

MICHIGAN OVERSEAS VETERAN

VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

SUMMER/FALL 25

2025-2026 VFW/AUXILIARY JOINT PROJECT

Our Mission is simple: We
Rescue One to Heal Another.

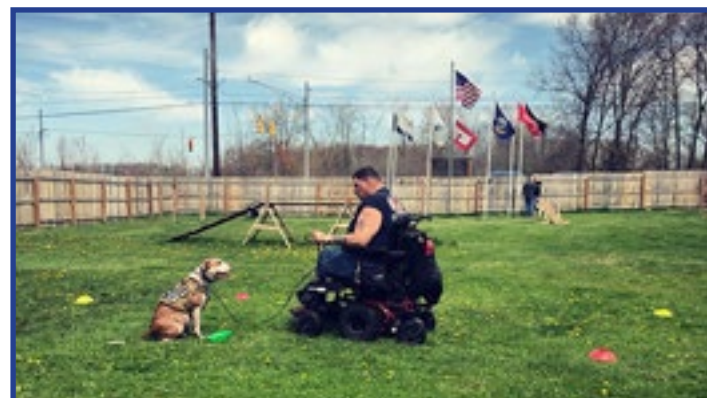
Blue Star Service Dogs rescues
shelter dogs, trains them, pairs
them with combat Veterans
diagnosed with invisible wounds,
and continues their training
together to be Service Dogs. We
support Veterans, their Families,
and service dogs to achieve the
transition from military to
civilian life.

State Commander Reinold Yahnka has announced that the Department VFW will join with the Department Auxiliary in promoting the State Auxiliary President's Special Project as the Joint VFW/Auxiliary project required by National for the 2025-26 year. The State President's Special Project is to support the Blue Star Service Dog organization. Blue Star Service Dogs is an organization that the Department VFW has endorsed for several years on our Resource webpage, but we have never done any targeted fundraising to support their programs. Posts may donate to support the VFW/Auxiliary Joint Project by sending a donation to Department Headquarters earmarked for "Blue Star Service Dogs" or "VFW/Aux Joint Project". Posts may donate any amount towards this project however, Post donations of \$50 or more will give the Post 10 points towards their All-State Program. Please join in this joint project effort to support this valuable Michigan resource that serves veterans and first responders. Please visit www.bluestarservicedogs.org to learn more.

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DEPARTMENT COMMANDER, REINOLD YAHNKA



Sessions (VTS) and have been getting great reviews on how informative they were. Thank you, Derek Braun, for taking on the added responsibility and doing a great job as the VTS Director. We are planning a last chance VTS for October 11, 2025. We have not selected a location at this time, but most likely it will be at the Department Headquarters. More to follow on this topic. Michigan Day at the National Home was a great success this year. We had 10 District Commanders and one District represented by its Junior Vice Commander out of twelve Districts. There were over 300 people in attendance, and the donations totaled from Districts, Posts, and Auxiliaries totaled over \$25,000.00. Ohio contributed a total of \$476,094.25 on the day before, which was the highest single-day donation ever from a state. So, the National Home took in over half a million dollars in two days.

C o m r a d e s ,
Sisters, and
Brothers, we are
off to an excellent
start for this
year. We have
completed our six
Veteran Training

Thank you to everyone who donated to the National Home. We have been making progress at Camp Trotter in preparing for next year's camping season. We met with several contractors who dealt with plumbing, electrical, and a new alarm system. Their bids will be back when we get back from the National Convention and will be acted on promptly to get the work completed. Comrades Scott Taylor, his son Ben, and Aaron Lonsway from VFW Harrison Post 1075 came up to Camp Trotter on August 1st and completed a lot of work. Scott brought up his skid steer, brush hog, forks, and chainsaws. They cut down over 20 trees and cleaned everything up after cutting them down. Scott also brush hogged around the perimeter of the property and opened up areas that had grown over with brush. This was done out of the kindness of these three individuals, and they would not take any compensation. In total, they probably saved the camp between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Thank you, Scott, Ben, and Aaron. I don't want to forget Mike Brady from District 14, who came down and helped Scott and his crew accomplish all of the tree cutting. On Friday, August 1st, your Chief (PSC), Ray Lopez, and yours


truly were mowing grass from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, getting the camp ready for Family Day. Barry Walter was also there, performing various tasks throughout the camp that day. He prepared food for all of the workers and completed several loads of laundry, mostly bed linens and towels from previous workers at the camp. Aaron McClung and his crew from District 9 came down the last two weekends and fixed all the support poles for the pavilion that needed to be replaced. They dug out the rotten posts and replaced them with new posts. We will be planning another working weekend soon. The National Convention will be over after this article comes out. Congratulations to all of the Posts, Commanders, and individuals who were recognized at the National Convention. Congratulations to Past State Commander Napoleon for being recognized as the Commander of an All-American Department. Mission completed. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Conference. It's going to be Halloween weekend, and our costume party is on Saturday night. Bring on your scariest or funniest costume. We will be meeting in a new venue, and I think everyone will enjoy it.

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- UPCOMING EVENTS
- **2025 National Home Golf Tournament:** September 12th at The Medalist Golf Club, Marshall, MI
 - **2025 National Auxiliary President Visit to Michigan:** September 17th-19th, Districts 4 & 5
 - **2025 Karmanos Classic Car Show:** September 20th, 7:00pm, at 1330 N Crooks Rd, Clawson, MI
 - **2025 Big 10 Conference:** October 17th-19th in Bettendorf, IA
 - **2025 Fall Conference:** October 29th-November 2nd in Mt. Pleasant, MI
 - **2026 Mid-Winter Conference:** January 30th-February 1st in Kalamazoo, MI
 - **2026 Michigan Pool League Tournament:** April 23rd-25th at VFW Post 9283, Southgate, MI
 - **2026 Michigan State Convention:** June 9th-13th, Kalamazoo, MI


DEPARTMENT SENIOR VICE COMMANDER,
LARRY THAYER



Greetings, Comrades, Brothers, and Sisters! First and foremost, thank you for the honor of electing me as your Senior Vice Commander. I am truly humbled by your trust and support. Congratulations to Commander Yahnka—I have no doubt you're poised for a fantastic year ahead. And to Junior Vice Commander Ben Light, congratulations as well. I look forward to working side by side with you to make this year a success for all. The 2025 All-State Program has officially launched and is well within reach for every Post and District. Remember, All-State isn't just about earning a white hat—the hat is a symbol of leadership and a reflection of an All-State Post or District's excellence and dedication. The membership goal for All-American, and now All-State as well, has been set at 101% by our Commander-in-Chief. Let's not wait until 2026—start recruiting and renewing now. To everyone who attended one of this year's outstanding VTS classes—well done! If you walked away without learning something, you might have been napping—because the information shared was truly invaluable. To the Posts that made an effort to secure a student for Voice of Democracy or Patriot's Pen and fell short—don't give up! Reach out to Department Director Mike; he will ensure you get the support you need. If there is anything I can do to assist you or your Post, please don't hesitate to reach out. I can be reached via phone at (989)413-1096 or via email at vfwlarry@aol.com. I'm here to serve.



DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT/QUARTERMASTER,
BARRY WALTER



Congratulations to our newly elected team of Officers: Reinold Yahnka, Larry Thayer, and Ben Light. With the support of the Council of Administration and the leadership of a great cast of Committee Directors, I am confident that Commander Yahnka is well prepared to have a successful Michigan year. As we come back from National Convention, we look back with pride on the successes of the 2024-25 year under the leadership of Commander Kimberly Napoleon. Department received All-American honors with 102.53% in membership. Eight Districts earned All-American honors. 61 Posts earned All-American honors. 174 Posts exceeded 100% in membership. 131 Posts exceeded 102% in membership. 98 Posts and 1 Riders Group were credited with participation in the 2025 VFW National Day of Service. Participation by Posts and Districts in VFW core programs and your generosity in donations supporting youth, disaster relief in other Departments, the VFW National Home, Gold Star Mothers, Cancer, homeless veterans, and the joint VFW/Auxiliary program are remarkable. Nobody does more for veterans than you, the members of the VFW of Michigan. The awards presented to Posts and Districts at the State Convention reflected your success. Congratulations! And now the new year has many new leaders and new challenges. To prepare for those challenges, many of our Post leaders have attended one of the six VTS classes conducted around the state. It is up to you to make use of the knowledge and experience you have to lead your Posts into a new year. Thank you for attending VTS, and let it be the beginning of what we hope will be a fun-filled, mission-driven year for the VFW of Michigan. We will return from National Convention with our first female Commander-in-Chief, with new partnerships and programs to further the mission of the VFW. I look forward to the year ahead and hope that our office can serve you, our members, as you deserve to be served.

@VFWMI & @VFWAUXMI
FIND US ON FACEBOOK

DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY DIRECTOR

BOB LUTZ

Comrades, I hope that everybody is in good health and spirits and enjoying our summer weather! I would like to remind everybody that in the National Manual of Procedure, Section 218, Duties and Obligations of the Commander, paragraph I, “assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded,” so it is each Post Commander’s duty to make sure that their Post is properly sending in their reports. I know that I have posted this before, but I just want to make sure that each Commander and future Commanders are aware of it. I have been receiving Post reports from more than one member, and this is a problem because there is a lot of double reporting going on. Each Commander should appoint one person to send in the reports, and the other Post members should turn them in to that person. Another problem we are having is some Posts are sending in numerous reports with one report on each one. All you have to do is

click on the green + sign, and you can report as many reports as you want on one submission. All reports should be done separately and not all on one line (example below). Remember, the 10th is a hard deadline. If your report is late, you will get credit for the report but not for that month. If you are having some problems with getting your report on time, let me know. Be proud of what the Post does and report it. Remember to put the value of the hall on your report. If you

rent the hall, it is not reportable; you have to donate it to get credit. If you give, for example, a 10% discount on the hall, it is not reportable; the Post is still making money on it. I have some Posts that keep claiming money value for hours donated; this is not reportable. I have some Posts that are claiming anywhere from \$9.25 an hour all the way to \$50.00 an hour. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact me via phone at (586)924-4591 or email at activity@vfwmi.org.

	VALUE	MEMBERS	HOURS	MILES
WRONG:				
donate hall to line dancers X4, scouts X2, homeowners X1	700	7	26	
CORRECT				
donate hall to line dancers X4	400	4	16	
donate hall to scouts X2	200	2	8	
donate hall to homeowners X1	100	1	2	



DEPARTMENT ALL-STATE DIRECTOR, MICHAEL MARTIN

it because there have been several changes to the program that make it even more exciting. Post Commanders should familiarize themselves with this year’s requirements and make plans to meet them. Many of the requirements are things your Post already does or

should be doing. Download and print the application/checklist and use it to keep track of your progress so you won’t suddenly realize that you are missing something. One of the more exciting things about this year’s All-State program is that Posts can design their own Community Service projects to better serve their local community. Contact me to get your projects approved in advance. There should have been many more All-State Posts last year because of the huge number of Posts that met or surpassed the membership goal of 102%. Most of those Posts probably met the

requirements for All-State status, but the Post Commanders, for whatever reason, did not send in the All-State application. When they failed to do so, they denied their Post the recognition they deserved for their hard work in serving veterans and the community. I hope to see many more Posts applying for the All-State recognition they deserve this year. More information about the requirements of the All-State Program is available on the website. If you have any questions about the program, please contact me at allstate@vfwmi.vet or 616-594-9151, and I will assist you.



DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR, WILLIAM (BUTCH) OGDEN

are due the end of the month following the end of the quarter. If you don’t file a March audit, you cannot submit a June audit. When the Post Commander signs the audit, he is declaring it is a true and accurate document. Comrades, when you submit an audit, Department does

Congratulations to all the newly elected Officers and appointees. Comrades, this year started on May 1st, so as a reminder: audits not need a copy of your bank statements or the Quartermaster Report, just the audit. If the audit is not signed by all three trustees, the Post Commander must submit a letter stating the reason for the absent signature(s). When submitting the audit, make sure that all information is recorded. Comrades, the National By-Laws state that a relief fund shall be established and maintained by the Post. There are too many Post audits that don’t have a relief fund. On the audit form you are to include the amount of your bond, which is to be greater than your assets, the date of the expiration,

and who the bonding company is. This year for filing an inspection report, you must submit proof that it has been filed with the IRS. Department does not want a copy of your 990 or 990T. To those that are doing inspections, please print legibly and make sure the report is signed by the Inspector and the Post Commander and printed names. The inspections must be completely filled out with no blank entries, as they will be sent back for completion. As a final reminder, you are inspecting the Post, so make sure you visibly see all documents needed for the inspection.

ALL GAVE
SOME

SOME GAVE
ALL

DEPARTMENT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

SCOTT TAYLOR

Comrades, here are the legislative priorities as set forth by the State Commander and approved by the members for our State Legislative Agenda. I, along with Co-Director Derek Blumke and Doug Brinker, met with Michigan State Representative Kathy Schmaltz on Thursday, July 24th, 2025, at her office in the Capital Building in Lansing. Our topic of discussion for this meeting was the overprescribing of psychotropic prescription medications, which has been shown to cause an increase in overall reported suicides as a result. This is an issue that is common in the veteran and civilian population, so it is being looked at and discussed as a statewide epidemic that also has a nationwide nexus. Comrade Blumke has been working on this project for over seven years now. At the conclusion of our meeting with Representative Schmaltz, it was determined there is a need to hold a Committee Hearing. Representative Schmaltz will be coordinating this hearing, and we will keep you updated as we make progress on this important legislation. As a reminder, if you have not signed up for the VFW Legislative Action Corp email notifications, please go to vfwaux1599.org, go to the Programs dropdown, click on Legislative, and scroll to the bottom for instructions on how to sign up. If you have any questions, reach out to me or Comrade Blumke.



DEPARTMENT SURGEON, AARON MCCLUNG

As your new Department Surgeon and Hospital Chair, I'm thrilled to kick off what I believe will be an incredible year for our Department. My mission is set on empowering every Post to shine through the Hospital Program, and I'm committed to making sure you have everything you need to succeed. This year, my top priority is to help all Posts understand not just how to report your amazing work, but also what activities count as reportable. Every Post is doing meaningful work, and I want to see those efforts recognized! If you have any questions, please reach out to me—I'm here to help. You can find a detailed guide on reportable activities in the Hospital Program section of the Department website. To make things even easier, I'm ready to visit your District or Post meetings to provide hands-on training on reporting and share exciting ideas for programs your Post can take part in. The Hospital Program is designed to be simple and inclusive, with plenty of resources to support you every step of the way. I'm truly excited about what we can achieve together this year. Let's make our collective impact stronger than ever as we serve our veterans and communities. Reach out, get involved, and let's make this a year to remember!



