

MICHIGAN OVERSEAS VETERAN

VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

WINTER 25-26

BLUE STAR SERVICE DOGS PRESENTATION AT FALL CONFERENCE 2025

On Friday, October 31st, Trish, the Executive Director of Blue Star Service Dogs, along with lead trainer Glenn, gave a presentation at Fall Conference. Their demonstration focused on the key differences between service dogs and emotional support dogs. Examples were shown of their dogs following commands that can be useful for injured or disabled veterans, such as picking up keys or a credit card from the ground. It was a wonderful and informative demonstration. As a reminder, Blue Star Service Dogs has been chosen by State Commander Yahnka and State President Scheetz as their 2025-2026 VFW/Auxiliary Joint Project. Please visit www.bluestarservicedogs.org to learn more.



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DEPARTMENT COMMANDER, REINOLD YAHNKA



Comrades, Brothers and Sisters, we just finished our Fall Conference at the new venue in Mount Pleasant. Overall, I think it was a great venue, and I look forward to many conferences there in the future. The rooms were very nice, and the conference room was set up to meet our needs. Also, our hospitality room had much more space, especially with the foyer overflow and two TVs. The costume banquet was a success for those who wore costumes and enjoyed by those who didn't. Next year, Halloween is on Saturday night, so start planning your costume for next year's banquet. All Posts and Districts should have their VOD and Patriots Pen judging completed and the All-American

Dashboard reports submitted online. The deadline for submitting reports on the All-American Dashboard is January 31st, 2026. The Mid-Winter Conference is coming up from January 30th through February 1st, 2026. Make your room reservations as soon as possible, and make sure you order your VOD and Patriots Pen Banquet tickets early before they sell out. As we approach the holiday season, let's take time to help those who might be alone and welcome them into our homes. Hopefully, your Post and Auxiliary will put together baskets for needy families in your area and deliver them if you can. Where has the time gone? Already six months have flown by, with six more to go. Membership is looking pretty good. Work on contacting your annual members and get them to get a life membership. Offer them an incentive, such as paying the first \$45.00 of their life membership.

You will be surprised at how many will take you up on a deal like that. I hope everyone had a happy Thanksgiving, as it is now time to prepare for Christmas. I will be doing Santa Claus at the National Home for District 8 on December 5th. It is so much fun not only for the families but also for me. I asked my President, Debbie Sheetz, to be Mrs. Claus with me this year, and she graciously accepted the invitation—pictures to follow. I will also be doing a Village Tree Lighting Ceremony in Springport on December 6th at 5:00 pm. Remember to reach out to those who might not be as fortunate as you and offer them a listening ear. Do buddy checks; you know who needs a call. Do it; it might make a big difference in someone's life. As we close out this year, I want to wish all of my comrades and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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National President visit the Department, and we appreciate the VFW Officers and members who were able to join us during her visit. Your Department Officers attended the Big Ten Conference Annual Meeting in Iowa in October and heard encouraging messages from Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Cory Geisler. The 2026 Big Ten Conference Annual Meeting will be next October in Kalamazoo. There will be more information on this meeting in the coming months, and we look forward to your support as Michigan hosts this important event in 2026. Fall Conference was well attended in Mt. Pleasant. We always want more members to come and participate in the program orientations, especially early in the year, and this year was



it was. This year brought a brand-new venue, and although we didn't quite know what to expect, Mt. Pleasant proved to be an excellent choice. The rooms were comfortable and reasonably priced, the attached restaurant offered great food and value, and the convenience of downtown and the casino nearby made the location even better. We enjoyed some exceptional training throughout the weekend. The presentation by Blue Star Service Dogs, the Commander and President's joint project, was truly impactful. Charitable Gaming also delivered an excellent session. If anyone would like a copy of the slide deck, just send me an email and I'll be happy to forward it to you. The Halloween Banquet was a tremendous success and gave everyone a chance to relax, laugh, and simply enjoy each other's company. The food was fantastic, and the camaraderie even better. I hope you all had as much

fun as I did. As of this writing, VOD and Patriot's Pen entries have been submitted to their Posts for judging. By the time this article is published, District winners should be preparing for Mid-Winter Conference. I hope everyone has already purchased their banquet tickets. You won't want to miss seeing who earns the trip to the Freedom Academy. Just before Fall Conference, our Department Line Officers and delegate attended the Big 10 Conference in Bettendorf, Iowa. A special congratulations to Barry Walter on his re-election as Big 10 Secretary-Treasurer. Iowa put on an outstanding conference and set the bar high. I am confident, however, that we will rise to the challenge when it's our turn to host in Kalamazoo in October 2026. Last year was remarkable in terms of membership growth and All-American Posts. This year we are poised to do even better. Remember, part of the All-American program includes updating your dashboard, so be sure to enter your VOD and Patriot's Pen information. If your Post isn't at 101% yet, I trust you have a plan in place. If you need help, reach out to your Membership Director; he will gladly work with you to help you reach your goal. As always, if you need anything, please feel free to contact me.



DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT/QUARTERMASTER, BARRY WALTER

good. We would appreciate feedback from attendees: what can we do better or differently? For those that did not attend, what can we do to get you to attend? The Fall Conference banquet was a fun event, and some of the costumes were very creative. Thank you for participating. Past State Commander Kimberly Napoleon was honored to receive her recognition as the Michigan Commander's Group 2025 Veteran of the Year Award on November 8, presented by MVAA Director Brian Love and State Adjutant General Maj. General Paul Rogers during the Michigan Military and Veterans Gala. The following day PSC Napoleon was honored as the Grand Marshall of the Detroit Veterans Day Parade. Congratulations PSC Napoleon! As we head into the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, we are reminded that not every veteran in Michigan is enjoying the warmth and comfort of home and family that you and I enjoy. In your community there are veterans and their families in need. We ask that you search them out. Offer them the assistance that you would like if you were in that need. We cannot

be everything to every veteran, but we need to do what is within our ability to serve them as we would wish to be served. We are busy preparing for Mid-Winter Conference in January. This event is most significant for honoring our District Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen winners and our Department Teacher of the Year winners. We hope that you can make plans to attend Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo and support these great programs. Our VFW National Representative will be VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Cory Geisler of Wisconsin. We look forward to giving Cory a great Michigan welcome. We have been saddened to report the passing of Past State Commander Wayne "Boomer" Buck on November 1 in Nevada. PSC Buck served as State Commander in 1994-95. We anticipate a memorial service and interment in Michigan in December. We inform Post and District Officers as plans are announced. Please keep his widow, Eileen, in your prayers during this difficult time. If your Department office staff may be of any assistance to you, please contact us.



Reminder that inspections are to be done after the Post has submitted their 990 and renewed their corporation update. When these actions have been completed, contact your District Inspector for the inspection. District Inspectors, you must see all paperwork that is included in the

DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR, WILLIAM (BUTCH) OGDEN

Comrades, we just finished with the Fall Conference in Mount Pleasant. Congratulations to the All-State Posts and the All-American Posts. inspection. Please print legibly and make sure that you submit it to Department. You should look at the checklist for information before the inspection. You are to inspect the Post; it is not a pass/fail event. It is to document issues that need to be corrected to help keep their nonprofit status. At this time audits were due by October 31st. There are currently 22 posts with 2 audits behind. All assets are to be on the audit, including bonds and investments. There are too many Posts with no relief fund on the audit. Comrades, section 219 of the National Bylaws states a relief fund will be

established and maintained by the Post. Also, section 704 of the National Bylaws states a relief fund shall be established and maintained by the Post. The audit must be signed by the 3 elected trustees and the Post Commander before submitting it to Department. I look forward to Mid-Winter conference for the VOD-Patriot Pen and Teacher of the Year event to be held in Kalamazoo at the Radisson. As always, for any questions, feel free to contact me via email at 1950americanpatriot@gmail.com or phone at 517-504-4069. No phone calls after 9 pm.



