

WAR MEMORIAL CENTER

# 2024

HONOR  
THE  
DEAD

SERVE  
THE  
LIVING

ANNUAL REPORT



LEST  
WE  
FORGET





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**2024**

# ANNUAL LETTER

## Dear Friends,

What does a dream fulfilled look like? At the War Memorial Center, in 2024 it looked like...

- 27,316 American flags representing each Wisconsin Killed-in-Action, displayed in a glorious Field of Flags on Memorial Day, a visual reminder of the price of freedom.
- A new permanent exhibit honoring Wisconsin's Prisoners-of-War and those service members still classified as Missing-in-Action.
- An expanded offering of 50 virtual lesson plans for students across the country and 11,630 students coming to the War Memorial Center to participate in our enhanced education program and to see history brought to life and forming an appreciation of service beyond self.

Your War Memorial Center achieved these dream goals in 2024, the culmination of a multi-year effort.

The dog tag chandelier on the cover of this annual report is comprised of 530 dog tags, each one represents ten Prisoners-of-War from Wisconsin going back to the Civil War. It is a signature feature of our new permanent exhibit, Lest We Forget, which opened in June (learn more about that exhibit on pages 10-11).

This annual report also showcases our many community partners. Together, we have expanded the reach of the War Memorial Center's impact, taking our mission to Honor the Dead – Serve the Living beyond our walls and out into the community through traveling exhibits, Veteran mental health initiatives, and digital lesson plans.

As we enter the next phase of Operation Advance, we focus on securing the future of this iconic landmark and the many

memorials under our care for many generations to come. Your War Memorial Center is more than just a historic building; it is a living tribute to the service and sacrifice of Wisconsin's Veterans and our promise to Never Forget.

In 2024, our President & CEO, Dan Buttery, retired for personal health reasons associated with exposure to burn pits while serving in the U.S. Army in Iraq. Dan's five years of service to our organization was extraordinary, and his contributions to Wisconsin and the Veteran community will be with us for years to come. Dan steered the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic, led our strategic plan initiatives, grew new programs, and enhanced the visibility of the War Memorial Center. He left big shoes to fill, but we look forward to building on Dan's success with a new president in 2025. Thank you, Dan!

In Service,  
**Co Nguyen**  
Interim President & CEO

**Andy Gordon**  
Board Chairman



**This is SO EXCELLENT and such a great reminder, especially on this Memorial Day weekend, of the men and women who sacrificed for our freedom. I am SO GRATEFUL!**

— Weber Group on Discover Wisconsin Episode



# WAR MEMORIAL CENTER IMPACT



## THE WAR MEMORIAL CENTER

is Wisconsin's most visible and enduring tribute to the state's Veterans. Beyond its architectural significance (designed by world renowned architect Eero Saarinen), it has grown into a statewide hub for Veteran services and remembrance. It is a place to educate our youth and adults about the importance of service and provide an oasis for Veterans in need of support.



It was wonderful to view the exhibits, and I am eager to come back with my children so they too can learn alongside the 200,000+ people that now visit the War Memorial Center and engage with its programs each year.

— Gabe Conger, Bradley Impact Fund



**200,000  
VISITS**



**117,000  
COMMUNITY  
OUTREACH**



**\$580,000  
SERVICES**

**200,000+**

**LIVES TOUCHED**

Educational and community programs delivered on-site, across the community, and online.



**300** **WMC ORNAMENTS**

Our fifth annual commemorative ornament marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day is donated to 300 VA residents over the holidays.



**50,000**

**VETERANS REACHED**

Public messaging campaigns launched to reduce the number of Veteran suicides and promote Veteran mental health.



**23**

**VIDEOS PRODUCED**

War Memorial Center's YouTube channel adds videos for Lest We Forget, Mental Health PSA's, and Field of Flags.



**2,300**

**VETERAN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Veterans participate as subject-matter experts at WMC, in classrooms, and community events.



**4**

**TRAVELING EXHIBITS**

War Memorial Center programming hits the road with exhibits focusing on Medal of Honor, women Veterans, military awards & decorations, and POW/MIA.

