

MICHIGAN OVERSEAS VETERAN

VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

— SPRING 21/22

**CRISSA ESSE**

2021-2022 Voice of Democracy First Place



Dept. Color Guard at Honors Banquet

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DEPARTMENT COMMANDER, KEVIN CONKLIN

We are drawing close to the end of my administrative year 2021-2022. The time really flies by and it seems like I have so much more to do. We have accomplished many things this year and I am very proud of our staff at Department. Many of these

projects you may not even be aware of. Just to name a few, the service office has been revitalized, our monthly communications and marketing has drastically improved. We have successfully started the VFW Department of Michigan Foundation 501 c(3). We received our first \$10k donation from another foundation that would not have otherwise been donated. This is the beginning of great things to come for the Department of Michigan. We need to continue to promote the Foundation and resources towards marketing. We have developed partnerships with multiple organizations and corporations for donations and sponsorships. I anticipate this will continue to grow by leaps and bounds.

Speaking of the Service Office, we not only saved jobs but brought an additional 2.2 million dollars extra to all of the service office organizations in the State of Michigan. This was greatly due to the partnerships that we made and developing relationships. I appreciate the membership that was ready and willing to make the calls and send the letters to the Governor and legislatures.

Fortunately, after meeting with the Governor and staff we were able to resolve some bureaucratic issues. We still have a way to go however. Please stay involved with your local legislatures and sign up for Action Corp! If you don't pay attention and show them you are watching we could lose many benefits.

Please keep up the great job with community service and hospital reporting. As of the writing of this article we as a Department are 100% reported in both community service and hospital reporting. Younger veterans are interested in community service events!! If you get out into your community and show them what the VFW can do, the new members will show up. We need to be more proactive with finding new members. Be willing to talk to people that are wearing veteran apparel or have a veteran bumper sticker. That is a lead in to strike up conversations. We are nearly at 100% in membership, currently 95.68%. Please continue to make those phone calls on the expired lists.

Comrades, I will continue to serve the Department of Michigan to the best of my ability. I have made decisions that may have forced members to do things they haven't tried but I can assure you that it was with the best intentions for the Department of Michigan. I am very excited on the direction that the Department of Michigan is currently headed in. We have jumped many hurdles throughout this year and here we are in the home stretch. #1 in the Big 10 for membership and #8 in the VFW! This is truly a team effort and ... Continued on page 2 ...

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DEPARTMENT COMMANDER, KEVIN CONKLIN - CONTINUED

the willingness to try different things. I am confident that the upcoming leadership will continue with course we have set this year. Even though we still lost posts we are headed in the right direction to save many. I do need everyone that needs help to ask. We cannot fix problems unless we know about them. The earlier the better. I am looking forward to presenting many All-State caps this year as many posts certainly deserve it!

As my year ends, I will offer my experience and knowledge to the Department of Michigan. I will also be seeking to continuing my representation of Department of Michigan by becoming a candidate for the high office of National Council of Administration in 2023.



DEPARTMENT SENIOR VICE COMMANDER, JOHN GRIFFITH

Optimism - what a great blessing to be an optimistic person and it's even better when you have a team made up of optimistic, forward thinking people ready to meet and solve problems head on. That is what this year has been. After a few years of what seemed like constant controversy, disruptions and the difficulties imposed upon us by the pandemic, it has been my pleasure to serve with Commander Conklin, Jr. Vice Commander Ray Lopez and the members of our Council of Administration to put the Department of Michigan back on track. Our administrative team at Department HQ, consisting of QM/ADJ Derek Blumke, Amanda Lopocky, Jan Passmore and Sarah Anderson, has served with energy and dedication making the responsibilities of the line officers less challenging. The members of our Department should be very proud of what WE as members of the Michigan VFW accomplished this year. Under the leadership of our legislative staff Kevin Hensley, Cameron Zibikowski and Andy Conklin, major legislation at both the state and federal level has been accomplished.

In December the State of Kentucky sustained a series of tornadoes that devastated towns and communities. The Department of Michigan VFW rallied without hesitation collecting more that 1.5 million dollars in donations from baby formula to batteries and clothes. Additionally over \$17,000.00 was collected by our Posts and Auxiliaries and then donated to the State of Kentucky to meet the needs of veterans. This year we have truly "Served and Protected Veterans".

Look at our membership team headed up by Garrett Dickey. As this article is being written we are at 95.40 % in membership well on our way to a 100% for this membership year! Together we can do this again next year.

Currently the world seems to have gone crazy. Inflation, rising gasoline and food prices, a war in Ukraine, China threatening Taiwan, Iran firing missiles at our embassy in Iraq. With all these distractions going on, it would be easy to become pessimistic. But as we head towards the 2022-2023 year, my message to you is remain optimistic and trust that together, with God's blessings, we will continue our mission next year to "Do What Has to Be Done for Veterans".



DEPARTMENT JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER, RAY LOPEZ

G r e e t i n g s Comrades. As this administrative year comes to a close, I want to congratulate all the Posts that have reached 100% in membership. Your hard work and dedication to veterans, community and our great organization is an example to all. It was great seeing everyone during my travels throughout the Great State of Michigan.

We are now in the process of holding our elections throughout the State. Let us be helpful and assist any newly elected officers in a smooth transition and continue to mentor others when we can. Get your election report submitted to National. I would also like to remind all Post to elect their delegates and alternates at their April meeting and submit post delegate forms to Department.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for allowing me to serve as your Department Jr. Vice Commander. I look forward to seeing everyone at our Department Convention.



DEPARTMENT SURGEON, DON MARTINDALE

Comrades What a year we have had, especially concerning hospital visits. I want to thank each and every one of you that did anything to contribute to the helping our fellow man in his or her time of need. Those of us who were able to carry on should feel thankful that we weren't incapacitated, and those that were affected you have my condolences.

I don't have the final totals for the hospital program, but I am hoping and I feel we may achieve 100 % reported in the state. As of right now I need eight more Posts to report soon, they have been contacted and hopefully will respond.

I want to congratulate all of our Post Commanders for guiding your Post through a very difficult time, and condolences to those Posts that were forced to close due solely to Covid. I do hope that next year will be a much better one for everyone.

I hope to see you at the State Convention. With any luck this fiasco in the Ukraine will be over soon, I do not envy what they are going through.



DEPARTMENT QUARTERMASTER, DEREK BLUMKE

The unimaginable, has become normal. A global pandemic stopped the world on its axis. Our posts closed down. Some only for a period, but eighteen of Michigan's VFW posts have closed forever since the pandemic began. At the same time, neighbors came to view neighbors as others. Others viewed each other as threats to their health. Threats to their safety. Others viewed others as threats to their rights. Threats to their freedom. Threats to their safety. Others still view others as others. Not friends. Not partners. Not citizens. Not comrades. Others. Other nations have viewed other nations as others. Other nations attacked other nations. Other soldiers attacked other citizens. Other nations came to the defense of other nations. Our nation supports the defense of other nations. Other nations have threatened the existence of all nations. We as a nation, we as veterans, we wonder if we will again be at war. Another war. Another great war. Another bad war. In Europe. With other nations. But the world is seemingly coming together, as Europe is heeding the poem of Europe: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me,

because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee." – John Donne

As the war expands, the economies of other nations contract. Our economy contracts. The money of others is worth less. Our money is worth less, now. We worry if our money will be worthless. At the same time, the bonds of our veterans have strengthened. The bonds of the VFW strengthened. The world worries for others. We should worry for others. Others worry, I do not worry for this nation. I do not worry for this nation's veterans. For there are other American war veterans. There are many comrades. We have comrades. And we have our resolve. And we have the VFW. Others have not seen war. Others fear the worst, but we have seen the worst. We have seen war. We will lead through any crisis, and we will lead our communities through any challenges to face us. In the coming years, our VFW will contract. In the coming years, our VFW will grow. Veterans of the Post 9/11 wars are joining our ranks. They are proud of the generations of veterans who have made this VFW strong, and they are proud to be standing alongside you. In the coming years, there will be change. Change is normal. The world once stopped, but the VFW did not stop. The VFW will not stop. The VFW is our family. The VFW is the strength of our communities. And there are no others in our Veterans of Foreign Wars.



DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN, JOHN JAMES

The 43rd Mid-Winter Conference Voice of Democracy/Patriots. Has come to an end. We are very proud of our students, teachers and the family as

Most comrades think we exits to read the prayer at the post meetings. Is that the purpose of the Chaplain?

The chaplain exists to minister to Veterans and their Families. We are like the good shepherd who well look over his flock. For the spiritual needs of the members.

As in John 10:7 Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep who looks over our Flock, for the spiritual needs of the members, by prayers and visiting them?

Let's all please continue to be a light unto others. As Mathew 5:16 states: In the same way; let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven.

I look forward to seeing you at the Department Convention.

well as the Posts and Districts Commanders for outstanding job this year. There were many more of our Auxiliary and VFW who worked very hard this year.

Let us remember those who have passed away. Please put the family and friend in your prayers.

Remember Operation Save stand by them, Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 for those who are in suicidal crisis.

How Important is our Post Chaplains?

VFWMI.ORG QUICK LINKS

vfwmi.org/contact

vfwmi.org/vethelp

vfwmi.org/join

vfwmi.org/directory

vfwmi.org/officers

vfwmi.org/allstate

vfwmi.org/mov

vfwmi.org/forms

vfwmi.org/gallery



BIG 10 DELEGATE, NORM MAULDIN

As my term draws to a close, I want to begin this by thanking you for the opportunity to serve you as your Big 10 Delegate, it has been

Johnston from Missouri; Chad Solheid from Minnesota; and our own Gerald (Jerry) Gorski from Michigan.

Throughout the years, Jerry has proven that he cares about veterans, regardless of their campaign. He has stepped up during tumultuous times to keep this great organization on track, and help keep it operating for the membership. That's why we voted to support him in his run for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief 2023-2024.

Additionally, we have two other National positions that need to be filled. For National Quartermaster General the candidates are: Marc Garduno who is currently the Assistant Quartermaster General and is endorsed

by our Past National Quartermaster Debra Anderson; and Hal Roesch, Past C-in-C, who has a very impressive resume. For National Chaplain the candidate is Deborah Halter from Missouri who is currently running unopposed.

The elections will take place at the National Convention in Kansas City in July 2022. If elected as your representative, I will ensure my vote will be as the membership wants and what's best for the Veteran's of Foreign Wars.

The next Big 10 Conference will be held in Potawatomi Hotel and Casino, Milwaukee, Wisconsin from October 14-16, 2022 and the reservation cutoff date is August 15, 2022.

my honor and privilege. I will be running for re-election during the upcoming Department of Michigan Convention.

This year the election of National Officers will be an important event for us in the Big 10. The next National Junior Vice Commander –in-Chief will be elected from our Conference. There are currently four (4) candidates running for this position. They are: Carol Whitmore from Iowa; Chris



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION, JERRY GORSKI

I just returned from Washington DC, where the National Council of Administration Workshop and National Council Committee Meetings were held. Because of the COVID Restrictions, we also did not have our Annual Legislative Conference Meetings with our Senators and Congressmen & Congresswomen. We also did not have the Department Voice of Democracy Winners and National Patriot's Pen Winner attend their Washington DC Trip along with the Parade of Winners. This is the 2nd Year in a row, where the Department Voice of Democracy Winners and National Patriot's Pen Winner Trip had been cancelled because of COVID.

While the National Council Members were in Washington DC, we got to see a live press conference held outside the U.S. Capitol Building with House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takono, who introduced and championed the "PACT Act", which stands for Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics, which will expand health care and benefits to all veterans with service-connected illnesses as a result of being exposed to toxic chemicals, environments and other hazards such as burn pits, during their war service. The Bill will cover veterans spanning generations.

At that Press Conference, we got to see Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic appear & speak along with other veteran service organizations regarding the "PACT Act", which is focused on assisting toxic-exposed veterans. Also appearing & speaking on behalf of the PACT Act were Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Members of Congress, advocates Jon Stewart and John Feal, and other VSOs to show their support for the bill. Also attending were members of the VFW.

Later in the afternoon, Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic testified in-person before the 117th Congress during a special joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veteran Affairs, where he delivered the VFW Legislative Priorities Goals for 2022. Commander Fritz gave an impassioned answer about the PACT Act Bill, putting pressure on those who had not made their minds on which way to vote.

I am happy to report to you, that the PACT Act Bill PASSED in the House. Democrats, who unanimously voted for the bill, were joined by 34 Republicans in passing the legislation. It now goes to the Senate for Approval and then on to President Biden's desk for Signing into Law. It should be Passed & Signed into law by the time you read my article.

During President Biden's State of the Union Address before Congress, while we were in Washington DC, President Biden

asked legislators to address the issue. President Biden stated, "Pass a law to make sure veterans devastated by toxic exposures in Iraq and Afghanistan finally get the benefits and the comprehensive health care they serve".

Membership. As of March 12, 2022, Michigan is in 8th Place in the Nation at 95.39%. Michigan moved up from 10th Place since my last article. That is Great! We need 1,633 New, Reinstated and Continuous Members to Reach 100%. National is at 93.12%. National needs 71,224 New, Reinstated and Continuous Members to Reach 100%. Michigan is still in 1st Place in the Big Ten Conference at 95.39%. That is also Great! Missouri is in 2nd Place at 95.08%. WE CAN STAY IN 1ST PLACE in the Big Ten Conference with everyone's help. WE CAN DO IT! I KNOW WE CAN!

Thank you again for Electing Me as your National Council of Administration Member representing YOU and the Department of Michigan for 2019 through 2023.

Thank you again Michigan for Endorsing Me for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief 2023-2024 representing Michigan. I will not let you down!

Thank you to Every Post and Every Auxiliary for supporting me and contributing to my campaign.

Thank You and God Bless You.

COOTIE CORNER - ERIC BELL



Greetings, Comrades and Auxiliary Sisters and Brothers!

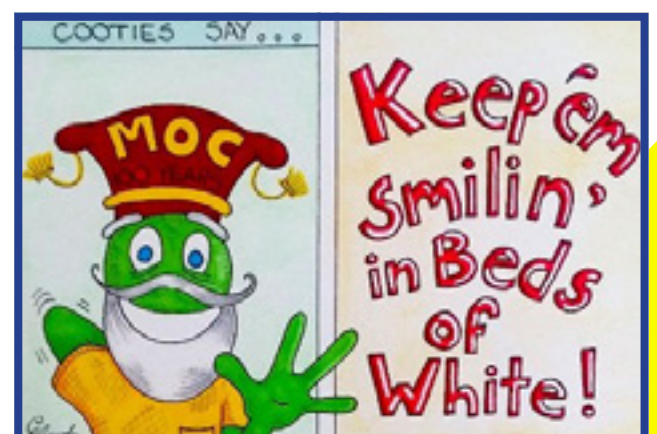
We are getting ready for our administrative year to end. All Pup Tents will be visited and inspected by a Grand Inspector soon. Ensure your Pup Tent is in order. Any questions? Contact Grand Chief of Staff PGC Eric Bell at roadrunnerdaddy@hotmail.com. "Cootie School"

For the 2021-2022 year; The Military Order of the Cootie ranks are 9,199 Cooties world-wide, with 284 Pup Tents. Membership, not only in the Cooties but in the VFW is very important to us. The VFW is our pool of qualified members. Cooties across the globe are "doing our part" by recruiting VFW members as well as Cooties. To date, 657 Cooties have recruited over 3,844 VFW members. One of our other missions is Hospital work. In this year, Cooties have visited over 79,053 patients, accumulating over 79,202 hours, covering 674,489 miles and donated over \$399,489.00 hard dollars to those efforts.

Our other mission is The VFW National Home for Children. This year Cooties have; donated \$16,000.00 for the Supreme Commander's Special Project- Purchasing Indoor/Outdoor sports activity equipment, purchased a 2nd Snow Plow vehicle (on order), and purchased a generator set for the Military Order of the Cootie House.