We understand that some Posts may still have difficulty in navigating the online reporting system, so we want to ensure that all Posts know that we have resources available to help with Hospital Reporting. I have updated a reporting guide, which is in PDF format. If you would like a copy of the guide emailed or mailed to you, please contact me at aaron.mcclung.vfw@gmail.com or call me at 904-864-5910. Like other programs, the Hospital Program is an evolving program. The most recent changes were a direct result of a change to the All-State Program approved by the Council of Administration. Posts will still need 10 months of qualifying reports, but there is now a 14-month reporting period for this year. The All-State Program was adjusted to align with National

DEPARTMENT SURGEON, AARON MCCLUNG

Comrades, we are having year with Hospital Reporting. It is great to see more and more Posts come on board with the online reporting system. Programs and allow reporting through June. With this change, many Posts are still All-State eligible that wouldn't have been without the change, as long as they consistently keep reporting each month. Like the Program Activities reporting, we will be refining the Hospital Reporting program soon with guidance from the Department Commander. Please watch your emails for updates to the reporting program. A reminder that, like the program activities, monthly reports are due by the end of the day on the 10th of each month for the preceding month. We also understand that sometimes, circumstances arise that may cause reports to not be submitted. If a Post would like an exception to a reporting deadline for a report, please reach out to me for Hospital Reports or Bob Lutz for Activity Reports to see if we will approve the reports with the exceptions. Into the numbers, this reporting year, we are seeing astonishing numbers for Posts and Districts reporting. These numbers only reflect Hospital Reporting, and the numbers are looking good. Going into November, the Department of Michigan still has 199 posts out of 236

that are maintaining All-State eligibility requirements for Hospital Reporting. We have had a few Districts have at least a month with 100% of Posts reporting within the District. District 9 is leading the way with 3 months at 100% and a reporting level of 95% for the reporting year. District 13 is in a close second with a month at 100% and a few more months above 90%, which is helping the district stay above 90% reporting for the reporting year. District 5 is currently leading the Department in donations, District 6 is currently leading in patients served, and District 8 is leading in pints of blood donated. There is still lots of time remaining in the reporting year, and we are continuously improving. If this were a sport, I would say we're having a banner year. The success of this year is a continued result of the hard work and foundation built by previous State Surgeon Benjamin Light (State Jr. Vice Cmdr) and his predecessor, Don Martindale. We continue to improve each year as a Department, and it's a direct reflection of the great leadership we have in our program. Thank you all for everything you do.

GREAT LAKES NATIONAL CEMETERY

Comrades, things haven't slowed down at Great Lakes National Cemetery; interments for fiscal year 2025 were 4,385, compared to 4,397 for fiscal year 2024. Since opening 20 years ago, there have been 70,639 interments. Great Lakes is the 6th busiest National Cemetery, with a staff that is 28th in

size for the National Cemeteries. The cemetery will be opening a position for Caretaker Supervisor this coming year. We send goodbye to Director Andre Logan as he is moving back to his home state of Virginia to run the state's military cemeteries. Russ Sayles is the acting director currently.

Due to the government shutdown, several events had to be canceled, one being the fall headstone cleaning; a spring headstone cleaning is scheduled for April 11, 2026. Phase 2 of the construction project will wrap up shortly, with the restrooms being open soon.



DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

ORVILLE BEAUCHAMP

To my fellow veterans, this is Orville Beauchamp. I am the New Membership Director for the Department of Michigan Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2025-2026. I have been with the VFW for quite a few years now and know the importance of keeping our membership strong and knowledgeable. With all the uncertainty in Washington today, we need to be heard, and the only way we are heard is by being active participants in the system. The best way to be a participant is to be part of the VFW, the oldest and most respected organization in Washington. So, I am reaching out to those members, both at home and veterans who are deployed or stationed in Korea and abroad. If you have never thought of being involved with the organization or have become disillusioned by the organization or a Post. I would ask you to reach out and find out what we are doing now. There has been a change in direction and what we are about. Past National Commanders of the VFW Duane Sarmiento and Al Lipphardt have both said that your father's VFW may be a thing of the past. We have shrugged off the stereotype that the VFW is a bunch of old guys sitting at a bar and reminiscing of the good old days. We are doing what we have done for years, but now we are talking about it. We are volunteering and helping communities through food banks and clothing for homeless veterans. Christmas for the disadvantaged, and meals for veterans and families in the community. We also offer scholarships to your children for college with our Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen programs. Another program we coordinate closely with is Student Veterans of America. The SVA have chapters in colleges across the country and are there to assist veterans who are returning to school after their deployment or those who have left the service. Through our partnership with SVA we provide their members with benefit claim assistance and other services. SVA works with school financial aids offices to assist in getting grants and helping them file for student loans and VA GI Bill benefits. And just as important, SVA members are also there to mentor their new student members. If you have questions, please reach out to me at membership@vfwmi.vet or call me at 734-575-2320. I can fill you in on the great opportunities we have to offer as well as benefits that you may not know you are entitled to and assist in directing you to the Veterans Service Officer closest to you in the state.

VETERAN CRISIS LINE

800-273-8255 PRESS 1

MENTAL HEALTH/VMS DIRECTOR, DOUG BRINKER

Fall blessings to all our VFW and our Auxiliary members. We had an excellent Fall Conference at our new location of Mt. Pleasant. Thank each of you for stopping by the table. Remember to capture photos of the materials you grabbed displayed at your Post and receive All-State credit. I want to thank 10th District Commander Scott Taylor for holding a PTS Seminar as well as Past State Commander Conklin for the Stand Down in Decatur. Big shout-out to Troy Post for hosting their annual PTS panel discussion, with thanks to Todd Post CDR for his diligent efforts making it a success. Remember, anyone who attends any of the upcoming THRIVE Suicide Prevention training courses over the next several months, make sure I receive a copy of the sign-in along with your Post number to receive credit. No paper trail—it never happened. We want to hear from you and have you extend an invite for the Mental Health/VMS programs to your Post or District. To be approved, you must request the program through the Department website, go to "Request a Department Representative," and fill out the form. The State Commander must approve the request before the program travels to your location. As we move into the winter months, it's imperative we continue to conduct buddy checks on each other. This time of the year can be exceptionally depressing for many who have no family to celebrate with or who have lost family just before the holidays. Studies show that at this specific time of the year, suicide rates begin to climb and become the worst around mid-winter. Speaking of Mid-Winter, I hope you have planned to attend the Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo. We owe it to the incredible work our young leaders put into all they have for the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen scholarship competitions. Remember to come by the Mental Health/VMS table, grab some information, perhaps even an autographed copy of My Dark Shadow, and let's have a conversation about beginning 2026 with solid achievement as a Department. Our goal is to provide tools and hope to prevent a suicide from occurring in all possibilities. My phone is on 24/7/365 at 517-499-0926. I will answer regardless of the hour! Take note of the following upcoming events: THRIVE Trainings (contact me for dates and locations; free to attend) and the Spring Massage Championship Event Wellness in the Woods with Mental Welfare added at Ann Arbor VFW 423 May 1st-5rd, 2026, all weekend long.



SERVICE DOESN'T STOP
WHEN WE'RE DONE SERVING.

