

**Coon Valley**  
**Legion Post 116**



**86th Anniversary 2007**

***Compiled by Post Historians***

**Henzil Hanson**

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# THE POST HISTORY

The American Legion Post #116, Department of Wisconsin, Coon Valley, Wi. was organized in 1921. The Post charter was issued March 1, 1921 with the following as charter members:

Ingman Bakkestuen	John S. Nelson	Earle J. Spellman
Julius A. Bjornstad	Clarence B. Moen	John Berg Sr.
Nels O. Neprud	George J. Ihle	Carl T. K. Moen
Nels A. Nordstrom	Monton B. Lund	Oscar W. Nordstrum
Arthur A. Ronken	Arthur S. Blihovde	
Clifford O. Veldey - Adjutant    N. O. Neprud - Commander		

The first World War saw 60 men and women from the Village of Coon Valley and area in service.

1921 - Post rifles were received. Rifles were not for sale at the time, so they were loaned by the Ordinance Dept. of the U.S. Army. A bond that cost \$2.00 annually was posted with the U.S. Army until 1931 when they were made available for sale.

1921 - Post bought a piano from Brown Music Co. of Viroqua for \$230.

1922 - U.S. Flag and Post Colors were purchased at a cost of \$65.00.

1922 - The first annual dues were \$2.50, of which \$1.25 went to National Headquarters.

1922 - Memorial Day Services have been held every year, weather permitting. Flags have been placed on the Veteran's graves and color guards, color bearers, bugler and firing squad have paid their respects to departed comrades. Programs have been held after the ceremonies.

1923 - Two University of Wisconsin lecture courses were sponsored.

1926 - Harvest Picnic was held at Anton Rundhaugen farm at which Governor Robert M. LaFollette was the featured speaker.

1927 - Coon Valley American legion Auxiliary was organized on May 5<sup>th</sup>. First officers were:

Ina Benell - President	Josie Berg - Vice President
Hazel Ihle - Secretary	Laura Nordstrom - Treasurer
Hilda Bjornstad - Sgt. at Arms	Palma Hofslie - Chaplain
Maud Anderson - Historian	

Other charter members were: Josie Erickson, Gjerda Halverson, Clara Hanson, Anna Kerska, Bergina Nordstrom, Albina Sedevie, Margaret Veldey and Mary Zimmerman.

1927 - Post voted to construct a skating rink on the Weishaupt Lots (Locker Plant) not to exceed \$25.

1928 - Post charter became permanent on May 3rd.

1928 - Thirty-five curb flags were sold to business men and other residents.

1928 - A suction pump was bought for flooding skating rinks where the present park is located and on A.C. Brye pasture. Later this pump was donated to the Coon Valley Fire Department.

1928 - Picnic was held at the Joe Koula Sr. farm. Out of the receipts of these picnics \$900 was deposited to a permanent building fund.

1928 - Northern Wisconsin Tobacco Pool Warehouse (Vernon Co. Farm-Co Mill) was leased for dances. This occurred after Ole Larson rejected a proposition of an option of building a "Bowery" on his land (across highway from Tim Skolos).

donated to Coon Valley School Band, V.A. Hospital in Tomah and Camp American Legion. The Post has donated money to the Fish Pond and fishing ramp near the Vets Hospital near Tomah. Legion members and Auxiliary members have visited the Tomah V.A. Hospital on several occasions to visit with the Veterans, serve a light lunch and provide musical entertainment. Post furnished new 50 star flags for every room in school and State Flag and U.S. Flag for pole outside.

The Second World War had 82 men and women from within the limits of Coon Valley. Plus there was a large number that were in the service from nearby communities.

