

MICHIGAN OVERSEAS VETERAN



• Reporting your positive impact on the Michigan community •

January/February/March 2012

Volume 79 Number 3



SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

Here we are again approaching that time of year when we elect our officers for the upcoming year. It becomes increasingly difficult to find members who will take the responsibility and accept a position in our Post. How many times have we been at a meeting and a member complains about how the Post spends money or how the Post is run. Most of the time these members never offer to help their Post by taking the responsibility of a position. In the smaller Posts around our state, the same 6 to 10 comrades keep their Post alive by continuously taking on a position, rotating chairs or accepting a position for many years. I know of many Posts that have had the same Commander for 10 or more years. These individuals should be commended for their dedication to the Post and to our organization. Without such dedication there would not be as many Posts in the Department of Michigan as there are. For those Posts that find themselves in the position of not being able to fill the chairs, there is little that our Bylaws allow us to do. As difficult as it is, some Posts will fall by the wayside. However, before this happens every effort should be made to merge or consolidate with

**Kirk
Kennedy**
Senior
Vice Commander



another Post. No one, not even me, wants to see his or her Post lose their charter, but if it came to that I would rather belong to a Post that is 100 miles away than not be in this great organization at all. If you find that your Post is in this type of position, please call your District Commanders and let them know.

Bylaws are the rules that govern the way we do business. Each and every year new Bylaws are proposed at our National Convention. Some are passed and some are not. This is the way for organizations to progress with the times. These changes can be initiated at the Post level, and eventually end up at the National Convention for consideration. It is your right as a member of our organization to put forth changes that you think are appropriate. The deadline for Bylaw changes is April 1st of this year. They must be in department hands by this date. Do not complain about the Bylaws, do something to change them. VETERANS SERVING VETERANS.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER

As I write this, we have just returned from the Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo where we honored the young ladies and gentlemen who were district winners in the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen, along with the Teachers of the Year. We wish the department winner well at the national level. To all the Ladies Auxiliaries and Veterans of Foreign Wars members that came down to Kalamazoo to honor them... THANK YOU.

Comrades, this year under Sec. 623 of the national Bylaws, each Department will have their own National Council of Administration member, to be elected to a four-year term. They will be installed at the same time as the National J.V. Commander from the conference that the State is in. That means that this year we will elect a National C of A member for 3 years; we have two candidates for the honor. State Commander Jack Pray and PSC Lloyd Putman II. This vote will take place at State Convention on June 9, 2012. Please take the time to join us in Troy, Michigan.

Membership, comrades, is still a problem. The prior year's membership stood at 56,108 members. As of this writing, membership is at 51,940 – that's 92.57% or down 4,168 members. We have to, and can, do better than this. Write, call or visit the unpaid members

**Ron
Devereaux**
Junior
Vice Commander



of your Post to find out if there is a problem or if they need assistance. Invite them down to the Post for the meeting or to a dinner. In short, comrades, do whatever it takes. The strength of the Veterans of Foreign Wars lies within all of its members.

For those Post Commanders looking to make All-State, you only have 90 days left to get your donations and programs done and into department. The deadline is April 30. Best of luck.

Comrades, get out into your communities and let the public know that they have a Veterans of Foreign Wars in their community; talk to people. Take the programs we have to them. Go out and get that Eagle Scout or Girl Scout Gold Award, go to your school for the VOD or Patriot's Pen contests...get the kids writing. Talk to the teachers and go to that city meeting and let them know we are there for the community and the veterans.

When you reach out your hand, you never know who is going to reach back to you.

ADJUTANT/QUARTERMASTER

The year end is creeping up on us. The elections will take place in April and we need to make sure that the Election Reports are sent to National, immediately after the elections. Every incoming Commander should have their committee and officer appointments ready to go in April. Also remember that the Post audits for January, February and March are due by April 30, 2012.

Make sure you elect delegates to the State and National Conventions in April, so that the information can be sent into Department and National, along with the delegate fees. The state delegate fee notices will be sent out soon. The registration for National is \$25.00, which

**Rob
Weiss**
State Adjutant/
Quartermaster



allows you to name one delegate. Any additional delegate attending the National Convention will cost the Post \$10.00.

Even though you may not be attending, the State or National Convention does not preclude you from paying the fees. Please make sure that your Post is completely up to date so that we do not have to send out reminders.

Rob Weiss
State Adjutant/Quartermaster

Advocating For Others

The Department of Veterans Affairs published a final rule in the Federal Register on January 25, 2011, that amended 38 CFR § 3.307 by adding a new section (a)(6)(iv). The new section establishes presumptive herbicide exposure for certain veterans who served in, or near, the Korean demilitarized zone (DMZ) between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971. The Department of Defense (DoD) provided VA with the identity of certain military units operating along the DMZ during that timeframe.

A veteran with confirmed service in one of these units during the designated timeframe qualifies for the presumption of herbicide exposure. This regulation is a change from previous VA policy, which acknowledged herbicide exposure

on a facts-found basis for veterans of designated units who served from April 1968 to July 1969.

Because the new regulation represents a liberalization, the provisions of 38 CFR § 3.114 regarding effective dates of service connection apply. Veterans who were denied service connection based on the previous policy may now receive a grant, with an effective date "no earlier" than January 25, 2011.

After reviewing documents related to herbicide used in Vietnam and Thailand, the VA has determined that there was significant use of herbicides on the fenced in perimeters of military bases in Thailand intended to eliminate vegetation and ground cover for base security purposes. Evidence of this can be found

ADVOCATING, continued on page 2

ADVOCATING, continued from page 1

in a declassified Vietnam era Department of Defense (DoD) document titled *Project CHECO Southeast Asia Report: Base Defense in Thailand*. Therefore, when herbicide related claims from veterans with Thailand service are received by the VA, they are required to evaluate the treatment and personnel records to determine whether the veteran's service activities involved duty on or near the perimeter of the military base where the veteran was stationed.

DoD has provided information that commercial herbicides, rather than tactical herbicides, were used within the confines of Thailand bases to control weeds. These commercial herbicides have been, and continue to be, used on all military bases worldwide. They do not fall under the VA regulations governing exposure to tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange. However, there is some evidence that the herbicides used on the Thailand base perimeters may have been either tactical, procured from Vietnam, or a commercial variant of much greater strength and with characteristics of tactical herbicides. Therefore, the VA has determined that a special consideration of herbicide exposure on a facts found or direct basis should be extended to those Veterans whose duties placed them on or near the perimeters of Thailand military bases. This allows for presumptive service connection of the diseases associated with herbicide exposure.

The majority of troops in Thailand during the Vietnam era were stationed at the Royal Thai Air Force Bases of U-Tapao, Ubon, Nakhon Phanom, Udorn, Takhli, Korat, and Don Muang. If a US Air Force Veteran served on one of these air bases as a security policeman, security patrol dog handler, member of a security police squadron, or otherwise served near the air base perimeter, as shown by MOS (military occupational specialty) performance evaluations, or other credible evidence, then herbicide exposure should be acknowledged on a

facts found or direct basis. However, this applies only during the Vietnam era, from February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975.

Along with air bases, there were some small Army installations established in Thailand during this period, which may also have used perimeter herbicides in the same manner as the air bases. Therefore, if a US Army Veteran claims a disability based on herbicide exposure and the veteran was a member of a military police (MP) unit or was assigned an MP MOS and states that his/her duty placed him at or near the base perimeter, then herbicide exposure on a facts found or direct basis should be acknowledged for this veteran. The difference in approach for US Army Veterans is based on the fact that some MPs had criminal investigation duties rather than base security duties. The veteran's lay statement is required to establish security duty on the base perimeter. This also applies to US Army Personnel who served on air bases in Thailand. During the early years of the war in Vietnam, before Air Force security units were fully established on air bases in Thailand, US Army personnel may have provided perimeter security. In such cases, if a veteran provides a lay statement that he/she was involved with perimeter security duty and there is additional credible evidence supporting this statement, then herbicide exposure on a facts found or direct basis can be acknowledged for this Veteran.

If you or someone you know served in one of these areas, assigned to the specific detail noted above and have one of the listed presumptive conditions relative to herbicide exposure have them file a claim. The VFW Service Office contact information is as follows:

VFW Service Office
477 Michigan Avenue, Suite 1215
Detroit, MI 48226-2588
PH: 313-964-6510
FAX: 313-964-6545
E-mail: vfwmiadvocates@gmail.com

Department Service Officer
SUCCESS STORY



Paul Harvey was well known for his "The Rest of The Story" – a column that many found insightful and interesting. This is one of those cases that fit within the scope of Mr.

Harvey's, The Rest of The Story.

In 2002, a county office contacted us regarding a claim that was submitted for a Navy veteran for a condition that had become quite debilitating. Unfortunately, the claim folder was not in Detroit, but was located in St. Louis, Missouri. The claim folder had been there for some time, so it was a safe bet that the claim the veteran had filed was probably denied.

After numerous attempts to get the veteran's folder transferred to the Detroit Regional Office, it was finally transferred in mid-2004. A thorough review found that, in fact, the veteran had been denied in 1988. During the review, it was determined that medical evidence submitted with the claim had not been reviewed by the VA examining physician before an opinion was offered. Based on

that finding, we opened the claim to have the evidence reviewed, and once again, the claim was denied on the basis of it not being a well-grounded claim.

In 2007, additional private treatment records were provided to the VA and a VA examination was ordered in 2008. On November 3, 2008 the VA conceded and granted service connection at a 100% evaluation.

Now, for the Rest of The Story! We disagreed with this decision as to the effective date of the grant of service connection. We claimed that a Clear and Unmistakable Error (CUE) had been committed by omitting the previous medical reports. Finally, after the claim went through all the administrative appeal processes at the Regional Office, it was sent to our office to prepare a legal brief before it went to the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, D.C.

Our staff member handling the case reviewed the file from back to front and came to the conclusion that virtually all the evidence used in 2008 to grant service connection was the same evidence that was submitted in the veteran's original

claim of 1988, excluding an updated report that was submitted with the 2007 claim.

So an in-depth conversation ensued with our Advocate and the VA over the merits of the evidence. On December 6, 2011 the VA agreed with us and retroactively granted entitlement back to the original filing of 1988.

In the rating decision of December 6, 2011 the examiner related that the VA examiner in 1988 stated that the history the veteran provided was consistent with the veteran's military records. Further, the examiner reported that the veteran's military medical records and private treatment records were not made available for review. Really?!!

In addition, it was determined that the VA failed to properly adjudicate the veteran's claim by not supplying the VA examiner with the veteran's military and private treatment records and as such conceded that, essentially, the VA's failure to properly adjudicate that claim in 1988 makes it as if the VA never made a decision on the claim until November 3, 2008 – hence a CUE.

One catch. The evaluation from 1988 to the 2007 grant would only be at the 70% evaluation, based on the previous medical evidence of record at the time the decision was made. However, it is apparent to the VFW that the veteran probably could not work because of the severity of the condition. So, we will be asking for a claim of Individual Unemployability (IU) from 1988 to 2007, when the VA finally granted service connection. A grant of IU would establish payment at the 100% rate, even though the veteran was only rated at 70%.

For the better part of twenty years, the veteran was without acknowledgement of a condition that affected his quality of life. For the better part of twenty years, the persistence of a county office working in concert with the VFW was able to turn an injustice around.

For this veteran, "The Rest of The Story" has not been fulfilled until the check is in the mail and the quality of life has been turned around. We will keep our readership abreast of the final amount when all claims have been resolved.

CHAPLAIN

Yet another productive Mid-Winter Conference, and it will be spring before we know it. Where does the time go? In just a short time, April will be here and we will have the Joint Department Testimonial. It just seems like time is flying by.

So, as we move ahead in 2012, please note the many events taking place within all levels of our Michigan VFW and that applies to its Ladies' and Mens' Auxiliaries. In addition to meetings, please do not forget the importance of recruitment, and certainly care for veterans and their families. Both are vital to our organization and the time to act is now.

Accordingly, I ask – What positive thing is your Post and/or District known for or something that you like about them? Posts and Districts generally have rich histories with foundations based upon years, and often several generations, of giving members. From hosting amazing events such as memorials, youth programs, etc., to hosting impressive fundraisers, and/or effective community/veteran service and project workers...what do you prize about your Post/District?

I think for many comrades (sisters and brothers, too), the answer will arrive quickly..."I like that best" or "I think this is the best thing we do." If you cannot think of anything, or are unsure of how you can help, it could be an ideal opportunity to re-evaluate and find your calling among the many programs and opportunities to give within the VFW. For service, it just takes the will to act; per Proverbs 16:9: "The mind of man



Jennifer Smith
State Chaplain

plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."

Please consider the dedication of our older and now deceased members as a precious part of our organizational heritage. Their hard work has allowed us to enjoy an organization that assists many. Let us endeavor not to forsake that legacy with apathy or inaction. We should start, restart and continue to give our time, efforts, skills, and/or resources as we can to serve, and possibly recruit others, to sustain our best traditions. As Philippians 2:1-4 states in a call to selfless action: "If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

Moreover, and this is important, there is joy in giving! We have many devoted Posts, Ladies' and Mens' Auxiliary members that know this to be true, but could always use extra help today.

May God bless you.

MICHIGAN OVERSEAS VETERAN (ISSN 1067-0661) is published quarterly, January/February/March, April/May/June, July/August/September, and October/November/December, at American Graphics & Design, 3380 S. 108th Street Greenfield, WI 53227 by the Department of Michigan, Veterans of Foreign Wars at 924 N. Washington Ave., Lansing (Ingham), MI 48906. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT LANSING, MI AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Members receive this publication as part of their dues. Subscriptions for non-members is \$4.00. **Postmaster: Send address changes to National VFW, 406 W. 34th St., Kansas City, MO 64111.**



DISTRICT 4 REPORT

Phil Merrow
District 4 Commander



Comrades, Sisters and Brothers of District 4,

Where has the time gone? By the time you read this article, it will be time for Post officer nominations/elections. Per the Manual of Procedure (Section 217, page 69), nominations will take place in March and elections will take place in April. Don't forget that the order of nominations and elections shall be Commander, Sr. Vice Commander, Jr. Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Chaplain, Judge Advocate, Surgeon and Trustees.

For those of you who didn't know, Past District 4 Commander Jim Niner shaved his head at the Northville Post 4012 "Haircuts for Cancer" fundraiser. There was \$1,600.00 raised for him to do it. From what I was told, this money was raised even before the fundraiser took place. I believe that everyone enjoyed the pink hat that Jim wore home that day. This is a great fundraiser and my hat is off to everyone from Northville VFW Post 4012 and their supporters. Where else can you get a haircut for \$12.00 and all the proceeds go to cancer research? Thank you to Past Post 4012 Commander Dave Rouse for not listening to District 4 President Sharon Lewinski on how to cut my hair.