 **VFW**
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Today'sVFW.org

20TH ANNUAL DETROIT VETERANS DAY PARADE

On Sunday, November 9th, 2025 PSC Kimberly A. Napoleon served as the Grand Marshal of The 20th Annual Detroit Veterans Day Parade in Corktown. Pictured below with James Europe from VFW Post 2253 along with Fox2 Detroit Meteorologist Rich Luterman, 2LT U.S. Air Force veteran who served as the weather detachment commander in Southwest Asia during Operation Desert Storm. Also pictured with Oscar Mike representative, who completed 4-mile race for suicide awareness and to honor the servicemen and women in and out of uniform, and 12th Congressional District Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib who posed for photo pre parade step off. Lastly, PSC Kimberly A. Napoleon delivered the pre-20th Detroit Veterans Day parade remarks after being introduced as the Grand Marshal of the parade.



QUILT OF VALOR RECIPIENT,
BARRY WALTER

The Quilts of Valor Foundation (QOVF) was established in 2003 by Catherine Roberts, who sought to create a tangible way to express gratitude to military personnel. The mission of the foundation is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing quilts. Each quilt is a heartfelt token of appreciation, symbolizing honor and support for those who have served in the armed forces.

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2025 COMMANDERS GROUP MICHIGAN VETERAN OF THE YEAR,
KIMBERLY A. NAPOLEON



Brian Love, director of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency; Kimberly Napoleon and U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Paul D. Rogers, adjutant general and director of the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ POST REPORTS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

POST 582 - ORTONVILLE

October 10th VFW Post 582 lead the homecoming parade through Ortonville to the football game. November 8th was the 5th annual Ruck for Vets to raise money for area veterans and families in need and veteran suicide awareness. The Post has adopted 5 families for the holidays. And on Veterans Day, the Post held a flag retirement and new flag installation at Oakwood Elementary school Ortonville.



POST 3946 - ROCKFORD

Rockford VFW Post 3946 presented a check for \$2,000 to Senior Neighbors Veterans' Home Repair Assistance Program during its monthly meeting in September. "This is VFW Post 3946's first donation to Senior Neighbors, and we are excited to help provide financial support for their home repair program, which helps veterans remain independent in their own homes," said Post Commander Larry Herrington. Ashley Doyle, administrator of the program, said the funds provided by the Post are greatly appreciated "and will be used to make needed repairs and modifications to the homes of Kent County veterans." Home repair assistance is individualized, based on the specific need of the veteran, and ranges from simple things such as installing grab bars in bathrooms and showers to more involved projects such as building handicap ramps and making minor home repairs. Suzanne Callahan, President of Senior Neighbors, said she "couldn't be more pleased with the donation," emphasizing, "Senior

Neighbors is dedicated to helping all Kent County seniors, including veterans, live their lives with dignity, independence, and a sense of community." In addition to its Veterans' Home Repair Program, Senior Neighbors offers a wide range of other programs and services available not just to veterans but to any Kent County senior age 60 or over. The services the organization provides range from a pet program that helps seniors with veterinary bills and animal care items such as food to transportation, meals, case management, and crisis assistance. According to Herrington, "Rockford VFW Post 3946 is committed to community service and outreach," and the Post supports wide-ranging charitable activities, "some specifically aiding veterans and their families, others supporting the community at large." Some of the Post's recent charitable donations include scholarships to local disadvantaged youth to attend VFW Camp Trotter for Children in Newaygo, support of Eagle Scout projects, donations to

the VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, sponsoring Sparta Little League teams, and the Bishop Hills Flag Pole Project. The sole source of revenue supporting VFW Post 3946's community outreach is their monthly, home-cooked roast beef dinner. Served with all the trimmings, the dinner is served 12-2 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month at the Boat & Canoe Club, 401 N. Park St. Eat-in or carry-out. Drop by for dinner if you're in the area!



POST 4659 - SHELBY TOWNSHIP

On Saturday, November 8th, Shelby Township's Old Settlers Post #4659 celebrated their 80th Anniversary with a dinner and program.



Post 4659 Cdr Art Hugo, Post 4659 Auxiliary Pres Sylvia Pocock, Dept Jr Vice Pres Jan Passmore, & Dept Cdr Reinhold Yahna



Dept Cdr Reinhold Yahna, Dist 5 Cdr Dane Beremek, Dept Jr Vice Cdr Ben Light, & Post 4659 Cdr Art Hugo



Post 4659 Auxiliary Sr Vice Pres Diane Hugo, Dept Jr Vice Pres Jan Passmore, Dist 5 Pres Sandra Kleven, & Post 4659 Pres Sylvia Pocock



Post 4659 Cdr Art Hugo, Post 7573 Cdr Raul Villarreal, Post Dept Cdr Jerry Gorski

POST 7573 - NEW BALTIMORE

Lempke-Blackwell Post 7573 proudly participated in New Baltimore's annual Veterans Day ceremony on November 11, 2025, joining city officials, local residents, and fellow veterans in honoring the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. The ceremony, held at New Baltimore City Hall, featured remarks from the Mayor, who expressed heartfelt gratitude for the selfless service and enduring sacrifices made by veterans

across all branches of the military. The Post Commander, Raul Villarreal, along with Post 7573 officers, stood alongside community leaders as the city paid tribute to those who have defended the nation's freedoms at home and abroad. Post representatives, along with their Auxlary took part in the ceremonial observance, which included a moment of silence, the presentation of colors, and a wreath-laying to commemorate fallen service members. Attendees gathered

in unity to reflect on the significance of Veterans Day and to acknowledge the ongoing contributions of America's veterans. Lempke-Blackwell Post 7573 remains committed to honoring military service, supporting veterans and their families, and strengthening its bond with the New Baltimore community. The Post extends its appreciation to all who attended and helped ensure that the legacy of America's veterans continues to be remembered and celebrated.



POST 8846 - NORTH MUSKEGON

Don Rea Post #8846 coordinated with Tractor Supply in Muskegon to participate in their "National Hometown Heroes Day" on November 1st, 2025. Under the direction of Store Manager, Jennifer Grennel, Post Officers Rod Siegel, Lawrence Sullivan, Steve Allen, Gary White, and David Jones celebrated a day to honor veterans, service members, and first responders who have served with strength, courage, and heart.





AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT, DEBBIE SCHEETZ

Before I make my request, I want to take a minute to share what the Auxiliary is really about. We've been at this for more than a century—over 110 years focused on supporting veterans, service members, their families, and the communities they call home. For all that time, our job has been simple: stand beside the VFW and lend a hand wherever it's needed. Our programs are broad. We volunteer at VA hospitals and veterans' homes. We go into local schools to talk about patriotism. We work with youth

groups, help legislators understand what veterans need, and award scholarships—both in partnership with the VFW and through our own Auxiliary programs. We're also pretty passionate about preserving our history and making sure people know who we are and what we do. But one of the most important things on our minds these days is growth. We need new Auxiliaries to strengthen our VFW Posts. We need new members to step up, especially because so many of our current volunteers have already given decades of their lives—35, 40, or even 50 years in some cases. So, here's my plea to every VFW member reading this: If you have eligible family—your

spouse, kids, grandkids—who aren't already part of the Auxiliary, think about signing them up at your local Post. If your Post doesn't have an Auxiliary yet, talk with your VFW about starting one. And if you're not sure how, just reach out to our office and we'll put you in touch with someone who can help. The truth is, if we don't start bringing in more members—especially younger ones—there's a real risk we'll fade away in the next decade. The same goes for the VFW itself. That would leave a huge hole, not just for our organizations, but for all the veterans and families who count on us. And honestly, that's not the future any of us want to see.