- Aug 1966 All soldiers from Coon Valley area who were patients in Vietnam Hospitals were to receive a gift from the Coon Valley Post.
- Nov 1966 Hospitality cards were received and sent to all servicemen from the area.
- Nov 1968 Decided to give free membership for the first year only to veterans in service over two years or any member overseas.
- Mar 1969 Legion Post decided to join the Lions Club and hold June Dairy Days in Coon Valley the first weekend in June.
- Nov 1969 Post sent \$20 to Tomah VA Hospital for bleachers.
- Oct 1970 Mrs. Anna Koethe donated \$500 to Legion Post.
- Jan 1971 The Legion Hall was repainted.
- Apr 1971 The Legion Post joined other county posts and sponsored anti-litter program.
- Jun 1971 Post received The American Legion Post Distinction Award and an Honor ribbon placed on post colors. Presented to Coon Valley Post #116 for going over the top.
- Sep 1971 Legion Post held consignment sale.
- Oct 1971 Roger Nelson compiled maps showing the location of the Veteran's graves which the Post visits on Memorial Day.
- Dec 1971 Ground work was started for the Legion birthday party in March. It was also decided at that time to observe the Post's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- Mar 1973 Boy Scouts reorganized in Coon Valley with Legionnaires Joe McCormick and Tom Silha as leaders.
- May 1973 Seventh District Spring Conference held in Coon Valley.
- Nov 1973 Twenty-five chairs bought for Legion in name of Julius Bjornstad and a plaque of his to be hung in the club house.
- Jun 1974 125<sup>th</sup> celebration of Coon Valley.
- Dec 1974 Mortgage of Legion Hall burned.
- Feb 1975 Post #116 hosted Vernon County Banquet.
- Jun 1975 The Auxiliary donated a stove with the old stove given to the park shelter house.
- Apr 1976 Seventh District Spring Conference hosted by Post #116.
- Apr 1976 Pictures of post commanders hung in Legion Hall.
- Jul 1977 Wayne Kuester elected State Vice Commander.
- Jun 1978 Year of big flood in Coon Valley.
- May 1979 World War I veterans and Gold Star Mothers honored at Memorial Day services.
- Jun 1979 Post #116 helped sponsor Westby Legion baseball.
- Mar 1980 Hosted Vernon County Banquet.
- Aug 1980 Insulation of Legion club rooms begun.

- Apr 1993 Roger Mathison elected 7<sup>th</sup> District Commander.
- Jun 1993 Lions Club donates TV-VCR to Legion Hall.
- Aug 1993 Bus trip sponsored to Legion Day at County Stadium.
- Nov 1993 Plaque presented to Ron Evenstad, Westby High School Band Director, for his years of participation in the Memorial Day Program.
- Sep 1994 State membership Drive-in held at Legion Hall.
- Apr 1995 Clothes donated to Homeless Vets Program at Fort McCoy and VA Hospital in Tomah.
- Aug 1995 Post receives award for 14 years consecutive all time high.
- Nov 1995 Post sponsors Ryan Niedfelt for Wisconsin Team Leadership. School at Ripon College.
- Dec 1995 Mortgage burned from Post expense \$45,000 in August of 1989.
- Dec 1995 Post hosts Business Association Dance.
- Jan 1996 Post donates speakers for PA system for High School and Legion Baseball teams.
- Mar 1996 Post hosts Vernon County Banquet.
- Mar 1996 Post holds first Palm Sunday Breakfast.
- Apr 1996 Post hosts 7<sup>th</sup> District Spring Conference.
- May 1996 Post orders new Legion jackets.
- July 1996 Roger Mathison elected State Vice-Commander.
- Aug 1996 Post #116 team wins State Legion Trap Shoot at Wis. Rapids.
- Feb 1997 Post hosts fund-raiser for Roger Mathison for State Vice-Commander Campaign.
- Mar 1997 S.A.L. Squadron #116 reactivated. Steve Nelson advisor.
- May 1997 Post votes to build new kitchen and handicapped bathrooms.
- June 1997 Use of hall donated for Sam Bakkestuen fund-raiser.
- July 1997 Roger Mathison elected State Commander at Green Bay.
- Aug 1997 Discussion held on possible formation of a Veterans Memorial Committee.
- Aug 1997 Lions Club will donate \$5,000 toward kitchen project.
- Sept 1997 Ground broke on new kitchen project.
- Nov 1997 Testimonial Banquet held for State Commander Roger Mathison.
- Jan 1998 Howard Kumm donated a plaque and \$500 in memory of his brother, Lloyd Kumm.
- Feb 1998 Wheel chairs, walkers, and crutches donated to Coon Valley Lions for their mission to Mexico.
- Feb 1998 Mike Fencl elected Coon Valley Fire Fighter of the Year.
- Apr 1998 Received \$778 matching funds from A.A.L. for pancake breakfast. Proceeds to new kitchen project.
- May 1998 Post purchased new Legion Emblem highway signs.
- May 1998 State Commander Roger Mathison is Memorial Day speaker.
- Jun 1998 Color Guard presents colors at Relay for Life at Viroqua Fairgrounds.
- July 1998 Gordon Henley, Ossie Ihle and Don Kammel voted Life Memberships because of work done on new kitchen.
- Sept 1998 Verlyn Larson appointed chairman of Coon Creek Area Veterans Memorial Committee.
- Oct 1999 Post donates \$200 to American Legion National Emergency Fund.
- Jan 1999 Coon Valley Area Baseball Association holds Chicken Q at Legion Hall.
- Feb 1999 Post votes to remodel bar room. Old wall demolished next morning.