Mid-Winter Conference was a blast. This was my first time at Mid-Winter, and I had a great time. Congratulations

to the District 4 Teacher of the Year Judy Wycoff (submitted by VFW Post 5572). She won the Department of Michigan Teacher of the Year for High School. Also our District 4 VOD winner Lydia Searcy (also submitted by VFW Post 5572) won the Dick and Vi Thorpe Memorial Scholarship and VFW Post 4644 Scholarship.

As of the writing of this article we have three Posts in the District that are at 100% for membership. They are Sgt. Walter Blankertz Post 134, Gen. William S. Knudsen Post 7310 and Miller-Strawn Post 9363. Congratulations to the comrades at these Posts on reaching 100% membership.

Did you know that if your Post has ceremonial rifles that were obtained through the US Army TACOM, you must report them every three years on a ceremonial rifle triennial form? Also, if you obtained a static display (tank, cannon, pistols, etc.) they must be reported on an Annual Certification of Army Material form and it is required every year because of the high dollar value of the items. These forms were given to every Post Commander at the February District meeting. If you need any of these forms, please let me know.

Yours in Comradeship,
Phil Merrow
District 4 Commander



DISTRICT 6 REPORT

Richard Schroeder
District 6 Commander



Greetings Comrades,

The highlight of the Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo was honoring our Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy and Teacher of the Year winners. Our state winners from District 6 included Patriot's Pen 5th Place winner Karona E. Wickens; Post 4076, 8th Grade, Chelsea; \$500.00; Voice of Democracy 7th Place winner was Devon M. Mayse; Post 1584; 11th grade; Adrian; \$1,000 and Teacher of the Year for Grades 1-5, 1st Place winner, Tammy Steffee; Post 6464; Fowlerville.

District 6 placed winners, along with Districts 4 and 15 in all three state events. A hearty congratulations to all of our State, District and Post winners and a special thanks to our Ladies Auxiliaries and Committee Chairmen, Heather and Rick Shepherd and Neil Fulton, for all of their hard work in making all of this possible. Also, Lansing Post 701 is to be strongly commended for their donation of the Morley S. Oates VFW Post 701 and Ladies Auxiliary Scholarship and Plaque totaling \$1,000.00.

As you all know, our charitable gaming events are important fundraisers for our District. Therefore, I am asking all Posts for their support and assistance in our upcoming poker events. They will be held on February 22-25; March 17-20 and May 19-22, 2012. These events provide a good portion of our monies, so please make room on your calendars to volunteer to work these events.

All of you are reminded that nominations for Post officers will be held in March and the elections and installation of officers in April. Be thinking about who you would like to represent you and your Post in the upcoming years.

The training classes for new Quartermasters and trustees will be held in Hamburg on April 21, 2012 and the election of District officers on May 5th in Lansing at Post 701.

Our District has enjoyed many successes

will promote growth. You will see the young members, new members and the "old timers" that were disgusted with the way things are, all start showing up to lend a hand by sweeping floors or filling out reports that the District Commander is calling for. Together they will build a sense of ownership to this great organization.

If comrades want to continue to be bitter about who knows what, then maybe they should get over it...or move on; join a pessimist club of some sort. If the Veterans of Foreign Wars continues status

with the completion of 100% reporting of Community Service projects, Activities and Hospital Reports, to name a few. Two of our Posts are currently at 100% strength: a big congratulations to Milan Post 5177 and Erie Post 3925. Several of the Posts are close, but the remaining 25 Posts have much work to do. The District is just over 90% in membership, making us last for the Department among the 12 Districts. We have over 400 unpaid members. I am asking all members and Post Commanders to make every effort to contact your unpaid members and to help them if they need financial assistance in paying their dues. The District has membership people to help you in contacting them. We all know that times are tough, but your tenacity in solving this problem is tougher. The fate of this great organization of ours rests on all of us. So, please contact your unpaid members!

Commanders, please remember to send me your TAPS reports for the Memorial Ceremony to honor our fallen in Lansing at the district meeting on May 5, 2012.

The Freedom Academy is asking Posts to purchase pins in support of students attending the academy. Pins will be \$2.00 each and Posts are asked to purchase a minimum of 10. One point will be allotted to the All-State Program, up to five points for 50 pins. Donations will be accepted at the District meeting.

The VFW Legislative Services lists publications for veterans and is very helpful if you have a need for these services. Service-connected disability rates are going up for 2012. i.e.: 10% - \$127; 20% - \$251; 30% - \$389; 40% - \$560; 50% - \$797; 60% - \$1,009; 70% - \$1,272; 80% - \$1,478; 90% - \$1,661 and 100% - \$2,769. This information, and much more, is discussed at our District meeting. Please attend and share your information with us, as well.

Continue to march and see you on the objective!



DISTRICT 7 REPORT

Kevin Conklin
District 7 Commander



Congratulations to the Posts and Districts that were involved with the recent VOD, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year program. I would like to thank Evelyn and Dale Avery, who chaired these programs for District 7; they do an outstanding job of coordinating these programs every year. Les Croyle, Jim Galen and Gloria Dobie also did a terrific job coordinating these programs for the Department. The VOD banquet was a great success. For those not in attendance, there was plenty of good food, fun and comradeship for all and you certainly missed a good time listening to Les and Gloria's antics.

We are halfway through this year and I am optimistic the year will end on a positive note. However, after this year what really changes? We will still need to turn in reports, sweep the floors, take out the trash and listen to the new officers tell

us how great things are going to be in the coming year.

There are many Posts throughout the state that are struggling to keep the lights on. For the most part, there seems to be the same few comrades dedicating much of their own time and money to keep their struggling Post afloat. They have to sweep floors, take out the trash, and fill out seemingly meaningless reports. All the while, other members spend much of their time and energy blaming others and spreading hate and discontent. I have witnessed and spoke to many comrades who want to participate, but don't want to be part of the rumor mills and deception. After all, who wants or needs added stress to their lives? If this energy was spent helping out the few members that are trying to keep the Post afloat, we would be a lot better off. I truly believe if we build a friendly atmosphere, it

quo, by "just getting through my year", we will not have a fraternal organization.

So, let's help out that comrade who hasn't forgotten what the Veterans of Foreign Wars is all about. Pick up a broom, help fill out that report, take out the trash, and most importantly, work together; potential members and the community will notice.

The next District 7 meeting is May 6th at the Marcellus Post 4054. Come and join us while we enjoy the awesome Veteran's Museum and displays; and, of course, some very good comradeship.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS



DISTRICT 8 REPORT

Jerry Lee Smith, Jr.
District 8 Commander



My how time has flown by; the year is almost over. I want to thank all of you who took time out of your busy schedules to attend the Mid-Winter Conference at the Radisson in Kalamazoo. As usual, Ron Amend and Les Croyle did an excellent job getting things set up. I would like to especially thank those of you who attended the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen banquet. What a wonderful bunch of students; it does my heart good to know that my future is in the hands of these young men and women. The essays were well thought out and well written and a good time was had by all. I want to thank all of you who attended the District Meeting/Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen awards luncheon. I want to thank those students who attended and their parents, for nurturing such fine citizens. Our District winners are as follows:

Patriot's Pen: 1st Place, Hannah Kenny from Post 2326; 2nd Place, Gabbie Haven from Post 2326; 3rd Place, Lindsey Carlson from Post 2406. The Voice of Democracy winners: 1st Place, Cadelyn Takace from Post 3030; 2nd Place, Kelsey Foster-Goodrich from Post 6252; 3rd Place, Connor Meston from Post 2326. As you can see, Post 2326 really did well in our competition. I want to thank our District Representatives, Bernie Livingston and Karen Barnes, for doing another outstanding job for our District again this year, and I want to thank all of the Posts and their Auxiliaries who put so much time and effort into this program. You all did a great job and we thank you.

We had an awesome turnout for the luncheon, but I was sorely disappointed and embarrassed at the number of Posts who were not represented. I can assure you that those Post Commanders will be hearing from me personally, and it wouldn't surprise me if State Commander Jack Pray also doesn't have some input on those Posts who were not represented.

I will be sending out letters to those Posts that are missing audits; your last

audits were due by the end of January, and some Posts are missing more than one audit. This is simple stuff, people. You must have your trustees audit your books once a quarter. Failure to do so can, and should, bring disciplinary action against your Post. It is not fair to all the comrades in your Post to not get these simple tasks accomplished. I know that I will get the phone calls stating that you did do your audits and they got lost. If that is the case, then make another copy of the audit (you do make copies, don't you?) and send it to Department. Many of the Post Commanders have already received letters from me about lack of participation in our Department's programs, particularly Community Service, Hospital and Youth Activities. Again, I was informed that the reports were done and have gone into cyber space; and I say – again – send another copy in to Department. As I have stated all year long, our programs are there to strengthen our place in our communities and help our veterans...and the last time I looked, that is a major part of our mission. Get your reporting done. If you need assistance, my staff and myself are here to assist you in correcting these situations.

Okay...enough negative stuff. Overall you comrades have been, and are, doing a wonderful job. You are efficient and professional in your endeavors, and I appreciate that it makes my job so much easier. We already have three Posts at 100%, and I want to thank those Commanders who have put forth the effort to accomplish this task. I know it is not easy. There are many of our Posts within the District that are only a few members short of being 100% – so let's work on this.

I look forward to seeing you all at the next District meeting held on May 5th (Cinco de Mayo) at the Comstock Post 6252. This will be election time, so get your candidate or yourself ready to help our District excel.



DISTRICT 9 REPORT

Phil Patterson
District 9 Commander



The holidays have come and gone. I hope that all had a blessed and good Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year. We are well into the second half of our VFW year 2011-2012. We just finished our Mid-Winter Conference and wish that the attendance could have been better. The information that we received was very beneficial and I hope it will be put to good use.

Congratulations to all the Posts that took the time and energy to make the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year programs a large success. The highlight of the Mid-Winter Conference was the honoring of our District winners in the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year Programs. The winner of the State Voice of Democracy was Ashli Savage from Post 9809 in District 9. Ashli received a \$6,000 scholarship and is going to Washington, D.C. for the VFW National Finals. We wish Ashli the best of luck and hope she is the national winner and brings this award back to the State of Michigan. District 9 has won (4) years in a row.

The All-State program deadline is just around the corner. I hope all the Posts who are participating this year have reported in the required programs by April 30th. This will be the last *MOV* before the program deadline.

We are again approaching the nomination and election of officers for the 2012-2013 administrative years. Please make sure that you send your election report form in as soon as possible after the elections have taken place. Remember the new rule on installation of officers; they must be installed prior to the State Convention. Remember to choose the best person for the job, not always your best friend. Don't forget that all audits must be done and dues paid, so your Post can vote in all elections.

Camp Trotter for Children is ours, comrades. We will be looking for

volunteers to help with the spring clean up at the Camp. I do not have the exact dates for the cleanup at this time, but I will get them and let you know. Let's take pride in our Children's Camp. June 22nd is the golf outing for the camp. Dept. Sr. Vice Kirk Kennedy is asking that all Sr. Vice Commanders get golf giveaways that can be used for prizes during the golf outing. If you do not golf that is okay...we will get your prizes to the outing for you.

CONGRATULATIONS to the five Posts that were at 100% at time of the conference: Post 2725, 3733, 4090, 5695 and 10705. Great job, everyone! Comrades, we have 11 Posts in our District that need 10 members or less. Let's go and get these members. We currently have 3,715 Life members, 86 new members, 69 reinstated members and 1,006 continuous members. Our District needs 371 members to be 100%. Comrades, we can do this. We are currently at 92.93%.

I would like to ask your assistance in getting your Hospital and Program Activities reports done. These need to be turned in by the 10th of each month, either electronically or by paper. Comrades, make sure that you report to your Commanders everything that you have done during the month, so that it may be reported; this is one way that we continue with our nonprofit status.

The following dates are the District meetings for the 2011-2012 year: • May 12, 2012, Belding Post 4406 School of Instruction – TBD • All meetings are at 1:00 p.m. School of Instruction is subject to change without notice.

With that, I would like to remind all of you that I work for you. I am here to support you. We are a team...if you have questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact me. I may be contacted at 616-755-3176 or e-mail me at philvfw12082@rocketmail.com
Remember: Army Strong.



DISTRICT 10 REPORT

Stu Billey
District 10 Commander



The year is half over and what an experience it has been. We have had our ups and we have had our downs. I am proud to say that some of the hiccups that we have had are being resolved. The Mid-Winter Conference has ended and it was great to see everyone that could make it. The banquet for the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen winners was amazing. Let's keep up the good work getting out to the schools and encouraging the students to participate in this program.

March is nominations for the ensuing year and April means elections for new officers. With that in mind, please make sure your election reports are turned in on time and without errors. You cannot elect the same member to two or more positions. Also, the Adjutant cannot be a trustee. Try to encourage new members

to attend these meetings to understand how the election process works. Do not try to elect them to a position that they are not ready for; or this might even scare them from returning to the Post. Please keep sending in your monthly activity and hospital reports. We have Posts that are very far behind in these, and I would like to see numbers improve.

Next, I would like to talk about membership. As of the writing of this article, we have four Posts that have met or exceeded the 100% mark. Congratulations to Posts 2934, 4642, 6965 and 8872. There are 12 Posts that are six or fewer members shy of 100%. Keep up the recruiting and keep the continuous members involved and interested.

There has been a lot of talk about the dreaded "change" word going around the District. I know that the word "change"

is perceived as something bad, but let's not think of it in such a negative light. Let us think of it as a new beginning of what is yet to come. Look at the changes in automobiles, televisions, appliances and modern medicine. We can think of these things as modifications to what we already have. Would any of us go back to black and white TVs or driving a Model-T Ford? Of course we wouldn't.

Let us move away from the "old ways" and start to push into the "new" era. Here are some simple tips to help maintain and modernize your Posts. To the posts that are not using computers, I encourage you to look into the technology. Monthly reports are much easier to complete and submit online than by mail. It is easier, faster and cheaper to send an e-mail than to mail out letters. Make sure that your Post has a copy of the new National Bylaws podium edition. There are Posts (and I know this because I saw it at a Post meeting) whose edition is from 1993. There have been a couple changes made in the past 19 years that should be looked into.