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, JASON MANKE

It was great seeing all the members at Fall Conference. I hope each member was able to learn something new from that they could

take back to their Auxiliaries. It was awesome to see 14 first-timers attend Fall Conference. I held my first meeting with the District Sr. Vice Presidents; we did a little training to help prepare them for next year. I'm looking forward to doing some more training with them at the Mid-Winter Conference in January.

Speaking of Mid-Winter, this is always a great time to recognize all the students. Welcome to the new Auxiliaries that we've instituted into our great state: Auxiliary 1527, 6134, 2964, and 3901. I know Marilyn is working hard on getting more Auxiliaries ready to be instituted during this year.



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT, JAN PASSMORE

At Fall Conference, I had my first meeting with my District Junior Vice Presidents. It was nice to begin meeting with those that could come. I am looking forward to meeting with them again at Mid-Winter Conference at the end of January. Fall

Conference was a wonderful training conference where I think everyone learned a lot. The bingo fundraiser was very enjoyable, and fun was had by all. Next, I would like to give a warm welcome to the four new Auxiliaries that have joined our organization since the first of July. I had the honor of instituting two of the four Auxiliaries and wish them success as they get going. I encourage everyone that can to attend our

Mid-Winter Conference, where we will be honoring our Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, and Teacher of the Year recipients. We will be having a Service Officer Training for Auxiliary membership, and it is strongly encouraged for Auxiliary members to attend, as it is quite the learning experience. Here is to wishing everyone a blessed holiday season and an awesome new year. Stay safe, warm, and happy!



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT YOUTH/CAMP TROTTER CHAIRMAN, KELLY SMYCZYNSKI

Our first Fall Conference in Mt. Pleasant went well. Along with training, we participated in the Department Bingo fundraiser, silent auction, and raffle. Fun was had by everyone! The Auxiliary Camp Trotter basket raffle raised \$365. The School of Instruction included information on reporting. When writing your description of an activity, answer these questions: Who did what? For whom? How many members participated? How many were served or assisted? Don't forget to include how many youth

worked with you. If you purchased books from the Patriotism through Literacy Program, please include how many. Did your youth groups help our veterans and shine with patriotism? If so, award them with the Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citation. The deadlines for the Illustrating America Art Contest are fast approaching. The contest is open to current students in grades K-8. Entries are due to the Auxiliary by March 31, 2026, to Department by April 15, 2026, and to the National Auxiliary by May 5, 2026. Eligibility and requirements can be found at vfwauxmi.org; under Programs, select Youth/Camp Trotter. Camp Trotter is closed for the winter, but maintenance continues. In October

2025, the mattresses in all cabins were replaced, the fire suppression system received maintenance, and ancient thermostats were upgraded. Our Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo is fast approaching. I encourage everyone to attend, as it's the best way to stay up-to-date and find out about the work our sisters and brothers are doing around the state. Once again there will be no silver dollar table, but we will be doing a basket raffle. Districts 8, 9, 10, and 11 should bring baskets for the Auxiliary Camp Trotter raffle. Auxiliaries are also welcome to donate their own baskets. You may choose your own theme. Or feel free to call or email me for ideas. Let's fill our table to overflowing!

@VFWMI & @VFWAUXMI
FIND US ON FACEBOOK



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN, DIANA WARD

Greetings, Sisters, Brothers, and Comrades. It was great seeing everyone at Fall Conference. I hope you enjoyed the presentations at the School of Instruction and found at least one thing that was helpful in your own Auxiliary programs. If you weren't able to be there, I have posted my PowerPoint presentation on the Americanism—Michigan Facebook page. Please feel free to share it with your members. Looking forward to reading all of your reports for what you have done for Veterans' Day and Pearl Harbor Day. There are several other patriotic birthdays and observances. Tell me what you did to promote them. Continue to get flags out to businesses and individuals who might have worn and tattered flags. Remember, we want to catch patriotism and patriotic actions when they are happening. Drive around

your neighborhoods and communities and notice who has flags up, who has patriotic displays, or who shows American pride. We can encourage their patriotism by presenting them with Certificates of Appreciation and Recognition. Take pictures and put them in the paper or on social media. This will show them as a shining example and encourage others to display flags or other actions of patriotism and Americanism. Teach them to develop the behaviors. Have you gotten into the schools yet? Use the tools available on MALFA for education with kids. Develop Americanism and patriotic events and activities you can do with kids. Have a day of kid-friendly programs at your Post—coloring contests, flag-folding lessons, and teaching them about the Missing Man Table and what POW/MIA means. I am planning on doing a Gold Star Family recognition at the Mid-Winter Conference. Please email me the information for those you know. I would like a picture of the veteran, their name,

branch of service, and when and where they paid the ultimate sacrifice. Also include the names of the surviving family members. I would like to have these by January 10, 2026. Here are the upcoming patriotic observances for December and January. Please check out the monthly bulletins and Americanism—Michigan Facebook page for more details about these special dates: December—Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Birthday (12/1); Pearl Harbor Day (12/7); U.S. National Guard Birthday (12/13); Bill of Rights Day (12/15). January—Save the Eagles Day (1/10); Ratification Day—Treaty of Paris (1/14); Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (1/19); Vietnam Peace Day (1/27). The next deadline for quarterly reporting is January 31, 2026. When reporting flags, please be sure to give me the exact number of flags and the cost of the flags. If you ever have questions or need assistance, I can be reached on my cell at (810)955-2951 or by email at legalblaze@aol.com. Keep up the great work!



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT CHIEF-OF-STAFF, MARILYN MALICK

I want to take a moment to recognize four Michigan VFWs that have recently launched new Auxiliaries, a VFW member thinking about starting an Auxiliary at your Post. I'd love to help. You can reach me by phone or text at 586-536-6004, or email me at MJMalick@msn.com. A key part of keeping our Auxiliaries active and strong is making sure they get the support they need. Sometimes, all it

takes is a small push to help an Auxiliary regain momentum. Pairing new members with experienced mentors is a great way to do this. We've got plenty of members who've picked up useful advice over the years and are happy to guide our newer folks. Mentoring doesn't have to be complicated—it's just about sharing what you know and being there for someone with questions. No one learns everything overnight, so having a go-to person really helps, both for the mentor and the mentee.

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AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN, KRIS GRIFFITH

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Then, on October 28, Reed City VFW Post 2964 created their Auxiliary, and most recently, Fred Quandt VFW Post 3901 in Algonac formed theirs on November 9, 2025. We're excited to welcome all these new Auxiliaries! If you're a VFW member thinking about starting an Auxiliary at your Post, I'd love to help. You can reach me by phone or text at 586-536-6004, or email me at MJMalick@msn.com. A key part of keeping our Auxiliaries active and strong is making sure they get the support they need. Sometimes, all it

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AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT CONDUCTOR, DENISE ARNOLD

It is so much fun being part of the Line Officers for the great state of Michigan VFW Auxiliary. I have had the opportunity

to attend the National Conference in Columbus, the Big 10 Conference in Iowa, and most recently our Fall Conference. I was able to assist with the institution of the Reed City Auxiliary on October 28 and visit Districts 4 and 8 as well. I am looking forward to Mid-Winter and the rest of the

adventures with the Auxiliary this year! Let's go, Team Debbie!





AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT CHAIRMAN, APRIL LOWERY

Across the United States, communities look for ways to honor and support the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces. While thank-you speeches and patriotic ceremonies are meaningful, there are everyday actions that make a deeper impact—especially when service members are deployed or veterans are facing challenges back home. “Adopting a unit” is a volunteer effort through which a community group, school, organization, or even a single family provides ongoing support to a deployed military unit. This can include sending care packages filled with snacks, hygiene products, and entertainment items, as well as handwritten cards and notes. To a deployed service member, these gestures offer far more than physical items—they offer emotional connection. The simple act of knowing that someone hundreds or thousands of miles away cares about their well-being boosts morale and counteracts the isolation and stress that can come with deployment. For families at home, the Adopt-a-Unit program reinforces that their loved one is not forgotten. It becomes a bridge between civilian life and military duty, reminding our troops that their sacrifices matter. When service members return home, not all transitions are smooth. Some veterans struggle to find stable employment or housing, and too many end up without a permanent place to live. Supporting homeless veterans is one of the most meaningful acts a community can take. Distributing “blessing bags” filled with travel-sized hygiene items, warm socks, gloves, snacks, and resource cards can make a tremendous difference. Hosting blanket drives, providing hot meals, or creating warming stations during winter months also shows tangible care. Beyond meeting basic needs, these efforts restore dignity. Homeless veterans are not defined by their present situation—they are individuals who have served our country and deserve compassion, respect, and a pathway to stability. Mental health remains a critical issue for many veterans. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides immediate, confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. By dialing 988 and pressing 1, veterans, service members, and their families gain direct access to counselors trained in military-related stress and crisis response. Awareness saves lives. Sharing information about 988 on social media, at community events, or in veteran-centered spaces ensures help is always within reach. No veteran should ever feel alone when facing emotional or mental health challenges. For some veterans, healing comes on four legs. Blue Star Service Dogs (BSSD) is an organization that pairs trained service dogs with veterans who struggle with PTSD or other invisible wounds. These dogs provide more than companionship—they offer security, emotional grounding, and renewed purpose. Many veterans describe their service dog as a partner who helps them reengage with the world, rebuild confidence, and reclaim independence. BSSD is the special project of both Commander Reinold and President Debbie. All donations made from auxiliaries can and should be reported under the Auxiliary Veteran and Family Support program!

VFW STORE AD

NEW!
1030 ORNAMENT \$24.90

NEW!
1025 ORNAMENT \$29.95

NEW!
7186 CAP \$19.95

NEW!
PATCHES
8179 SMALL \$2.95
8186 LARGE \$5.95

NEW!
2506 FLAG \$32.95

NEW!
1237 PADFOLIO \$58.00

NEW!
1092 ZIPPO LIGHTER \$54.00

VFW
VFWSTORE.ORG

Prices valid through 8/31/2026. To place your order, call 1.833.839.8387 or go online to VFWSTORE.ORG

VISIT DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE TODAY
VFWMI.ORG

vfwmi.org/contact
vfwmi.org/vethelp
vfwmi.org/join

vfwmi.org/directory
vfwmi.org/officers
vfwmi.org/forms

DISTRICT COMMANDER REPORTS



DISTRICT 4 COMMANDER, BRIAN MARTIN

Comrades, as your District 4 Commander, I believe leadership means more than just managing—it means advocating. Over the past quarter, I've focused a great deal of time and effort on veterans' legislative advocacy—meeting with Michigan legislators, city officials, and county leadership to push forward real change that will benefit our veterans today and into the future. From Lansing to Wayne County, I've been in active discussions with State Representatives, Senators, the City of Detroit's veterans staff, and the newly appointed Director of Wayne County Veterans Services. These conversations are part of a broader strategy to ensure veterans in every corner of Wayne County have access to the benefits, resources, and local support they've earned through service. This work is grounded in the Michigan Commanders Group Legislative Priorities, which I outline a clear path toward progress on issues that affect our Posts and our people. These priorities are publicly available at michigancommandersgroup.org/Legislative. Some of the key items we are actively supporting include: Special Liquor License Expansion; Increasing the number of licenses available to veterans service organizations from 12 to 42, allowing more Posts to legally host events and generate revenue; Parking Protections for Disabled Veterans: Building off the recent Detroit resolution, we're working to secure statewide free parking privileges for veterans with DV license plates; Legal Gaming in Clubrooms: Advocating for legislation that would permit state-regulated gaming machines in VFW and other VSO clubrooms, modeled after Ohio's successful veteran gaming system; and Wayne County Veteran Service Officer (VSO) Expansion: We're pressing the County to hire full-time, accessible VSOs that serve veterans in all regions of Wayne County—not just downtown Detroit. Let me be clear: this is not about politics; it is about policy that honors our commitment to those who have worn the uniform. These priorities are not just talking points. They are action steps—backed by your VFW, your District, and the full weight of the Michigan Commanders Group. The Fourth District continues to lead from the front. Whether it's through legislative engagement, public awareness, or face-to-face advocacy, we are showing up for our veterans at every level of government. We are raising our voices. And more importantly—we're being heard. Thank you to all the Post Commanders, Auxiliary leaders, and community partners who continue to support these efforts. Your engagement matters. Your voices matter. And together, we will build a better future for our comrades and their families. We are the Fighting Fourth. We go all the way—and then some.



DISTRICT 5 COMMANDER, DANE BEZEMEK

Greetings, Comrades! It is hard to believe that the year is almost half over, Fall Conference is behind us, and Mid-Winter is just around the corner. Upcoming District events are the District Meeting on December 14th at Post 9914 starting at 10:00 AM and the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher of the Year banquet on January 4th, 2026. Post Inspections are in full swing, and we are looking forward to them being completed soon. Congratulations to Old Settlers Post 4659 on 80 years. Congratulations to Post 4037, 1008, and 3908 for achieving 100% or better in membership already; keep up the great work on recruiting and retaining members. The goal is 101% this year. If you need assistance with reporting, please reach out to me; I would love to help. I look forward to visiting with your Post soon.



DISTRICT 6 COMMANDER, REX MURDOCK

Comrades of the Super 6th District, it's a great honor to serve as your District 6 Commander for the 2025-2026 year. District 6 has a proud tradition of producing outstanding leaders, and our very own Reinhold Yahnka now serves as our Department Commander! Let's rally behind him and help achieve the Triple Crown by reaching 101% membership. There's no reason every Post can't hit this goal—let's work on it now rather than waiting until the final month. As I visit each and every Post, I'm excited to see the incredible work being done across our District. Each Post brings something unique and valuable to our great organization, and the impact you're making in your communities does not go unnoticed. I look forward to seeing every Post achieve All-State and All-American honors this year. Together, we can make it happen—and I'm here to assist you in whatever your needs may be. The Fall Conference was a great success, and I'm already looking forward to the Mid-Winter Conference and VOD/PP Banquet. Be sure to secure your hotel reservations and banquet tickets as soon as possible!

VETERANS: DON'T FEED THE SHARKS.
The VFW provides FREE benefits assistance.