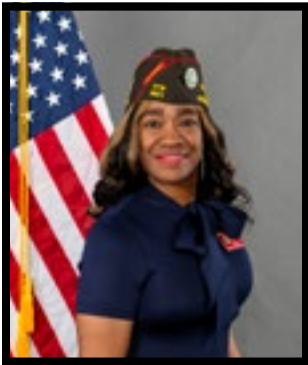
DEPARTMENT VOD/PP/TOY DIRECTOR, MICHAEL MARTIN

By now your Post should be in full support of the Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, and Teacher of the Year programs. This year the theme for both essay programs is "How are you showing patriotism and support for our country?" Reach out to the schools, both public and private, including parochial schools. Don't forget to reach out to homeschooled students. You can also send information to organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other student-oriented organizations. If your Post has a membership table at an event, make sure they have entry forms for both the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen available at their table. Remember, students do not need to be related to a VFW or Auxiliary member to enter these programs. If you would like a flyer that is particular to your Post and includes QR codes for both Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen, email me the name of your Post Chairperson and their email address, and I will create the flyer and email it to you so you can copy and distribute it in your area. Just email me the required information at scholarships@vfwmi.vet. Districts and Posts should be selecting their judges right now also. You should have a minimum of three judges, with five to nine judges preferred. Your judges cannot be connected to the VFW or the Auxiliary in any way. Selecting your judges now will prevent any last-minute scramble to find qualified judges. While Scholar's App is not mandatory this year for the Posts and Districts you should become familiar with it. I have training videos available for both Post and District Chairpersons, which you can receive by emailing me and letting me know which video you would like to receive. I am looking forward to another successful response to this very important program. For more information, please visit VFWMI.org and click on "Programs." I am also available via email or phone call if you have any questions.



DEPARTMENT VTS DIRECTOR, DEREK BRAUN

Comrades, I would like to thank Commander Yahnka for the appointment and the opportunity to meet so many of you. The Commanders, Officers, members, and Auxiliaries of Posts 2780 Traverse City, 3651 Midland, 2406 Charlotte, 6695 Plymouth, Post 2891 Crystal Falls, and the staff of Camp Trotter for their hosting of VTS (Veterans Training Seminar). Your warm welcome to the presenters and trainers, and the immaculate conditions of your Posts contributed to the overall success of the training sessions. Comrades, none of these training sessions would have been successful without you. Your openness, willingness to engage, ask questions, and challenge the instructors made each session unique and allowed us to customize the instruction to the needs of your specific Districts and Posts. There is one VTS session remaining on October 11th; this is your last chance this year to not only maintain your All-State eligibility but to also gain some very useful information to take back to your Post and its members to help with your successful operations.



NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRWOMAN, KIMBERLY NAPOLEON

Greetings, Comrades and Auxiliary Family! With another year in the books, I am refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready to hit the ground running (along with my newly appointed assistant, Past State Commander Ray Lopez) on behalf of the over 441,000 veterans (and the many family members) in the State of Michigan. This year, we have some particularly important pieces of legislation that will be coming up for votes in the House and the Senate. We must continuously, as we have in the past, be diligent about making the Department of Michigan VFW voice heard to our elected officials on Capitol Hill. I am excited to see what this year brings, and this leads me to my first article of the quarter. The VFW National Legislative Services Office establishes VFW's legislative priorities and advocates on veterans' behalf. By interacting directly with congressional members, the VFW has played an instrumental role in nearly every piece of veterans' legislation passed since the beginning of the 20th century. Everything we do on Capitol Hill is with the VFW's Priority Goals and veterans' well-being in mind. With the strength of the more than 1.4 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary, our voice on Capitol Hill cannot and will not be ignored! For nearly 75 years, the VFW's annual Washington Conference has given an opportunity for VFW leaders from each state to personally lobby their respective lawmakers and watch as the VFW's current

Commander-in-Chief testifies on Capitol Hill before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on behalf of veterans. These scheduled meetings for your elected legislators are coordinated by your Department National Legislative Committee Member. The meetings are intentional, direct, and to the point—delivering our organizational priority goals and stating our “why” for them. We also have lawmakers who do not necessarily have our best interests at heart. We respectfully give our “why not” as we deliver our opposition. Such is the case with the CHOICE Act, authored by District 1 Congressman Jack Bergman, who also happens to be a Llife Member of the organization. As many of you know, one of the VFW's major priority goals over the past few years has been getting the Major Richard A. Star Act passed. The bill is named in honor of Major Richard A. Star, a decorated war veteran who was forced to medically retire due to his combat-related injuries before obtaining the necessary 20 years of service. Current law prohibits concurrent receipt of DOD retirement benefits and VA disability payments to those combat-wounded veterans medically retired prior to obtaining the full 20 years and has a dollar-for-dollar offset for those veterans who do not have at least a 50% VA disability rating or higher. These are two different types of benefits, one earned for time served and the other compensation for the ill or injured as a consequence of sacrificial service. This is unjust and unfair. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Ranking Member Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID), and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) announced they

are filing the Major Richard Star Act as an amendment to the annual must-pass defense bill, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This bipartisan amendment, if adopted, would eliminate the dollar-for-dollar offset that currently affects more than 50,000 medically retired combat veterans, many of whom had fewer than 20 years of service or disability ratings below 50%, thereby affording them their full earned Department of Defense retirement and awarding VA disability compensation payments concurrently. At the time of this article's submission, the bill has 76 co-sponsors, including Michigan's two Senators, Navy Lt. Gary Peters and Elissa Slotkin, who was recruited by the CIA as a Middle East Analyst serving 3 tours in Baghdad over the span of her 5 years of military service. Grassroots advocacy is critical to determining what will make its way into final authorization and appropriation bills, and lawmakers want to hear what is important to their constituents. We have asked for previous support, and in the last three Congressional Sessions, Michigan's Senators have not wavered in their commitment to right this wrong and do what's right for those who have sacrificed their bodies, minds, and some even their lives. As the National Legislative Committee Assistant Chairwoman and your National Legislative Committee Member Representative, I am asking all to contact the offices of these legislators and thank them for their support of this important piece of legislation. Gary Peters' office can be reached at (202)224-6221 and Elissa Slotkin's office at (202)224-4822. Major Star lost his battle with cancer on February 13, 2021.

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POST REPORTS

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POST 582 - ORTONVILLE



Post Commander Dennis Hoffman along with Brandon High School freshman Abigale Radke placing flags on veterans graves at the Ortonville Cemetery for Memorial Day.



Post presented Ortonville senior center with a \$500.00 donation to help fund a community 4th of July BBQ, about 350 community members enjoyed the celebration.

