

State of the Post Report 2008-2009

I am happy to report the H.A. Todd Wisconsin Motor American Legion Post 537 is alive and active despite a recessionary economy. Membership is at 320, an increase of 21 members over and above this time last year. Special thanks to 1st-Vice Commander Linda Pfeiffer and her committee for a job well done. Linda is also the editor of the TODD TATTLER, our monthly newsletter. She has done an excellent job of getting the "word" out to the membership in a timely fashion.

The American Legion "Family" (Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion) held a very successful Pancake Breakfast and Live Broadcast with WMIL-FM 106.1 on Memorial Day. We served 320 people and netted over \$1800. Proceeds went to purchase a new riding lawn mower for Camp American Legion. Past Department Commander Chuck Cooney and I presented WMIL-FM 106.1 with a plaque on behalf of the Legion and all veterans for their continued support. We had a great turnout for the annual City of West Allis Memorial Day Parade and Program held at Veterans' Park. Attendance was up for the Flag Disposal Ceremony held at the Post later in the day.

The NASCAR #76 Freedom Car driven by Jerick Johnson from Team Johnson Motorsports paid the Todd Post a visit in June. On hand for the event was Past National Commander Butch Miller, Dept. of Wisconsin Commander Dave Kurtz, 4th District Commander Marv Brozinski and numerous racing fans.

The State Convention was held in La Crosse July 16th-20th. National Commander Marty Conaster was among the many guest speakers who attended this event.

The Post Picnic was held in early August on a weather perfect day. The food was Outstanding! Thanks to all the volunteers who made it all happen. The annual Corn Roast sponsored by the bar was a huge success. KUDOS to Bar Manager Bill Martin, his staff and the bar customers who made it all happen.

The Post was one of 50 in Southeastern Wisconsin to participate in a program sponsored by the VAMC and the Medical College of Wisconsin called "Working with Veterans' Organizations to Improve Blood Pressure". Chaplain Gretchen Davies and Post member Robert Fyfe volunteered to administer this program at

the Post level. The Post was recognized by Department Commander Jim Reigel for its “pioneer” spirit. If the program is successful here, it will be expanded to the rest of the state. We are proud to be part of this effort to help veterans lead longer and healthier lives.

A donated wheelchair ramp was installed at a Post member’s home. The person using the ramp said he was now able to get out of the house without assistance and looked forward to getting outside to go shopping and visiting neighbors. We thank the volunteers who moved and assembled the ramp for this veteran. Also, a spinet piano was donated and moved to the Veterans Facility at Union Grove, Wisconsin, along with a large bag of music. Veterans will be entertained for years by this great gift.

Post members who served in the Navy attended the commissioning ceremonies of the U.S.S. Freedom at the Milwaukee lakefront in November. It was the first time the Navy had such a presence in Milwaukee since sponsoring Great Lakes Tours in the 1980s, 90s, and into the new millennium.

The Post was able to sponsor 4 boys for Badger Boys State. Each boy sent a letter saying they learned a lot while there, and thanked us for the opportunity to participate in this invaluable program.

3rd-Vice Jim Marinkovich was busy this year organizing coloring contests, participating in a flag etiquette program with Service officer Nick Berg at the Lutheran Manor Senior Center and setting up visits to the fourth grade students at Manitoba School. He was able to give a presentation on Veterans’ Day, provided school supplies for the kids and gave out Christmas presents to the class. Jim also provided Christmas presents to young people at the Rescue Mission, Children’s Hospital, Sacred Heart Croation church and St. Mathias Parish as well as several needy families with children. Gifts were donated to the Post by the 84th Division Army Reserve Family Relations President Tony Gerasch. We thank Jim for his hard work and Tony for his efforts to make the Christmas season merrier for many young children.

In addition to arranging funeral arrangements for Post members who passed away this last year, Service Officer Nick Berg was instrumental in getting out information regarding veterans' benefits and programs. He set up speakers who came to our meetings and published information in the TODD TATTLER. He sent Care Packages to our deployed soldiers with the help of Cub Scouts from St. Mathias School. Both Nick and Robert Fyfe are responsible for setting up the Todd Post website, www.Toddpost537.org. Nick has been and continues to be a valuable asset to the membership of this Post.

The SAL sponsored a pancake breakfast on Veterans' Day. Fresh hot pancakes, sausage , omelets and a toast bar were part of the menu. Attendance was very good for this second time event. The SAL was able to give a family in need toys, clothes, food and money for Christmas. The looks on the kids' faces was thanks enough for what they received. It truly was a great time for all involved.

My wife and I attended Mid-Winter in Marshfield in January. The high point of the conference for me was when Commander Reigel presented the Todd Post with a Certificate for 100% membership. We were only 1 of 2 Posts in the 4th District to achieve 100% before December 30, 2008.

The fund raising committee has been trying to raise funds for programs involving children youth and veterans. Late last year, a raffle was set up for this purpose. It fell short of the goals set, and all monies were returned. A new raffle has been set up for the same purpose and it seems to be on its way to be a big success.

The annual Todd Post Smoker was held in March. Everyone who attended had a great time playing cards, buying raffle tickets and feeding their faces. Attendance was down slightly from last year, but the amount of money received this year was close to the amount we took in last year; so the committee was happy.

The S.A.L. was able to hook up with a local senior citizens center that was looking to reduce its mobile inventory. Electric carts, wheelchairs, and many other items were loaded up in a truck and transported to Camp American Legion. It was a win-win situation for all concerned.

Members of the Todd Post attended a Remembrance Ceremony for the U.S.S. Lagarto, the sub that went down in 1945 with Lt. H. A. Todd Jr. aboard. This ceremony was held the first weekend in May in Manitowoc, where the sub was originally built.

The House Committee has been busy making your Post a better place to visit. Among the many improvements the Committee has overseen are the outside remodeling with new siding, doors and windows installed, inside remodeling with new floors in the bar hallway and restroom area, a new filtration system, 3 new televisions, a new jukebox and sound system, an A.T.M, a new security system with cameras and alarms, a total remodeling of both restrooms, new doors, a refinished floor in the hallway, new chairs and numerous electrical and plumbing updates. The kitchen has a new 2 door refrigerator, a new 2 door freezer, a new ice machine and a new mop sink. We are currently looking into getting a new stove and making improvements in the kitchen and hallway. So, we have a few things more to do and then this building should be in pretty good shape; just in time for its 150th anniversary. There will be a committee set up for that as well.

So you can see that the Todd Post is alive and active as ever. I want to thank all my officers for their contributions over the last year. They have helped make this Post a Post we all can be proud of. And I want to thank you, the Post member for your continued support. We couldn't have done it as well without you.

Thank you.

Mark Sandow

Commander