**13**

**FAMILIES HONORED**

Flag of Honor program offers beautiful tribute to honor a Veteran's legacy on the scoreboard of a Milwaukee Brewers game.



**972**

**LETTERS TO VETERANS**

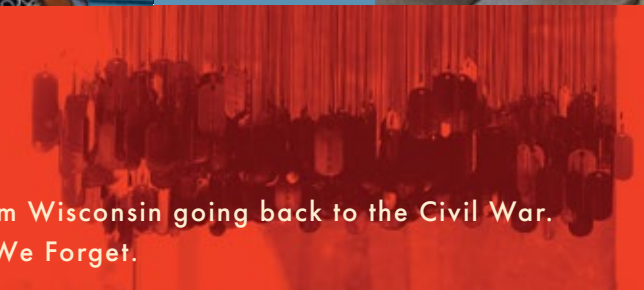
Dear Hero program connects students with Veterans to write letters of appreciation during the holidays.



**530**

**DOG TAGS IN CHANDELIER**

Each of the 530 dog tags represents 10 prisoners of war from Wisconsin going back to the Civil War. It's the signature feature of our new permanent exhibit Lest We Forget.





# FIELD OF FLAGS

## 27,316 AMERICAN FLAGS

2024 MARKS THE FIRST YEAR WE HIT FULL SIZE FOR OUR FIELD OF FLAGS

We built this Field of Flags —and will continue to every Memorial Day — as a visual reminder of the price of freedom.

Five years in the making, this Field of Flags now honors every Wisconsinite killed in action since statehood.

It takes 600 volunteers and a week to build.

### EACH FLAG REPRESENTS A PERSON.

- 12,301 CIVIL WAR
- 3,976 WORLD WAR I
- 8,390 WORLD WAR II
- 801 KOREAN WAR
- 1,161 VIETNAM
- 64 GULF WAR & GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR
- 623 PEACETIME

“ THANK GOD WE DON'T FORGET THEM.

“ IT'S BOTH BEAUTIFUL AND SAD.

### EACH YEAR THE FIELD OF FLAGS GOT BIGGER.

- 2020**  
2,972 Milwaukee service members killed in action during World War II
- 2021**  
7,056 U.S. service members KIA since 9/11
- 2022**  
12,301 Wisconsin service members KIA during the Civil War
- 2023**  
15,015 Wisconsin service members KIA since WWI
- 2024**  
27,316 Wisconsinites killed in action since the Civil War

“ Our sincere gratitude and appreciation for all the hard work you put into the Field of Flags. We visited on Monday to pay our respects, open conversations with our kids on the importance of Memorial Day, service, and connection with the community. It was a sobering and powerful day.

— Sarnowski Family





# SERVICE EXPERIENCE DAY SIGNATURE EDUCATION PROGRAM



## OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP STUDENTS GAIN A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF

military service, the War Memorial Center, and the Wisconsin service members who paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

The popular Service Experience Day, held over two days in the spring and fall, attracts thousands of students to the War Memorial Center. Static and interactive display stations are scattered throughout the campus with service member volunteers, equipment, activities, and materials for students to observe, participate, and ask questions.

Many of these students have never met a Veteran. We provide students with a meaningful opportunity to interview Veterans. History is brought to life and a deeper appreciation of service beyond self is formed.



Something new I learned was there are many kinds of military.

— Ahsem, Milwaukee Public Schools



Your education programs for schools are like beacons of light, illuminating the path of understanding between veterans and younger generations, ... you're teaching our youth valuable lessons about sacrifice, duty, and the importance of community.

— Harriet



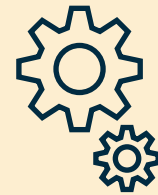
## EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS



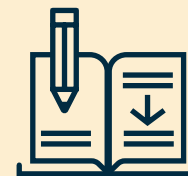
STUDENT PARTICIPANTS:  
**11,630**



SERVICE EXPERIENCE DAY:  
**2,192**  
Students, Chaperones,  
Veterans & Volunteers



ROBOTICS:  
**366**  
Participants & Volunteers



LESSON PLANS:  
**11,998**  
Downloads in 13 states  
and the United Kingdom



## STRATEGIC GOALS

In 2022, we issued a five year Strategic Plan where we outlined these four goals:

- 1 PROVIDE SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR VETERANS
- 2 PARTNER WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY
- 3 INCREASE AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT
- 4 EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

We are proud to report on our progress during 2024:

**Goal 1, 2 & 3:** Our partnership with the Southeast Wisconsin Veteran Suicide Prevention Task Force, has led to numerous events and support of organizations working to improve Veteran mental health. Our role will continue to grow in this space, like with our Introduction to Robotics helping teach new skills to disabled Veterans.