On a sunny Memorial Day morning, more than 500 members of the Romeo community gathered at Romeo Cemetery to honor the men and women who gave their lives in service to our country. The Striber-McVicar VFW Post 2052 hosted the ceremony, which featured U.S. Congresswoman Lisa McClain as the keynote speaker. Standing among rows of flags and solemn faces, McClain delivered heartfelt remarks about the importance of remembering our fallen heroes and expressed deep gratitude for the sacrifices made by Gold Star families. Congresswoman McClain spoke with sincerity about the debt we owe to those who never returned home and the families who bear that loss every day. “To our Gold Star families, no words can fully capture what you have endured, no words can make whole what has been lost, but know this: your sacrifice does not go unnoticed, your loved ones are remembered, and your strength inspires our nation. When we speak of heroes, we speak of your sons and daughters, your husbands and wives, and your mothers and fathers.” Following the ceremony, the community gathered at the VFW Post for a complimentary lunch, offered as a gesture of unity and remembrance. Veterans and civilians shared stories, honored the memory of the fallen, and recognized many of their own. The event served not only as a moment of reflection but also as a powerful reminder of the bond between a grateful community and those who serve to protect it.

- Troy Kosal, Commander.



Past State Commanders Ron Amend and David Miller took a three-day trip to visit longtime friend Comrade James Pintar, Life Member of the Rangers Post 6165 in South Range. Jim took time to take Ron and David around Northern Michigan, including the Copper Harbor area, stopping at the beginning of US 41. Jim is very active with the Veteran of Foreign Wars, his Post, and the community, chairing projects like saving the Champion Mine Shaft Number 4. They also visited Mountain View South Range Cemetery for Veterans and Spouses, which has 450 crosses and 58 flagpoles with a veterans section and a veterans cremation section. They refer to this cemetery as "Arlington North." The Post Auxiliary once a month has pasties for sale; they cook 540 to 600 every month. Ron and David were drafted to bag pasties the second day of their visit.



When Posting to social media use #VFWPostPride

POST 8872 - PORT SANILAC

In celebration of Flag Day on June 14th, VFW Post 8872 placed 74 flags on the perimeter fence and around the gazebo in the Harbor Park in Port Sanilac. It coincided with Music in the Park that evening, where a 50/50 drawing took place and the name drawn received a 3'x5' American flag from the Post. In addition, an 8"x12" flag was given to everyone in attendance as they left the park.



POST 8964 - OVID

Newaygo, MI – Ovid Memorial Post 8964 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has completed a vital repair project at the pavilion of VFW Camp Trotter for Children in Newaygo, Michigan. The initiative addressed significant wear and rot in several support posts, ensuring the pavilion's continued safety and durability for community use. Post Commander Art Jones and Quartermaster/Adjutant Aaron

McClung began the project on Friday, July 18, completing it over three days. The team replaced five 6x6 posts that showed visible signs of deterioration. Each replacement involved excavating 40 inches to reach the footer, removing the damaged post, and splicing in a new 5-foot section of pressure-treated wood. To maintain structural stability during the process, temporary load supports were used, with a floor jack

providing additional reinforcement while the old posts were swapped for new ones. The installation of the new, pressure-treated posts is expected to significantly enhance the pavilion's longevity, preserving an essential space for veterans and their families at Camp Trotter. This project highlights Ovid Post 8964's commitment to maintaining and improving facilities that serve the camping community.



VFW STORE AD





VFW K-9 LEASH Polyester with Combat Tested logo. 1 x 60". Made in the USA. 1613 \$11.95

VFW K-9 PATCHES Sew-on patch is sealed on back. Tactical patch has hook-and-loop back to attach to tactical gear. 3 x 3.5". Imported.

8167 Sew-on	\$7.00
8199 Tactical	\$8.00

VFW

VFWSTORE.ORG

COLLAPSIBLE DOG BOWL Red with VFW Logo screened in white. Silicone. 5 x 2". Imported. 1090 \$4.95

COOTIE CORNER



Eric Bell, newly elected as the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie, touts "Just some of what we do."



Past Grand of Michigan Commander Russ Makowski, Supreme Blanket Bum Eric Bell, and Grand Command of Michigan Mark Rosiak posed for a picture at the Cootie Table on Michigan Day at the National Home for Children, Eaton Rapids, MI. A great time was had by all and a "lousy" time it was.



From left to right, appointed Supreme Officers Eddie Dandridge Sr., Hazel White, and Russell Makowski.

News from National Convention

The Grand (State) of Michigan was presented with an Excellence Award for completing over 350% in Hospital work from Pup Tents (Posts) across the State of Michigan, along with multiple Pup Tent membership and special project awards. Grand (State) Commander Mark Rosiek from VFW Post 423 in Ann Arbor (PT-42 Yardbirds) accepted the award. Hazel White from VFW Post 1859 in Saginaw (PT-17 Wanigas) was presented with the Supreme Sky Pilot (Chaplain) of the Year Award for her outstanding Cootie Sky Pilot service to the Grand of Michigan and to the Supreme organization. Eric Bell from VFW Post 345 in Redford (PT-21 Gremlin) was elected as the Supreme Commander. Eric is only the 7th Michigander to hold this position since Cootie inception in 1920. Rosalyn Dandridge (VFW AUX) from VFW 1794 in Mt. Clemens (PT-32 Auxiliary Caraboa) was elected as the Supreme Junior Vice President. Eddie Dandridge Sr. from VFW 1794 in Mt Clemens (PT-32 Caraboa) was appointed Supreme Chief of Staff. Robert Routhier Jr. from VFW Post 1859 in Saginaw (PT-17 Wanigas) was appointed Supreme Deputy Chief of Staff. Russell Makowski from VFW Post 1519 in Northville (PT-12 Leaky Beer Hill) was appointed Supreme VFW National Home Chairman. Hazel White from VFW Post 1859 in Saginaw (PT-17 Wanigas) was appointed Supreme Deputy Provost Marshall.



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT, DEBBIE SCHEETZ

I am honored to be serving as your 2025-26 Department President of the VFW Auxiliary. It has been a long road to get here, with some trials and tribulations but also with camaraderie and friendship. This year, as well as the past 2 years, I am honored to be standing next to Reinold Yahnka, your Department

VFW Commander. Together, we are striving to have a year of unity and accomplish the tasks that need to be done but to have fun along the way, too! We are here for all members of the organizations as well as the families of the veterans, our communities, and our youth. We have many activities throughout the year that we hope you will participate in—like our Conferences/Conventions, your District meetings and events, and all our fundraising opportunities. My

President's Special Project is to raise money for the Blue Star Service Dogs in Pinckney, Michigan. They rescue shelter dogs, train them, and pair them with veterans or first responders and continue training them to become service dogs. It is a great cause that is needed, and Reinold was gracious enough to pick them to be our joint project! For more information go to either of the Department websites. I look forward to a great year serving our organizations and all veterans!



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, JASON MANKE

As I'm writing this article, we are getting ready to attend the VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Ohio, and I reflect on all the great times and great friends I've met over the years while attending the National Convention.

I would encourage every member to attend at least once in their lifetime. Trust me when I say you won't regret it! This year Michigan is looking forward to seeing Past Department President Jane Dady inducted into the Circle of Excellence, and we're hoping Michigan can bring home some National Program awards. I am looking forward to serving this great Department as your Sr. Vice

President. If there is anything I can do for an Auxiliary please let me know. To President Debbie and the other Officers, I'm just a phone call away if you need something. I'm going to end this article with a quote that's from my heart: "You are a true leader when you help your team become successful. Remember, leadership is not about you; it's all about the people you serve."