One is the new prayer for the National Home for Children. It was a change that happened last year and there are Posts

that are still using the old prayer during meetings. Familiarizing yourself with the Bylaws will help to create a less hostile environment during meetings and, in the Post in general. For all of you that think you know the Bylaws, reread the latest edition and see how much you actually know. Again, changes are made every year. I can't count the number of disagreements that I have had by members misquoting the Bylaws. I know I haven't been around as long as many members, but I have read the new Bylaws, so I would like to think that I know what I'm talking about. I don't know what was in the Bylaws in 1978, but I do know what's in them in 2012. When I hear someone start a sentence with, "The Bylaws state..." I automatically look it up. As President Lincoln once said, "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt." It's better to look at how it's supposed to be done than to continue doing it the wrong way.

With a few modifications, we can continue to operate to the highest capacity to help veterans and to help our organization.



DISTRICT 12 REPORT

Virginia McGowan
District 12 Commander



The very first thing for the New Year is to thank all the 12th District Commanders for the dedication shown to their Posts. I'm very proud of these men and women. I'm also honored every time I visit a Post and meet the membership. The 12th District and Post 2053 are honored to welcome a new member and Silver Star recipient, Gregory Pische. We of the 12th want to welcome him and all new members to our District and to the VFW.

There are lots of zeros on donation reports to Department. Post Commanders, have you made donations to Camp Trotter for Children, Gold Star Mothers, Homeless Veterans, Military Assistance Program (MAP), National Home? Make checks to Department of MI VFW and earmark it to where donations are to go and make sure your Post number is on the check. Let's help support our fellow comrades and their families.

Membership is looking good; many Posts are close to that 100%. New memberships are important, and so is that old member. Make them feel welcome and they may be your next best recruiter.

District 12 just had our VOD/Patriot's Pen/Teacher of the Year banquet. It was inspiring to listen to these young students as they read their entries. Our VOD winner, Elizabeth Bergren, is from Post

4499 (Manistee) and in the 11th grade; and our Patriot's Pen winner, Angelica Parker, is from Post 7806 (Manton) and in the 7th grade. Congrats to both these young ladies.

Post elections are around the corner. It is the Post floor that votes in the incoming officers. The new 2012 Bylaws/Manual of Procedures are out. Order them for your memberships; help them to learn and understand the VFW. Many want to take a Post office, but do not understand what it entails. I was one of these veterans. I asked questions of past officers, attended OTS and Conventions. I'm still learning and sharing the knowledge I have acquired. These podium books are very insightful and there are some changes each year.

There is a change of location for the last District 12 meeting on May 6, 2012. The meeting will be held aboard ship, on the WWII LST 393 in Muskegon, located at 560 Mart, Muskegon, MI 49440. Maps and information will be available at the District meeting on March 11th in Montague or by calling me. We will also have installation of new officers that day aboard the ship.

In closing, please stay warm and be safe. Next District meeting is at the Montague Post 3256 on March 11, 2012.



DISTRICT 14 REPORT

Sam White
District 14 Commander



The 14th District mourns the loss of two very active members, Past 14th District Commander and VOD Chairman Mike Talmadge and Escanaba Post 2998 Commander and 14th District Commander Richard Robitaille. They will be greatly missed.

As your new District Commander and VOD Chairman, I will do my best to fill these positions this year. I would hope some new people would step forward and become involved at the District and Post levels. Lots of help makes any job easier and more fun to do. Step up...get more involved!

The District 14 Spring Convention is at the Escanaba Post 2998 on Saturday and Sunday, May 5th and 6th. The District meeting will be on Sunday, the 6th beginning at 10:00 a.m.

I would like to mention a word about the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year programs. They are supported with money made from

our District 3-digit raffle. Every Post and Ladies Auxiliary is given their tickets at the fall District meeting. I understand some of our Posts are sending the tickets back and refusing to sell them. That is unfair to the Posts that sell their share. I think in the future if a Post has a winner in any of these great programs and has not sold their fair share of tickets, they should be required to pay the cost of their winner's expenses to Mid-Winter to compete, and not let the rest of the Posts pay their winner's expenses for them! If this is not corrected next year, I plan to make changes.

I would like to salute all of our Color Guards throughout the state. I know how much time is devoted to be a member of a Color Guard. To send our comrades on to their final farewell with military honors makes every veteran proud and thankful for the work these comrades do for all of us. My salute to you all.

Thank you.



DISTRICT 15 REPORT

Jack Lillar
District 15 Commander



Here it is already, the last week in January 2012. We are halfway through our year.

At this writing we have four Posts that have reached the 100% mark in membership. Congratulations to Post 4167 Mass City, Post 4803 Felch, Post 6507 Chassell, Post 3897 L'Anse. Good job! At the time that I am writing this article, we are at 94.67% for the District and are leading the Department in membership. We have a few more reinstates than new members; that shows that you are looking back at the members who have fallen through the cracks and getting them to come back on board.

At our District Mid-Winter meeting on February 12th I will be talking about the Post Inspection form questions one and two. Most of the Posts are incomplete on the answers for these two questions. I will be giving you contact information to correct these deficiencies and we will get this cleared up before our next inspections.

Lastly, lets all keep the pressure on our national and state representatives to not take away the benefits that our veterans have earned and so well deserve! Go to the National VFW Web site and look at the priority goals for 2012 and the 10 for 10 proposals.

CAMP TROTTER TALES

Winter is here (well, maybe)

– Mid-Winter Conference of 2012 has passed! Now we are headed toward an exciting new year for our VFW Camp Trotter for Children. The Camp Trotter Committee experienced a very successful Mid-Winter meeting with lots of new challenges to meet for Summer Camp 2012. The Money Raffle was a moderate success with donations totaling around \$32,000.00. Winners of the drawing(s) were: 1 thru 15 – Nancy Stock, Richard Redd, Tammy Thompson, Jerome Mixter, Kenneth Todd, Shirley Schrader, Raymond Sedlacek, Raymond Modzynski, Roseanne Turino, Susan Jacobs, Leonard Kaminski, Carlene Hackett, Lon Senko, Gerald Holloway and Dianna Krumm. Congratulations to all the winners. A very special thank you to all that participated in supporting your beautiful VFW Camp Trotter for Children.

First, an overview of the past and present status of Camp Trotter along with the future. Yes, the future of our Camp Trotter looks very bright with an aggressive schedule for renovations to begin in March of 2012. In March, the fun begins with the total removal and rebuild of the director's cottage (completion scheduled by 1 June) with the financial help of the money raffle and numerous major donations of many of our VFW Posts, Ladies Auxiliaries and Men's Auxiliaries. The dining hall will sport a brand new state-of-the-art automatic dishwasher, thanks to our Department Ladies Auxiliary and their fundraisers over the past three years. The new deck that was built in the Spring of 2011 will be showing off the two (2) new sets of patio furniture that will be purchased by



Ernie Meyers
Camp Trotter Tales

District 4 President Sharon Lewinski and her Ladies of District 4 – through their efforts of many fundraisers they made this happen. Thanks, Ladies!

Cottage 1 and 2 will get an update – new air conditioning and heating will be installed this coming March. The Olson-Kiste VFW Post 4406 Men's Auxiliary adopted half of Cottage #2, and is absorbing a lot of the cost for the renovations of this cottage; and the comrades of Post 4406 gave a sizeable donation to assist in this renovation. Both cottages will get new steel doors, front and back, and will have two new decks on the backside. A huge thank you to the Men's Auxiliary and the VFW Post 4406 of Belding.

Cottage 3 and 4 will have its final makeover, sporting new siding, all new steel doors, and six (6) new decks (front and back). Through all the many fundraisers that are occurring throughout this year and last, the committee is able to get a final closure on the much needed renovations.

NEW for 2012 – the committee is opening up the Camp to scouting units to utilize our location during the off-season months, such as "The Polar Bear" merit badge program and Winter Camporees. The Shiawassee Boy Scout District Council will be at the Camp on 17 February for the weekend. Welcome "Scouts".

NOW – help pass the word that the

Committee is taking applications for the various summer camp positions...i.e., Summer Camp Director, Asst. Director, Waterfront Director, Camping Counselors, Cooks. Duration will be six (6) weeks starting 9 July. Please send resumés to the VFW Camp Trotter for Children Director Ernie Meyers, Sr. His e-mail is emeyers76@att.net. The earlier the better! Remember: You must love to work with children ages 7 through 12 and must be able to get along with your peers...Homeland Security background checks are a requirement.

VFW Camp Trotter for Children will become a 501(c)(3) (a total nonprofit camp) and will be on major Web sites. We are still waiting to hear from the IRS on the outcome of our submission on the 501(c)(3) as of this writing.

Please help your VFW Camp Trotter for Children by getting the word out to support children to attend summer camp during this coming summer's camping season. Camping season starts July 15 and runs through August 18th. If you would like to obtain a new 2012 brochure, please contact one of the

directors and/or go to the site at <http://www.vfwmi.org/camptrrotter.htm>

The biggest thing that you can do to promote your Camp Trotter for Children is to get our youth and their buddies to come to Summer Camp. Check out the Website at www.vfwmi.org/camptrrotter. Scroll down to Camp Trotter and just click on and see all the changes and you will get lots of information on how to send a child to Camp. The cost was raised to \$200.00, due to the severe increase in cost of all commodities; food, gas, utilities, insurance, etc. The Camp is open to **ALL CHILDREN** – ages 7-12 years – bring your children and their friends.

Special Note: Life Membership to Camp Trotter for Children is open to all ages – yes, your child can become a Life Member. For only \$35.00, your child could experience memories for a lifetime. Won't you become a Life Member? Check out the Web site for an application.

Your Camp Trotter Committee Members will provide to you any and all information that you cannot find. Meet your Committee Members:

CAMP TROTTER, continued on page 6

CAMP TROTTER, continued from page 5

State Commander Jack Pray
 State Sr. Vice Commander Kirk Kennedy
 State Jr. Vice Commander Ron Devereaux
 QM/Adj. Rob Weiss
 PSC Ernie Meyers, Sr. -
 Director/Chairman
 Director Butch Ogden
 Director Richard Rought
 Director PSC Dave Hutson
 Director Dave Reeves
 Director Dennis Battle
 Secretary Caryn Lehner-Weiss
 Spring cleanup will take place during the first part of May – weather permitting. Interested? Give a committee member a call and get on the list...just for a day!

Finally, if there is anyone out there that has a carpentry background and would like to help in the remodeling, please give Committee Chairman Meyers a call at 517-543-0014. We are always looking for volunteers to help in Texas Hold 'em fundraisers for Camp Trotter.

Don't forget our 6th Annual Golf Outing at Newaygo on June 22nd. Check it out on the Department of Michigan VFW Web site under "Events" and the Camp Trotter Web site.

Thank you for supporting our beautiful Camp Trotter for Children.

Your Camp Committee

STATE JUDGE ADVOCATE

As of now we should have selected our new officers for the incoming year, 2012-2013. I hope the choices were based on the worthiness and capability of the new officer and not just because it's "Cousin Joe" or a pocket vote. I have seen a lot of people walk away from this organization because they viewed it as just a "good ol' boys club".

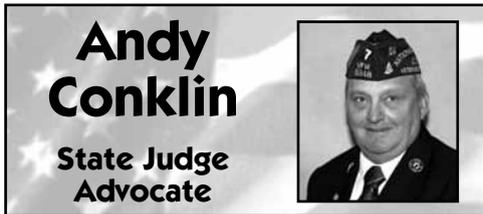
We all are to be considered comrades (friends), but sometimes this meaning does not get full credit for the interpretation it deserves. Let us reflect on the purposes of this organization, as in Sec. 230102 of our Congressional Charter and embrace it in our Posts the way we are expected. Also, we should review the "Oath of Membership" we took, and renew our "vows". Hopefully, this will help us understand the real importance of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and get our minds away from the social benefits, although sometimes that's important, too.

Our membership numbers reflect we must not have what it takes to attract new members; look at the big slump in auto sales a few years back. The Big Three had to re-evaluate what it takes to attract people to their market. We need to adopt this same philosophy to attract new members, but we also can't pass by the members we already have. As in last quarter's *MOV*, I stated we are as we are perceived. Start by treating each other with respect, and then get the new guys

off the bench and into the game.

We have plenty of training available; as I came up the chairs, I have never been turned away for advice from seasoned members and past officers. The National and State organization have many tools and forms of instruction and guidance material available. These were designed to fully inform you by people who have "been there, done that" to assist you in making proper decisions and running the Posts properly.

Whether or not you're an officer, we all have the responsibility to be proactive in maintaining the integrity of this organization. You can do this by attending meetings, presenting your ideas and getting involved in community activities. Our organization has such a diverse group of program activities – surely one must be of interest to you or your Post. Take it up and run with it. Our program directors were selected because they have expertise in the areas they represent and they stand ready to help you. Your success is a reflection on them and our organization. Like PSC Hutson said... "Be the Best You Can Be!!"



Andy Conklin
 State Judge Advocate

BUDDY POPPY

Hopefully as you read this, all the Posts will have their Buddy Poppy orders in to Department. All orders needed to be in by February 1 and by December 31 for your All-State points. As you are aware, National had distribution problems last year and many Posts did not get their Poppies on time. If you have your orders in by February 1 this year, we are hoping the Posts will get their Poppies in a timely manner.

Last year, the Department of Michigan was down a little in sales compared to the last 3-year average, but not as badly as some of the large states. We had District 6 and 9 with 100% in Buddy Poppy. Many of the Posts did well in their Buddy Poppy distribution; so keep up the good work, comrades.

For the Post Buddy Poppy chairmen,

there are some good resources available on the National VFW Web site for you to use. A Buddy Poppy chairman's guide is available, along with a brochure on the history of the Buddy Poppy. A guide on preparing for a successful Buddy Poppy program is also available, with posters that can be printed and displayed in your Post. These tools are available on the National VFW Web site at vfwdepartmentresources.org. You will find these a valuable resource in planning



Steve Meredith
 Buddy Poppy Director

Michigan State Veterans Homes
 Report by Board of Managers PSC Ernie Meyers, Sr. and PSC Richard "Chic" LaFave

The Board of Managers who preside over the two (2) State Veterans Homes of Michigan are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Each Manager serves a six-year term and can be reappointed upon the recommendation of their respective Veterans Group. The exception is the Independent Manager, solely chosen and appointed by the Governor.

The Board of Managers was created by Public Act 152 of 1895; the Board exercises certain regulatory and governance authority regarding admission and member affairs at the State Veteran Homes. They also represent the interest of the veterans' community, in both advisory and advocacy roles.