**Goal 3 & 4:** We've grown our education program to include field trips and tours, 50 free lesson plans available for download nationwide, four traveling exhibits (seen by nearly 50,000 community members), and an artifact collection.



Thank you for protecting our country and thank you for saving humans' lives.

— Ahsem, Milwaukee Public Schools





# LEST WE FORGET

## NEW PERMANENT EXHIBIT

In June we celebrated the opening of our second permanent exhibit, **Lest We Forget: Remembering Wisconsin's POW/MIA.**

This follows the 2022 opening of *The Wisconsin Medal of Honor Exhibit: 64 Stories of Courage*. These exhibits mark a new direction for the War Memorial Center. One that enhances the visitor experience and preserves for the next generation the freedoms we cherish. It's part of **Operation Advance**, which now advances to focus on the long-term viability of our historic building.

### MIA NAMES

1,660 Wisconsinites are listed as missing in action. Our exhibit will evolve as the remains of these missing heroes are identified and returned home, like Donald Downing of Columbus who was recently identified by the Defense Dept. POW/MIA Accounting Agency.



### TAPS ON THE WALL

POWs during the Vietnam War devised a secret tap code to continue their resistance. You can listen to the tap code and learn common messages like "you are loved".



### THREE HEROES

Former POWs Bill Henderson, Guy Gruters, and Gerald "Jerry" Gerndt attended the grand opening of Lest We Forget.



### DOG TAG CHANDELIER

Each dog tag represents ten Prisoners-of-War from Wisconsin. 5,298 in total since the Civil War.



### MISSING MAN TABLE

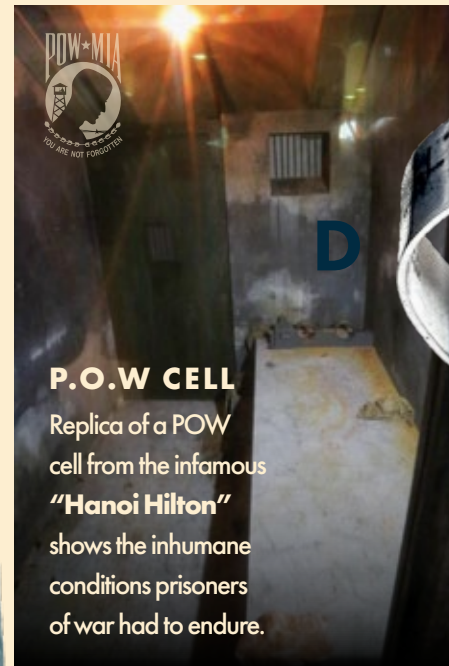
Visitors reflect on the symbolism of the elements comprising this military tradition.

“

The chair is empty because loved ones are still missing.

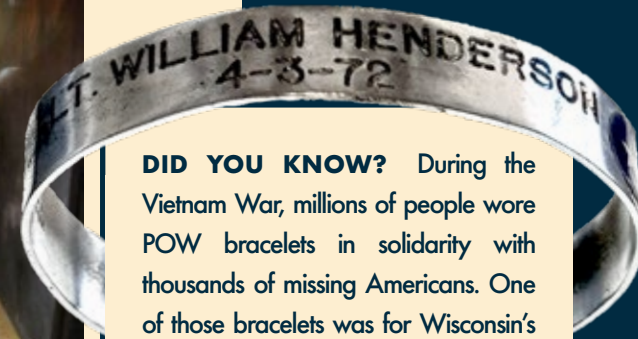


Above: Lance's sister, Janine Sijan-Rozina, stands next to the Lest We Forget cell replica where her brother was held a prisoner of war.



