regulatory affairs at the federal, state and local levels. Bert served in the Wisconsin Army National Guard and is an Iraq War veteran. He holds Bachelor of Arts and Juris Doctor degrees from the University of Wisconsin Madison. Bert is one of a set of triplets!



George J. Gaspar, Development Committee Chair, Trustee since 1990

George Gaspar is the longest serving member of the WMC Board and its former chairman from 2002-2013. For almost 50 years, he worked as a financial and research analyst and was named a four-time *Wall Street Journal* "All Star Analyst." George was a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and received the Army Commendation Medal.



Eugene Manzanet, Trustee since 2023

Eugene Manzanet, Ph.D. is the Senior Director of Diverse Business Development for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. Eugene serves on numerous nonprofit boards and advisory councils throughout the Milwaukee area. He served as a mayoral appointment as the vice-chairman of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.



Jeffrey Marks, Development Committee, Trustee since 2019

Jeff Marks was the Senior Director of Installation Transformation for Johnson Controls Building Systems North America until his retirement in 2023. He is a U.S. Army Veteran, who retired as a Brigade Command Sergeant Major. He is a graduate of U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. Jeff is affiliated with numerous Veteran organizations.



Co Nguyen, Personnel Committee, Trustee since 2021

Co Nguyen immigrated to the U.S. after the fall of Saigon, which he witnessed from a ship as his family escaped. Co was the fourth Vietnamese American selected for admission to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Co was Airborne, Air Assault and Ranger qualified. Co is currently the head of quality for Rockwell Automation. Co's three children were born in the U.S., Brazil, and Hong Kong.



Ray Pasbrig, Personnel Committee, Trustee since 2022

Ray Pasbrig is a Vietnam Veteran with decades of service to Veterans. Ray enlisted in the U.S. Marines under the "buddy system" in 1968. That meant he was guaranteed boot camp as a group with his three high school friends. As a Veteran, Ray worked his way up through numerous leadership positions with several Veteran organizations.



John Weishan, Jr., Finance Committee, Trustee since 2000

John Weishan is one of the longest serving members of the WMC Board. He is a U.S. Marine Corp Veteran from the 1st Battalion 3rd Marine Division and is a graduate of University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. John served on the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for the 16th District from 2000 to 2022.



Christine Westrich, Trustee 2019 - July 2023

Christine Westrich graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and served 11 years as a Marine back-seater in the F/A-18D Hornet with additional tours at the White House Military Office and within the Intelligence Community. She is the City of Milwaukee's Emergency Preparedness Director while continuing her lifelong career as a professional artist.

WMC STAFF

Dan Buttery

President & CEO

Laurie Kildegaard

Vice President of Finance & Administration

Vicki Chappell

Vice President of Philanthropy

Sean Clark

Program Director

Manda Gill

Event Manager

Mark Waldoch

Accountant

Sherry Lapene

Administrative Assistant

Nanette Prendergast

Development Assistant

Randy Hahn

Facilities Manager

Armando Herrera

Assistant Facilities Manager



2024 EVENTS

FIELD OF FLAGS

Memorial Day Week

LEST WE FORGET

POW/ MIA Exhibit Open

June 7

CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM FIREWORKS

July 3

SUMMER BEER GARDEN

warmemorialbeergarden.com

DOORS OPEN MKE

September 28 & 29

VETS DAY 5K

November 9



War Memorial Center

CONTACT US

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www.warmemorialcenter.org