The Board of Managers are currently under the umbrella of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), which in turn is Commanded by MAJGEN Greg Vadnais, the Adjutant General of Michigan. General Vadnais was appointed by Governor Rick Snyder to this high office in January 2011. The Deputy Director for Veterans Affairs is retired State Senator Jason Allen from Traverse City.

The Board of Managers and its two (2) State Veterans Home Administrators were given a major challenge over these past month(s) and that is, to put together a long range mission and to project a major capital outlay for the future of the residents/veterans of our Homes. The operating budgets are increasingly being diminished and the challenge is to cut down to the bare necessities needed to operate, but not to endanger the quality of care to our residents. The Board has taken this very seriously and is responding to the challenge. The new deputy director is allowing the Board to be a major part of the equation in helping solve this crisis.

The make up of the Board of Managers was effectively changed when SB 799 was signed into Law by Governor Rick Snyder taking affect 1 January 2012. The term of each manager through attrition will be three (3) years with a maximum of two (2) terms. The American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars will drop from two members to one member for each organization. The AMVETS will lose their appointment on the Board of Managers (again through attrition). This position will become an independent appointment by the governor. The two American Legion and VFW seats, again through attrition, will become independent appointments by the Governor.

Members of the Board of Managers consist of seven (7) members; and the officers of the Board are voted upon at the Board of Managers Meeting in March of each year within the Board itself. The following is the make up of the Board:

- (2) Veterans of Foreign Wars: Manager Ernie Meyers, Sr., PSC, Vice Chairman of the Board (Charlotte) and Manager Richard "Chic" LaFave, PSC, Member (Gwinn)
- (2) The American Legion: Bill Coffey, PSC, Treasurer/Clerk of the Board (L'Anse) and Gary Veldman, PSC, Chairman of the Board (Muskegon)
- (1) Disabled American Veterans: Gerald Cool, PSC, Member (Adrian)
- (1)AMVETS: Mary Wilseck, PSC, Member (Livonia)
- Independent: Not yet appointed

The Grand Rapids Home for Veterans is home for just over 700 residents.

- Domiciliary – 140 beds available, 58% filled; at present 81 occupied.
- Nursing Care – 618 beds available, 76% filled; at present 467 occupied.
- **Currently there are 24 members that reside at the Home who are 70-100% service connect disability (The VA funds their full cost of care; they live at the home for free) – This information needs to get out to our veterans that need our help!**

- *Average assigned nursing beds 472 (1/3/12)* (varies from day to day)
- In January 2011, the average assigned nursing beds was 548.
- The Board of Managers has directed the Home to reduce the four (4) residents to a room down to two (2) residents to a room. This will enhance a much better quality of life for the resident Veterans.

The D.J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans located in Marquette houses some 189 residents.

- Domiciliary (ambulatory) – 22 beds available; 50.0% filled at present.
- Nursing Care – 182 beds available; 97.25% filled at present.
- **Currently there are 18 members that reside at the Home who are 70-100% service connected disability. Please get the word out to our veterans that truly need our help!**
- The VA Survey conducted at the DJ Jacobetti Home in November 2011 produced 0 citations.

Special Note: The Board of Managers is well aware that our State has a \$1.8 billion shortfall for next year's budget and we are very concerned how this will affect the Homes. Although the Board of Managers is well aware of the setbacks in the fiscal end, we are dedicated to protecting the veterans in both Homes and maintaining a high standard of quality care for all residents.

Just a quick note to say thank you for your support over this past year and your continued support to assist the veterans at Grand Rapids Home and the D.J. Jacobetti Home in Marquette.

Finally, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary lead the charge in volunteer organizations when it comes to volunteer hours and donations. Thank you from the two Home Administrators and the Board of Managers.

REMINDER: The Board of Managers meetings are open to the public – you are welcome to attend any meetings. Next meetings scheduled are being held at our State Capitol in Lansing, Room 424 at 9:00 a.m. on February 9, 2012 and on Wednesday, March 14th at 9:00 a.m. at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans.

April 19th at the D.J. Jacobetti Home in Marquette. ALL starting times are 9:00 a.m. Always call in advance for any possible date/time changes. Grand Rapids Home for Veterans: 1-616-364-5300 and the D.J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans: 1-906-226-3576

REMINDER: You can further help by purchasing winter coats, winter hats, gloves, boots (all sizes). You can use your Post Relief Fund. Please call either Chic or myself anytime for further information on the two (2) State Veterans Homes. You can e-mail: emeyers76@att.net

From Chic and Ernie to all of you – thanks for what you have done and what you are currently doing for our Veterans Homes!

BUDDY POPPY, continued from page 6

your Buddy Poppy Day program. We need to be looking now for places to distribute our Buddy Poppies. The National Buddy Poppy Days this year are May 10, 11 and 12. National VFW will allow Scouts to help distribute our Poppies, another valuable resource. Buddy Poppies can always be distributed at other times. At my Post, we pass Poppies out during the Memorial Day parade. The Ladies Auxiliary has made posters and centerpieces utilizing Buddy Poppies. With a little imagination we can find ways to display our Buddy Poppies. Comrades, if we get out and distribute our Buddy poppies in our communities, any donations we receive will go into our Post relief funds. We all have members who are struggling these days. We

can use our relief funds to help these members, maybe pay a comrades dues that otherwise might not be able to. By doing so, we are also helping our membership, which we all know is the lifeblood of our organization. I believe that other than our Cross of Malta, the Buddy Poppy is the most visible symbol of our great organization. When we get out in our communities and distribute our Buddy Poppy, people know who we are. This is great exposure for our VFW, and it shows one of the good things this wonderful organization we belong to does.

Steve Meredith
VFW Department of Michigan
Buddy Poppy Director

Bills Enhancing Oversight of Veterans Programs Among Legislation Signed by Governor

December 21, 2011, Lansing, MI – Gov. Rick Snyder today signed legislation enhancing the oversight of Michigan’s veterans programs by providing greater opportunity for input from those who served in the current wartime era.

Senate Bills 798 and 799 revise the membership criteria for the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Board of Trustees, county and district veterans committees, and the Michigan Veterans Facility Board of Managers.

“Our current wartime veterans bring so many impressive attributes to the table, including diverse skills and experiences,” Snyder said. “We need to give them a greater voice. For example, only one-quarter of Michigan’s 700,000 veterans are now eligible to serve on the trust fund board. We need to tap their dedication and vision to help make certain that our veterans receive the benefits they’ve earned. Ensuring the strength of these boards for the long term is a meaningful step.”

S.B. 798, sponsored by state Senator John Moolenaar, gives the governor greater flexibility to appoint veterans who served within the past 20 years to the

trust fund board. That flexibility extends to appointments of county and district committee members as well, which are made by the trust fund board. The board and committees distribute funds to eligible wartime veterans and their families to relieve temporary financial crisis or hardship.

Under the bill, membership will still include representatives of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans. It will be modified to include representatives of any other congressionally-chartered veterans organization and independent members who would not represent a specific organization.

S.B. 799, sponsored by state Senator John Pappageorge, revises the membership criteria for the Michigan Veterans Facility Board of Managers, which oversees the state’s two veterans’ homes.

Each board and committee member will have to be a veteran and have demonstrated knowledge, skills and experience in public service, business or finance.

The bills are now Public Acts 282 and 283 of 2011.



Michigan Overseas Veteran 2011-2012
PLEASE ADHERE TO THESE DEADLINES

| Issue | Deadline | Issue | Deadline |
|---------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| July/August/September | August 1 | January/February/March | February 1 |
| October/November/December | November 1 | April/May/June | April 1 |

Please Remember!

- Do not type all CAPITAL LETTERS. Use capitals sparingly. When in doubt, do not capitalize a word. Use 12-point font type size.
- Please no handwritten submissions, as they will not be considered for publication.
- Do not write on back of pictures. Use a separate sheet of paper. Identify all people in the photograph. Try to limit number of people in photo to five or six, at most.
- Posts and Auxiliaries are encouraged to submit items of interest from their areas.
- We reserve the right to edit all submissions due to space constraints.
- Do not submit newspaper articles and pictures from newspapers UNLESS you provide written authorization from the publication involved.
- Never submit article or photos clipped from newspapers or magazines.
- DISTRICT COMMANDERS – Please submit your District Meetings schedule as soon as possible, so it can be published.
- MAIL ALL ARTICLES TO MOV EDITOR:
 MOV Editor: Matt David, editormov@yahoo.com
 Auxiliary Editor: Diane Ward, legalblaze@aol.com

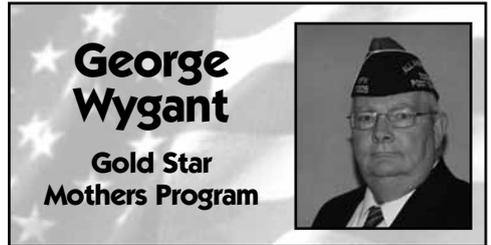
GOLD STAR MOTHERS PROGRAM

The Department of Michigan Gold Star Mothers Program is designed to provide financial support to the American Gold Star Mothers (AGSM) Inc. This is an organization of mothers whose children have died while in military service, died as a result of that service or are missing in action. They are a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit Veterans Service Organization, founded in Washington, D.C. in 1928, incorporated and chartered by the United States Congress.

The three main objectives of their organization are to assist veterans, active duty military and their families. This is accomplished by the Veterans Administration Volunteer Services activities in veteran hospitals, centers and cemeteries. Their members provide venues of learning and fellowship and provide resources on grief support and information on national and state legislative issues. Their Communities: The American Gold Star Mothers (AGSM) members assist many community organizations. The continuous generosity of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliaries have helped them maintain these objectives.

Michigan currently has six nationally chartered chapters. The most recent chapters were chartered in April 2011. They are Mid-Michigan and South Western Michigan chapters, comprised mainly of OIF, OEF, Desert Storm and Associates. In the past eight months, they have participated in parades in many communities, ceremonies in national and local cemeteries, sponsored outside activities for veterans and provided needed items at VA hospitals.

AGSM fundraisers can only be used to support the above programs. Resources



to support their organizational operations, conferences and conventions is totally out of pocket or through generous support of other sponsoring organizations, such as the VFW and its Auxiliaries.

The All-State program provides for a goal of \$1 per member, which equates to \$51,841.00 or 1 point for every \$25.00 for a total of 4 Points. This would equate to approximately \$32,000.00 if every Post donated \$100.00.

In these tough economic times, these goals are not realistic for many of our Posts. So, as the Director of the Department of Michigan Gold Star Mother Program, I am asking that each Post donate a minimum of \$25.00 this year. This would equate to \$8,000.00 to the AGSM this year in support of not only their primary mission, but organizational needs as well.

On behalf of Carol Johnson, Department of Michigan Sr. Vice President and Mid-Michigan Chapter President AGSM, she would like to thank each and every one of our comrades and Auxiliary members for your continued kindness and support of the American Gold Star Mothers Incorporation.

If you have further question, please contact me at 517-676-0855 or george.wygant@yahoo.com

Specific questions on AGSM Inc. can be directed to Carol Johnson at 517-712-4574 or agsm06@yahoo.com

Veterans Coat Drive



The VFW Post 8303 recently completed an annual coat drive for the men and women that reside at the Veterans Home in Grand Rapids. Over 100 coats were collected and delivered to the home. Pictured, L-R: Post Commander Herm Weststrate and Senior Vice Commander Herb Rice unloading coats at the Veterans Home.



The 7th District has the distinction of having all three top positions filled by young veterans serving from recent conflicts. Pictured, L-R: Jr. Vice Commander Rodney Cockerel (9355), Sr. Vice Commander Dave Spence (4054), Dept. Sr. Vice Commander Kirk Kennedy and District Commander Kevin Conklin (6248).

MICHIGAN FREEDOM ACADEMY 2012

The 2011 Freedom Academy was held on July 10-15, 2011 at the Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) Phelps-Collins ANG Base in Alpena, Michigan. There were 116 total delegates, 24 of which were VFW referred or sponsored. Due to transportation constraints, the Freedom Foundation board meeting was not held at the academy, and neither Sandi Onstwedder nor myself attended.

There are some new developments for the 2012 Freedom Academy program. First, thanks to coordination between Dept. Ladies Auxiliary President Mariann Hamann and Dept. Commander Jack Pray, Ladies Auxiliaries can now receive a point toward their Achievement program for donations to the Freedom Foundation. Those funds, added to VFW Post donations, will be utilized to support the academy. It is my fervent hope that the Ladies Auxiliaries will donate generously to the program.

Second, for the first time ever, Freedom Academy pins are now available. These pins were sold for the first time at the Freedom Academy display table at the Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo. Each VFW District Commander received a package containing packets of 10 pins for each Post within their respective Districts. Posts that procure all 10 pins will receive one point toward the All-State program. Posts will receive one point toward the All-State program for every 10 pins purchased, up to a maximum of five points. Posts wishing to receive additional pins should contact me. Auxiliaries that wish to obtain Freedom Academy pins may do so by contacting me or Ladies Auxiliary Freedom Academy Liaison, Sandi Onstwedder. The price of the pins is \$2.00 each or \$20.00 for a packet of 10, which will be



Maurice Morton
Michigan Freedom Academy Director

the minimum quantity mailed.

The dates for the 2012 academy are July 1-5, 2012. Please get your delegate applications in before the academy is full. The deadline for applications is June 15th; however, for the last two years the academy has reached maximum capacity, well in advance of that date. If at all possible, please sponsor a delegate. The delegate sponsorship fee is \$150.00.

Due to recent changes in the state government, Michigan National Guard command structure and the Freedom Foundation's financial situation, the academy has been struggling. As I have stated in previous articles, the Freedom Academy is funded strictly by donations and we are not receiving enough to sustain the Freedom Academy indefinitely. I am asking my VFW comrades and Auxiliary sisters to support this worthwhile program as much as possible.

Again, my thanks to Mariann Hamann and Sandi Onstwedder for their assistance in involving the Ladies Auxiliary. I would also like to thank Commander Pray and All-State Director Larry Thayer for their support of the program.

If anyone has any questions about the program, please contact me at 248-683-8720 or e-mail me at mauricemorton@hotmail.com

Maurice B. Morton
Director
Michigan Freedom Academy

WWII Veteran Honored

The comrades of the 9th District's Cleveland-Wolverton Post 3794 wish to announce that comrade Ed Johnson was awarded France's highest award, Knight of the Legion of Honor; this is equivalent to our Medal of Honor.