DontFeedTheSharks.org

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



DISTRICT 7 COMMANDER, SCOTT HOLMES

Greetings to you all from the Working 7th District. The year is halfway completed, but there is still work to be done. All Posts are encouraged to continue to gain membership. This is how we continue to grow and make our voice heard before Congress to help our veterans, families, and communities. This year our goal is 101%. If every member brought in just one new member, the challenge would be easily completed. Every Post should be looking for new members every day. Do you carry membership applications with you? If not, then start. You know the walk and the talk. You see the hat, shirt, or decal on a car, and you start a conversation. Bring them into our fold. But never forget to ask their spouse as well. They could be a veteran as well! Congratulations to the 61 All-American Posts this year and to the All-State Post recipients. Your Posts' hard work doesn't

go unnoticed. There are also people and foundations that may surprise you with all your hard work and donate to your Post. Fall Conference is completed, and it was good to see so many friends again. Both the VFW and Auxiliary attended the training that was provided. I believe the highlight for me was the Blue Star Service Dogs appearance. The information and performance by the handlers was fantastic. This program rescues dogs from local shelters and then sends them to prisons, where the dogs are paired up with inmates. These inmates train the dogs on simple tasks. Once completed, the dogs move up to specialized training by the Blue Star Dogs special trainers. The demonstration provided showed us these skills. Each dog is trained to meet the needs of their recipient. Every Post should be proud to make a donation to this program and continue to, even after the end of this year. I see why our Department Commander and Department President chose this program to be their joint Special Program. This program helps

veterans and will continue to do so well into the future. Happy belated Veterans Day to all of you! I had the privilege of attending an elementary school veterans appreciation breakfast with many of our area veterans. The children put on a great show, especially when they sang Lee Greenwood's God Bless the USA. There is so much joy in the words and actions they show. That night I had the honor of being the guest speaker at my Athens Historical Society Veterans Appreciation dinner. Many of the veterans I saw that morning were in attendance. I spoke about moving to our small village and that I have met many of the prominent members of our community and thanked them for being ready to help the VFW and vice versa. Without community involvement, things wouldn't get done. Comrades, remember to report all of your Veterans Day events. The holiday season is upon us, and I hope all will have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year. Until Mid-Winter, may you all be happy, safe, and prosperous.



DISTRICT 9 COMMANDER, MICHAEL ECKMYRE

Hello Comrades, The Mighty 9th District is off and running for this year. Our District meetings this year will be February 21st and May 16th of 2026. Our focus this year is on communication and teamwork, as the new age of reporting is upon us, and we intend to create a learning atmosphere for all the Post Commanders and

their Posts. My other goal with the help of District is to raise money for the VFW service office so they can help veterans get what they are entitled to without the risk of being taken advantage of by the sharks and claim seekers who in turn take a percentage of the veterans' benefits without the veteran being aware that they are being taken advantage of. So far, with the help of District members and the local media, we have raised over \$3000 in the first month. We are

also getting the Voice of Democracy / Patriots Pen information to all the schools this year so the teachers can implement these essay writings into their curriculum with this year's theme for both as "How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?" There are more things planned for the Mighty 9th this year, so I hope to have more positive information to share throughout the year. I feel honored to serve as the District 9 Commander for 2025-2026.

RECRUITING EVENT

Below are pictures from a recruiting event we had in the District at Lugnuts Stadium. My Senior Vice and I had a good time and there was a good turn out. We got to hang out with Terry Stevens and Metal Mandy from Q106 radio station from Lansing. Q106 has been

an instrumental asset in getting the word out and helping our District 9 in raising money and awareness for the VFW Service Office. As Commander I feel it is very important to get all of the Posts in my District as well as other Districts to get the word out to

DISTRICT 9

fellow Comrades that there is free services through the VFW Service Office to get the help and claims filed the proper way so that our Comrades get what they are entitled to without worrying about any costs involved. - District 9 Commander, Michael Eckmyre



DISTRICT 10 COMMANDER, TRASON WILLEMIJN

Comrades and friends, I am proud to report that the state of VFW District 10 is strong and moving forward with purpose. Our posts continue to demonstrate the spirit of camaraderie and service that defines the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and this Veterans Day offered a powerful reminder of that commitment. Members of Charles Schoor VFW Post 796 participated in the annual Veterans Day ceremony organized by the St. Clair County Veterans Council at the Allied Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Port Huron. This year's guest speaker, Captain Nicholas Edward Beebe of the Selfridge Air National Guard, delivered

a moving message about how veterans continue to serve long after their time in uniform ends. He spoke about service rooted in love: love for our country, for one another, and for the responsibility we carry as veterans. As he spoke, the clouds parted and sunlight broke through, creating a truly meaningful moment for all in attendance. Following the ceremony, Post 796 members and families gathered at the post for fellowship and shared time together out of the cold. Handmade cards from students at Crull Elementary School were distributed, bringing warmth and smiles to the faces of those present. Christmas cards were also circulated for signing, continuing the spirit of giving across the community. Additional meals were prepared and delivered to veterans who were unable to attend due to health

or weather challenges—simple gestures that reflected the true meaning of Veterans Day: compassion, connection, and service. Across the district, our posts continue to move forward with dedication. Burton and Davison Posts have been working diligently toward consolidation and are expected to unite as one strong and active post by year's end. Special thanks go to Ron Amend for his hard work and leadership throughout this process, as well as to Paul McIvor and Dan Crocker for their continued support and involvement in district matters. District 10 continues to thrive because of the commitment of its members and the communities that stand behind us. Together, we will keep advancing our mission of service, remembrance, and patriotism.



DISTRICT 15 COMMANDER, RYAN SPENCE

Greetings from District 15 in the soon-to-be White North. I should be well under way; I have completed the 2 Posts that I was

assigned and had a good visit at both. Thank you, 3674 Iron Mountain and 2891 Crystal Falls. Fall Conference is now behind us and was a great time for those that could attend! Looking forward to our VOD and PP contest and reading the entries this year. It will be Mid-Winter meeting time soon. Our District Meeting is on

January 7th, the day before the Super Bowl, with Mid-Winter the weekend before that. I hope everyone was able to attend Veteran's Day events in their area and for those who served to be recognized for their service because they have all earned it by swearing an oath a lot never have the opportunity or courage to do.



LISTED BY	POST NUMBER	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	AGE	SERVICE	WAR
	2144 Holland	Garcia, Mike	78 Marines/Vietnam			
	4162 Hamtramck	Faron, Joseph	90 Navy/Korea			
	6695 Plymouth	Corrow, Richard	76 Marines/Vietnam			
	4642 Linden	Bond Jr., John T.	76 Navy/Vietnam			
	8236 Flint	Collison, Thomas	86 Marines			
	8846 Muskegon	Cobler, Dennis D.	83 Army/Vietnam			
	4659 Shelby Township	Charbeneau, Henry	80 Air Force/Vietnam			
	8872 Port Sanilac	Covey, Charles E.	76 Army/Vietnam			
	3701 Lakeview	Hoerauf, Randell R.	76 Marines/Vietnam			
	3514 Arcadia	Klein, Raymond	86 Army/Korea			
	9021 Warren	Runyan, Robert	75 Army/Vietnam			
	6464 Fowlerville	Barbour, Dale L.	93 Army/Korea			
	4095 Carleton	Yarbrough, Timothy	63 Army/Cuba			

AUXILIARY DISTRICT REPORTS



DISTRICT 5 PRESIDENT, SANDRA KLEVEN

Wow, what a busy 5 months it has been in the 5th District. I have completed most of my official visits; just 4 more to go.

Have attended several dedications of Veteran Memorials, attended the POW/MIA ceremony at Oakland Hills Cemetery, had dinner with our National President Lois Callahan, and attended the 80th Anniversary Celebration at Old Settler's Post 4659.

Also held my first Auxiliary District Meeting. Fall Conference was a great time, with a new venue this year in Mt. Pleasant. Looking forward to hearing all the great essays from our VOD/PP winners and celebrating with them at Mid-Winter Conference.



DISTRICT 7 PRESIDENT, DAWN HOLMES

Our Fall Conference is now behind us, and it was so good to see all of you. I can't believe that my year is almost halfway completed. Since being elected as District 7 President, we have completed all of our official visits. I am happy to say that all of District 7's Auxiliaries are doing well. I have learned a lot and hope that you have as well. Since the

Department Convention, my Post has been involved in Colon's 4th of July parade, the Athens Community 4th of July Celebration, and our annual Homecoming event. The last event celebrates, annually, the return of our World War I soldiers. I have had the pleasure of attending various veterans events this last week. Our village and county have, as always, come out to show their appreciation to all of our veterans. Since the government shutdown had Ft. Custer National Cemetery closed, the community came

together and still held the annual Veterans Day ceremony. So many people came together to ensure this program was still held for our veterans. It was a sight to experience. I look forward to Mid-Winter and all the students that we will have there. There hasn't been a year yet that I didn't shed a tear on hearing from them when reading their essays. I pray that I have served the District and Department to the best of my ability. I wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and a prosperous New Year.



