

NEWS RELEASE

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University Veterans Club members place flags at five local cemeteries

In honor of Memorial Day, students recognize sacrifices of those who served before them

[Story Link](#)

Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2022

Menomonie, Wis. – In remembrance of Memorial Day, members of the University of Wisconsin-Stout Veterans Club supported the [Dunn County Veterans Service Office](#) by placing U.S. flags at gravesites in five area cemeteries during the holiday weekend, honoring 108 county veterans.

Veterans Club members placed flags at Falls City, Forest Center, Iron Creek, Spring Brook and St. John's cemeteries.

“The Dunn County Veterans Service Office provides support and services to our UW-Stout veterans, which includes students, staff and faculty,” said UW-Stout [Veteran Services](#) Coordinator Chris Engen, who served a 30-year Army military career before retiring as a colonel. “This is an opportunity to assist their efforts and the important work they do. We are grateful for remembrances like this that honor the service and sacrifices of our Dunn County veterans.”

The club has volunteered for the flag placing since 2010, Engen added.

Pride and honor on an important day

The club's partnership with the county's Veterans Service Office began when the office conducted a benefits overview for the club. The club then offered a commitment to assist the office in any projects needing volunteers. Shortly after, when a county volunteer group was no longer able to continue with the flag placement, the office reached out to the Veterans Club, and the partnership grew.

“All veterans need a sense of purpose after leaving the military,” said county Veterans Service Officer Greg Quinn. “During military service, we have many young men and women who have an incredible amount of responsibility at very young ages. Upon leaving the service, it may take many years to develop that high level of responsibility within the civilian sector.

“This partnership allows many to continue that sense of purpose to their fellow veterans, showing the sense of pride and dignity necessary for Memorial Day,” Quinn said. “Our office benefits because we have a group of young men and women who are future and current leaders that can be counted on to be respectful and prideful with honoring these deceased veterans on such an important day.”

Dunn County has more than 30 volunteers who place flags on nearly 5,000 veteran gravesites in 72 cemeteries, Quinn said.

Veterans Club President Eric Gritzmacher was a gunner’s mate 2nd class in the U.S. Navy, serving from 2004 to 2008 with two tours in Iraq and one in Somalia.

“Veterans are uniquely aware of the sacrifices and heroic efforts made by those who served before us,” Gritzmacher said. “When we have the opportunity to recognize and honor those commitments by planting flags, we are saying, ‘Thank you. The torch has been passed, and your efforts to carry it this far will never be forgotten.’

“If you can help and you have the ability to do so, you have to. Like Mr. Rogers said, ‘Always look for the helpers,’” he added.

Gritzmacher, of Hayward, will be a senior this fall and is majoring in [computer science](#). He was named an [Outstanding Student Leader of the Year](#) at the annual Leadership Awards on May 4.

Veteran Services

The Veterans Club serves to ensure a positive relationship among university students, veterans and the local community. It has 55 active members.

Veteran Services at UW-Stout has the [Military and Veteran Resource Center](#), a dedicated on-campus space for veterans, service members and their families, where veterans can meet, study and participate in veteran-specific activities.

The [Veteran Mentorship Program](#), a peer-to-peer mentoring program, matches student veterans with first-year student veterans to help build relationships and to set and achieve their academic and personal goals.

The university’s [Hall of Heroes](#) in the Memorial Student Center honors students and staff who died in military service to the U.S.

UW-Stout is [Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University](#), with a focus on applied learning, collaboration with business and industry, and career outcomes.

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Photos

Veterans Club President Eric Gritzmacher places a U.S. flag at the gravesite of a veteran at Falls City Cemetery.

Veterans Club member Brody Klund places a U.S. flag at the gravesite of a veteran at Falls City Cemetery.

Veterans Club Treasurer Sam Hovland places a U.S. flag at the gravesite of a veteran at Spring Brook Cemetery.

UW-Stout Veteran Services Coordinator Chris Engen