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT, JAN PASSMORE

I have now progressed from being your Department Auxiliary Chaplain to being your Department Auxiliary Junior

Vice President. I'm looking forward to continuing to follow the path to the high office of Department President. If you are now the District Auxiliary Junior Vice President, I welcome you to being a part of the 2027-2028 year. I'm available by phone at 989-292-0917 or email at janione@frontier.com. We will be

meeting at the Fall and Mid-Winter Conferences and the 2026 Department Convention. I hope to see you all at the Fall Conference. I ask that you continue to support our Department President Debbie Scheetz and the programs that she has set for the 2025-2026 year. We want her year to be as wonderful as it can be!



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN, DIANA WARD

Greetings, Sisters, Brothers, and Comrades! For those of you that may not know me, my name is Diana Ward, and I have the great privilege of serving as

your Department Americanism Chairman for the 2025-2026 year. I have been a member of Curtis-Wolverton Auxiliary #3243 in Fenton since 1991 but literally grew up in the VFW, having parents that were active since 1972. My eligibility is through my father, James Ward, a 20-year Navy veteran who served in Korea, Vietnam, Guam, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines—just to name a few. He also served as a United States Air Marshal. My mother, Viola Ward, was also a Navy veteran. They are my “why,” along with all the other members of my family scattered across the US who have served. As so many of you, we know many veterans, so the National and Department themes really speak to us and our American pride. The National theme is “From Sea to Shining Sea: Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free,” and our Department President Debbie's theme is “We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All.” What is Americanism? We might all have an idea, and maybe it is different for each of us, but essentially, it comes down to our pride in our country and promoting the ideals established by our founding fathers. In February 1927, VFW representatives along with several other patriotic organizations attended a conference, and they defined Americanism as “an unfailing love of country; loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity.” This year, we will work to uphold this concept of Americanism through education to our members, our communities, and the children who will someday be the backbone and leaders of our great nation; we will promote Americanism through leading by example—flying your American and POW/MIA flags, observance of patriotic holidays both known and obscure, practicing proper flag etiquette, and distribution of flags; honoring our Star families for the sacrifices their families have given; encouraging the education of our youth through recognition of our teachers; and mentoring of our members and the traditions of the VFW Auxiliary. Starting with September and continuing through December, we have so many opportunities to promote Americanism. I'm just going to give you a little taste here, but please check out my bulletins and the Americanism Facebook page for more detailed information. Please take the time to share your own stories and projects. Let me know when you are having an Americanism event; I'd love to come and also promote it through our Department. September is National Service Dog Month. This would be a great time to make a donation to Department Commander Reinhold and Department President Debbie's joint special project, Blue Star Service Dogs. Many of us are familiar with V-J Day (9/2), Patriot's Day (9/11), the U.S. Air Force birthday (9/18), and POW/MIA recognition (9/19). You may not know about

Uncle Sam Day (9/13), Mayflower Day (9/16), Constitution Day (9/17), Air National Guard birthday (9/18), Gold Star Mothers Day (9/28), and VFW Day (9/29). Remember that Sept. 7-13 is National Suicide Prevention Week. In October, we have Columbus Day (10/13), U.S. Navy Birthday (10/13), Day of the Deployed (10/26), and Navy Day (10/27). The Navy birthday and Navy Day are two separate observances—look for more information on this in my bulletin. In November we have the Marine Corps birthday (11/10) and both Veterans Day and Armistice Day on November 11th. Here's some wild information: I have always been raised with the concept that Veterans Day is celebrated at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. However, according to veterans.com, this designation is actually intended for Armistice Day because this is when the Armistice was signed to end WWI. Everyone knows of Pearl Harbor Day on December 7th, but other observance days are Civil Air Patrol birthday (12/1), U.S. National Guard birthday (12/13), and Wreaths Across America (12/13). The Auxiliaries are doing such a great job with their Americanism reports, and so many of your projects are enlightening as to how much you do. The next deadline for quarterly reporting is October 31, 2025. Don't forget that Teacher of the Year Nominations are due to the Posts by October 31, 2025. When reporting flags, please be sure to give me the exact number of flags and the cost of the flags. If you ever have questions or need assistance, I can be reached on my cell at (810) 955-2931 or by email at legalblaze@aol.com. I'm looking forward to a great year!



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT CHIEF-OF-STAFF, MARILYN MALICK

I would like to begin by congratulating Commander Reinold Yahnka and President Debbie Scheetz and their Officers on their new positions and wish them a

successful year. As Extension Chairman, it is my job to assist in maintaining the VFW Auxiliaries that we currently have and to help VFW Posts in our state establish new VFW Auxiliaries. The first goal of maintaining current Auxiliaries is something that we all have to play a part in. Find ways to get involved and to get others involved. Get motivated and get others motivated as well! Utilize the Healthy Auxiliary Toolkit that can be found on the National website at www.vfwauxiliary.org and the Department website at www.vfwauxmi.org. Find out what is going on in the organization by reading the program blogs. And above all else, support all veterans! If you have any questions throughout the year, do not hesitate to call or text me at 586-536-6004 or via email at MJMalick@msn.com. Another goal is to assist VFW Posts in our state to establish new VFW Auxiliaries. What are some of the benefits of having a VFW Auxiliary in your Post? It can open the doors

to new membership in the Post; help with family-oriented events and meal preparation; help spread the word on Scholarship programs and other VFW programs, including Buddy Poppy Drives; boost the Post's visibility in the community by being involved in more local activities and events; and help to serve more veterans, active-duty military, and their families. Your VFW Post can have all of these benefits and more by starting a VFW Auxiliary in your Post! If you are interested or would like someone to come into your Post to speak to your members about starting an Auxiliary, please reach out to me using the contact information listed above.



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN, KRIS GRIFFITH

My name is Kris Griffith, and I have the honor of being your Department Chaplain. I am a member of Auxiliary #4093 in the 6th District, and I am very grateful for their support as I continue this journey. I would like to congratulate Commander Yanka and President Scheetz and wish them a successful year. I am excited about this year and look forward to working with your Department Officers and all our Auxiliaries to make this a great year! I also look forward to visiting with old friends and meeting new ones throughout the year, whether it be at a District meeting, conferences, or other VFW Auxiliary functions held throughout the year.

AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT FUNDRAISING CHAIRMAN

CARRIE TURNER

The VFW Auxiliary is a charitable service organization involved at local, District, and Department levels. The community service and charitable works we do are entirely dependent on the giving of time and funds. Each level of the organization has multiple fundraising streams and different uses for the funds. Funding primarily comes from the activities of members (dues, personal giving, and the investment of time, helping do the projects to raise funds and serve the mission). Most charitable organizations are operated by a very small percentage of their total membership; potentially 5-10% are actively participating. They attend the meetings and conferences, do the administrative tasks, support the physical location (Post), plan and work events, promote membership, solicit donations, do program activities, travel, and ensure the all-around success of the group. They give of themselves—freely and with purpose—weekly, monthly, annually—year after year. Every year we seem to fish in this same pond—a small number of members—to provide the majority of the support. Our goal is to more actively engage the other 90-95% of our members and local communities. “More hands make light work”—encouraging more participation could help distribute the activities and support needed and bring in new ideas and connections. In lieu of time, if more members can make small financial donations, that would also be very helpful. We must also get out into the community, show who we are and what we do, provide opportunities for ways others can support the mission, and invite them to join us as members. Planning our own public events or joining in community events are great ways to engage more supporters while they enjoy the fun. For examples of fun activities you could do in your Post or community, please visit our Facebook page—VFW Aux Fundraising-Michigan!