Ed was a member of the 1st Infantry Division enlisting in June of 1941 and serving until well after the end of the war in Europe. During his service in WWII, he participated in every landing of the European Campaign. He received burns when his landing craft hit a mine approaching Omaha Beach at Hour 5 on D-Day. For

his actions after the mine blew the doors of his landing craft, Ed was awarded the Silver Star. Ed was twice awarded the Bronze Star and a French Croix de Guirre. Comrade Johnson fought through France and Belgium, including the Battle of the Bulge. In Germany he remembers that the Battle for the Hurtgen Forest and the capture of Aachen were particularly intense.

After the war while he was being treated for his injuries, a young lady named Mae spotted Ed and told her friends, "I'm going to marry that man" and they have been together ever since.



Pictured, L-R: Ed Johnson, Mae Johnson and Adjutant General of Michigan, Major General Vadnais.

VOD DIRECTOR LES CROYLE

To everyone in the Department of Michigan, thank you for all the hours spent on the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year programs. A special thank you to all who have donated to our scholarships throughout the years, all this year's contestants, the state judges, Comrade Ed Sobolewski for donating all the name tags, Rocket Flag Company of Warren, Michigan for the use of the large American and POW/MIA flags used at the banquet and to all the Posts and Auxiliaries that sponsored the programs, UAW Region 1, Region 1C and UAW Local 160 for their ads, Gloria

Dobbie, Jim Galen, Roz Cooperman and GreenPath for their scholarship donation, and anyone else who may have had an oar in the water on these programs.

To Ron Amend, Pat Patterson and Paul McIvor, thank you all for taking care of my duties as Assistant Convention Director, so I could be with our contestants.

As it is never too early to get started, here are the themes for 2012-2013:

Voice of Democracy –
"Is Our Constitution Still Relevant?"
Patriot's Pen –
"What I Would Tell America's Founding Fathers"

Honoring the Fallen

"Show me the manner in which a nation or a community cares for its dead, and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender sympathies of its people, their respect for the law of the land and their high ideals."
–William Gladstone

To the editor:

For some 50 years, there has been talk of a U.P. Michigan Veterans National Memorial Cemetery. On September 18, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars 15th District Fall Meeting in South Range, a resolution was passed to work on acquiring a National Memorial Veterans Cemetery in the Upper Peninsula.

There are 55,000 veterans in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Wisconsin. They are under the care of the V.A. Hospital in Iron Mountain. The Republic or Sagola area would be central to the area.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration in Washington told me that we must acquire land and Gov. Rick Snyder's approval before they will give us any help.

Our closest national cemetery is some 400 miles away. The one in Milwaukee is full, and the nearest is Ft. Snelling in south Minneapolis, Minnesota.

There are two national cemeteries in Lower Michigan; Fort Custer in Augusta and Great Lakes in Holly, but they are 500 miles away. Great Lakes opened five years ago and has 16 burials a day coming through the gate. We have

already exceeded 10,000. There are 544 acres there with a plan for the next 50 years –1,500 can be buried per acre with no walkways – many of our veteran's sections in local cemeteries are filling up.

A veteran, spouse and any children younger than age 18 may be placed there. Benefits vary whether on active duty, disabled or length of service. Any veteran with an Honorable Discharge is eligible. Once the casket or urn is brought to the gate, all of the expenses for the lot and burial are covered by the administration.

It is good to honor those who have served and it is a reminder to future generations of the sacrifices of many for our liberty. "We honor the dead by serving the living."

Please join us in praying for a donation of 40 to 160 acres of land. If you know of anyone who would like to donate land for this Memorial, please let me know. It would make a great legacy. For more information, call the Veterans of Foreign Wars at 906-523-4813 or e-mail me at erliim@up.net

Rev. Elmer R. Liimatta
National Chaplain 2010-11

*God and the Soldier, all men adore
In time of danger and not before.
When danger is passed and all things righted,
God is forgotten,
and the soldier slighted.
(Etched on the wall of a sentry box in Gibraltar.)*

STATE POOL LEAGUE

We are on the home stretch for our 2012 State Pool Tournament. Just a reminder that singles play on April 19th, doubles on April 20th and teams on April 21st at Post 2496, Alpena.

NOTE: Due to our state pool tournament being moved up one week this year, we must have all entry fees and single, double and team entry forms turned in no later than March 22, 2012. Our pool draw will be held March 31st at the Flint VFW Post at 1:00 p.m.

Ticket Sales!!!! I hate to be repetitive, but our ticket sales make our pool tournament possible. So, SELL, SELL, SELL!!!! Remember for each banquet ticket, a book of tickets must be sold. Send all monies and entry forms to me at the address below.

If any members want a rule change, you must have it submitted 30 days prior



Denny Craycraft
State Pool Director

to our 2012 Pool Tournament. Send them to Denny Glutz, as well.

Ad Books: If you want in our history book this year, make sure you have your money and ad sent to me by March 15th.

I'll be looking forward to seeing you all in Alpena. Best of Luck to All!

Denny Glutz
State Pool Quartermaster
10352 Lennon Road
Swartz Creek, MI 48473

Auxiliary News

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT



Mariann Hamann

Many thanks go to all those who made our Mid-Winter Conference a huge success. Many of you had the pleasure of meeting the gracious Francisca Guilford, National Conductress. High-

lights of the conference included the "Night on the Town" and the reception and banquet to honor Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen students and Teachers of the Year.

The week of February 12-18, 2012 is National Salute to Veterans Week. Activities are being planned around the state, especially at our VA hospitals and

nursing homes. Contact the Voluntary Service Office at a VA medical center near you to see how you can help. Erma Bombeck once said, "Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience and just plain love for one another." Learn how you can become a volunteer.

At the end of February, I will represent Michigan at the National Mid-Winter Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. Because you enabled our state to exceed the National membership goal of 91%, I will also attend my "night on the town". Thank you for your hard work in collecting dues, recruiting and reinstating members.

If you have not yet paid your 2012 dues, please do so as soon as possible. You are no longer a member in good standing and would not be allowed to attend an Auxiliary business meeting or apply for a

cancer grant. If you are having financial difficulties, contact your Auxiliary; they may be able to help.

Michigan is very close to reaching 100% in Membership – a major milestone. Please ask your relatives, friends and neighbors to join the Ladies Auxiliary to the most elite Veterans organization in this country. We need to keep our numbers high in order to have a strong voice in Washington to support our Veterans and active military personnel. Application forms are available on our Web site or call your Auxiliary Treasurer.

Several Auxiliaries have had problems this year. Most of them are the result of personality conflicts. Please stay focused on our motto, "UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES". Ladies, you can agree to disagree and still get the job done for our Veterans, active military and their families. These American heroes

need us more than ever. Please don't let them down because you don't like someone from your Auxiliary.

Do you know that some Auxiliaries have Pool Leagues? Most teams shoot weekly and compete in District and Department Tournaments. Besides having fun, these talented ladies raise lots of money for Cancer Aid and Research. The Ladies State Tournament is March 15-17 at VFW Post 3087 in Flint. Join the fun and watch the Department Officers play against these seasoned pool players on Saturday, March 17.

We are always looking for ways to improve our conferences, Web site and services, so please share with me your fresh ideas. Even small changes can bring great satisfaction to all members.

God Bless You and God Bless America!

Mariann Hamann, President

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN



Sandy Medos

Hello Sisters,

Can you believe our year is coming to an end? I have enjoyed being your Chaplain this year. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve you and our veterans and their families. Just a few housekeeping notes...

Be sure you have sent in to Department all your sisters' names who have passed away this year, so they will be listed in the Memorial Book.

If you are coming to the State Convention, just a reminder: the JOINT MEMORIAL SERVICE will be held on Friday, June 8, 2012. Please plan on attending this joint program with our VFW comrades and pay your respects to those that have gone to the great beyond this past year.

A BIG THANK YOU to all our service personnel, past and present. Thank you for our Freedom as we take one more step for our veterans.

Candy Beatty
Dept. Chaplain
Ladies Auxiliary VFW

VETS AND FAMILY SUPPORT CHAIRMAN



Kathy Kirby

Dear Auxiliary Sisters,

I would like to thank all of the Auxiliaries that participated in the Mid-Winter Buddy Poppy Contest. There were 71 entries in the contest from

Auxiliaries and 18 from the youth. A total of 7,094 Poppies were used. Great Job! Be sure to order your Buddy Poppies for your Buddy Poppy Days and extras for your Poppy displays. Don't forget, there is a Buddy Poppy contest at National Convention. If you wish to submit a display, but you are not attending the National Convention, please let me know and I will try to assist you in making arrangements to get it to the Convention.

President Mariann's special project for the National Home was new cribs for the babies. Our ladies raised \$11,194. Great job, ladies! The National Home will purchase the cribs and items to go with them.

Here is a checklist for Veterans and Family Support: 1) Please make sure your Health and Happiness quotas are sent in to National Headquarters. Please report them to me as Health and Happiness. 2) National Military Services fundraiser (one time donation of \$100 for your special National Award); send donations earmarked as NMS. 3) Thank You coins ordered and distributed to veterans and active duty military service men and women.

Ladies Auxiliary Continuing Education Scholarship deadline is February 15, 2012. All applications must be sent directly to the National Organization. The application can be downloaded from the Department Web site at www.milavfw.org. Also, the Jankowski Scholarship deadline date is May 1, 2012. This scholarship is sent to the Ladies Auxiliary Department of Michigan.

Please remember to report to me all your work and projects for our veterans, active duty personnel and their families.

Kathy Kirby, Chairman
Department Veterans
and Family Support

DEPARTMENT YOUTH ACTIVITIES/ JUNIOR GIRLS CHAIRMAN



Bonnie Pray

What an exciting Mid-Winter Conference. It was a fantastic weekend for the students who represented their Posts, Auxiliaries and Districts in the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year.

A big thank you goes to the Department Chairman, Gloria Dobbie and the Department Director, Les Croyle, and all those who helped. They did a great job.

Now we have the Young Creative Patriotic Art program coming up. There is still time to promote the program as the Auxiliary deadline is not until March 31. Follow up with those you have already contacted. Be sure they understand that the application must have all the questions completed and the required signatures when you receive the art through your Auxiliary. If it is not completed correctly, that could cause disqualification when you forward it onto the Department. I hope you understand that I am willing to do what I can to receive the art by the deadline. All you need to do is contact me with any questions you may have or suggestions for me on how to receive the art.

After the Department judging, the art goes onto National. The top prize is a \$10,000.00 scholarship. The other prizes range from \$5,000.00 for 2nd Place down to \$500.00 for 5th through 8th place.

The 1st Place winner will also receive a plaque, airfare and two night's lodging to attend the Ladies Auxiliary National Convention. The 1st Place entry will be featured on the cover of the *Ladies Auxiliary VFW Magazine*. The 2nd and 3rd place winners will be featured in the magazine and the others will be on the Ladies Auxiliary Web site. We need to ensure that the proper criteria is met when entries are submitted by the students. "Helpful Hints" gives you pointers on matting, as well as packing advice. You can get that from the Ladies Auxiliary Web site at www.ladiesauxvfw.org

Our Junior Girls are working very hard on Auxiliary programs. They are ambitious and a great group of young ladies. It's very exciting to present them with any awards they earn. We need to keep the message out there to the students, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, church groups, sport groups and youth groups in our communities that we are here "For our Veterans", and how they have sacrificed for this great country. The more we include our youth and teach them, the better the future will be.

We need to continue to "Step Up – Leave No Veteran Behind". They are the reason we are here with the freedoms we have. Keep sending those packages to our troops. Just because we are coming to the reporting end of the year, doesn't mean we should stop doing what we do. Our military is still out there and we will be there for them.

God Bless Our Troops

DISTRICT 5 PRESIDENT

Linda Gloger



Hello Sisters,
Well, half the year is over. I can truly say it has been a very interesting and educating year for me. Inspections are done. All the Auxiliaries have come through their inspections fairly well. We have had a few bumps in the road this year, but we have smoothed out the bumps really well. Mid-Winter Conference has come and gone. We made our 91% so you could send your District President out on the "Night on the Town." I want to express my deepest thanks to each and every Auxiliary for doing the best they could to make this night out on the town happen for your President. If it was not for all your hard work, it would not have happened. So again, THANK YOU.
We are now at 94.33% in membership.

We are number two in the state. We have 11 Auxiliaries that have made 100%. Thank you, thank you sisters. Let's not give up. Let's see if we can get those last few dues we need to make all our Auxiliaries 100%. Wouldn't that be something to see? If we did, than we could help make Department closer to their 100%. So do not give up and keep working for more members. Let's continue to work on getting the members that have not paid their dues yet this year – to pay them.
Sisters, there is one thing that I can say about these past few months. I have enjoyed every moment of them. I truly enjoy seeing and visiting with each and every one of you. Let's keep doing what we are here for our organization.
Supporting our Veterans!!!!
Linda Gloger
5th District President

DISTRICT 12 PRESIDENT

Elizabeth Plont



Hello sisters of the Mighty 12th District. Where has the time gone? I apologize for not getting a newsletter in the last *MOV*, so now I have some catching up to do.
First, I must say a huge THANK YOU to all of you for the awesome job you did on helping the District reach the 91% goal in membership and allowing me to have my "Night out on the Town" at the Mid-Winter Conference. Thank you so much. At this writing, I do not know where we are going, but I am sure I will enjoy it. Thank you also to all the membership chairmen for making all the phone calls to their Auxiliaries, and thank you to Annabelle Furgason for her part and her hard work on getting the dues in. Please continue your hard work and let's make it to 100%. I know we can do it.

excellent job they have done raising their children. We do learn from example. Also, thank you to Robert and Mary Beth Cascaddan as they took on the chairmanship for the first time this year.
I have had the opportunity to help out at a few of the Auxiliary fundraisers. I helped serve BBQ chicken when the whole town was without power; there we were busy as bees serving the community. I also helped at a Polish Festival and truly enjoyed myself there, as well. Lots of good Polish food to sample. I am trying to attend other Auxiliary's dinners, so if you could please let me know when you are sponsoring one, I would love to come to it. Likewise, if you need help, let me know and I will be more than happy to pitch in.
Our next District meeting will be on March 11th at the White Lake Post 3256 in Montague. I am hoping to see all of you there and, maybe, some of you who haven't been to a meeting in a while.