Other special projects that Cooties participate in at the VFW National Home are; The Christie Braun Supreme Scholarship (tech school scholarships and post-graduate scholarships), Easter Treat, Cedar Point Trip, State Days, Fall Festival, Cootie Christmas, and wherever we can help.

Give a hoot! Go recruit!





DEPARTMENT SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR, EDDIE DANDRIDGE

Well, this year The Department Of Michigan was successful in hosting the outstanding Students & amazing Teachers of Michigan.

The Radisson Hotel in Kalamazoo, Michigan hosted The Department of Michigan Mid-Winter Conference and VOD/

PP/TOY Award Banquet 29 January 2022.

It was extremely exciting to see all the young VOD/PP Students face again who entered the scholarships competition and seeing the entire VFW/Auxiliary organization together again.

This VOD/PP program is all about our future young leaders in the coming years. We can't forget the many amazing Teachers who day after day enter our Michigan Schools teaching & sharpening our children's young minds so they will be able to lead our Communities, Towns, Cities, States & Government one day, to you we say thank you for your dedication.

Our 1st. Place High School Teacher (K-5) was Jessica Marcet from VFW Post #6579, New Lothrop Area Public School.

Our 1st. Place PP Jr. High School (6-8) Winner was Aubree Bronkema, Immanuel Baptist School from District #9 VFW Post #9455 who also won the Traveling Trophy, received by District #9 Commander Larry Thayer which will be on display at VFW Post #9455 for 1 year.

Our 1st Place VOD High School (9-12) Winner was Crissa Esse, Inter-City Baptist School from District #4 VFW Post #9283 who also won the Traveling Trophy received by District #4 Commander John Blackstone which will be on display at VFW Post #9283 for 1 year.

All our Department 1st Place winners were forwarded to National Headquarters Competition. By the time you read this article the VFW will have Hosted a Virtual 2022 Parade of Winners on 07 April.

Our entire Scholarship Team want to thank everyone at the Post level because this is where it all starts, if you work the program the right way, & the District work the program the right way, it makes the process much smoother at the Department level.

All Commanders, Members, Chairman's, Quartermaster's, & Adjutant's at all levels Outstanding Team Work.

The VOD/PP/TOY is an incredible joint program which requires many people to pull it together, to everyone, you pulled it off!

Our Department VFW Convention Directors: Past State Commander Paul McIvor, Past State President Patricia Patterson as always you stayed on top of every detail throughout the Mid-Winter Conference & Award Banquet.

Our Department Assistant VOD Director: Rudy Wade & Honor Guard Member: Ricky Young, you both were awesome.

I personally thank you State Commander Conklin & your staff for the assignment as Department of Michigan: Scholarships Director 2021-2022.



Aubree Bronkema, Patriot's Pen First Place



Voice of Democracy & Patriot's Pen Students



Butch Ogden escorts Commander Kevin Conklin & wife Rini

DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY DIRECTOR

BOB LUTZ

Hello Comrades, I hope that everybody is in good health and spirits!

The computer age is here to stay and starting with the May 2022 reports, the only activity reports that will be accepted are the online reports. Some Comrades are fighting this, but we must move on. If you don't have a computer, you can always go to the library, senior citizen club etc. They not only have computers available, but most have computer classes also. Another way is to ask your sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters etc. and they will be able to assist you. Please don't fight it, it is much easier than you think.

I would also like to remind everybody

that the 10th of the month is a hard deadline for getting the reports in and getting credit for that month. If the 10th lands on a weekend or holiday the deadline will be extended to the next business day. If something unexpected happens call me and we can work things out.

Another thing Comrades, I have getting reports that people think that they are being funny by putting names like Donald Duck, Me etc in the submitted by portion of the report, just to let you know, these reports will NOT be accepted!

I will be available at the conventions and VTS's to answer all questions. I am also available for District meetings.





AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT - STEPHANIE KRUEGER

Here we go entering into the season of Spring and there is so much that occurs at this time of our organization's year.

Elections, installations, District Conventions are followed up by the Department Convention in June. Both VFWs and Auxiliaries are reminded that delegates must be elected to serve at the District meetings for next year, the Department Convention in June, and the National Convention which will be in Kansas City, MO in July. Please check your By-Laws to be certain you are holding these elections in a timely manner and then be certain the reports are sent to the District, Department and National levels as soon as possible after elections. Hold the elections, fill out the paperwork and get it in the mail with any required fees as soon as possible so it does not get lost in the shuffle.

This has been a great year and we are pleased that two Posts (Nashville Post in District 8 and St. John's Post in District 9) have begun the process of instituting an Auxiliary. Nashville's Institution Date is March 20 and St. John's has not set a date as of this article. I thank the organizers and teams assisting in this process.

Before we know it another year will be in the books and a new Administration will take

the lead on all levels of our organization. Teamwork has been the theme this year and I want to thank Department Commander Kevin Conklin for setting the example. The VFW and Auxiliary are stronger when we work together and this year has proven that. Covid has tried, but failed, to keep us from our mission of working together for our Veterans, their families and our communities. Please continue to do what you do.

Many thanks, to all who supported the Gold Star Families this year. The pins are almost all sold out and every cent of the net after the post of making them will be given to the Michigan Gold Star families. Several donations have been given at events and we will make the final donation at the end of our Administrative year. These families continue to grieve daily for their family members that gave their lives for our freedom.

Remember why you joined, and why you remain in this organization. Now go find just one person and help them to find the joy of volunteering. Take them under your wing. Become a Mentor. Who knows how far they will soar. If each of us finds just one, we will double in size. It might seem impossible but just do your part in finding one. We are all capable of that.

It has been a busy but joy-filled time serving as Department of Michigan VFW Auxiliary President.

AUX CHAPLAIN / JANE DADY

This isn't a color within the lines life. It is filled with frustrating events, the inevitable and unexpected. Know that for all those who love God, all things work together for good, and are done according to his purpose.

Do not worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for everything he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.

Love one another, help one another, serve one another, Honoring and Glorifying God in all we do.

Trust that God will hear you. Pray for his comfort and strength when life runs out of those lines.

AUX GUARD / JASON MANKE

I hope this message finds all our members in good health. My year as your Department Guard is sure flying, I have truly enjoyed visiting with several different District's as the Department Representative. I am looking forward to visiting the other Districts as I progress through the Department Chairs in this great state. As the new kid on the block, I'm happy to say this year's officer team has been led by a great mentor, in President Stephanie Krueger. Now that Mid-Winter is over, our sights are set on the state convention in June. I am looking forward to seeing Auxiliaries throughout the state reap their awards for the hard work they put into our programs.

On January 2, 2022, District 7 held an awards banquet for the Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen and Teacher of the year. I want to thank all that helped to make it a special event.

May God Bless each of you and may God Bless this great Organization.

AUXILIARY SECRETARY / SANDI ONSTWEDDER

I was presented with a great opportunity when Stephanie Krueger reached out and asked me to serve as her/your Department VFW Auxiliary Secretary. It has been a learning experience. I continue to try to do my very best yet often fall short of my predecessors. I want to thank you for your patience and understanding as I continue to learn and put this organizations needs first. This is year one of my acceptance so hopefully things will steadily improve.

I am working from home for the time that my husband will be in Hospice care. Nicole is acting as Secretary along with her Treasurer duties. I am grateful for your support and understanding. My wish is for you to know you can reach out to your office at any time. We work for you, our members, Veterans and their families.

AUXILIARY CHIEF OF STAFF / GLORIA DOBBIE

I am pleased to announce the institution of a new Auxiliary in the Department of Michigan. Auxiliary #4113, St. Johns in District 9 is still in planning stages but, Auxiliary 8260, Nashville in District 8, will be held on March 20th at 3:00 pm. We welcome all new auxiliary members to the great adventure of serving Veterans and your Community on a new level.

Thank you to Cindy Peto organizer of Nashville #8260, Carrie Turner and Christine LeBrun for bringing this Auxiliary to fruition happen. Please contact the Department Office for exact information on this institution.