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT HOSPITAL CHAIRMAN, ANN BACKHURST

The Hospital Program is the oldest continuous Program in the VFW Auxiliary, and one in which we work toward making it fun for the veterans while honoring their service. The Hospital Program is successful because of the many Auxiliary members who volunteer their time and talent to the various VA hospitals, non-affiliated hospitals, and nursing and state veterans homes. This year I would like to have 100% of Michigan Auxiliaries participate in the program in some way. The 2024-2025 Department of Michigan Hospital Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Judy Fell, Auxiliary 8945, District 15 in the U.P. of Michigan. Congratulations, Judy!



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT YOUTH ACTIVITIES/CAMP TROTTER, KELLY SMYCZYNSKI

Greetings to all! Summer is over, and a new school year is upon us. It's time to get into your schools and homeschool groups to promote the Illustrating America 2D Art Contest. Don't forget to include the youth within your own family. The contest is open to current students in grades K-8. The deadline for entries to your local Auxiliary is March 31st, Department by April 15th, and National by May 5th. Hopefully you've all begun your Reading Buddy Program; partner up with a school or host the program at your Post. Choose books from the Patriotism through Literacy booklist (can be found on MALTA) to be read to youth or for the youth to read to veterans, then donate those books to your local libraries and/or schools. Have you identified your youth groups? After-school groups, Boy/Girl Scout troops, and church youth groups are just some ideas of youth groups you could sponsor—and those groups can assist with your other programs and events. Harness the energy of youth. Let them help with setup, teardown, serving, and assembling care packages. Have you recognized their service? Citations are available on MALTA to recognize individuals and groups for their patriotism and service to our veterans. There was no youth camp this year, as there were items that needed to be addressed to meet current State of Michigan regulations. Even though there was no youth camp this summer, much-needed maintenance continued throughout the summer. Clean-up days were by sign-up, rather than predetermined. Thank you to those who came alone and/or as part of a group to help! Camp Trotter was open for other events. The Golf Outing was June 22nd, and Family Day was August 2nd. I'm sure I'm not the only one looking forward to camping season next year!



AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN, MARIAN BELAIRE

Greetings, veterans and family members of veterans. I'm Marian Belaire, and I am the Membership Chairman for the Department of Michigan VFW Auxiliary for the year 2025-2026. First, I would like to thank all the veterans for their service. Let's face it, family members of veterans have served as well, just not in harm's way. What I love to do, more than anything, for this organization is to support veterans and their families in so many different ways. The VFW Auxiliary is the oldest veterans service organization. Since 1914, the VFW Auxiliary has been bringing services, information, and help to veterans at home and abroad, as well as to their families. Each year, the Auxiliary members do things such as volunteer at VA hospitals, march in parades, work with youth groups to teach patriotism, write to legislators in support of veterans' issues, and join with other organizations in the communities to help those in need. In addition, we support the National Home

for Children in Eaton Rapids, where there are forty-two homes. Were you aware that there's a camp in Newaygo called Camp Trotter, on Bills Lake, where children from 7 through 12 can go and have an amazing time in a safe environment? There are also scholarship opportunities that are open to children from Michigan. These scholarships can be lucrative and involve multiple opportunities in writing and the arts. Of course, none of this happens without the hard work and dedication of our members. As our membership base ages, we're in need of new members, especially those with a wide array of skills. But what we need more than anything are members who have a passion to help. As you can see below, the membership wheel explains who is eligible to join our organization. Since 2015, men have been eligible to join the VFW Auxiliary. There's no better way, in my opinion, to honor your veteran than to join us in our mission-critical efforts to help veterans. Please help us help our heroes! Lastly, our Auxiliary finally has its own QR code! It's amazing, and I know now that so many are tech savvy; this is so easy to use. All you do is

point your mobile device's camera at the QR code and hit download. You will find information about our Auxiliary, a fillable application, and a site where you can find the nearest VFW Post. The prospective member fills out the application, prints it out, and brings that with the DD214 or other form of eligibility to the next Auxiliary meeting. This is much easier than carrying around paperwork, don't you agree? With your help we will ensure our organization will be around for another 100 years to continue taking care of our veterans. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 248-345-2442 (call or text) or via email at mbelairemvf@yahoo.com, or go to www.vfwauxiliary.org.



DISTRICT COMMANDER REPORTS



DISTRICT 4 COMMANDER, BRIAN MARTIN

Comrades, it is my honor to bring you this update on behalf of the Fighting Fourth District. As we reflect on the last quarter and prepare for the next, I want to begin by offering heartfelt congratulations to Past District Commander Tracy Nagy for achieving All-American District Commander honors. This marks only the sixth time in our District's history that we've achieved All-American, and Comrade Nagy becomes the first female commander in District 4 to receive this distinction. Her leadership, commitment, and tireless advocacy for our Posts and veterans made this milestone possible. I would also like to recognize the Posts whose hard work and dedication earned them All-American Post Status: City of Wyandotte Post 1136, Grand River & Police/Firefighters Post 1519, James Europe Post 2233, Livonia Post 3941, Conroy-Reyne-McNeil Post 4422, Huron River Post 4434, and CPL Lambert A. Pfeiffer Jr. Post 9283. To those Posts with active Auxiliaries, please know that your support was instrumental in our success. We thank you. I would also like to congratulate the Department of Michigan Commander Reinold Yahnka and the Department of Michigan Auxiliary President Debbie Scheetz. District 4 is excited for the year ahead and ready to make a lasting impact on the lives of our veterans. It is a privilege to work alongside District 4 Auxiliary President RoseAnn Boguslawski. Together, we are focused on a shared mission

of unity, service, and advocacy. This year, we are rallying around the newly opened Fisher House in Detroit. We are calling on every Post and Auxiliary to support this cause through both monetary donations and volunteer time. We know District 4 will go all the way and then some in supporting our veteran families during their time of need. District 4 has remained highly engaged over the last three months. Many of our Posts hosted or participated in Memorial Day ceremonies and parades, helping communities across Wayne County reflect on the meaning of sacrifice and freedom. On June 14, Southgate Post 9283 hosted its third annual Flag Retirement Ceremony in partnership with Michigan Memorial Funeral Home and Cemetery. In mid-June, I had the distinct honor of attending a Purple Heart Medal Presentation for Comrade Matthew Fisher of Redford Post 345; Congresswoman Rashida Talib helped secure his rightful recognition. On July 4th, District leadership joined community celebrations in Wyandotte and Westland. I was honored to march in the Wyandotte Independence Day Parade with District Auxiliary President RoseAnn Boguslawski, Jr. Vice Commander Joseph Cotton, and many other representatives from across the District. That evening, Commander Mike Rokita and Bova Engineers Post 9885 in Westland hosted a truly spectacular fireworks display, one of the best I've seen in my life. Throughout the first week of July, District 4 hosted a VFW membership booth at the Uncle Sam Jam in Woodhaven. Even with thunderstorms threatening to shut us down, we were able to recruit eight new members

