

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, Dashboard reports submitted online. 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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**DEPARTMENT SENIOR VICE COMMANDER,
LARRY THAYER**

Greetings, Comrades! With Fall Conference now behind us, I want to take a moment to reflect on what an outstanding event 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 Table, and the VFW Auxiliary 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 and won't miss anyone who comes 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 looking 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 our 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

Comrades of Michigan: It has been a very busy several months following National Convention. We were honored to have the Auxiliary 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

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 MVA Director Brian Love and State Adjutant General Mai. 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 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.


DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR, WILLIAM (BUTCH) OGDEN

Comrades, we just finished with inspection. Please print legibly and make sure that you submit it to Department. You should look at the checklist for in Mount Pleasant. Congratulations to the All-State Posts and the All-American Posts. 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 SURGEON, AARON MCCLUNG

Comrades, we are having an outstanding year with Hospital Reporting. It is great to see more and more Posts come on board with the online reporting system. 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 904-364-3910. 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 into November, the Department of we have in our program. Thank you all see all paperwork that is included in the

GREAT LAKES NATIONAL CEMETERY

Comrades, things have not slowed down size for the National Cemeteries. The Due to the government shutdown, at Great Lakes National Cemetery, cemetery will be opening a position several events had to be canceled, one interments for fiscal year 2025 were for Caretaker Supervisor this coming year being the fall headstone cleaning; 4,385, compared to 4,397 for fiscal year. We send goodbye to Director a spring headstone cleaning is year 2024. Since opening 20 years ago, Andre Logan as he is moving back scheduled for April 11, 2026. Phase 2 there have been 70,639 interments. to his home state of Virginia to run of the construction project will wrap Great Lakes is the 6th busiest National the state's military cemeteries. Russ up shortly, with the restrooms being Cemetery, with a staff that is 28th in Sayles is the acting director currently. open soon.

DANE BEKEMEK


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 to our Student Veterans of America. The

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 the Veterans Service Officer closest to you in the state.

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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

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



TodaysVFW.org

20TH ANNUAL DETROIT VETERANS DAY PARADE

On Sunday, November 9th, 2025 U.S. Air Force veteran who served as of uniform, and 12th Congressional PSC Kimberly A. Napoleon served the weather detachment commander District Congresswoman Rashida as the Grand Marshal of The 20th in Southwest Asia during Operation Tliba who posed for photo, pre Annual Detroit Veterans Day Parade Desert Storm. Also pictured with parade step off. Lastly, PSC Kimberly in Corktown. Pictured below with Oscar Mike representative, who A. Napoleon delivered the pre-20th James Europe from VFW Post completed 4-mile race for suicide Detroit Veterans Day parade remarks 2235 along with Fox2 Detroit awareness and to honor the after being introduced as the Grand Meteorologist Rich Luterman, 2LT servicemen and women in and out 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.



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 Lamar 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 to all seniors, including those who are not just veterans but to any Kent County senior age 50 and 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!



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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 Huge, Post 4659 Auxiliary Pres Sylvia Pocock, Dept Jr Vice Pres Jan Passmore, & Dept Cdr Reinhold Yahnka



Dept Cdr Reinhold Yahnka, Dist 5 Cdr Dane Bezenek, Dept Jr Vice Cdr Ben Light, & Post 4659 Cdr Art Huge



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



Post 4659 Cdr Art Huge, Post 7575 Cdr Raul Villarreal, Past Dept Cdr Jerry Gorski

POST 7573 - NEW BALTIMORE

Lempke-Blackwell Post 7573 proudly across all branches of the military. The Post in unity to reflect on the significance of participated in New Baltimore's annual Commander, Raul Villarreal, along with Post Veterans Day and to acknowledge the ongoing contributions of America's veterans. 2025, joining city officials, local residents, leaders at the city paid tribute to those and fellow veterans in honoring the men who have defended the nation's freedoms committed to honoring military service, supporting veterans and their families, and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. The ceremony, along with their Auxiliary took part in the held at New Baltimore City Hall, featured remarks from the Mayor, who expressed a moment of silence, the presentation of colors, and a wreath-laying to commemorate fallen service members. Attendees gathered and enduring sacrifices made by veterans 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 Gruen, Post Officer 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