Please be listening and on be the lookout to continue to propose new Auxiliaries to Unaffiliated Posts in your area. They're waiting for you to ask and encourage them!

Good Job Awards are being distributed to deserving members everywhere. We are here to help, Suspensions can be lifted or imposed. We will do what is best for the Auxiliary and the Members. Whenever special zoom meetings are scheduled, please take advantage of the opportunity to learn about your Auxiliary. Enjoy the lifelong commitment you have made to be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.

OUTREACH / CHRISTINE LEBRUN

What does it mean to be a Volunteer? It's an act of freely giving your time to assist others; and, in the case of Auxiliary Community Outreach, it's assisting other organizations with their mission. As you conduct your volunteer time remember that you are a representative of our great organization. This means how you behave, respond, speak, and appear are all being observed. As you conduct your volunteer time, be sure to know your contact person, arrive on time, be flexible, dress appropriately, be respectful and be committed to do what you came to do! Last but not least, have fun!

**AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT SR. VICE - DIANA WARD**

This year seems to have gone so fast. We are nearing the end of Madame Stephanie's year and my year is looming ahead. It's an

exciting time. This has been a great year and I have really enjoyed all the visits I have had with you! I have renewed many friendships and gained so many more. The warm hospitality I have felt throughout the state has been wonderful.

Hopefully, all of the Auxiliaries have had the opportunity to review your Guide Sheets and finalized all of the programs. Make sure that you have gotten everything reported. Let's make sure that every Auxiliary is reported at least once for each program. Make sure that all of your donations are made to the different programs. We want to make Michigan shine and get Stephanie into the Circle of Excellence.

In March, I held my District Presidents and Chairmen's training weekend and I really believe it was a successful weekend. There was learning, mentoring and fellowship. Thank you to Sandi and Nicole for getting all the paperwork and documents together. Thank you to Marilyn for heading up my programs. I'm looking forward to a great year.

Hope you all had the opportunity to order one of my shirts. The order will be

going in the first week of April. I may have a small window of time to place late orders, but please let me know if you want to get one ordered. They should be delivered to me by mid-May. Likewise, hopefully, you have all had the opportunity to purchase tickets for my raffle that will be held during the month of May – it is the lottery day drawing raffle. There are still tickets available if you need them, and they are \$5 each.

Madame President Stephanie, I am at your disposal for anything you need for the closing of your year. I am here for my fellow Line Officers if you need any assistance for completion of the year and preparing for next year. To the Districts and the Auxiliaries, if there is anything you need assistance with, please feel free to contact me. I pledge my continued support to you this year.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at our State Convention. It will seem a bit different in our new location. Wishing Stephanie and Kevin a wonderful time at their Testimonial and a successful Convention. To my counterpart, Sr. Vice Commander John Griffith, please let me know if there is anything the Auxiliary or I can do for you as you prepare for your year ahead. We are here to serve with you and provide assistance to all of our veterans and Auxiliary members.

MEMBERSHIP**NICOLE KOUTZ**

Together we have brought in over 900 new or rejoined members to our organization and that is mind blowing! This brings us to less than 500 members needed to be 100 percent in Membership this Program Year! The sad news is that means with the 900 brought in as new or rejoins the lapsed members have been left behind. The good news is that we still have time to reach out to all those members and get them back!

Time is running out! This is when we MUST work together to get dues PAID. If you have been reading these bulletins and the posts on Facebook, you know that any member who has not paid their 2021 annual dues are longer in good standing. If they do not get their dues paid by June 30, 2022, they will have to rejoin the organization. That means they will have to fill out a membership application, provide proof of eligibility and be accepted by the membership of the Auxiliary they wish to join. They also have to wait one full year to be able to apply for a cancer grant from the National Organization. This is something we do not want any of our members to be faced with. Work for your Auxiliary. Get those members to pay their dues.

AUXILIARY VETERAN & FAMILY SUPPORT**NANCY VREDEVELD**

It is hard to believe we are in the last quarter of the 21-22 Auxiliary program year.

Thank you to Department President Stephanie Krueger for considering me for this appointment. I have enjoyed reading about all the ways our auxiliary members across the state of Michigan support our veterans and their families.

Whether it is giving haircuts, preparing meals, sending cards, driving someone to

a doctor appointment, yard work, taking them out to eat, or just listening, you are amazing!!! THANK YOU!!!

You have reported all these things to me, and I want to give you some information as of 1/22/22. Our members have reported 1,410 projects by 5,456 members, 19,809 hours, 77,293 miles, and total dollars of \$122,396.47. Great job Michigan!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Department Convention in June.

**AUXILIARY BUDDY POPPY & NATIONAL HOME****KATHY HUBBARD**

Do you have Poppies with you all the time? Buddy Poppies aren't just for the "official" once a year donation drive. You can use them to interact within your community in promoting Veterans and the many programs and projects that your Auxiliary participates in.

Poppies are assembled and put together by hospitalized Veterans who in turn, are compensated. Allowing them to have some cash on hand. Once assembled the Poppies are distributed by the National VFW Headquarters to local Posts and Auxiliaries.

Poppies are distributed at drives for donations throughout the United States and money placed in a Relief Fund to help

with the welfare of our Veterans and their families. All monies collected from the poppy distribution is mandated to be held in the Relief Fund. Many individuals donate and refrain from taking the Poppy. Yet they are still demonstrating their support to Veterans for their service and sacrifice.

At the Mid-Winter Conference this past January, I had the pleasure of meeting the new Executive Director of the VFW National Home for Children Michael Wilson. I am looking forward to good things occurring under his leadership. Mike is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He announced that at this time there are several vacant homes that are available,

and it is his mission to get them filled. There is information and videos on the on their website vfnationalhome.org to help get things started for those looking for a hand up. The National home also has a Helpline. That number is 1-800-313-4200.

There are many ways that you can support the VFW National Home. You can sign up to use the Amazon Smile, Kroger Community Rewards, purchase a Life Membership to the VFW National Home or become a Home Front Hero on the Website. If you have not visited the home I encourage you to call and set up a tour.

POST REPORTS

POST 334 - LAKE ORION

On Friday, February 19, 2022, North Oakland VFW Post 334 delivered to the Oxford Fire Department and the Oakland County Sheriff's Oxford Post the National VFW Life Saving Award to each department for their work with the November 30, 2021 shooting tragedy at the Oxford High School. The "Life Saving Award" was presented by North Oakland VFW Post 334 Quartermaster/Adjutant Chuck Haskin and Post Commander Jim Hubbard.

The award consisted of a Life Saving certificate and a medal reading "First Responder Award".

North Oakland VFW Post 334 salutes each employee at both departments for their outstanding service to our community.



POST 582 - ORTONVILLE

Guard Veteran Charles Gulf 101 & wife Karen 98 a Coast Guard Spars married 76yrs. At ceremony with Post CMDR Hoffman receiving certificates and challenge coins from C.G. Capt. Brad Kelly & BMCM Charles Northcott. Post CMDR presented Girl Scout Troop 76460 with patriotism pin for their community service helping local veterans.



POST 1454 - ALMA

Post 1454 grilled half chickens for the soldiers of the local armory. The auxiliary supplied the sides, but the post grilled and served the Highlanders. We fed around 60 soldiers of the B-Btry 1-119th FAR Highlanders on Saturday the 9th of April. Gail Alexander and Victor Simon maned the grill while other post members made baked potatoes and other jobs that needed taken care of.



POST 3701 - LAKEVIEW



Adopt-A-Highway clean up crew



New sign going up at new Post home



Fundraiser for local veteran with cancer

POST 3941 - LIVONIA

The VFW Livonia Post 3941 was honored to Host the distribution of “Quilts of Valor” to veterans of the Livonia community.