I truly enjoyed all of my inspections this year. Your hospitality was greatly appreciated and the luncheons were so delicious. I enjoyed seeing all of you again. I think I have made some new friends along the way. I look forward to seeing all of you at the District meetings.
The Fall Conference at Shanty Creek went well. It never ceases to amaze me on how much I continue to learn at these conferences. This year I am meeting new people from other Districts and it has been so much fun.
I attended our District VOD/Patriot's Pen Banquet held at the Albert Shiffer Post 2335 in Mecosta on January 15th. I am always in awe when I hear these children read what they have entered. I am so proud of all of them...they are all winners. Congratulations to all of you, and a big thank you to their parents for encouraging them to enter and for the

Our District Past Commanders/Past Presidents Banquet will be held on April 21st at the William J. Beal Post 446 in Muskegon. This is open to everyone, so please consider coming on this special day as we honor those who have dedicated their time and help served our veterans.
Our State Convention will be held in Troy on June 7th through the 10th. Please try to attend and help support Sr. Vice President Annabelle Furgason as she is installed as Department President. We are very proud of Annabelle for her dedication to our veterans and to our organization. We look forward to supporting her and being alongside her as we serve our veterans.
Please continue doing the awesome job you are all doing. I am so proud of all our ladies in District 12 and remember: "Every minute is another opportunity to serve."

DISTRICT 6 PRESIDENT

Ivette David



First of all I would like to congratulate all the participating students and teachers in the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year. You are all winners! I would like to extend our gratitude for supporting our programs, but especially for supporting and believing in our so beloved veterans.
At this point I would like to say thank you to all of my 6th District Sisters for working so hard. Thank you for making the 91% percent and for providing such an unforgettable experience of going on the "Night on the Town."
I would like to take this opportunity to

please request your cooperation in regard to the Texas Hold 'em being held for our District. We need sisters to assist in running these events.
Please keep in mind the deadlines for submitting reports. We still have time to make our District a 100% in Membership. We can do this, Ladies!
I hope to see all of you at Department Convention.
Dates to remember:
April 13-15
Department Testimonial,
Bay City, Michigan
May 5
District Meeting at Post 701, Lansing
June 7-10
Department Convention

DISTRICT 10 PRESIDENT

Norma VanEtten



Sisters and Veterans, WOW! What a great year so far! I have had the pleasure of meeting so many wonderful people. National Conductress, Francisca Guilford, it was great to meet you at our Department Mid-Winter Conference. I cannot wait to see what is in store for the rest of the year.
I am looking forward to meeting our National President, Gwen Rankin, on April 17, 2012 when she makes her official visit to Michigan and look forward

to seeing so many of my Auxiliary sisters again. I hope you all plan to attend. All the inspections went great and, believe me, I got a few surprises. Thank you for all the great gifts; I have a special place in my living room for all of them so I can always remember.
There are several Posts and Auxiliaries in our area that are having Valentine parties and some that make a great corned beef and cabbage for St. Patrick's Day. There are also Easter parties for the children, and lots of fish fries...and don't forget Bingo. Please get out and support them.
Thanks again...I cannot tell you how much I love you all.

DISTRICT 15 PRESIDENT

Carole Lillar



Ladies of the 15th, You are totally awesome! You have been working on all the programs and you are doing some great things to help our beloved veterans.
At the time I'm writing this, we have reached our January membership goal of 91%; now we need to get out there and get to that 100% mark.
Congratulations to our VOD, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year winners! Our VOD winners were – 1st Place: Madeline Stimac from Hancock High School, sponsored by Post/Aux. 6165; 2nd Place: Devyn R. Smith from Hancock High School, sponsored by Post/Aux. 6165; and 3rd Place: Brittany Nicholas from Jeffers High School, sponsored by Post/Aux. 6165. A clean sweep for Post and Auxiliary 6165. Congratulations to their chairmen for an excellent job in gathering entries.
Patriot's Pen winners are – 1st Place:

Zane M. Sarafiny from West Iron County Schools, sponsored by Post/Aux. 3134; 2nd Place: Delaney Carter from Houghton Middle School, sponsored by Post/Aux. 6165; and 3rd Place is Debra Ann Zei from Chassell Township Schools, sponsored by Post/Aux. 6507.
Teachers of the Year for the District are – Grades K-5: Holly Renee Rivest from CLK Elementary, sponsored by Post/Aux. 3900; Grades 6-8: Carolyn Crothers from Birch View Elementary School, sponsored by Post/Aux. 6507; and Grades 9-12: Debra Ann Zei from Chassell Township Schools, sponsored by Post/Aux. 6507.
I'd like to give a special thank you to the District 15 chairmen for this year, Bill and Sunny Cole from Chassell Post 6507. Jack and I are looking forward to seeing you all at the banquet in April to honor these winners at our spring District 15 VFW meeting in Wakefield.
You can reach me at 458 Londo Road, Wakefield, MI 49968 or by phone at 906-229-5263.



Mid-Winter Conference

On January 27-29, 2012, the Dept. of Michigan held its 33rd annual Mid-Winter Conference. The conference included the Council of Administration meeting and ended on Saturday night, January 28, with a banquet honoring the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen essay completion winners.

As is tradition, the students do not know where they placed in the statewide competition until after dinner. The 1st Place winner of the Voice of Democracy competition receives a \$6,000.00 scholarship and an all expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the final national competition. The winner at the national level receives a \$30,000.00 scholarship.



On behalf of Post 446, Don Carson presents a donation to the VFW National Home for Children.



On behalf of Post 4406, Joe Pena presents donations to the Day of Challenges and Scouting program.



On behalf of Post 3941, Benny Gaglio presents a \$500.00 check to the Cancer program.



Nick Karmanos of the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute at Wayne State University is presented with a check in the amount of \$39,335.96, which was collected from individuals and VFW Posts during the 2010-2011 year. Pictured, L-R: Past State Commander Lloyd Putman II (Commander 2010-2011), Nick Karmanos, Dept. Cancer Director James Proteau and State Commander Jack Pray.



Past National C-in-C Ed Banas addresses the membership.



State Commander Jack Pray is presented with an Honor Guard jacket by State Honor Guard Captain Butch Ogen.

Defense Budget Breaks Faith with Troops

Defeating negative proposals key, VFW legislative goals

February 14, 2012 – America's military is the strongest and most powerful on Earth because it takes care of the people who take care of the mission, but the nation's largest combat veterans organization believes that two principal proposals in yesterday's fiscal year 2013 budget request for the Department of Defense are going to be "deal breakers" with the troops.

"We will not allow the nation's economic problems drive a military downsizing strategy that breaks faith with every man and woman who has ever worn the uniform," said Richard L. DeNoyer, National Commander of the 2 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliaries. "We will not allow the budget crisis to be more important than the men and women who serve and sacrifice to keep everything and everyone we hold dear safe."

DoD's proposal contains two recommendations that would significantly change military pay and benefits, which in a vocation as inherently dangerous as the military might convince some recruits not to join much less reenlist.

One proposal recommends 1.7-percent military pay increases for 2013 and 2014, and a mere half percent in 2015. Tied to pay changes is DoD's concurrence to create a Military Retirement

Modernization Commission, which some in Congress already said should also examine the non-taxed status of military allowances, such as separate rations, housing and combat pay.

"The VFW is appreciative that the White House and Pentagon support grandfathering military retirees and those currently serving under the existing retirement system," said DeNoyer, "but our concern is for tomorrow's recruits, the young 18-year-old enlistees and new 22-year-old officers who will be fighting tomorrow's wars with the same force challenges as today – high operations tempos, too little dwell time, and not enough troops to meet worldwide threats and commitments."

The second proposal would force military dependents and retirees to pay more for their Tricare health programs.

DoD recommended a three-tiered annual enrollment fee for Tricare Prime, which over the next five years would quadruple existing fees for some working age military retirees – based on the amount of retirement pay received – and index future increases to medical inflation. Congress rejected a similar three-tiered proposal in 2006, and last year opted instead to link fee increases to annual cost of living adjustments. New this year are also proposals to institute one-tier annual

enrollments and increased deductibles for Tricare Standard and Extra programs, a three-tiered fee for Tricare for Life coverage, and new pharmaceutical copays for everyone except uniformed service members.

DoD wants Tricare beneficiaries to use military treatment facilities to help reduce costs, but DeNoyer said every military family member and retiree is well aware how difficult appointments are already to schedule, which will become even harder with two more recommended Base Realignment & Closure Commission rounds.

"The new generation's service and sacrifice to country will continue to be exponentially greater than the vast majority of Americans who choose not to serve, and that's why defeating these negative Quality of Life proposals are top VFW legislative priorities," said DeNoyer, a retired Marine and Vietnam combat veteran from Middleton, Mass.

"Keeping intact the incentive of a modest and immediate retirement stipend, and somewhat inexpensive healthcare for oneself and spouse for life, are not too high a cost for a nation to pay for the 1 percent of Americans who serve us in uniform, or the even fewer who stay in uniform 20 or more years."

The VFW National Commander is

also wary of DoD's plan to increase its reliance on the Reserve Component, since gone over the next five years will be more than 100,000 active-duty troops, primarily soldiers and Marines, even though the world remains an extremely dangerous and very unpredictable place. "America's Guard and Reserve forces are magnificent, but they are equally tired after more than 10 years of war, and their capabilities are meant to complement the active force, not outright replace it," he said.

The VFW regards budget-driven proposals to diminish pay and benefits as unconscionable and a breach of faith with those who serve and those who will follow.

"There is an inherent cost to fielding a professional, all-volunteer military, and breaking faith with our military and their families, and to deem their pay and benefits programs 'too generous' compared to corporate America, is insulting and totally forgetful of how much our nation asks of them," said DeNoyer.

"It is for these reasons that the VFW will work with Congress to oppose all plans to make those who sacrifice the most for our country to sacrifice even more, and we will hold accountable those elected officials who support these proposals."

2011-2012 Voice of Democracy Contest

Department of Michigan Veterans Affairs
Voice of Democracy



1st Place
\$6,000.00 *Ralph J. Seabold Scholarship*
District 9 – Post 9809
Ashli M. Savage



2nd Place
\$3,500.00 *Ladies Auxiliary Scholarship*
District 13 – Post 2496
Robert W. Jones



3rd Place
\$2,500.00 *Hazel Park VFW Scholarship*
District 7 – Post 1855
Hannah MacDonald



7th Place
\$1,000.00 *Newberry Scholarship*
District 6 – Post 1584
Devon M. Mayse



8th Place
\$1,000.00 *Department of Michigan
Veterans of Foreign Wars Scholarship*
District 14 – Post 6
Mitchel C. Crothers



9th Place
\$1,000.00 *Orvel Walter Memorial Scholarship*
District 12 – Post 4499
Elizabeth Bergren



1st Place
\$1,000.00 *Bond, Wes Longenbach Memorial Award*
District 11 – Post 3033
Hunter Ullom



2nd Place
\$750.00 *Bond, Ladies Auxiliary Award*
District 13 – Post 1518
Emma Phillip



3rd Place
\$500.00 *Bond, Ladies Auxiliary Award*
District 8 – Post 1518
Hannah

Patriot's Po

and Patriot's Pen Essay Contest Programs

FW and It's Ladies Auxiliary

ocracy Winners



4th Place

\$1,500.00 James N. Goldsmith Scholarship

District 8 – Post 3030

Cadelyn T. Takace



5th Place

\$1,000.00 Eric & Delores Halverson Scholarship

District 10 – Post 3243

Angela K. Stabel



6th Place

\$1,000.00 Ladies Auxiliary Scholarship

District 15 – Post 6165

Madeline N. Stimac



10th Place

\$1,000.00 Past Commanders Club Scholarship

District 5 – Post 1669

Ashley L. Blanchette



11th Place

\$500.00 Dick and Vi Thorp Memorial and \$500.00 VFW Post 4644 Scholarship

District 4 – Post 5572

Lydia R. Searcy



12th Place

\$400.00 John & Shirley Sweebe, \$400.00 Donald Mrdjenovic, and \$200.00 Rob & Marcia Weiss

District 11 – Post 3735

Jenna N. Grant

en Winners



1st Place

5th District Award

Post 2326

n Kenny



4th Place

\$400.00 Bond, 9th District Award

District 7 – Post 6248

Rebekah Ashley



5th Place

\$500.00 Bond, Barry & Pam Walter Award

District 6 – Post 4076

Karana Wickens



State Commander Jack Pray and State Auxiliary President Mariann Hamann with the top five Patriot's Pen District winners.



State Commander Jack Pray and State Auxiliary President Mariann Hamann with the Voice of Democracy winners.



Judy Wycoff – Teacher of the Year, Grades 9-12 from Allen Park High School and sponsored by Post 5572 and District 4.



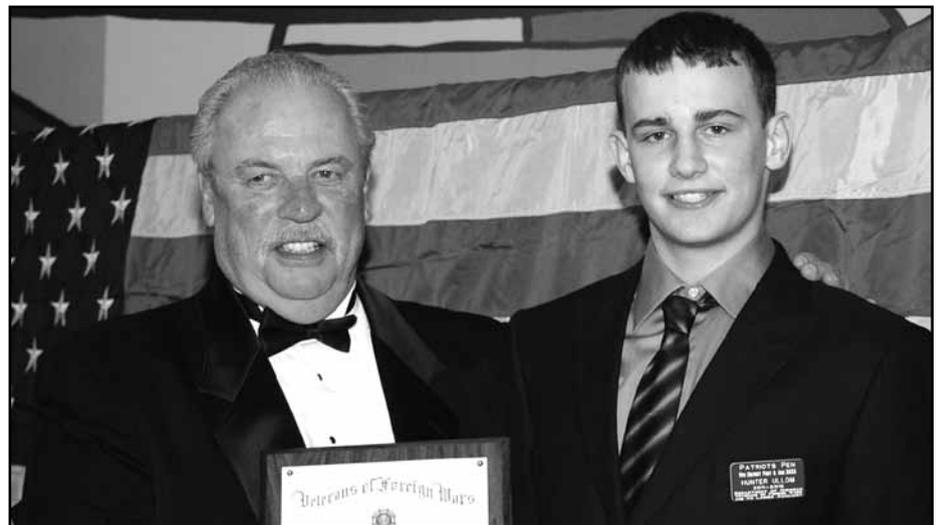
Tammy Steffee – Teacher of the Year, Grades 1-5 from H.T. Smith Elementary School and sponsored by Post 6464 and District 6.



State Commander Jack Pray and Ladies State Auxiliary President Mariann Hamann with the Teacher of the Year winners.



State Commander Jack Pray and State Ladies Auxiliary President Mariann Hamann with all the winners from the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year competitions.



Hunter Ullom, 1st Place winner of the State Patriot's Pen competition is presented with the \$1,000.00 Wes Longenbach Memorial Scholarship and Plaque by State Commander Jack Pray.



Ashli Savage, 1st Place winner of the State Voice of Democracy competition is presented with the \$6,000.00 Ralph J. Seabold Scholarship and Plaque by State Commander Jack Pray and State Ladies Auxiliary President Mariann Hamann.