into our ranks. Thank you to everyone who braved the weather and stayed committed to the mission. On July 13, the Department hosted a well-attended VTS training at Post 6695 – Mayflower-Lt. Gamble in Plymouth. On July 26, Commander Mike Lewis and the members of Flat Rock VFW Post 9363 Miller-Strawn hosted a PTSD and Suicide Prevention Class. Also on July 26, we held our annual District 4 Family Day Picnic, strengthening bonds between members, Auxiliaries, families, and friends. District 4 was also well represented at Michigan Day at the National Home, with members in attendance from Posts 1136, 2233, 4230, 6695, 9283, and 9363. Our commitment to the legacy of the National Home remains steadfast. While we celebrate what we've achieved, we must keep our eyes on the work ahead. I have been actively engaged in discussions with local and state officials on legislative priorities that directly impact our veterans, such as: Parking Protections for Disabled Veterans, Liquor License Expansion, Legal Gaming in Clubrooms, and Wayne County VSO Staffing. We are all still pushing for the Commander's Group Legislative Priorities, and I will continue to advocate with local, county, and state officials to ensure that Wayne County veterans are not left behind. This quarter has shown us once again that the Fighting Fourth District is defined by service, sacrifice, and unity. To every Commander, member, Auxiliary leader, and volunteer—thank you. Your dedication powers this mission. Together, we honor the past, serve in the present, and shape a better future for our veterans.



DISTRICT 5 COMMANDER, DANE BEZEMEK

Greetings, Fighting Fifth Comrades! I look forward to working with you this next year and want to offer my thanks to Commander

Jon Adams for his successful year. First,

congratulations to all of District 5 Posts that achieved All-American for 2024-2025 and our All-State Posts. Congratulations to the Fighting Fifth's own Comrade Ben Light for his election to Department Junior Vice Commander. I encourage each Post to ensure they are reporting for both the Program and Hospital reports; let's get credit for the good things we are

doing. The District Commander of the Year program is closely aligned to the All-State Requirements, so I encourage you to work on both programs and get your Post recognized for doing what we do best in supporting our veterans. I look forward to visiting each Post this coming year, and thank you to my fellow District Line Officers for assisting me this year.



DISTRICT 7 COMMANDER, SCOTT HOLMES

Greetings, fellow Comrades of the Working 7th. As we start a new year, congratulations to Reinhold Yanhka, our new Department

Commander. I look forward to working with him and all the newly elected/appointed Line Officers and the members of the Council of Administration. We shall have a successful year as we all work together to fulfill our mission, Aim High for Veterans. Every Post should be looking at becoming All-American and All-State. These programs are what every Post should be accomplishing and reporting throughout the year. All

of us should be using the National and Department checklists to guide you on completing these tasks. This year the membership goal is 101%, which means most Posts might only need one or two new or expired members to reach this goal. I cannot stress the importance of doing your monthly Community Service and Hospital reports. These are to be completed no later than the 10th of each following month. The reports are not just saying what your Post accomplished in your community but serve to prove your nonprofit status if your Post was ever challenged. National uses these reports as well when they are in front of our Congressional Leadership to show what we do for all veterans and their constituents across the country. The

start of a new school year is close at hand. Ensure you make early contact with the schools in your area and distribute this year's Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy scholarship applications. Make sure to have the students include the Student Biographical Form and the Student Release, and let them know we need a head and shoulder picture for each application. Fall Conference in Mt. Pleasant is on the horizon. If you plan on attending, make your reservation soon. More information regarding hotels is on the Department website. As of publishing, District 7's first meeting will be completed; our next two meetings will be Nov 9th in Marcellus and May 3rd in Decatur. Have a great and safe summer and fall!



DISTRICT 11 COMMANDER, BRUCE BRIDSON

Greetings, Comrades, Brothers, and Sisters! On behalf of District 11, I extend our warmest congratulations to the newly elected

Department Officers: Commander Reinold Yahnka, Senior Vice Commander Larry Thayer, Junior Vice Commander Ben Light, Auxiliary President Debbie Sheetz, Senior Vice President Jason Manke, and Junior Vice President Jan Passmore. We also salute all newly appointed Officers at the Department level. Your dedication and leadership are deeply appreciated, and we stand united in support of your mission. District 11 sends sincere wishes for another successful and record-breaking year. May your efforts continue to strengthen our organization and uplift the communities we serve. Comrades of the 11th District, thank you for the honor of appointing me once again as your District Commander. I am deeply humbled and proud to continue serving alongside such resolute individuals. For those who may not know me, I served our great nation in the United States Air Force as a firefighter from October 1987 to November 1991. During my time in service, I was stationed at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam and Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, Michigan. I

was deployed to Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf War and Operation Desert Storm from 1990 to 1991, where I earned my eligibility in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Throughout my military career, I was honored to receive several commendations, including the Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, Outstanding Unit Award, National Defense Service Medal, Longevity Service Award, NCO Professional Military Education Ribbon, Air Force Training Ribbon, and Southwest Asia Service Medal with two Bronze Stars. I am a proud Life Member of St. Helen VFW Post 5680, where I currently serve as Post Quartermaster. My commitment to our veterans and our community remains unwavering. On a personal note, I have been blessed with 32 wonderful years of marriage to Veronica, my lovely bride. Together, we have one daughter, Allison, and two beautiful granddaughters, Brooklyn and Madylin. I look forward to working with each of you to strengthen our District, support our comrades, and uphold the values of the VFW. Thank you for your trust and continued support. I encourage and welcome your active participation at our upcoming District meetings. Your presence and engagement are vital to the strength and success of our organization. Each District meeting during my term will include a one-hour training session beginning at

9:00 AM. These sessions are designed to be informative and beneficial, helping us grow as leaders and better serve our Posts and communities. Meetings will begin promptly at 10:00 AM, following the training. The meeting topics discussed are of foremost importance—not only to our members and Posts, but to the VFW as a whole. I urge all Comrades to attend and contribute. Upcoming meeting dates are November 9th at VFW Post #3724, Midland, and February 8th at VFW Post #5738, Clare. Please remember to submit your Hospital and Activities reports by the 10th of the following month. These reports are essential for tracking the incredible work our Posts are doing. If you encounter any issues with reporting, do not hesitate to reach out to me or any District Officer—we are here to support you. Today's reporting procedure is rather simple. If your Post is hosting an event you'd like listed on the Department website, please email the details to our District email: district11@vfwmi.org. I also look forward to seeing you at the Department Fall Conference in Mt. Pleasant. It is always a meaningful opportunity to connect, learn, and strengthen our bonds as Brothers and Sisters with others throughout the state. Thank you for your continued dedication and service. Together, we will make this a productive and impactful year for District 11 and the Department of Michigan VFW.