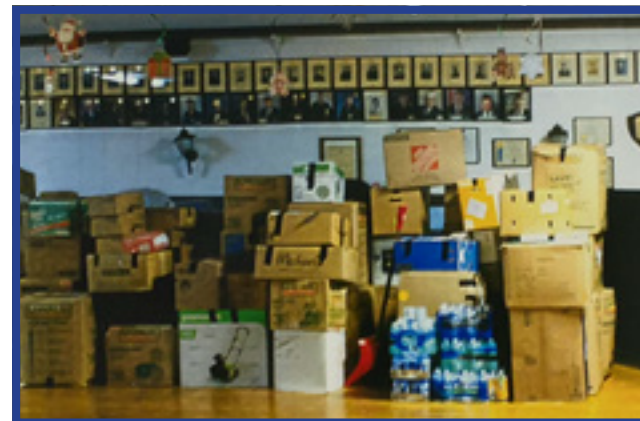
The QOVF, Quilt of Valor Foundation, www.qovf.org, distributed 22 quilts to veterans over three occurrences at the post, January 12, February 9, and March 9, 2022. The recipients were from Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force duties. Two veterans were from WWII service. The QOVF was founded in 2003 and has distributed over 296,000 quilts.

**POST 6132 - LANSING**

Post 6132 sponsored seven veteran's families and their children for Christmas in 2021.

**POST 8846 - NORTH MUSKEGON**

Due to the support of Post 8846, Veterans Gary White and John Sorenson were able to delivery 5,040 pounds of non-perishable food, clothing, bottled water, hygiene products and candy to our fellow Americans and Comrades who suffered greatly from recent tornado devastation in Kentucky. In addition, the Post also recieved over \$1,500 in donations that were also used to purchase needed goods. These generous donations from the Post along with the time effort of Gary and John demonstrtrate the true meaning of give to the less fortunate to give others “hope for a brighter day”.

**POST 8846 - NORTH MUSKEGON**

Our Post celebrated it's 75th Anniversary on December 15, 2021. On Veterans Day, in addition to our regular program, we included a recognition of our 75th Anniversary. I have attached a copy of the program for the day. The front cover shows the challenge coin we had minted for the occasion. A coin was sent to every member of the Post. The back page lists the 44 Charter Members of the Post and an image of the Certificate issued by National. Also attached is a photo of the cake we had made marking the occasion with the program cover and the 75th Anniversary Certificate. Post Historian Jeff Lyall gave a historical presentation to the over 80 people who attended. Past

Department and District 10 Commander Ron Amend represented the Department. District 10 Commander Thomas Webber also attended. We also presented Comrade Dewy Neddermeyer with a 75 year membership pin and framed challenge coin. Although Comrade Neddermeyer 75 years of membership were not all with Port Sanilac Post 8872, he was the Post Quartermaster for many years. Attached is a photo of Adjutant Jeff Lyall presenting the pin and coin to Comrade Neddermeyer. The other photo is of Comrades Dewy Neddermeyer and Ed Bauer. They are our only two World War II members.

Our program included all Veterans Day ceremonies we usually do, which include

presenting our VOD and PP and coloring contest (1st and kindergarten) winners. Also we recognized the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier which fell on Veterans Day this year.

Our Post did a Flag dedication at the Carsonville-Port Sanilac High School basket ball game on March 3, 2022. They did a lot of upgrade to the gymnasium and our Post donated and American, POW/MIA and Michigan Flag. They always had The American and Michigan Flag up but I tried to get the POW/MIA Flag up for a few years. They finally agreed when the changes were made. Persistence pays off. I also attached the comments I gave. The presentation was between the Jr. Varsity and Varsity game.





DISTRICT COMMANDER REPORTS



DISTRICT 5 COMMANDER - SU-JEN MAULDIN

How the time has flown. Since my last article, we held our Voice of Democracy (VOD), Patriot's Pen (PP), and Teacher of the Year (TOY)

Here are some reminders:

- Your delegate strength is determined by the number of members you have on March 31st.
- Nominations and election should be done by April. Remember to elect delegates at the same time. Submit your Election Reports immediately after the elections are completed.
- Department will be sending out a form to list your Post delegates along with your delegate fees. Please get them in the mail as soon as possible. They must be received before Department Convention in June.
- National Convention delegate fees will be sent out also. These fees are mandatory and need to be submitted before Department Convention.
- Make sure you are paid up with County Council, District, Department, and National or you will not be eligible to vote at Department Convention.
- Make sure the Sr. Vice Commander gets a copy of your Election Report for the District Roster and a list of your delegates.
- Information for the Department Convention is located on the Department website under "News".

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve you. I did my best and hope I served you well. I want to THANK my staff for all your help. You have been there when I needed you and I could not have asked for better. THANK YOU to my Auxiliaries, especially my Auxiliary Husband Don McNichol, it was an interesting ride. Congratulations to all our newly elected officers.

I wish you luck in the coming year.

banquet. Congratulations to our District VOD winner Ranyah Bullock sponsored by Post 2645, PP winner Rebecca Wang sponsored by Post 334; and TOYs grade 9-12 Cristina Sulisz sponsored by Post 582 and grade 6-8 Shannon Dickinson sponsored by Post 9914. Thank you to all the posts and auxiliaries that participated.

Those of you who did not attend Mid-Winter Conference missed out on some very good training. I commend the Department Staff for putting it together. The VOD/PP/TOY Banquet was a success. "Bravo Zulu" to the Department and Auxiliary Chairpersons for an outstanding program and a very enjoyable evening.

The Past Commanders/Past Presidents Banquet was wonderful. "Thank You" to Post 9021 for hosting the event and to both Sr. Vice Commander Ben Light and Sr. Vice President Janet Swica for an excellent program. I look forward to what the two of you will accomplish next year.

Congratulations to all the Posts that made 100% in membership. I know it hasn't been easy this year but you persevered. At the time of this writing, the District had 5 Posts over 100% and 18 Posts that needed 10 or less to reach 100%. Let's make those phone calls, knock on some doors, do some buddy checks, whatever it takes to contact those veterans.



DISTRICT 6 COMMANDER REINOLD E. YAHNKA

The year is coming to an end, and we will soon have our

last District Meeting and have elections for next year's officers. The Department Convention is going to be in Flint in June. Make sure someone from your Post attends the Convention on Saturday 4 June and register before 10:00 am so that their Post can vote. Make sure you send in delegate fees and have all audits turned in. We are getting down to the wire and really need to be working membership. It would be nice if the District could be at or over 100 percent before the end of April. Congratulations to Post 423 120.88%, Milan Post 5977 115.38%, Dundee Post 6462 112.96%, Fowlerville Post 6464 112.12% Springport Post 6056 105.43%, and Gras Lake Post 10194 104.76%. There are several Post that need 5 or less members to reach 100%. Keep up the great work that you are doing on membership. The District is 100 percent in activity and Hospital reporting. There are 9 Post in the District 423, 701, 1138, 1584, 4093, 6056, 6464, 9656 and 10194 eligible to make All-American.

It has been an Honor to be your District 6 Commander and I am here to serve you and help you or your Post in any way I can. So please feel free to contact me at any time so that we can keep the "Super 6th District" "Veterans Moving Forward".

Thank You, for all that you do.

DISTRICT 8 COMMANDER - MIKE MARTIN



I am nearing the end of my second year as the Commander of the Great Eighth District, and it has been quite an

adventure. We got through the pandemic together when we couldn't even meet in person but still managed to accomplish quite a bit in our service to Veterans. We did what Veterans do—we improvised, adapted, and overcame the obstacles Covid-19 put in front of us.

My second year was more like what passes for "normal" in the VFW. I was able to visit many posts in the 8th District and got to know many Comrades whom I now call friends. We've accomplished a great deal, but I did not do it alone.

I want to thank my Senior Vice

Commander Gary Brown Sr. and my Junior Vice Commander Robin Bailey for their guidance and for their friendship. Also, I want to thank my Adjutant Garry Goff (Goofy) for keeping me from making too many mistakes, especially leading the District Meetings. He did so with a great sense of humor, and I especially appreciate that. Also, thanks to Barry Wickman, the District 8 Quartermaster for his guidance and friendship. Often when I would call him about doing something, he was way ahead of me. And last, but certainly not least, thank you to my Committee Chairpersons and the Post Commanders of the Great 8 District for their dedication to serving Veterans.