- Sept 2001 Monte Nelson donated Chester Peterson's handicapped scooter to Post #116.
- Sept 2001 Resolution #11 that Coon Valley Post #116 drafted urging schools to offer course on veterans influence on United States history was approved at the National Convention in San Antonio, Texas and sent forward to Wisconsin Dept. of Instruction.
- Sept 2001 State Historian, Francis (Frank) Mathison, took first place in the National History Book Contest.
- Sept 2001 Seventh District Fall Conference held in Coon Valley.
- Oct 2001 John Thurk, Verlin Larson and Don Kammel presented flags to children at Coon Valley Elementary School.
- Oct 2001 Post donates \$50 to Wisconsin U.S.O.
- Nov 2001 Coon Valley legion recommends Robert Kerska for Wisconsin Teacher Of The Year.
- Nov 2001 Post votes to cancel candy pack this year only because school closed due to environmental concerns.
- Nov 2001 Post donates \$100 to local Salvation Army.
- Jan 2002 Post donates \$400 to Westby Legion Baseball.
- Feb 2002 Post donates \$200 to King Legion Representative
- Mar 2002 Marc Lingelbach elected Coon Valley Fire Fighter Of The Year.
- Mar 2002 Blue Star Service Banners presented to parents of local servicemen and women.
- Mar 2002 Post donates \$200 to Children's Miracle Network.
- Apr 2002 Donated \$100 to Coon Valley Area Youth Foundation.
- Apr 2002 Post donates use of hall for Becky Prat Fund-raiser.
- May 2002 Post #116 Firing Squad performed Memorial Day Rites at Mormon Coulee Cemetery for first time.
- May 2002 Post purchases two 5' x 8' polyester flags to fly in the Coon Valley Village Park.
- May 2002 Coon Creek Area Veterans Memorial Dedication following annual Memorial Day Program. Post donates total of \$4,862.45 to date to Memorial.
- June 2002 Post purchases two cases of "2002 Freedom Guardian" steins designed by artist Susan Sampson for resale.
- June 2002 Post donates wheelchair to Vang Church in memory of Robert "Fox" Strangstalien.
- Aug 2002 American Legion 2002 "Class A" State Tournament held in Coon Valley Aug. 02-06.
- Sept 2002 Roger Mathison presented checks totaling \$14,000 to both the Westby Legion Baseball and the Coon Valley Area Baseball Association on behalf of the American Legion State Baseball Tournament held in Coon Valley.
- Oct 2002 Post donates \$100 towards Tech-Ed Scholarship sponsored by AAL and Lutheran Brotherhood.
- Nov 2002 Post donated \$250 to Westby Food Pantry and \$250 to Salvation Army.
- Dec 2002 Post donated \$500 to S.A.L. Squadron #116 for assistance at December raffle party.
- Jan 2003 New floor installed in banquet hall. "Infamous Hump" is now history.
- Jan 2003 Post #116 reaches all time high of 208 members and is now largest post in county.
- Feb 2003 Post donated \$250 to support "Youth Supporting The Troops" program. Packages to be sent to area men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and surrounding area.
- Mar 2003 National Commander, Ron Conley, spoke to approximately 135 people at Coon Valley Legion Hall.

