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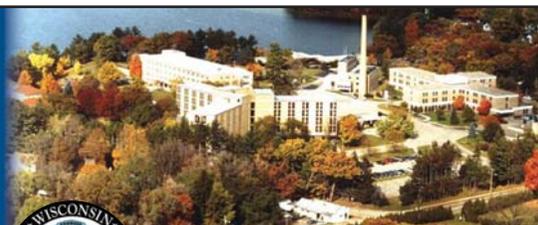
**Gary Dumas** has lived at the Home for just under two years: "I love the activities available, especially spending time in the woodshop, it was a great choice for me."



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"For God & Country"



# Badger Legionnaire

## & "Wisconsin" Official Publications of The Wisconsin American Legion Family

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

The mission of The American Legion, Department Of Wisconsin is to provide service to veterans, their families and their communities.

## Amherst Legionnaire Presented with Honorary Diploma

Joseph "Joe" Brouillet arrived at the Selma Voight Post No. 22 meeting in April expecting to speak with local school administrators about Veterans Day program ideas. However, he had been purposefully misinformed.

Joe was raised in New Berlin, Wisconsin where he attended the local school. At the age of 15 his father was involved in an industrial accident at work and was no longer able to support the family. Being the oldest son, Joe began work on a mushroom farm located next to his parents' house to help support his parents and his younger siblings who were still living at home. "I would go to school, walk home 2.5 miles, change my clothes, go to work for a couple hours, go home, do my homework, have supper and go to bed and next day start all over again," said Joe.

After completing the 8th grade Joe began working full time instead of returning to high school. When there was a little money saved up his father decided that he should enroll in a trade school. Joe attended the Milwaukee School of Engineering, completing his courses when he was 17. Joe returned to work on the mushroom farm and then enlisted in the Army Air Corps when he turned 18.

In the military Joe trained as an Aircraft Mechanic and eventually became a Crew Chief for C-47s'. Being a Crew Chief entailed much responsibility, making sure the plane was safe and flying with it wherever it went. After obtaining the rank of Corporal in July of 1948 Joe served in Germany and participated in the Berlin Airlift.



Joseph "Joe" Brouillet

Joe relates that it was the same routine everyday during the airlift. The landings had to be timed exactly three minutes behind the plane in front of you requiring precision timing and teamwork. He assisted in two to three flights per day, depending on how everything went with the loading and unloading of the planes.

A tour that was only supposed to last for 45 days was eventually extended to 180 days. After Germany, Joe was sent to Puerto Rico and then on to the Marshall Islands in the Pacific, duty that took him far, far away from the mushroom farm in New Berlin. Upon his return to the states he married his best friend, Dolly.

After a total of six and a half years of military service Joe and Dolly returned to New Berlin and began raising a family. Avid travelers, Joe and Dolly began looking for a place to stay during the summer. Finding an ideal spot in Amherst, Joe and Dolly spent weekends fixing up the place and in the summers that fol-

lowed, created memories there as well. When Joe retired in 1985, he and Dolly moved to Amherst permanently.

Fast-forward a few decades later to a conversation between Elementary School Librarian Aralda Bell and Superintendent LeAnn Chase in September of 2010. Knowing that Joe had never officially graduated from high school, Aralda expressed her interest in having Joe recognized in some way. In January the School Board voted to award Joe with an honorary high school diploma from Amherst High School.

At the April meeting of Post No. 22, Amherst Superintendent of Schools LeAnn Chase and School Board Member Sandra Keener presented Joe with the honorary diploma, much to his surprise. When asked how she thought everything turned out, Aralda Bell said, "I think that it is a fitting tribute for a wonderful man; for all that he has done for his country and what he is still doing for the community."

Joe has been a member of The American Legion for over 30 years and is a member of St. James parish in Amherst. He is an avid gardener and has mastered pickling and making various jellies and jams, most of which he shares with family and friends. A talented woodworker, he enjoys creating beautiful pieces of wooden art, some of which are currently on display at the Jensen Community Center. Joe also created the Berlin Airlift display located next to the Village Hall and spends time speaking to the elementary children on a regular basis about his experiences in the military.