DISTRICT 11 PRESIDENT, BETTY GRIFFIN

Thank you to all the Auxiliaries who helped with their Post with the Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, and Teacher of the Year. I am looking forward to escorting District 11's winner to the banquet in

Kalamazoo. I am glad I did not have to judge the entries, because they were all amazing and heartfelt. This scholarship contest would not be possible without the members who put applications in students' hands. It all starts with each Auxiliary reaching out to our schools and community. District 11, you did an amazing job! If you are a veteran in need of healthcare, food,

or other services, please seek out your county Service Officer. If you are unsure how to find them, go to your nearest VA Hospital or CBOC. Please seek out veterans and/or families who may need help during the holidays. Surprise them with a food basket, a small gift, or the greatest gift of all: 1 hour of your time. Wishing everyone joy and peace for the holidays.



DISTRICT 12 PRESIDENT, DONNA MISZEWSKI

Hi there all, this is Donna Miszewski, District 12 President, reporting in. Things here in District 12 have been going pretty smoothly. I was lucky to get my Auxiliary Official Visits completed by October 9th. On October 28th I was a pro-tem

Conductress to help institute a brand new Auxiliary #2964 in Reed City, Michigan. On October 30th I went to Fall Conference in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, at the Comfort Inn Hotel and Suites, a new venue for our Fall Conference. It is very nice. On Friday (Halloween), I attended the Department Bingo fundraiser, and I didn't win. And on Saturday I attended the dinner and costume party, which was fun and very enjoyable. As I was

doing my visits, I observed that it appears Auxiliaries with older members are the most dedicated to the helping of our veterans in many different ways. Which serves as a reminder that is why we are here, as an Auxiliary, to help the VFW. I am beginning to see the younger members joining. The older members are taking them under their wings (so to speak) and giving them pointers on what to do by mentoring them.



DISTRICT 14 PRESIDENT, ANN BACKHURST

As I write this, snow, also known as "thick rain," is falling, covering this part of District 14 with a thick blanket of snow, and the deer are coming through my side yard looking for the promised pumpkins. All official

visits are completed except one. Many of the District 14 Auxiliaries have been busy. Auxiliary 3165, Negaunee, will be having a ravioli-making event. St. Ignace 5114 recently hosted the VFW District meeting, providing a great dinner. Sault Ste. Marie 3676 is always busy with smash burger events and yoga. Gwinn 5670 made treats for the veterans at Jacobetti State Veterans

Home in Marquette. Manistique 4420 hosted the District Auxiliary meeting in August and later hosted the Department Road Show Training in September. Brimley 9023 will be donating handmade caps and scarves for homeless veterans. Ishpeming 4573 continues BINGO'ing. District 14 is looking forward to District Convention April 11-12 in Manistique.





VFW AGENDA (PG 1)

47th ANNUAL MID-WINTER CONFERENCE
JANUARY 29 – FEBRUARY 1, 2026

THURSDAY JANUARY 29, 2026

6:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room	Room
7:00 p.m.	COMMANDER'S DINNER WITH SR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (by invitation)	Brick & Brine

FRIDAY JANUARY 30, 2026

DRESS CODE of the DAY: CASUAL, VFW COMMANDER'S POLO & GREY SLACKS

PICK UP PRE-PURCHASED BANQUET TICKETS (Pickup at Auxiliary Registration)

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Registration (Closed for Lunch 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.)	
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Program Display tables	
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	VFW & Auxiliary Buddy Poppy Displays	
8:30 a.m.	VFW Service Committee Meeting Chairman, PSC John Griffith	Prairies
9:00 a.m.	VFW Budget & Finance Committee Meeting Chairman, PSC David Miller	Prairies
9:30 a.m.	VFW Bylaws & Resolutions Committee Meeting Chairman, PSC Kevin Conklin	Prairies
10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:15 a.m.	Post Inspections & Audits (Lessons Learned) Dept Inspector, Butch Ogden	Prairies
10:30 a.m.	Department All-State / All-American Program Review Director, Mike Martin	Prairies
10:45 a.m.	Department Membership Program Review Director, Orville Beauchamp	Prairies
11:00 a.m.	Youth Activities Program, Applications Preparation Department Director, Larry Thayer	Prairies
11:15 a.m.	VFW State Legislative Updates State Legislative Directors, Scott Taylor & Derek Blumke	Prairies
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN	
1:00 p.m.	VFW National Legislative Priorities Update National Legislative Cmte Members, Kimberly Napoleon & Ray Lopez	Prairies
2:00 p.m.	Community Service – National Day of Service Department Director, Tracy Nagy	Prairies
2:15 p.m.	Americanism – POW/MIA Program Updates Department Director, Nathan Moran	Prairies



VFW AGENDA (PG 2)

2:45 p.m.	(break out meetings) Dept & District Senior Vice Commanders Dept & District Junior Vice Commanders Dept Riders Groups	
2:45 p.m.	Post Benefits Advisor School, VA updates Service Office Director, Sidney Love	Prairies
3:15 p.m.	Hospital Program Reporting (Lessons learned) Department Surgeon, Aaron McClung	Prairies
3:30 p.m.	Activity Reporting, (Lessons Learned) Activity Evaluations Director, Bob Lutz	Prairies
3:45 p.m.	Presentation - HUMANA and VFW Partnership	Prairies
4:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks, Department Officers	Prairies
5:00 p.m.	Students Meet & Greet with National Representative	
6:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	Hospitality Room	
6:30 p.m.	DINNER WITH SR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND DEPARTMENT CoFA MEMBERS, Cash Bar	Meadows

SATURDAY JANUARY 31, 2026

DRESS CODE of the DAY: VFW CoFA UNIFORM for COUNCIL MEMBERS
VFW COMMANDER'S POLO for VFW MEMBERS

ALL BANQUET TICKETS MUST BE PICKED UP BY 10:00 A.M.

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Registration	
8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Program Display tables	
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	VFW / Auxiliary Buddy Poppy Displays	
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Council of Administration Breakfast	Meadows
9:10 a.m. -	Council of Administration Meeting Program Director Reports as requested by the Commander	Prairies
	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN	
2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	VFW Auxiliary VOD/PP/TOY Reception	Glens
4:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	VOD/Patriot's Pen Students/TOY Reception	Meadows
4:50 p.m.	Head table meet for line up	Arcadia Foyer
	VFW BANQUET DRESS – HEAD TABLE BLACK JACKET FORMAL VFW MEMBERS ATTENDING – SUIT & TIE	
5:00 p.m.	VOD/Patriot's Pen/Teacher of the Year Banquet Arcadia Ballroom	
	(Doors open at 4:45 pm for seating) (Tickets must have been purchased in advance)	

Revised 11/23/2025



VFW AUX AGENDA

Thursday, January 29 (casual dress)

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Line Officers Meeting
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Pre-Council of Administration Meeting including Budget and Audit (Council Members Only)
6:00 pm	Department Officers Dinner with National Representative
6:30 pm – 10:00 pm	Department Hospitality Room

Friday, January 30 (morning is casual; afternoon is official look blouse/shirt)