- Jan 2006 Coon Valley awarded 2007 State American Legion Baseball Tournament.
- Jan 2006 Donation of \$225 made to Area Aging Group for senior meals.
- Feb 2006 Fire Fighter Of The Year nominee- Mark Dahlen; E.M.T. Of The Year-Ken Phillips; Police Officer Of The Year-Jim Hanson; Legislator Of The Year-Terry Musser; Viki Lyn Burgemeister was nominated for the Female Legionnaire Of The Year.
- Apr 2006 Post donated \$250 to Youth Supporting Our Troops Project.
- Apr 2006 Post votes to donate beer and help provide bartenders for Mike Raasch Benefit.
- May 2006 Coon Valley American Legion marchers awarded first place in Westby Sytennde Mai Parade.
- Jun 2006 Family of David "Whitey" Elsen presented \$1,000 memorial to the Post.
- Aug 2006 Phyllis Galstad donated wheelchair, walker and a monetary memorial in Memory of Wayne Kuester and Jim Galstad.
- Aug 2006 Post donates \$50 to Vernon County Council to be earmarked towards the High Ground Memorial.
- Sept 2006 Seventh District Fall Conference held in Coon Valley.
- Sept 2006 Family of Leo Cavadini donate his WWII parachute for future display in Legion Hall.
- Sept 2006 Post votes to purchase a mini-split kitchen air conditioner for \$1,300.
- Oct 2006 Post donated \$250 to Westby Food Pantry.
- Oct 2006 Post furnished crossing guards for Coon Valley on Halloween night.
- Oct 2006 Legionnaire, Frank Baker, donated Christmas Trees for Coon Valley Legion, Coon Valley Auxiliary and Coon Valley Area Baseball Association for the Lion's Club Community Christmas Lot.
- Nov 2006 Ron Hoff donated a framed aerial photograph of the Coon Valley American Legion grounds.
- Nov 2006 S.A.L. Commander, Chad Hofslie, presents Post with \$150 from S.A.L. Squadron to assist with Post Newsletter.
- Dec 2006 Post donates \$100 to Vernon County Crime Stoppers.
- Jan 2007 Post donated \$250 to The Youth Supporting Our Troops Program.
- Jan 2007 Post reaches all-time high of 222 members.
- Feb 2007 Outstanding Fire Fighter Of The Year nominee-Sara Freise; Outstanding E.M.T. Of The Year-Aryn Hooker; Outstanding Legislator Of The Year-Lee Nerison; Educator Of The Year-Dan Dwyer.
- Mar 2007 Coon Valley Post hosts Vernon County Banquet.

# COMMANDERS AND ADJUTANTS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Adjutant</u>
1921-1922	Nels O. Neprud	Clifford O. Veldey
1922-1923	John Nelson	Nels Neprud
1923-1924	A.M. Halvorson	Thomas Hofslie
1924-1925	Clifford O. Veldey	Ira Tiedman
1925-1926	Emil Ihle	Ira Tiedman
1926-1927	Julius Bjornstad	Alf Johnson
1927-1928	Wenzil Koula	O.E. Bennell/Tom Hofslie
1928-1929	Wenzil Koula	Nels O. Neprud
1929-1930	Lloyd Brye	Rueben Moen
1930-1931	Ed Kerska	Orville Lunde
1931-1932	Clifford O. Veldey	Orville Lunde
1932-1933	Nels O. Neprud	Orville Lunde
1933-1934	J. Bjornstad	Orville Lunde
1934-1935	R. Skaaland	Orville Lunde
1935-1936	R. Skaaland	Nels O. Neprud
1936-1937	R. Skaaland	Nels O. Neprud
1937-1938	R. Skaaland	Nels O. Neprud
1938-1939	R. Skaaland	Nels O. Neprud
1939-1940	R. Skaaland	Nels O. Neprud
1940-1941	R. Skaaland	Nels O. Neprud
1941-1942	R. Skaaland	Nels O. Neprud
1942-1943	R. Skaaland	Nels O. Neprud
1943-1944	Wenzil Koula	Nels O. Neprud
1944-1945	Wenzil Koula	Nels O. Neprud
1945-1946	Wenzil Koula	Nels O. Neprud
1946-1947	Lester Gilbertson	Rudy Larson
1947-1948	Orville Aadland	Rudy Larson
1948-1949	Bill Spriggs	Melvin Fink
1949-1950	Glenn Nordstrom	Melvin Fink
1950-1951	Dick Amundson	Curt Olson
1951-1952	Louis Gilbertson	Curt Olson
1952-1953	Vernon Silha	Sam Gilbertson
1953-1954	Bud Bluske	Layton Nelson
1954-1955	Vernon Burke	Leonard Erickson
1955-1956	Vernon Burke	Harvey Putt
1956-1957	Vernon Burke	Harvey Putt
1957-1958	Dean Amundson	Gordon Dreves
1958-1959	Fred Anderson	Gordon Dreves
1959-1960	Henzil Hanson	Walt Steenberg
1960-1961	Henzil Hanson	Walt Steenberg
1961-1962	Herby Jothan	Gordon Henley
1962-1963	Gordon Henley	Herby Jothan

This March 2007 Edition  
of  
The Coon Valley American Legion  
History Book

prepared by

PAST STATE HISTORIAN  
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