### P.O.W. CELL

Replica of a POW cell from the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" shows the inhumane conditions prisoners of war had to endure.



**DID YOU KNOW?** During the Vietnam War, millions of people wore POW bracelets in solidarity with thousands of missing Americans. One of those bracelets was for Wisconsin's Bill Henderson held prisoner of war in North Vietnam for one year. Upon his return, Bill's wife had hundreds of bracelets returned to her from happy Americans. Bill's sister donated her bracelet to our collection.



### WEBSITE/VIDEOS

Exhibit microsite features five heart-wrenching Wisconsin POW/MIA videos. From a C-130 pilot recovering remains from North Korea to a POW part of Operation Homecoming, these stories need to be remembered and shared.

Left: Lance Sijan's replica headstone from Vietnam. "LE PHI XICH" is a man's name used to protect the grave against vandals. L.P.S. is Lance P. Sijan.

Right: Lance Sijan's flight suit on display

### HERO WITHOUT TEARS IN CHAINS

#### LANCE P. SIJAN STORY

Milwaukee native Lance Sijan is featured in both Lest We Forget and the Wisconsin Medal of Honor Exhibit. Sijan is one of only 19 U.S. Air Force veterans in history to receive the Medal of Honor. During the Vietnam War, he survived six weeks in the jungle without food or water despite horrible injuries. Once captured and held in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" POW camp, he inspired fellow prisoners with his incredible resistance to the enemy. Sijan's unrelenting spirit and valor led even his Vietnamese Army guards to show a rare sign of respect. They buried him in a marked grave with the phrase

"HERO WITHOUT TEARS IN CHAINS."







# THANK YOU

TO THE MANY LOYAL DONORS WITH WHOSE SUPPORT OPERATION ADVANCE IS MADE POSSIBLE

## MAJOR SUPPORTERS OF OPERATION ADVANCE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Chris Abele  
We Energies Foundation

★ ★ ★ ★

The Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation  
Michael W. Grebe  
In Honor of First Lieutenant Harold A. Gottsacker United States Army

★ ★ ★

ARCO/Murray  
Murph Burke  
VADM Dirk Debbink USNR (Ret) and Terry Debbink  
Pat and Rachel English  
Evan & Marion Helfaer Foundation  
Mike and Sue Heyer  
Herb Kohl Philanthropies  
Dennis and Sandy Kuester  
James and Betty Jo Nelsen  
Sensient Technologies Foundation  
The Weber Group  
James Bond, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs  
Kiwanis Club of Milwaukee

★ ★

In Honor of Robert W. Doucette, The Cara Foundation  
Couri Insurance Agency  
George and Anna Clair Gaspar  
CSM Michael Koszuta, USA (Ret) and Pamela Koszuta  
John and Linda Mellowes  
Milwaukee Armed Services Committee, Inc.  
Mary and Ross Read  
Rotary Club of Milwaukee  
A. O. Smith Foundation  
Kristin Pochowski and The Stone Golf Outing  
CDR Richard T. Vallin, USN (Ret)  
WaterStone Bank

★

128th ARW Community Council  
Candee and Ray Arndt  
Tony and Andrea Bryant  
Dan and Patty Buttery  
Curt and Sue Culver  
Alberta Darling  
Ralph Evinrude Foundation, Inc.  
Michael and Donna Farrell  
Richard and Ellen Glaisner  
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Kowal Investment Group  
In Honor of Henry, Willard and Gil Kuehn - WWI, WWII, Korea  
Gerald and Elaine Mainman  
Lisa Mauer and Ed Probst  
Milwaukee County Veterans Association, Inc  
Michels Corporation  
Marian and Bill Nasgovitz  
Navy League of Milwaukee  
Jennifer and Steve Pankowski  
Major (Ret.) Cheri L. Rumler, USAR-ANC AMEDD  
Jeffrey & Pamela Shovers  
Bert L. & Patricia S. Steigleder Charitable Trust  
Gary G. Wetzel MOH Post 10394  
Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans, Chapter 1  
Fred & Sandra Young