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, JASON MANKE



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT YOUTH/CAMP TROTTER CHAIRMAN, KELLY SMYCYZNSKI



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 deadline 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, 2016, to Department by April 15, 2016, and to the National Auxiliary by May 5, 2016. Eligibility and requirements can be found at vfwauxvni.org; under Programs, select Youth Camp Trotter. Camp Trotter is closed for the winter, but maintenance continues. In October

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AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT, DEBBIE SCHEETZ

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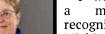


AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN, DIANA WARD

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 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 then put them in the paper or 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 MALTA 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 events. December: American Legion Post (CAP) Birthday (12/1), Pearl Harbor Day (12/7); U.S. National Guard Birthday (12/3); Bill of Rights Day (12/15); Ratification Day – Treaty of Paris (1783) (12/20); 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 flag. If you ever have questions or need assistance, I can be reached on my cell at (810)955-2931 or by email at legizable@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, expanding their ability to serve veterans and local communities. The Auxiliary to Red Arrow VFW Post 1527 in Portage was established on August 20, followed by the Auxiliary to Ralph Daily Jr. VFW Post 6134 in Pullman on August 23. Then, on October 28, Reed City VFW Post 2964 created their Auxiliary, and most recently, Fred Quadrant 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 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.



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN, KRIS GRIFFITH

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AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT CONDUCTOR, DENICE 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 adventures with the Auxiliary this year! 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 year! Let's go, Team Debbie!





AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT CHAIRMAN, APRIL LOWERY

Across the United States, at home, the Adopt-a-Unit program reinforces that their loved one is not forgotten. It becomes a bridge between the 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 \$24.00

1025 ORNAMENT \$29.95

7186 CAP \$19.95

2500 FLAG \$32.95

1237 PADFOLIO \$58.00

1092 ZIPPO® LIGHTER \$54.00

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

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DISTRICT COMMANDER REPORTS



DISTRICT 4 COMMANDER, BRIAN MARTIN

Comrades, as is grounded in the Michigan Commanders VSOs that serve veterans in all regions your District 4 Group Legislative Priorities, those of Wayne County—not just downtown Commander, I outline a clear path toward progress Detroit. Let me be clear: this is not about believe leadership on issues that affect our Posts and our 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—means more than people. These priorities are publicly available at michigancommandersgroup.org/legislative. Some of the key items we just managing—it means advocating. Some of the key items we are actively supporting include: Special org/legislative. Some of the key items we are actively supporting include: Special backed by your VFW, your District, and the full weight of the Michigan Commanders Group. The Fourth District continues quarter, I've focused a great deal of Liquor License Expansion: Increasing the time and effort on veterans' legislative number of licenses available to veterans advocacy—meeting with Michigan service organizations from 12 to 42, to lead from the front. Whether it's legislators, city officials, and county allowing more Posts to legally host events leadership to push forward real change and generate revenue; Parking Protections that will benefit our veterans today and into the future. From Lansing to Wayne recent Detroit resolution, we're working County, I've been in active discussions with State Representatives, Senators, the City of Detroit's veterans staff, Gaming in Clubrooms; Advocating for and the newly appointed Director of legislation that would permit state-Wayne County Veterans Services. These regulated gaming machines in VFW and conversations are part of a broader other VSO clubrooms, modeled after strategy to ensure veterans in every Ohio's successful veteran gaming system; corner of Wayne County have access to and Wayne County Veteran Service Officer (VSO) Expansion: We're pressing the benefits, resources, and local support the County to hire full-time, accessible they've earned through service. This work the County to hire full-time, accessible then some.