But there is much more to be done. Veterans will always need other Veterans to stand up for them in areas like health issues, suicide prevention, and much more.

We need each other and that is the glue that holds this organization together. That is also why we need to continue to bring in new members for the growth of the VFW and for their own well-being. Every single one of us knows a Veteran who is not a member of our organization and who qualifies. Just think what would happen if we all signed up just one new member.

It has been my honor and privilege to be the Commander of the Great 8th District and I will miss it. But I'm not going to be riding off into the sunset. I will be the All-State Director next year and so I will be seeing many of you again soon. I will also be seeing many new Comrades in the other Districts of the Department of Michigan.

Again, thank you for two great years and here's looking forward to many more years of serving Veterans together.



DISTRICT 14 - DEAN MAKI

First of all, I would like to thank Commander Conklin and his staff for a most enjoyable Mid-Winter Conference. I am looking forward to seeing all you comrade's this Spring at the State Convention.

I would like to congratulate our essay winners from District 14. Our VOD first-place winner was Gabriel Grondz from

Post 4573 in Ishpeming. Our second-place winner was Kayliegh Hopper from Post 9023 in Brimley. Our third-place winner was Timothy Garland from Post 3676 in Sault Saint Marie. Our Patriots Pen first-place winner was Liliana Saunders from Post 3165 in Negaunee. Our second-place winner was Olivia Letson from Post 4573 in Ishpeming. Our third-place winner was Hazel Garvon from Post 9023 in Brimley. Thank you to all the participants who have entered essays for these programs.

Thank you to all the posts who are submitting their quarterly audits in a timely manner. We still have several posts who have not submitted reports for Hospital and Activities. Please report monthly before the 10th of the month. We are also very close to getting 100% in the district. Recruit, Renew and Reinstate to help us attain this goal before the end of the membership year in May.

VETERAN CRISIS LINE

800-273-8255
PRESS 1

DEPARTMENT
SAFETY DIRECTOR
JESSICA WRIGHT

Greetings Comrades, Sisters and Brothers.

Public Service Officer of the year

entries have been received. We had 12 Posts submit entries this year! This is double of what was submitted last year.

Thank you to all the Posts who submitted entries. These fine men and women deserve to be recognized. I would encourage all of the Posts that did submit entries to honor these men and women at the Post/District level. They deserve to be recognized for their continued efforts to keep their communities safe.

I am pleased to announce this year's winners:

- **Law Enforcement Officer Brent Lincoln** nominated by Post 6056

- **FireFighter Michael Brant** nominated by Post 1136

- **EMT/Paramedic Corey Jones** nominated by Post 1138

Please help me in congratulating these fine officers at our June State Convention! Thank you to Posts 334, 1136, 1138, 1794, 2144, 3314, 3701, 4090, 6056, 6464, 9455 and 9914 for your entries this year.

If you are looking for safety materials the Michigan State Police have FREE safety information available for you. The form to obtain the safety information can be found online at

<http://bit.ly/31ZR9mC>

or you call 517-636-4256.

If you are unable to access the online form please call or email me and I will be happy to send you a copy. I am here to help you achieve your goals and assist with getting you the drug and safety points you need!

safety@vfwmi.org



DEPARTMENT PTSD DIRECTOR - DOUG BRINKER

Welcome fellow Comrades, Auxiliary to our New Department VFW year. I want to extend my sincerest appreciation to

Commander Conklin for another year appointment as the PTSD Director. As some might know June is PTSD Awareness Month and while the month will be more than half over by the time you are reading, know the reality so many of us are challenged each day with an internal monster that needs Awareness brought to the forefront. I have one simple question: ARE YOU OK? This question might come of a surprise when I share that its Ok Not to Be Ok! The challenges you face daily, hourly is Real, and the Pain is sometimes overbearing. However, you are not Alone, and You Matter! Hourly, Daily, Weekly, Monthly and Yearly You Matter to US and our communities.

For those of you who were in attendance when I spoke at the State Convention everything I ever share comes sincerely from the depths of my heart. Know that my phone is Always on! I will take a call at any hour day or night if I know it helps your safety from Suicide. As we move forward this coming year, I am dedicated more than ever to travel this great state conducting workshops in Posts and Districts helping you and those who just might be in attendance contemplating taking their life. To those whom I spoke to directly afterwards my sincerest condolences to your losses, and I plan to hold some trainings to educate on those simple signs including getting those interested SAFE TALK trained. To close, I would like to share a poem that I found perhaps will give you HOPE when your lost or you know someone whose giving up and wants the pain to end.

HOW LONG?

*I sit down and wonder how long
since you left? Leaving me frozen,
so lost and bereft*

*Remembering events from the most
painful of days, when choices you made
sent us separate ways*

*I visit the tree that stands over the
Chase, where you took your last walk –
leave flowers at its base*

*I visit your grave, read your name
on the stone, shed many a tear
standing cold and alone*

*I look at the picture of you in it's
frame, Reach out to your face
and whisper your name*

*I think of you daily and often I ask,
Why your wonderful smile
became only a mask*

*Which hid all your pain and held it
inside, Not giving us chance to stem the
dark tide*

*I am sad to the soul cos you couldn't
stay, Remember the feel of your
hand as you faded away*

*My beautiful boy with so much to give,
Had so many talents and much life to live*

*Was loved and respected by all
of his friends, Who aided and held
me when your life did end*

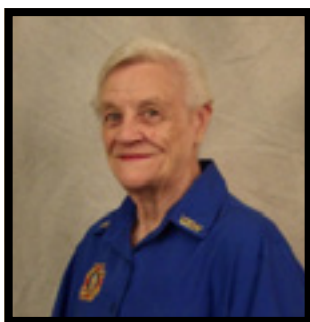
*Time is a healer or so they all say,
Things are slightly better with each
passing day*

*I pray that your rest is now trouble free,
And hope that you're watching
over Adam and me*

*For Daniel – 2 Years on
(Anne, 2012)*



AUXILIARY DISTRICT REPORTS



DISTRICT 4 - SERENA LEMONCELLI

Thank you to all the Officers and Chairman in the 4th District for all you have done, and I want to encourage to keep up the great work of

capable hands. Each District entry was truly a winner.

On January 2, 2022, the District held it's award banquet for the Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen and Teacher of the Year entrants. I want to thank all those that prepared and executed the event.

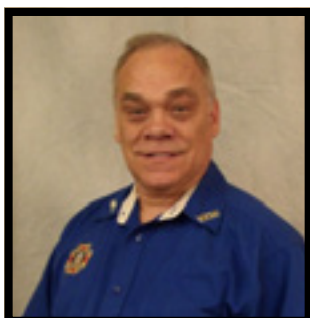
A sincere thank you to all the Posts and Auxiliary's that provided food and presents to the needed family in the community over the holidays.

Covid 19 is still rearing its ugliness. So please reach out to check on members, your family, and friends.

the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.

Let's all work together and continue to make our District Fantastic!

I would also like to Congratulate all the Teachers of the Year, Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen entries. They each exemplified our future leadership will be in



DISTRICT 6 - PATRICK RICH

We received some exciting news at Mid-Winter Conference. The VFW has decided to open VFW Camp Trotter for the summer camping season. There has been a cost increase from \$250 per camper to \$300. I know the increase was a necessary decision. So hopefully we can all begin donating towards the VFW Camp Trotter Scholarship Fund.

the VFW for the exact details.

The VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan is the only VFW sponsored home for Veterans and their family members, in the United States. We are fortunate to have it practically in our own backyards. Many Veterans and their families need a hand up to help them to regain their lives after serving our nation. Please consider making financial donations. They are always appreciative of the support.

It has been an honor to represent the members of the 6th District this year. Together we can and will accomplish great things for our Active Duty Military Members, Veterans, and their families.