# WHERE MILWAUKEE MEETS

## MILWAUKEE COUNTY REMEMBERS 9/11

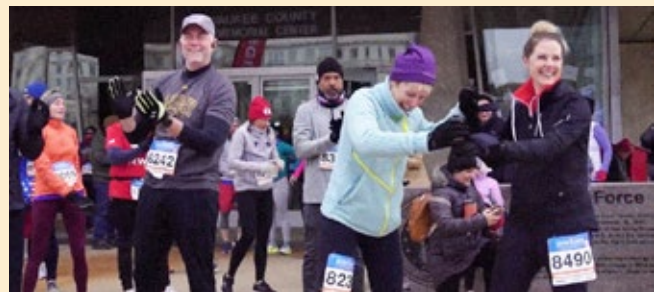
Every September 11, the War Memorial Center hosts a powerful and reflective ceremony for the annual Milwaukee County Remembers 9/11 event.

Milwaukee law enforcement and first responders lay wreaths on the steel beam artifact from the World Trade Center Towers, which now serves as our 9/11 Memorial. The ceremony is held at 7:46 am, to coincide with the exact moment the first plane hit in a terrorist attack on our country, claiming 2,977 victims.



## VETS DAY 5K & 10K

Every November hundreds of runners meet at the War Memorial Center to kick off the winter running season by honoring Veterans and current service members. The fun-filled, timed race along the beautiful Milwaukee lakefront starts and ends at WMC. Participants do 22 pushups before the race to honor Project 22, which works to reduce the suicide rate among Veterans.



## SUMMER BEER GARDEN | MEMORIAL DAY - SEPT.

Thanks to a partnership with Kegel's Inn, the War Memorial Beer Garden celebrates summer, Veterans, and Milwaukee from our iconic lakefront location.



Music in the Garden, a collaboration with the Southeastern Wisconsin Veteran Suicide Prevention Taskforce, is held throughout the summer at the Beer Garden..



## LOST IN HISTORY | VINTAGE TRAVEL MAP

Before Google and GPS, paper maps were a popular giveaway for travelers. In 1962, this map of Milwaukee featured the War Memorial Center. Our building was dedicated on Veterans Day 1957 and as you can see was a popular tourist destination even back then!



**THE FRONT COVER** of this map shows the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center, a striking modernistic structure on a gently rising knoll overlooking Lake Michigan. Designed by the late, internationally-famous architect, Eero Saarinen, its facade is distinguished by a pleasing blending of deep purples, blues and quiet red tones set in mosaic as a background for large Roman numerals marking the dates of World War II and the Korean Conflict. Located at 750 North Lincoln Memorial Drive, it stands as a lasting tribute to the 3,200 Milwaukee County men and women who gave their lives in the two wars. Built solely through public subscription which raised about \$2,500,000, it houses the Milwaukee Art Center and provides facilities for veterans, civic, cultural and charitable organizations.

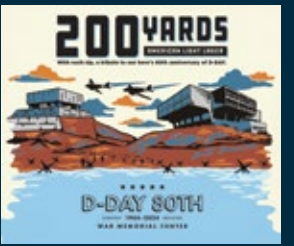


The War Memorial Center, a striking modernistic structure on a gently rising knoll overlooking Lake Michigan. Designed by the late, internationally famous architect, Eero Saarinen, its facade is distinguished by a pleasing blending of deep purples blues and quite red tones set in mosaic as a background for large Roman numerals marking the dates of World War II and the Korean Conflict.

# NEW IN 2024

## 200 YARDS BEER

Collaboration with Kegel's Inn & Explorium Brewpub produces collectible beer honoring the 80th anniversary of D-Day sold at War Memorial Beer Garden.



## PATRIOT AWARD

Dan Buttery receives our prestigious Patriot Award for his exceptional leadership and dedicated service to Veterans. Dan served five years as our President/CEO.



## DISCOVER WISCONSIN

Special episode of Discover Wisconsin titled War Memorial Center — A Living Memorial sponsored by The Weber Group brings the story of our unique building and history to a statewide broadcast and digital audience.



## TOP PODCAST

Visit Milwaukee's podcast Joshing Around Milwaukee episode 33 featured the War Memorial Center and Beer Garden. This was a top post on our social media!



## VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL

History panel about Army nurse Diane Carlson Evans' service and legacy donated by local Vietnam Veterans group Chapter One. Evans received the Presidential Citizens Medal for creating the Vietnam Women's Memorial.



## WMC AT RNC

An international audience sees our traveling exhibits at the new Baird Center Convention Hall during the Republican National Convention, the largest convention ever for Milwaukee.

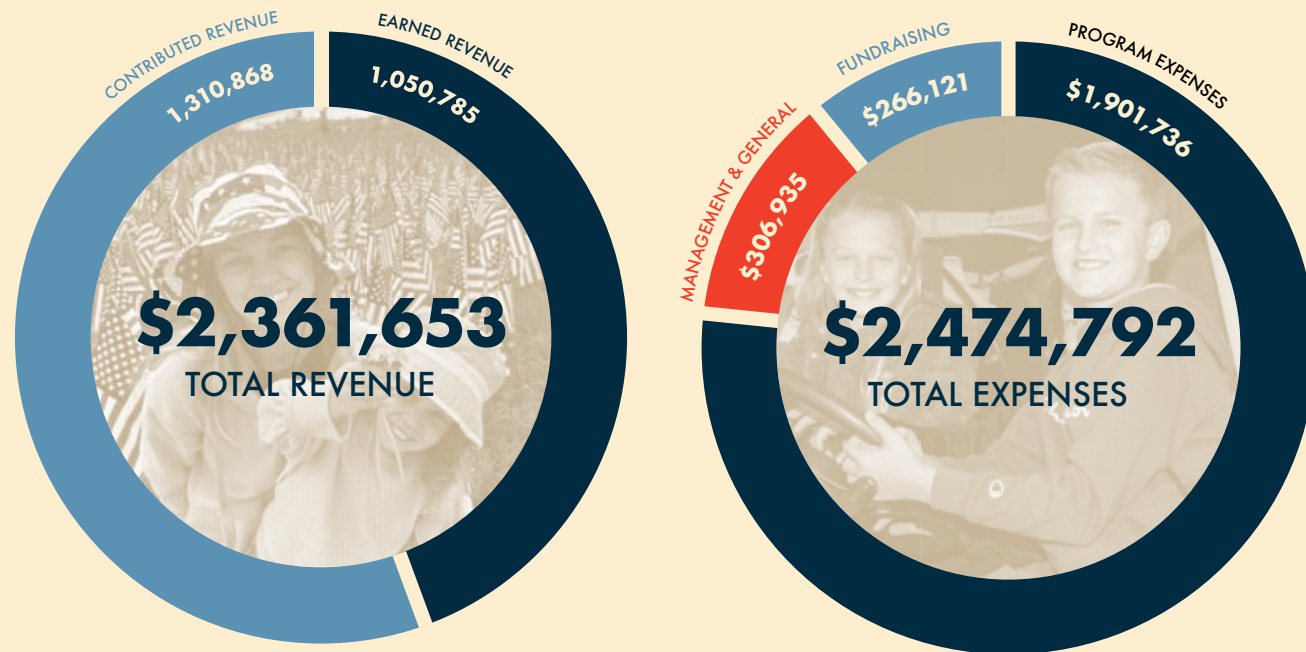






# FINANCIALS

WMC FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024

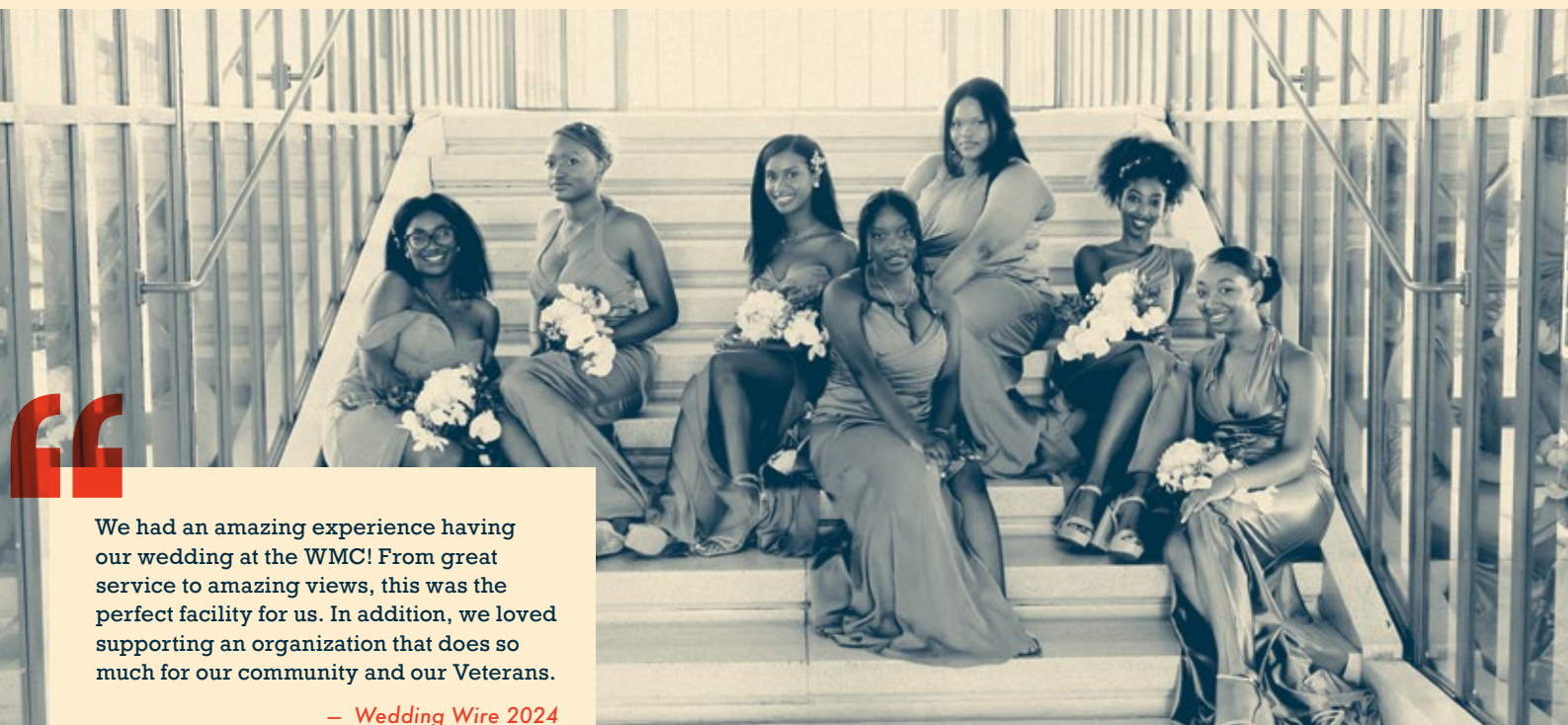


**\$13,542,112**  
TOTAL ASSETS

**\$332,651**  
TOTAL LIABILITIES

**\$13,209,461**  
TOTAL NET ASSETS

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



We had an amazing experience having our wedding at the WMC! From great service to amazing views, this was the perfect facility for us. In addition, we loved supporting an organization that does so much for our community and our Veterans.

— Wedding Wire 2024



# OUR SPONSORS



Erie Insurance Presenting Sponsor of Field of Flags 2022 - 2024

We are grateful for the loyal support of so many outstanding organizations. Thank you for supporting our mission:

**Honor the Dead — Serve the Living.**

12 YEARS	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
				We Energies Foundation
7 YEARS	6 YEARS	5 YEARS	4 YEARS	3 YEARS
Northwestern Mutual	Cargill	LINCOLN CONTRACTORS SUPPLY	RSM	ADMIRALS
Humana	PIEPER POWER	Kegel's Inn	COURT INSURANCE AGENCY	GENERAC
STELLA H. JONES FOUNDATION			Erie Insurance	
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NEW SPONSORS				
ARCO MURRAY	ARTEMAX	BELL AMBULANCE 264-BELL	BAIRD	Reinhart
				SPECTRUM INVESTMENT ADVISORS
				THE WEBER GROUP



AWESOME!! Very moving. We are so proud to be a part of this stunning memorial to those who gave the last full measure.