DISTRICT 5 COMMANDER, DANE BEZEMEK

Greetings, events are the District Meeting to Post 4037, 1008, Comrades! It is December 14th at Post 9914 starting at 10:00 AM and the Voice of Democracy, to hard to believe 10:00 AM and the Voice of Democracy, to keep up the great work on recruiting and retaining that the year is Patriot's Pen, and Teacher of the Year almost half over, banquet on January 4th, 2026. Post Fall Conference Inspections are in full swing, and 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 6 COMMANDER, REX MURDOCK

Comrades of Commander! Let's rally behind him and does not go unnoticed. I look forward to the Super 6th District help achieve the Triple Crown by reaching seeing every Post achieve All-State and All-American honors this year. Together, it's a great honor to serve as your District 6 Commander for the 2025-2026 year. I'm excited to see the incredible work District 6 has a proud tradition of producing outstanding leaders, and our very own Reinhold Yahnka now serves as our Department

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

AUXILIARY DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 5 PRESIDENT, SANDRA KLEVEN



Wow, what a busy 5 months it has been! I attended several dedications of Veteran Memorials, attended the Meeting, Fall Conference was a great time, with a new venue this year in Mt. Pleasant. Looking forward to hearing completed most of National President Lois Callahan, all the great essays from our VOD/PP my official visits; and attended the 80th Anniversary winners and celebrating with them at just 4 more to go. Celebration at Old Settler's Post 4659. Mid-Winter Conference.

DISTRICT 7 PRESIDENT, DAWN HOLMES

Our Fall Department Convention, my Post has together and still held the annual Conference is now been involved in Colon's 4th of July Veterans Day ceremony. So many people behind us, and parade, the Athens Community 4th came together to ensure this program was so good of July Celebration, and our annual was still held for our veterans. It was to see all of you. Homecoming event. The last event a sight to experience. I look forward to I can't believe celebrates, annually, the return of our Mid-Winter and all the students that that my year is World War I soldiers. I have had the pleasure of attending various veterans a year yet that I didn't shed a tear on completed. Since being elected as events this last week. Our village and hearing from them when reading their District 7 President, we have completed county have, as always, come out essays. I pray that I have served the all of our official visits. I am happy to show their appreciation to all of District and Department to the best that all of District 7's Auxiliaries shutdown had Ft. Custer National Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and are doing well. I have learned a lot and hope that you have as well. Since the Cemetery closed, the community came a prosperous New Year.

DISTRICT 11 PRESIDENT, BETTY GRIFFIN

Thank you to Kalamazoo. I am glad I did not have to judge the entries, because they are who helped all the Auxiliaries with their Post scholarship contest would not be possible without the members who put their Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, and starts with each Auxiliary reaching out to our schools and community. District Teacher of the Year. I am looking forward to escorting 11, you did an amazing job! If you are District 11's winner to the banquet in a veteran in need of healthcare, food, or other services, please seek out or other services, please seek out nearest VA Hospital or CBOC. Please with their Post scholarship contest would not be possible without the members who put their Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, and starts with each Auxiliary reaching out to our schools and community. District Teacher of the Year. I am looking forward to escorting 11, you did an amazing job! If you are District 11's winner to the banquet in a veteran in need of healthcare, food, or other services, please seek out nearest VA Hospital or CBOC. Please

DISTRICT 12 PRESIDENT, DONNA MISZEWSKI

Hi there all, this is Donna Miszewski, District 12 President, reporting in. It is very smooth. I was lucky to get my Auxiliary Official Visits completed by October 9th. On October 28th I was a pro-term reporting in. It is very nice. On Friday (Halloween), I attended the Department Bingo fundraiser, and I have been going pretty smooth. I was coming through my side yard looking for the promised pumpkins. All official

conducts 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 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 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.

HALLOWEEN FUN AT FALL CONFERENCE 2025

The collage consists of six square photographs arranged in a 2x3 grid. Each photo shows a group of people at a conference table, smiling and dressed in costumes. The costumes include a man in a cowboy hat and bandana, a woman in a black cat outfit, a man in a blue wizard costume, a woman in a referee costume, a man in a striped referee costume, and a woman in a green and orange patterned dress. The background of the collage is a decorative border of various Halloween-themed items like candy corn, bats, and jack-o'-lanterns.

Mid-Winter Conference

Radisson Hotel, Kalamazoo
January 28-February 1, 2026

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 Group	
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	
(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
 8:00 am – 9:00 am 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 2026 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
 President's Suite
 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 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 MCLEFRESH

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

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) _____