8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Registration (closes for lunch Noon-1:30)
8:00 am – 5:00 pm	Hospital Booth & Camp Trotter Table Buddy Poppy Contest
8:00 am – 9:00 am	District Sr. Vice President Meeting With Sr. Vice President Jason Manke
9:00 am – 11:00 am	Service Officer Speaker (benefits to members)
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Understanding Delegates and Voting Process Stump the Chief
Noon – 1:30 pm	Lunch on your own
1:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Council of Administration Meeting
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	2026-2027 Program Chairmen Training
5:15 pm	District President's Reception
6:00 pm	District President's Night on the Town
6:00 pm – 10:00 pm	Department Hospitality Room

Saturday, January 31 (Department Lavender Shirt; Banquet is dressy, except for head table which is formal)

8:00 am – 10:00 am	Registration
8:00 am – 12:30 pm	Hospital Booth & Camp Trotter Table Buddy Poppy will be judged at 10:00 am
8:30 am – 9:00 am	2025-26 Program Chairman Meeting with Christine Senko
9:00 am – 12:30 pm	Programs, Buddy Poppy Awards and Membership Awards
12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Lunch on your own
12:45 pm – 1:45 pm	District Jr. Vice President Meeting With Jr. Vice President Jan Passmore
2:15 pm – 2:45 pm	Auxiliary VOD/PP Reception
4:30 pm – 5:00 pm	VOD/PP Students, District Commanders/ Presidents & Head Table
5:00 pm	Escort of Head Table and VOD/PP Students
5:00 pm	Banquet

President's Suite

Arcadia Ballroom

Sunday, February 2

Safe Travels



HOUSING FORM

Department of Michigan Veterans of Foreign Wars
47th Mid - Winter Conference
Wednesday January 28, 2026- Sunday February 1, 2026

Make Your Reservation by January 5, 2026
To Make Reservations Call
Radisson Plaza Hotel
100 W. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo MI 49007
Phone 269-343-3333

- Cutoff date is January 5, 2026 or until block fills, whichever occurs first.
- Please make your reservations as soon as you receive this information.

To reserve your room, please call 269-343-3333 Reservation must be guaranteed with a major credit card.

When calling to make your reservation to receive the group rate, you must identify yourself as a Department of Michigan VFW Mid-Winter Conference Attendee.

A credit card and valid photo identification will be required upon check-in.

Rates are subject to 6% State Tax And 5% Occupancy Tax

Room rates: Standard Rooms: \$119.00
Suites: \$169.00

Group: Department of Michigan Veterans of Foreign Wars
Mid -Winter Conference

Wednesday January 28, 2026- Sunday February 1, 2026



AD BOOK FORM

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN
VFW AND AUXILIARY
47th ANNUAL MID WINTER CONFERENCE AD BOOK

RATES:
FULL PAGE AD - \$125.00
1/2 PAGE AD - \$90.00
1/4 PAGE AD - \$70.00
PATRON AD - \$10.00 (Name and Post or Auxiliary Number Only)

THE DEADLINE FOR ALL ADs IS JANUARY 5, 2026

MESSAGE: (PLEASE PRINT)

Payment can be made by check or credit card.

Make check payable to VFW Department of Michigan and mail with form to:
VFW Department of Michigan
924 N. Washington
Lansing, MI 48906

To pay with credit card complete information below and fax to 517-485-6432 or email to Jan: bookkeeper@vfwmi.vet or Amanda: amanda@vfwmi.vet:

_____	_____
Credit Card #	Expiration Date
_____	_____
Phone Number	Email for Receipt



BANQUET TICKET FORM

VFW AND AUXILIARY
47th MID WINTER CONFERENCE
Radisson Hotel – Kalamazoo, MI

BANQUET TICKETS
JANUARY 31, 2026 at 5:00 pm

Price \$52.00 per person /All seats are reserved
No tickets sold at the door

DEADLINE DATE FOR ORDERING TICKETS IS JANUARY 16, 2026
All tickets ordered after the deadline of January 16, 2026 will be at the rate of \$60.00
BANQUET TICKET ORDERS WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE,
INCLUDING NO SHOWS UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY STATE
COMMANDER FOR REFUND

Name: _____

District: _____ Post: _____ Number of Tickets: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

List name(s) of who tickets are for: _____

Payment can be made by check or credit card.

Make check payable to VFW Department of Michigan and mail with form to:
VFW Department of Michigan
924 N. Washington
Lansing, MI 48906

To pay with credit card complete information below and fax to 517-485-6432 or email to Jan: bookkeeper@vfwmi.vet or Amanda: amanda@vfwmi.vet:

_____	_____
Credit Card #	Expiration Date
_____	_____
Phone Number	Email for Receipt

**DESIGNER / EDITOR
ALYSSA MCELFRISH**

Hello! I hope everyone had a very happy Thanksgiving with family and friends. Now that we are getting into winter and the cold is here to stay a while, remember to check in on each other as Seasonal Affective Disorder and depression ramp up. Find ways to be there for each other, and if you or someone you know are feeling suicidal, please reach out to the free and confidential Suicide Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988 or going to 988lifeline.org.

2026 is rapidly approaching, and I look forward to seeing everyone at Mid-Winter Conference at the end of January in Kalamazoo. In the meantime, I hope everyone stays safe and warm. I encourage everyone to submit an article for the next issue as the next due date will be just after Mid-Winter and there should be plenty to write about since we will be celebrating our VOD/PP/TOY recipients. As always, if you have any questions regarding the MOV, please reach out to me, I am always happy to help. Until next time, Happy Holidays to you all!

Next deadline = February 6, 2026

Send articles for consideration to:
MOV@VFWMI.VET

The mission of this paper is to provide pertinent and accurate information about the decisions and activities of the VFW at the Post, District and Department level; the relevant affairs of the State and Federal governments, and the decisions and activities of the national organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The paper is also the voice of the members. We welcome articles from all members. All articles should contribute positively to the welfare of the VFW and its members. We will accept no attacks on any member or leader of the VFW. We will accept a thoughtful discussion of all related issues and reserve the right to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the VFW and its policies. Articles more than 500 words may be rejected or returned for revision. *We reserve the right to edit all articles as we see fit.*

The news and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Michigan or the National Organization.


CONTACT INFO UPDATE FORM

Members, please print the form to be filled out.
Return information is listed below.

Name: _____

Member number: _____ Post number: _____

Email address: _____

Address (if changed in last two years): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Are you currently on active duty? YES _____

Please complete and return to:

VFW Headquarters
924 N Washington
Lansing, MI 48906

Or email to: adjutant@vfwmi.vet

**YOU FOUGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY.
NOW JOIN US IN THE FIGHT
FOR VETERANS.**

We understand the unique bond you share with other veterans of overseas conflicts because we, too, have been there. No matter which conflict called you to service, we invite you to join us as we continue to fight for all that's good FOR VETERANS.


**VFWMI.ORG
QUICK LINKS**

vfwmi.org/contact

vfwmi.org/vethelp

vfwmi.org/join

vfwmi.org/directory

vfwmi.org/officers

vfwmi.org/allstate

vfwmi.org/mov

vfwmi.org/gallery

TAPS FORM

Comrades, please copy this form and use it for your TAPS report.

Send completed form to:
VFW of Michigan
924 N Washington - Lansing, MI 48906
or Amanda@vfwmi.org

Branch of Service :

ARMY AIR FORCE NAVY
MARINE CORP COAST GUARD

Served in :

WWI WWII KOREA VIETNAM
GULF IRAQ/ AFGHANISTAN
OTHER OCCUPATION FORCES

(Last Name)

(First Name)

(Age)

(Date of Death)

(Post)