— Reinhart, Field of Flag sponsor



# WMC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



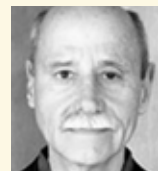
### Charles A. (Andy) Gordon, Chairman, Trustee since 2016

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, 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, an officer in the Civil War for the Union Army.



### Michael B. Koszuta, Secretary, Trustee since 2018

Mike Koszuta served 30 years in the U.S. Army retiring as a Regimental Command Sergeant Major. Before the Army, Mike served in law enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard. Mike is very active in training service dogs for disabled veterans.



### Michael Gibson, Treasurer, Trustee since 2016

Mike Gibson graduated from Xavier University in 1994 and was commissioned through the ROTC program as an Engineer Officer. He served over 22 years in the U.S. Army retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. His last assignment was as Professor of Military Science (PMS) at Marquette University, where he led the Army ROTC program developing hundreds of Cadets and ultimately commissioning 99 Second Lieutenants. Mike deployed numerous times to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti. He's currently a Construction Project Manager for J.H. Findorff & Son.



### Michael W. Grebe, Immediate Past Chairman, 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.



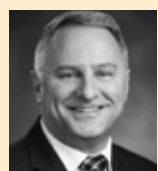
### Candee Arndt, Trustee since 2020

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, 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, Trustee since 2022

Josh Davis is the Director for Training Delivery on the Global Service Team for General Electric HealthCare. He served 28-years in U.S. Army serving in all three Army components eventually retiring from the U.S. Army at Fort Moore (formerly Fort Benning), Georgia. Josh served in multiple capacities during his career in the Infantry and Medical Regiment across the globe.



### Robert "Bert" Garvin, 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.



### George J. Gaspar, 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, 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, Trustee since 2021, Interim President/CEO since December 2024

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 retired from his position as the head of quality for Rockwell Automation.



### Ray Pasbrig, Trustee from 2022 to June 2024

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.



### Jean Ruka, Trustee since June 2024

Jean Ruka graduated from Alverno College with a degree in Medical Technology; entering the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War under the CASP Program. Jean served as enlisted and was eventually commissioned as an officer. Jean has been affiliated with numerous Veteran organizations.



### John Weishan, Jr., Trustee from 2013 to July 2024

John Weishan 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.

## PAYING TRIBUTE

In 2024, we grieve the passing of two former board members whose contributions to the War Memorial Center are forever remembered.

### Michael Berzowski

served as Chairman  
2013-2015

### Richard Vallin

served as Treasurer  
2013-2015

## WMC STAFF

### Dan Buttery

President & CEO  
Retired November 2024

### Laurie Kildegaard

Vice President of Finance & Administration

### Vicki Chappell

Vice President of Philanthropy

### Sean Clark

Program Director

### Manda Gill

Event Manager

### Mark Waldoch

Accountant

### Jenna Johnson

Administrative Assistant

### Nanette Prendergast

Development Assistant

### Randy Hahn

Facilities Manager  
Retired 2024

### Armando Herrera

Facilities Manager

### Brandon James

Event Staff & Facilities Assistant

### Samantha Mischker

Event Staff

### Ivan Mischker

Event Staff





@warmemorialcenter  
@War Memorial Center Weddings



@mke\_warmemorial  
@wmc\_weddings



@WarMemorialCntr



@WarMemorialCenter



@WarMemorialCenter

# 2025 EVENTS

## SERVICE EXPERIENCE DAY

April 24/25 and October 23/24

## FIELD OF FLAGS

Memorial Day Week

## SUMMER BEER GARDEN

Opens May 23  
WarMemorialBeerGarden.com

## MUSIC IN THE GARDEN

June/July/August

## MILWAUKEE REMEMBERS 9/11

September 11

## VETS DAY 5K

November 8



War Memorial Center

### CONTACT US

War Memorial Center 750 N. Lincoln Memorial Drive Milwaukee, WI 53202

(414) 273-5533

[www.warmemorialcenter.org](http://www.warmemorialcenter.org)