Carolyn Crothers – Teacher of the Year, Grades 6-8 from Birchfield Middle School and sponsored by Post 6507 and District 15.

VFW Calls VA Budget Proposal a Good Start

VFW is appreciative of the fiscal year 2013 budget President Obama proposed

February 13, 2012, WASHINGTON – The National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is appreciative of the fiscal year 2013 budget President Obama proposed Monday for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“The VFW appreciates the proposed increase because it recognizes that the proper care and treatment of wounded, ill and injured veterans are ongoing costs of war,” said Richard L. DeNoyer, who leads the 2 million-member VFW and its Auxiliaries. “We remain concerned, however, that the amount is not enough for the VA to maintain much less improve all the programs and services on their

watch, especially knowing the Defense Department plans to shrink the size of the military, which will directly increase the number of veterans seeking VA care and services.”

The proposed VA budget for FY 2013 is \$140.3 billion, of which \$76.3 billion is for mandatory benefits such as disability compensation and pension. The remaining \$64 billion is in discretionary funding, primarily for the Veterans Health Administration, which represents a 4.5-percent increase over FY 2012 funding, but falls more than \$4 billion short of the amount recommended by The Independent Budget, which the VFW

co-authors with AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

The VFW national commander said there are budget highlights that continue to elevate the importance of healthcare, mental health programs, women veterans, reducing the VA claims backlog and ending veterans’ homelessness. But he will still ask both House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs to substantially plus-up the miniscule \$1.6 million increase in medical and prosthetic research, and return major construction funding to an amount that is forward focused instead of an afterthought.

“A record 240 troops lost one limb or more in Afghanistan last year,” said DeNoyer, a retired Marine and Vietnam combat veteran from Middleton, Mass. “They will require a lifetime of care, and it shouldn’t be in VA medical facilities that average more than 60 years old,” he said.

“A nation that creates veterans has a sacred responsibility to care for them when they return home wounded, ill and injured. The VFW looks forward to working with the Administration and Congress in the coming days and months to ensure that America keeps that promise.”

VFW Statement on Veterans Job Corps Initiative

“We thank President Obama for continuing to move the issue of veterans’ employment forward”

February 03, 2012 – “There is no initiative too bold when it comes to helping veterans get jobs, especially with the new generation of post-9/11 warriors now reentering society in numbers not seen since the Vietnam War. Our nation and her public and private employer

partners must do everything possible to not only ensure their smooth transition, but to enlist their extraordinary talents to help serve and protect our nation and communities, and to help restore our economy to greatness. We thank President Obama for continuing to

move the issue of veterans’ employment forward, and for his strong commitment to those who have worn the uniform and to their families.” –Richard L. DeNoyer, National Commander of the 2 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliaries

Read more about the president’s plan to put veterans back to work on the White House Web site at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/02/03/president-obama-s-plan-put-veterans-back-work>.

★★★★★

Sport Clips Haircuts Exceeds \$1 Million in Donations to VFW’s Operation Uplink™ Free Call Day Program

U.S. service members to connect with loved ones for a fifth year through Sport Clips’ “Help a Hero” campaign

Kansas City, MO, January 31, 2012 – Sport Clips Haircuts today gave the Veterans of Foreign Wars a check in the amount of \$450,000 for Operation Uplink™, a program that provides free “talk time” to deployed and hospitalized U.S. service members via satellite phone and computer. Today’s gift tops more than \$1 million overall in the franchise’s five-year support of the program – \$1,311,777 to be exact. Sport Clips’ annual Help a Hero campaign to benefit Operation Uplink has provided the two largest single gifts to the program, making possible more than 1.5 million calls home by the end of 2011.

Sport Clips Founder/CEO, lifetime VFW Member and recently appointed VFW Foundation Board Member Gordon Logan presented a check today to the VFW Leadership Team at its national headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri. The donation exceeded Sport Clips’ 2011 gift by \$50,000 and represents funds raised by company team members and

clients from 825 locations across the country. “Even as we welcome more of our service men and women back home, our commitment remains strong to those who are serving our country overseas and in hospitals and their families and loved ones. We appreciate all those who worked so hard to make this milestone donation possible,” Logan said. “We hear over and over how meaningful these phone calls home are to our troops and their families throughout the year, and it makes us all proud to know we’ll be sponsoring 17 call days in 2012. It was important to me when I was overseas with the Air Force, and it’s important to our troops overseas and in hospitals to be able to call home during long deployments.” Logan added, “We really want to thank our clients who showed support for our troops with additional donations and our hardworking Sport Clips team members who took time during their work day and beyond to raise money for our Help a Hero effort to benefit Operation Uplink.”

Cassie Guy, team leader (franchise owner) of the Port Arthur, Texas store that raised the most money in the Sport Clips system, attended the check presentation, along with store manager Mandy Smith. Guy says the store’s team members feel driven by the purpose of Help a

Hero and went all out working before, during and after hours to hold garage and bake sales, a clay shoot, auction and tailgate at a nearby university to increase awareness and donations for the program. “I’m extremely proud of their effort and compassion,” Guy said.



Support Our Troops



Matt David, Editor

Editorial Committee:

Jack Pray, Commander
Kirk Kennedy, Sr. Vice Commander
Ron Devereaux, Jr. Vice Commander
Matt David, Historian/MOV Editor
Diane Ward, Aux. Committee Member

EDITORIAL POLICY

The mission of this paper is to strengthen the efficiency of the Veterans of Foreign Wars by providing timely, 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 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 in the letter column and reserve the right to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the VFW and its policies.

We ask that you keep your articles brief. We reserve the right to edit all articles. We look forward to hearing from you.

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

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TAPS

SEND TO:
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(517) 485-9456

Comrades, please copy this form and use it for the Taps that you send in.

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(Last Name) _____
(First Name) _____
(Age) _____
(Date of Death) _____
(Post #) _____
(City) _____

Branch (Circle One):

USA USAAC USN
USMC USAF USCG

Served In (Circle One):

WWI WWII Korea
Vietnam Gulf Other
Occupation Forces

**OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,
A VETERAN DIED TODAY**



6-MARQUETTE

- CONSTANCE, HARRY R., 87,
USA/WWII/KOREA
JOHNSON, GLENN M., 85, USN/WWII
116-BAD AXE
GORKOWSKI, PETER JR., USA/WWII
345-REDFORD
CARMACK, TED M., 86, USAF/WWII
CONNOLLY, RAYMOND J., 81,
USA/WWII
CRAFT, ROBERT W., 89, USA/WWII
DOWLING, REGINALD J., 80,
USA/WWII
GREENLEE, ROBERT E., 89, USN/WWII
HEIST, ARCHIE, 88, USN/WWII
IOVAN, PETER D., 85, USMC/WWII
MAC DONALD, JAMES L., 78,
USA/WWII
MELLEN, FRANK S., 89, USA/WWII
RICHARDS, JAMES G., 80,
USA/GERMANY
SPRANKLE, DELBERT W., 87,
USN/WWII
TATE, DONALD, 72, USMC/KOREA
WHEELER, LEE D.M., 91, USAAF/WWII
WILKEWITZ, WILLIAM F., 84,
USN/WWII
446-MUSKEGON
PERRI, ALFRED, 88, USA/WWII
WRIGHT, GERALD, 74, USA
582-ORTONVILLE
FORSYTH, LAWRENCE, 82,
USA/KOREA

701-LANSING

- NOSS, EDWARD, 90, USN/WWII
1071-COLEMAN
BUSHRE, HARVEY L., 79,
USMC/KOREA
COREY, EDWARD R., 78, USA/KOREA
DEDLOFF, CHARLES E., 88, USA/WWII
JOHNSON, JAMES E., 85, USA/WWII
1136-WYANDOTTE
GARY, JOSEPH, 64, USA/VIETNAM
PIERZYNOWSKI, BARNEY, 91,
USA/WWII
1138-MONROE
PARKS, JERRY, 86, USN/WWII
1146-ST. CLAIR SHORES
BOYD, WILLIAM E., 86, USMC/WWII
ERTZBISCHOFF, GEORGE E.
JAVICK, THOMAS JR.
SWEJKOSKI, NORBERT R., 78,
USA/KOREA

1329-HART

- WHEELER, ROBERT R., 84,
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1355-STURGIS
MILLIMAN, CLARENCE, 88, USA/WWII
WASHBURN, GEORGE, 63,
USA/VIETNAM
1407-FERNDAL
MERCEA, GEORGE, 89, USAAF/WWII
ROWE, GORDON E., 86, USMC/WWII
1452-CLIO
LE GRAND, CLEOPHAS J., 88,
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WASHBURN, DALLAS L., 84,
USN/WWII
WIDERHOLD, HARRY, 84, USN/WWII
1566-SAGINAW
JONES, LEWIS T., 95, USA/WWII
THON, RAYMOND G., 87, USA/WWII
1669-ROYAL OAK
MAPLES, GLENN, 81, USA/GERMANY
PETRUCCI, HENRY, 89, USA
WEASE, AYLETT N. JR., 86, USN/WWII
1855-DOWAGIAC
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URBANSKI, RICHARD J., 83,

USN/KOREA

- WALKER, DAVID, 85, USN/WWII
1859-SAGINAW
JAMROG, RICHARD, 85, USA/WWII
1887-MENOMINEE
CHAMPEAU, CLIFFORD F., 83,
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HERRILD, RUFUS L., 86, USA/WWII
KLAR, LOREN, 90, USAF/WWII
SIEMINSKI, WALTER S., 96, USA/WWII
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COMPEAU, ROBERT
DRAPCZYK, EDWARD, USN/WWII
KUTZ, RICHARD, USAF/WWII
LEDL, KENNETH
PEASE, HAROLD
TESKA, ROBERT
2053-WHITE CLOUD
LARSON, RAYMOND B., 90, USA/WWII
2144-HOLLAND
BARBER, DENNIS, 61, USN/VIETNAM
BRINK, THEODORE, 88, USA/WWII
DALZELL, WILLIAM, 68,
USN/VIETNAM
DE VRIES, JASON, 85, USA/KOREA
KANTZ, GEORGE W., 81, USN/KOREA
OUDEMOLLEN, FRANKLIN, 81,
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2233-DETROIT
AMOS, CHARLES, 84, USA/KOREA
2272-DURAND
LEIX, ELTON, 90, USMC/WWII
MIKAN, ROBERT, 85, USN/WWII
2409-OTTER LAKE
BABER, EDWARD, 87, USA/WWII
2496-ALPENA
ADAMS, JOHN, 74, VIETNAM
DZIUBA, JOHN, 85, KOREA
LISKE, HENRY, 91, USA/WWII
2891-CRYSTAL FALLS
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2945-SANDUSKY
FLEMING, WAYNE, 80, USA/WWII
2964-REED CITY
KEENA, WILLIAM, USN/WWII
2998-ESCANABA
ST. PETER, GERALD SR., 64,
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3023-GRAND RAPIDS
TOWNSEND, WILLIAM, 76,
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3033-MT. PLEASANT
DEMSKI, GEORGE J., 84, USA/WWII
GATES, IVAN W., USA/KOREA
SLOAN, THOMAS D., 92, USA/WWII
TUBBS, JERRY R., USA/WWII
3165-NEGAUNEE
KEVERN, GORDON E., 89, USA/WWII
3195-MUSKEGON
BOCIAN, GERALD F., 86, USN/WWII
BURKALL, ARTHUR M., 88, USA/WWII
VERMILYA, THOMAS C., 85, USA/WWII
WELLS, HOLLIS C., 68, USA/VIETNAM
3623-CHEBOYGAN
LAUHOFF, ALLAN, 80, USA/KOREA
SHIELDS, JOHN E., 87, USA/WWII
WEBER, GLENN G., 87, USA/WWII
3676-SAULT STE MARIE
BERGERON, PAUL D., 68,
USMC/VIETNAM
3733-FOWLER
FOX, STANLEY J., 87, USMC/WWII
GAVENDA, JOSEPH J., 89, USA/WWII
MANIEZ, FERNAND, 87, USA/WWII
SCHAFFER, EDWARD L., 84, USA/WWII
3901-ALGONAC
CORDEN, JAMES
PETERS, HAROLD, USMC/VIETNAM
WADE, ROY, USA/WWII

3925-ERIE

- BELL, JASON, 83, USA/WWII
HUFF, JOHN R., 82, USN/KOREA
4005-CORUNNA
ADE, GEORGE L., 93, USA/WWII
COMPTON, KENNETH, USA/WWII
GURDEN, EUGENE, USA/WWII
KLOCKZIEM, RONALD, USA
4034-HOUGHTON LAKE
KING, HOUGHTON, USA/WWII
4073-MARSHALL
WISE, CLIFFORD, 75, USA/KOREA
4090-PORTLAND
GOFF, WARREN, 90, USA/WWII
4115-SEBEWAING
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4159-ROSCOMMON
LARENTE, HENRY, 84, USN/WWII
VOKES, DONALD, 84, USN/WWII
4162-HAMTRAMCK
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4164-CARO
BIEBEL, REX E., 66, USA/VIETNAM
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LINABURY, BERT, 67, USN/KOREA
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VAN BUREN, CLIFFORD R., 69,
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4230-ROCKWOOD
COOPER, KENNETH J., 86,
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4249-NEWAYGO
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WRIGHT, GUY, 91, USA/WWII
4420-MANISTIQUE
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4422-TAYLOR
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4624-HUBBELL
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4642-LINDEN
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SMITH, DOUGLAS, 83, USN/KOREA
4837-MARLETTE
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5065-SHERIDAN
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SHAFER, MICHAEL, 88, USA/VIETNAM
5598-COOPERSVILLE
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5600-ONTONAGON
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5666-FLUSHING
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6250-STERLING HEIGHTS
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6507-CHASSELL
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701-LANSING
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HUSBY, ELIZABETH
796-PORT HURON
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GREEN, GAIL
MCCOY, SARA
THRIFT, CINDY
822-FLINT
RAYMOND, ALICE
1071-COLEMAN
BOWMAN, KATHY
1075-HARRISON
BORRING, SHIRLEY ANN
1136-WYANDOTTE
KANTHACK, BARBARA
1138-MONROE
SHANKLETON, LEOLA
1407-
LOHMEIER, LORRAINE
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1454-ALMA
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2144-HOLLAND
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LOOMAN, JUDY, 74,
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2292-EDMORE
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2326-GRAND HAVEN
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2406-CHARLOTTE
BUTLER, MARILYN
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2945-SANDUSKY
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PARTICKA, IRENE
WOODARD, THELMA
2964-REED CITY
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2998-ESCANABA
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3023-CRESTON
CHORMAN, SANDRA
3030-OTSEGO
DENDEL, IRENE
JOHNSON, HELEN
KRUTHOFF, RUTH
3243-FENTON
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3256-MONTAGUE
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3306-HOWARD CITY
BOWERS, GAIL
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3623-CHEBOYGAN