The VFW will kick off their VTS Officer training by once again hosting a Golf Outing the day before the training begins. That will be held on June 17, in Newaygo. Check with



DISTRICT 7 - JASON MANKE

As your reading this article our district has had 3 meetings already for the 2021-2022 year. Man is this year flying, I'm

food, help with raffles, etc). We had a great time honoring our VOD and Patriots Pen students at the Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo. It is always great to hear what our youth has to say since the youth is our future. Don't forget the District 7 VOD and Patriots Pen banquet will be on March 13th at the Decatur Post more details to follow. Our district has unanimously endorsed Sara Manke for Department Sr Vice President and me for Department Conductor for the 2022-2023 year. May God Bless each of you and may God Bless this great Organization.

halfway through my year as your District 7 President. A couple of things I would like to remind our members about are: At the next State Convention our district is planning on hosting a Hospitality Room. With that said we will need a lot of helpers (bartending,



DISTRICT 8 - NANCY VREDEVELD

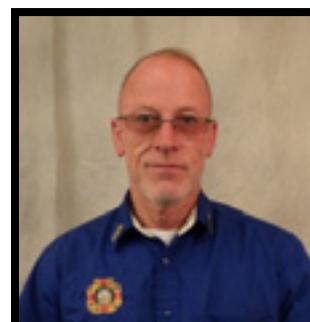
This year is flying by and I want to thank all those who have worked so hard for our veterans and their families. This year was not as challenging as last year, as we able to hold our meetings in person (with a little help with zooms), but things are not quite back to "normal" quite yet.

Michigan Mid-Winter, and it always such an honor to go and hear the Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen winners for the Department.

The Great 8th did a wonderful job in bringing in our membership. At the time I am writing this, we only need two more dues paid to be at 100%! No doubt in my mind that we will soon achieve that goal. Thank you all for helping us to achieve this milestone.

Continue the great work for our organization.

We recently had our Department of



DISTRICT 5 DON MCNICHOL

Congratulations to all the Auxiliaries that have reached 100% in their membership! A few auxiliaries are so very close and I

know with a push they will also achieve their 100% goal. Our District is at 99.43% as of February 15, 2022. I know we can reach that magic mark of 100% +1.

The next District meeting is Feb 20, 2022 at Post #6691 Fraser. Our District Convention will be held on April 24, 2022 at Post #7573 New Baltimore and that is when the 2022/2023 District elections will be held. Please plan to attend to have a voice in who serves in the district leadership positions.

Always recruit new members and more importantly, retain our existing members. Congratulations to the Department Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen winners as they move on to the National for judging.

It is very important that your auxiliary chairman are sending in all their reports so that they receive the credit your Auxiliary deserves.

Let's keep up the awesome work you all do for our veterans.

**SOME SAY THEY'VE
GOT YOUR BACK.
WE PROVE IT**



DISTRICT 10 ROBERTA REID

Great Time at Mid-Winter Convention. Congratulations to the VOD and PP and TOY winner for the

Dept of Michigan.

District members we still need to work to do have 6 Auxiliaries still need to get membership to 100% +1.

Remember at all District meetings the President or a representative must attend all District meetings.

Next District meeting will be election of officers and we are need of volunteers to fill these positions.

It will bat Davison VFW 4087 on May 14th (Change of Date) at 10am -11:30-lunch/ Cost \$7.00.

Buddy Poppy Day is May 5-7, 2022

Thanks for all you do to support Veterans and Families

DISTRICT 11 - MELODY SCHALK

After several years of not participating in Operation Help, District 11 has now reinstated it. For those that do know

what Operation Help is a program where Posts within our District that need to make repairs to their building can access

funds when Post cannot financially do it alone. In November 2021, we the first ad it was a success. July 23, 2022, at the Roscommon Post.

Mid- Winter Conference was a very memorable time. I had never been to one before and I was really impressed by the commitment our organization has for these Scholarship programs. The VOD/ Patriot Pen Banquet was fabulous. It was

great seeing all the kids that participated this Year. District 11 took 3rd place in the Voice of Democracy.

Mt. Pleasant Post #3033 VFW Riders Group has been doing a Bloody Mary Breakfast every 2nd Sunday of the month. Consider stopping by and supporting this great cause.

Report-Report-Report!!

DISTRICT 12 - DIANA HERRICK

Since 1914, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary has brought individuals from all walks of life for a common

purpose: to improve the lives of Veterans, active duty Service Members and their families. Along with our communities. Our programs are designed to bring needed services, information, and assistance to

targeted groups.

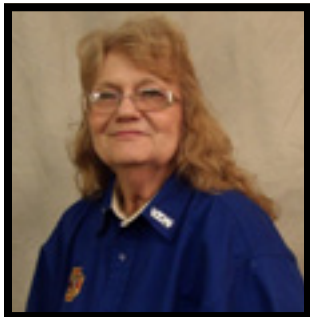
Our Auxiliaries for over 100 years have promoted patriotism, wholesomeness, harmony, togetherness, and national pride. Our organization is not owned or operated by one individual, but rather by a group of dedicated Auxiliary members. Their obligation is to promote and demonstrate respect for America's patriotic traditions.

Each member has taken on the responsibility to educate our communities

on our patriotic traditions, most importantly honoring our American Flag and those that served this country.

Nearly 475,000 members nationwide share in this mission with their passion. They vigorously support our country and more specifically, those who served and continue to serve our country.

Please check your eligibility to belong to the greatest support group ever for Veterans. Reach out to a nearby VFW Post to see about joining their Auxiliary.

DISTRICT 13 - SHEILA PICKARD

Here we are at the end of the year already. Recently we attended the Department Mid-Winter Conference held at the Radisson

Hotel in Kalamazoo. It was awesome to be with all our Voice of Democracy and

Patriot's Pen winners. Congratulations to all for your participation in our Scholarship programs, you each did an excellent job.

We also had wonderful presentations from our department chairman. I personally learned a lot and believed that many in attendance did also. A sincere thank you to all that participated.

There are not enough words to say about

our Department Officers, they are kind, courteous, and very knowledgeable. They are willing to help us in any way we need them to. Reach out and see for yourself the next time that you have questions.

I truly love this organization and serving members in a leadership position. Please continue to have a wonderful VFW Auxiliary year.

DISTRICT 14 - SCOTT COLLINS

Greetings from District 14!

This was my first year serving as District President and I must say that it has been an interesting journey. District 14 has seven active auxiliaries which are all located in the eastern half of the Upper Peninsula.

My official visits were conducted between October and December and all auxiliaries were very gracious when I was in attendance. The auxiliaries are: #3165 Negaunee, #3676 Sault Ste. Marie, #4420 Manistique, #4573 Ishpeming, #5114 St. Ignace, #5670 Gwinn, and #9023 Brimley.

Our District is very modest and seems to have trouble tooting our own horn officially by reporting to department on all that we do. Some Veteran & Family fundraisers and services that I have noticed being accomplished by District 14 are Pasty sales by #5670 #3676 and #5114, Bingo by #4573, Children's Christmas party by #4420, kitchen upgrades by #9023, and a generous donation to Upper Peninsula Honor Flight by #3165.

Our Fall Auxiliary District Meeting went well with a visit by Department Representative Sr. Vice President Diana Ward. She held a mini school of instruction for all members in attendance.

District 14 had two Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen contestants participate at The Mid-Winter Convention at Kalamazoo; Liliana Saunders, sponsored by #3165 and Gabriel Grondz, sponsored by #4573.

I would like to thank District 14 Chief of Staff Kathy DeNice for helping keep one of our Auxiliaries with problems afloat this year, Louise Ingalls of auxiliary #5670 for doing my own Auxiliary's official visit, and Auxiliary #4420 for hosting both Fall 2021 and soon the Spring 2022 District Meetings.



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103RD ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION TENTATIVE SCHEDULE JUNE 1 - 5, 2022 - FLINT

---- WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1ST ----

8:30 am Golf Outing Registration
(weather permitting)

9:30 am Golf Outing Shot Gun Start
Fenton Farms
12312 Torrey Rd, Fenton 48430

TBD - 10:00 pm Hospitality Room

---- THURSDAY, JUNE 2ND ----

8:30 am Registration, Director Displays

8:00 am - 9:00 am CofA Breakfast

9:30 am - 11:30 am Cof A Meeting
Reports from Service Office,
Camp Trotter, Budget and
By-Laws & Resolutions

11:30 am - 1:00 pm LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Registration
OPENING OF CONVENTION
Director's Reports

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Mandatory Practice for
Memorial Service
*** Required for District
Commanders & Line Officers*

6:00 pm - 11:00 pm Hospitality Room - Maidson

---- FRIDAY, JUNE 3RD ----

8:30 am Registration, Director Displays,
Photo Room, Awards

11:30 am - 1:00 pm LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Registration

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm Joint Memorial Service

2:15 pm - 4:00 pm Meet the Candidates

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm SR/JR Meeting, District Monitors,
District Commanders Meeting

5:45 pm Joint Testimonial

---- SATURDAY, JUNE 4TH ----

8:00 am - 10:00 am Final Registration, Photo Room
*** Registration will close promptly at 10:00 am*

9:00 am - 11:30 am Convention Business Session,
Nominations, Resolutions,
VFW National Home Rep

11:30 am - 1:00 pm LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
***All displays & other items must be removed
from area by 1:00 pm.*

1:00 pm - 5:30 pm Resume Convention
District Caucuses, Elections,
Installation of Officers,
New Council of Administration

6:00 pm - 10:00 pm Reception for Incoming
Commander & President

---- SUNDAY, JUNE 5TH ----

9:00 am - 12:00 pm VTS Training

---- CONVENTION DRESS CODE ----

Thursday
State Commander black polo shirt and tan khakis

Friday
State Commander black polo shirt and gray pants

Saturday
Past State Commander polo shirt and tan khakis

Sunday
Incoming State Commander
black polo shirt and slacks

*** Council of Administration members will be in
C of A for all C of A meetings (navy jacket and gray slacks)*

**HOLIDAY GATEWAY HOTEL
5353 GATEWAY CENTER
FLINT, MI 48507
810-232-5300**

AUXILIARY AMERICANISM CHAIR

BRENDA HILDERBRANDT

This last year it has been a wonderful that we have been able to get back together in person for meetings and conferences. We shared all the great things that our Auxiliaries are doing for our Veterans all across our Country.

We are meeting the goals of Flag Education by going into the schools and youth groups and teaching proper flag etiquette. We are also working within our communities showing citizens the proper way to display the American flag, and also by conducting public flag retirement ceremonies.

We have Promoted Patriotism by celebrating Patriotic Holidays and participating in Patriotic Parades while waving our flag, passing out flag codes and

giving out Pledge of Allegiance cards.

We haven't forgotten our POW/MIA Veterans as we continued to fly the POW/MIA flag in their honor. Many Auxiliaries have set up the Missing Man Table at their Post and Auxiliary functions. We have honored and recognized businesses with a certificate for flying that American flag and showing their patriotic support to country.

We recognized our Outstanding Teachers with the Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

We continue to support our Gold, Blue and White Star Families with tributes, memorials, donations, and inviting them to our Post/Auxiliary for a special dinners and occasions in their honor for their family member's sacrifice.

We have learned to Promote Americanism and how to connect with others throughout our individual communities on social media by using the first ever #AuxiliaryPatriotism. Use of social media outlets, along with the more traditional methods, allowed us the opportunity to show our community members that we are still here proudly serving our Veterans. Our main intent was for them to join with us in recognizing our local American Military heroes.

So, a sincere thank you to all the Auxiliaries that have completed so many of our projects within the Americanism Program! I am so very impressed with all the achievements during this 2021/2022 year and I look forward to many more great reports.

“THESE MAJESTIC HORSES HELP HEAL OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS”

With a boost, Rachael settled atop her beloved horse, Palette - and suddenly, all the pain and weriness of the past two years faded away. I feel alive again, Rachael thrilled, her heart filling with hope.

Things will get better, she realized. And she had just one though: *I wish I could share this feeling with others who are hurting.*

FOUR-LEGGED THERAPY

From the time she was a child, horses had been Rachael’s solace. Growing up, she spend countless hours at the farm across the road from her Goodrich, Michigan, home, helping care for and riding horses. At just 10, using saved birthday money, she bough her first horse. “Saba” became her best friend and confidant - especially when her mom remarried and her stepdad turned abusive. Eventually, her mom got the courage to leave, but all the turmoil had Rachael heading down the wrong path in high school. But through everything, Saba remained her anchor, and their bond helped Rachael get back on track.

After graduation, she studied equine management and science, and over the years, worked a variety of animal-related jobs. And every chance she had, she went riding with Saba and her foal, Palette.

Then in 2010, Rachel grew so weak that she could barely get out of bed. It took two years for her to be diagnosed with common variable immune deficiency, in which the body doesn’t produce antibodies to bacteria and viruses. During the darkest days, the one thing that kept Rachael going was her horses. She’d struggle to the stable.

Being able to touch them and nuzzle their soft manes lifted her spirit as she came to terms with her illness.

Now filled with gratitude, she decided, *I’m going to build a place where wounded souls can expereince the same healing love of horse.*

MAKING MIRACLES

In 2016, with her husband, Ted Gilmour, Rachel opened Equine Escape (equineescapeinc.org), welcoming special need, at-risk youth and wounded warriors.

“When I get anxious, I start holding my breath. But when I ride, I can feel my horse breathing, and I start breathing with her and I get calm,” says Melissa Everett, an Army vet who suffers from bipolar disorder and PTSD.

Since returning home, Rick Young, a veteran who served in Iraq, had been stampeding his way through life, always pushing himself and others. But the draft horse he chose insisted on setting the pace. “I pushed and pulled. Nothing worked. I finally threw up my hands. Lesson acknowledged.”

When Kent Thomas, who spent a year in Afghanistan, told Rachael he wasn’t sleeping, she gave him a series of exercises. “Lean forward and let your body rest against the horse’s neck,” she began, then, “Turn around, lie on your back with your head toward her flanks.”

“I had to trust and give myself over to the horse completely,” Kent says. “When it was over, I climbed into my car and bawled like a baby. At home, I slept like a baby 14 hours straight. Now, whenever I start feeling

edgy, my wife tells me it’s time to visit the horses.”

“You don’t realize how many issues you have until you get around a horse and feel comforted by them,” says Stephanie G., a wounded warrior who now volunteers at Equine Escape.

Rick agrees. “My horse, Gretel, is a great listener and an even better friend,” he says.

Rachael smiles knowngly. “You can’t hide your feelings from a horse,” she says. “And they don’t care what you look like, where you come from or your financial status. Their unconditional love and acceptance heals hearts and souls.”

- Written by Bill Holton for Woman’s World Magazine, November 8, 2021



Rick Young



Rachael Gilmour

MEET THE CANDIDATES

JERRY GORSKI

Candidate for National Jr. Vice Commander-In-Chief 2023-2024

NORM MAULDIN

Candidate for Big Ten Delegate 2022-2024

DEREK BLUMKE

Candidate for Dept. of Michigan Quartermaster 2022-2023

BRUCE BRIDSON

Candidate for Dept. of Michigan Judge Advocate 2022-2023

DON MARTINDALE

Candidate for Dept. of Michigan Surgeon 2022-2023

JAMES JOHNS

Candidate for Dept. of Michigan Chaplain 2022-2023

JIM MUYS

Candidate for Dept. of Michigan Chaplain 2022-2023

KIMBERLY NAPOLEON

Candidate for Dept. of Michigan Jr. Vice Commander 2022-2023

REINOLD YAHNKA

Candidate for Dept. of Michigan Jr. Vice Commander 2022-2023



My apologies for this issue being a bit behind. Navigating life with a full-time job, school, being

MOV@VFWMI.VET

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

WWI WWII KOREA VIETNAM
GULF IRAQ/ AFGHANISTAN
OTHER OCCUPATION FORCES

Galsterer, Fred 79 Air Force

Goheen, Gary 69 Navy/Vietnam

NEVER FORGET

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