MCKERVEY, CLOPHY
3676-SAULT STE MARIE
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3724-STANDISH
JOHNS, PATRICIA
3734-MUSKEGON
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3753-PINCONNING
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3791-FLINT
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4005-CORUNNA
BURKE, ARLOA
SUTTON, MARION
YERKE, RUTH
4034-HOUGHTON LAKE
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4093-CARLETON
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4126-MIO
BADGERO, THERESA
4139-LAPEER
VANSICKLE, CARROLL
4159-ROSCOMMON
ENCK, VIRGINIA
STOUT, JUNE
4187-TECUMSEH
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KULIKOWSKI, NORINE
LIEDEL, ELEANOR, 88
4249-NEWAYGO
WUNDERLIN, BETTY
4406-BELDING
WARNER, MARGARET
4573-ISHPEMING
JUIDICI, CARMEN
4646-LYONS
RANDALL, DORIS
4837-MARLETTE
WALKOWSKI, BETTY
5065-SHERIDAN
BAIRD, GRACE
BENIC, JEAN

CHAPMAN, KATHLEEN
HALVORSEN, DOLORES
HOOPLE, FAITH
WYATT, ALMA
5096-CUSTER
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5670-GWINN
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5857-ONAWAY
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6015-MARIAN
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6134-PULLMAN
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6252-COMSTOCK
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6056-SPRINGPORT
MICHALSKI, RHODA, 84
6248-DECATUR
HOSNER, SHIRLEY, 85
HUFF, ELIZA
6464-FOWLerville
KUCH, CAROL
6509-PETERSBURG
KROUT, ELINORE
REAU, NANCY
6691-FRASER
SMOUTER, PHYLLIS
6802-RICHMOND
MEYERS, GLORIA
WROBLEWSKI, GENEVIEVE
6896-WESTLAND
KAJDER, VICTORIA
LINK, PATRICIA
PAWLOWIEC, NORMA
ROMANOWSKI, STELLA
SILVA, MARCELLA
6965-UBLY
STEPKA, EMMA
WALSH, MARY ANN
7303-GLADWIN
DARBY, GOLDIE
FRAZER, FRANCES
KING, MILDRED
MAXSON, DOROTHY

**Join Department of Michigan VFW
Commander Kirk Kennedy and
President Annabelle Furgason
on a trip to the**

ARMY/NAVY Game 2012

December 6, 2012

0800 Depart from VFW Post 701 Lansing
1000 Depart from VFW Post 9568 Romulus
1700 Arrive Comfort Inn Motel, 53 Industrial Hwy., Essington, PA;
Phone: 610-521-9800; then on to Casino.
Harrah's Casino is 3 miles from hotel; free shuttle service.
Gaming package: \$25.00 plus \$5.00 towards buffet each day.
(Subject to change at Casino's discretion)

December 7 2012

0900 Leave for tour with guide to the historical area until 1700;
Then to local VFW Post for dinner (included)

December 8, 2012

TBD Tailgate at motel; then leave for game or shopping.

December 9, 2012

Leave for home, stopping for breaks and lunch (out of pocket)

**\$450 per person/double occupancy;
without game ticket, \$380 and go shopping instead.
Single \$150 extra.**

Half payment due June 1, 2012. Final payment due September 1, 2012

VFW Contact Person: Doug Masseau at 517-484-3092

Make reservations through:
Tours by Ruth, LLC
P.O. Box 70177
Lansing, MI 48908-0177
517-267-0662
800-363-8141

Pay by Check – VISA – MasterCard
Checks payable to:
TOURS BY RUTH

Send to:
Doug Masseau
307 Alger Street
Lansing, MI 48917

Please fill out below and send with payment to address above:

Smoking: Yes No Game Tickets: 1 2

1st Passenger Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

2nd Passenger Name: _____

Address: _____

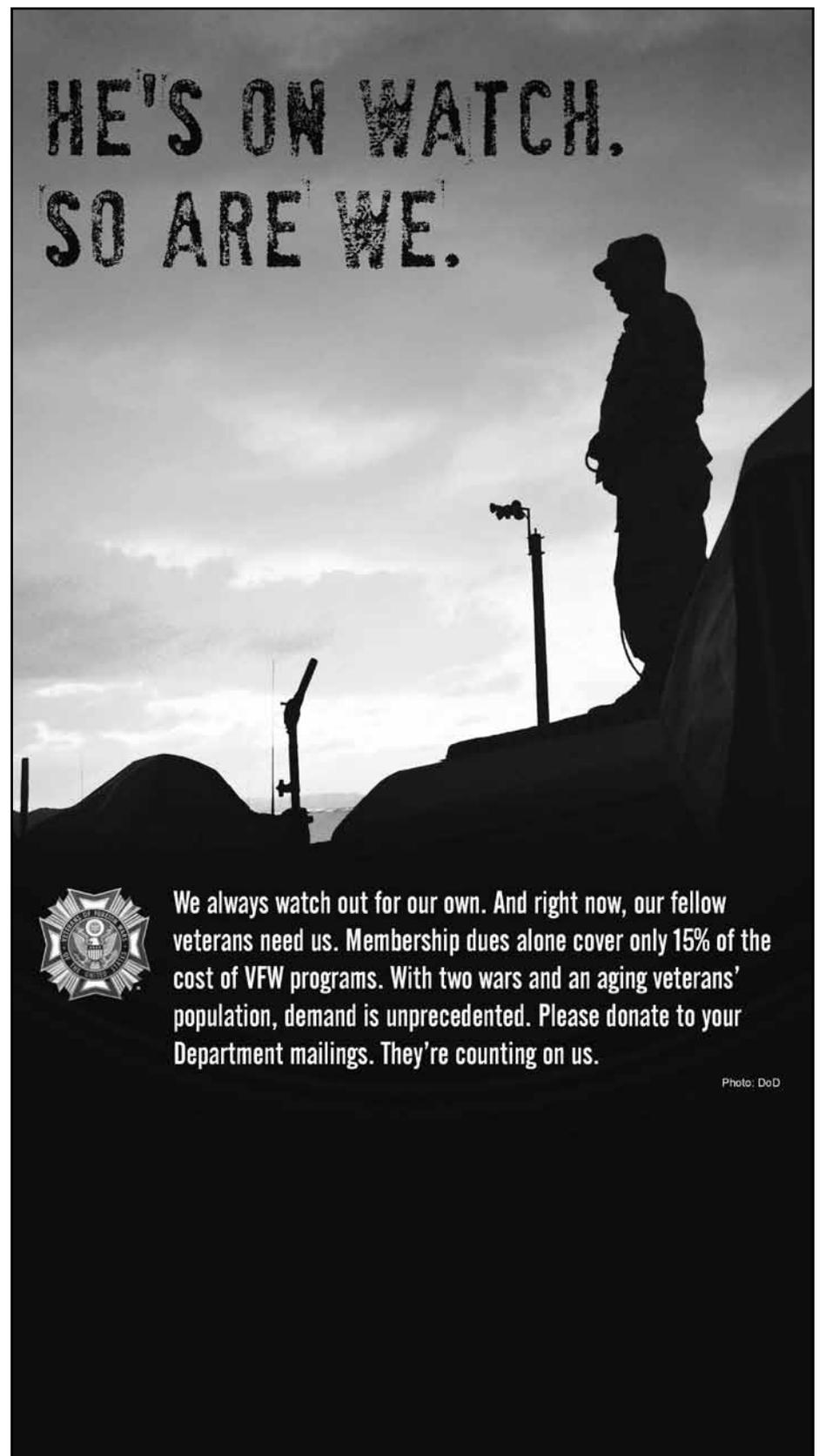
City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

TAPS, continued from page 17

7435-HALE
BLASER, MARGE
CUDNEY, DOROTHY
HEBEL, MARGARET
MAHAN, GOLA
NORD, HELEN
NUNN, PAULINE
7546-DEARBORN HEIGHTS
BREWSTER, MARIANNE, 49
7573-NEW BALTIMORE
HUBBARD, ROSE
SHINSKA, THERESA
7575-GARDEN CITY
HOGUE, VIOLA
7581-WAYLAN
ADAMS, GLENNA
BANKSTON, MAMIE
DALRYMPLE, RUTH
DAVIS, JEAN
GERLACH, VIVIAN
8372-ENGADINE
LEVEILLE, LORRAINE
8684-KALKASKA
GEROU, MARGIE

SORENSEN, BARBARA
8945-COVINGTON
GROOMS, ARDITH, 83
KOSKI, NORA, 90
9021-WARREN
KALINOWSKI, IRENE
9023-BRIMLEY
PESOLA, LILA
9084-WAKEFIELD
JAKKOLA, FLORINE
9455-OWOSSO
SCHAD, DORIS
9809-SAGINAW
BHIRDO, KAY
WALKER, THELMA
10770-LEROY
MIZELL, ERMA
15023-AT-LARGE
ARGABRIGHT, LYDA
GREINER, PATRICIA
MELLEROWICZ, ROSALIA
EDGECOMBE, JOYCE
MISH, JOYCE



**HE'S ON WATCH.
SO ARE WE.**

 We always watch out for our own. And right now, our fellow veterans need us. Membership dues alone cover only 15% of the cost of VFW programs. With two wars and an aging veterans' population, demand is unprecedented. Please donate to your Department mailings. They're counting on us.

Photo: DoD

Bonnie Pray
Candidate for Department Guard
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
District 10
Ladies Auxiliary 3243
Her husband and family

Andy Conklin
Re-Elect for Department of
Michigan
Judge Advocate
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
District 7
His Wife and family

Lynn Patterson
Candidate for
Department of Michigan
Department Quartermaster
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
District 9
David A. Huhn VFW Post 12082
Her husband and family

Harry "Les" Croyle
Candidate for
Department of Michigan
Department Jr. Vice Commander
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
District 5
Cpl Richard W. Menge
VFW Post 6756
His wife and family

Leonard "Lenny" Milewski
Candidate for
Department of Michigan
Department Jr. Vice Commander
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
District 4
City of Wyandotte VFW Post 1136
His wife and family

Sandy Medos
Candidate for Department Guard
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
District 4
Ladies Auxiliary 4422
Her husband and family

Larry Coleman
Candidate for
Department of Michigan
Department Surgeon
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
District 4
City of Trenton VFW Post 1888
His wife and family

Billy G. Stancroff
Candidate for Department of
Michigan
Department Jr. Vice Commander
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
District 12
Lt. Clement F. Derezinski VFW Post 7729
His family

John E. dePierre II
Candidate for
Department of Michigan
Department Judge Advocate
2012-2013



Endorsed and supported by:
Celery City Post 6248
His wife and family



America's Heroes

Presenting the new 2012 VFW Calendar,
arriving soon in your mailbox!



**Welcome in
the new year
and support
your Department
programs!**

Watch the mail for your 2012 VFW Calendar. The dramatic, eye-catching photography makes it the 2012 calendar you will want to proudly display in your home or office this year!

MICHIGAN OVERSEAS VETERAN

Official Publication of the Department of Michigan • Veterans of Foreign Wars
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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

MICHIGAN OVERSEAS VETERAN



• Reporting your positive impact on the Michigan community •
January/February/March 2012 **Volume 79 Number 3**



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Coming Events

- Department Commander/President Testimonial, Doubletree Hotel - Bay City April 13-15, 2012
- Buddy Poppy Days Sale Dates: May 10-12, 2012
- 2012-2013 Department Planning Meeting, Department Headquarters - Lansing June 2, 2012
- Department Convention Troy Marriott June 7-9, 2012

Every Hero Needs a Hero

The VFW knows that when many of our defenders return from battle they'll still have to fight. Fight for quality medical care. Fight for fair and timely benefits. Fight to ensure their spouses and children will be cared for, always.

Thankfully, they're never alone. They have VFW service officers on their side.

Please support the National Veterans Service. Your generosity helps so many veterans right here in our state.

You never know when you—or your closest comrades—might need a hero on your side.

Helping our Heroes



STATE COMMANDER

We just completed our Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo. It was great to see and talk to old friends and meet new ones. Congratulations to our Voice of Democracy State winner, Ashli Savage. She is a senior from the Community Baptist School in Saginaw and sponsored by Post 9809, District 9. She is advancing to the National finals held during our National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. the first week of March. Good luck, Ashli. After hearing our National Anthem performed by Angela Stabel from Linden High School, sponsored by Post 3243, District 10 and hearing the winning essay and meeting all the Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy and Teacher of the Year winners, I feel pretty good about our future. They are all winners.

Thank you to our Americanism Chairman, Nan Spaulding from our Department Ladies Auxiliary and Dave Tester from the VFW for the afternoon program. It was very touching and well done.

This VFW year is going fast and we need to take the time to contact eligible veterans and recruit them into our Posts. Currently, the State membership is at 52,580 or 92%. The ending membership last year was 56,180. So it is easy to see that the 100% goal we need is around 4,200 new or reinstated members; but wait, don't let that large number scare you off. Like everything else, we need to get them one member at a time. All Post Commanders and Post membership chairmen, contact your District Commander for a list of your unpaid members. These are the easiest members to get back in. They already qualify and only need the Post floor approval to get back in. Put together a few comrades and start a phone calling party once or twice a week. You may be surprised; it could work.

The VFW understands the need to address the nation's budget situation. The solution should not be on the backs of military retirees who have already given so



Jack Pray
State Commander

much of themselves for our country. The 10 programs under fire are:

1. Increase healthcare premiums for military retirees on Tricare
2. Increase pharmaceutical fees for active duty troops, families and retirees
3. Eliminate presumptive service-connected conditions for disabled and ill Veterans
4. Lock out or increase fees for Department of Veterans Affairs Priority Groups 7 and 8
5. Reduce cost of living allowances
6. Freeze military pay
7. End government subsidies to military commissaries
8. Eliminate DoD elementary schools stateside
9. Eliminate the 20-year military retirement plan
10. Eliminate DoD tuition reimbursement programs for service members

Please take the time to contact your senators and representatives to let them know that we support our active duty, families and military retirees. Request that they look elsewhere for the required cuts to help reduce spending and balance the budget.

Thank you for the honor to serve as your Commander. God Bless our active duty troops, their families, our wounded warriors and God Bless the U.S.A.