District 13 were honored to be recognized for their hard work over the course of the year. We had 11 out of our 12 posts and the District as a whole achieving All-American status. All 12 Posts attained at least 100% membership, and the District exceeded 104% membership, earning

DISTRICT 13 COMMANDER, DEREK BRAUN

Greetings from up north! District 13 is celebrating its successes from 2024-2025 and planning its path to successes in 2025-2026. In 2024-2025 the Posts in top District Membership Percentage honors. One Post and the District as a whole achieved All-State status. We were honored to have the Department JROTC Cadet of the Year come from our District as well; Cadet Commander Stark was deserving of the honor. All of the awards, honors, and accolades the District, her Posts, members, and Auxiliaries achieved over the course of the year are attributable to one thing: the passion of its members for taking care of veterans and their communities. We applaud both the individual effort of the more than 2000 District and Auxiliary members and their Posts for the effort that they have put in to move forward on the critical mission of returning the Veterans of Foreign Wars to the center of their communities. We understand that mission is not yet complete and have set forth an even more aggressive and challenging course for ourselves, at both the Post and the District level. We are fostering an atmosphere of unity both with the Posts in the District and with our partners in this mission, our Auxiliaries. We would like to thank Past State Commander Napoleon for her leadership and support in 2024-2025 and assure Commander Yahnka that we are undertaking and embracing his challenge to Aim High in 2025-2026.



DISTRICT 15 COMMANDER, RYAN SPENCE

Greetings, Comrades, from the U.P. It is an honor to serve District 15 as the new Commander for the western half of the Upper Peninsula. I am hoping for a great year this year, as we start out with so many Posts and Districts hitting their membership goal of 102%. It was great to have our leadership team up for VTS training this summer, and thank you to all those that attended. Please continue to get your reports submitted on time and reach out if you need our help! School will be starting up again, and let's reach out and get the information out there for the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy. Let's get out there and recruit new members and advocate for our programs.



WE WILL NEVER FORGET



ROLL CALL OF DEPARTED COMRADES

LISTED BY	POST NUMBER	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	AGE	SERVICE	WAR
	607 Rogers City		Sebright, James	92	Army	
	Kleiber, John F.	92	Army/Korea			
	667 South Haven		Vande Vusse, Alan	80	Marines/Vietnam	
	Lammert, John E.	97	Navy/WWII			
	796 Port Huron		Van Regenmorter, Matthew	45	Army/Afghanistan	
	McIntyre, Sidney R.	92	Army/Korea			
	1146 St. Clair Shores					
	Chown, Raymond H.	91	Air Force/Korea			
	Nuber, William J.	100	Navy/WWII			
	1519 Northville					
	Riley, Roger W.	90	Army/Korea			
	1566 Saginaw					
	Beatty, Gerald W.	93	Army/Korea			
	1669 Royal Oak					
	Hire, Clettis T.	75	Army/Vietnam			
	1887 Menominee					
	Lahaie, Roger W.	81	Army/Vietnam			
	2053 White Cloud					
	Baker, William	73	Army/Vietnam			
	Miller, Jesse	44	Army/Iraq			
	Richards, Ronald	91	Marines/Korea			
	2144 Holland					
	Barkel, Vern	98	Army/WWII			
	Bradley, Preston	91	Army/Korea			
	DeHaan, Peter	95	Navy/Korea			
	Garcia, Edward	80	Marines/Vietnam			
	Johnson, David A.	77	Army/Vietnam			
	Lankheet, Howard	93	Army/Korea			
	Sanderson, Robert W.	77	Army/Vietnam			
	2780 Traverse City					
	Courtad, Aloysius	98	Navy/WWII			
	2233 Detroit					
	Harris, James L.	83	Army/Vietnam			
	3243 Fenton					
	Anderson, Duane E.	79	Army/Vietnam			
	3293 Grand Ledge					
	Herbstreit, John	93	Army/Korea			
	Weymouth, Ronald	92	Army/Korea			
	3672 Albion					
	Topa, Allen	80	Army/Vietnam			
	3676 Sault Ste. Marie					
	Dalimonte, Richard	84	Army/Vietnam			
	Leask, Mark A.	61	Army/Gulf			
	Boger, William	68	Army/Vietnam			
	Wilson, Danny	73	Marines/Vietnam			
	3701 Lakeview					
	Burns, Rodney	78	Army/Vietnam			
	Corwin, Ronald	75	Army			
	Tonning, Robert	78	Army/Vietnam			
	3775 West Branch					
	Tomac, John L.	84	Navy/Vietnam			
	4054 Marcellus					
	Gearhart, Kenneth	84	Army/Vietnam			
	Kubik, Paul	79	Marines/Vietnam			
	Singley, Eric	78	Navy/Vietnam			
	4090 Portland					
	Chedester, Ernest E. Jr.	72	Army			
	Proctor, Fred D. Jr.	74	Army/Vietnam			
	4159 Roscommon					
	Coats, William B.	58	Army/Desert Storm			
	4659 Shelby Township					
	Finkle, Clifford	78	Army/Vietnam			
	6464 Fowlerville					
	Battle, Dennis J.	83	Navy/Vietnam			
	Salyers, Harold D.	78	Army/Vietnam			
	6695 Plymouth					
	Fox, Douglas	79	Army/Vietnam			
	7542 Birch Run					
	Hlavacs, John	94	Air Force/Korea			
	7573 New Baltimore					
	Muszynski, Lawrence T.	82	Navy/Cuba			
	8846 Muskegon					
	Cobler, Dennis	83	Army/Vietnam			
	Morphew, Lyle	97	Navy/WWII			
	9344 Harbor Beach					
	Fealko, Robert	99	Army/WWII			
	9809 Saginaw					
	Lubis, Ronald	94	Navy/Korea			
	15023 Lansing					
	Gosciak, Ernest	97	Navy/WWII			
	Remington, Donald	100	Marines/WWII			



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AUXILIARY DISTRICT REPORTS

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Welcome to the Fantastic Fighting Fourth District! I am RoseAnn Boguslawski from Pvt Lyskawa-Tutro VFW Aux 7546 in Dearborn Heights. I joined under my father, Ted, who served in the Army during the Korean War. Thanks to Jan Passmore, I was installed as President

DISTRICT 4 PRESIDENT, ROSEANN BOGUSLAWSKI

on May 2nd, together with my counterpart, Commander Brian Martin (from Post 1136). We both hit the floor running. Together we have attended a gala for the new Detroit Fisher House (which is our project for the year), a Flag Retirement Ceremony at Michigan Memorial Cemetery, marched in the 4th of July parade in Wyandotte, and had our joint family picnic on July 26th, which was well attended. July 27th found me in Eaton Rapids for Michigan Day at

National Home (where our District helped run the ice cream booth). Saturday, August 23rd, was our Luau Party Fundraiser at Post 6695. And our first District meeting is Saturday, September 6th. My official visits have started, and I am looking forward to working together with my Auxiliaries in any way I can. My philosophy in life is “Leadership is not about being the best. Leadership is about making everyone else better.”



Hello from the Fighting 5th District. I am your newly elected President, Sandra Kleven, from Hulet-Bravender 5587. We look forward to working with the Post Auxiliary in Holly. I am eligible under my husband who served in Korea during the Vietnam Conflict. A big shout out to our Department President Debbie Sheetz, from the 5th District! Also, congratulations to Department Commander Reinold Yahnka. We look forward to working with the Post and all the Districts to make this the best year yet.

DISTRICT 5 PRESIDENT, SANDRA KLEVEN



say congratulations to Debbie Sheetz, our new Department President and all

of her Line Officers. I look forward to working with everyone this year. As I become more familiar with this new position, I hope to be able to assist with all the Post Auxiliaries in District 7. If you have questions about any of this year’s programs, ask me. If I don’t know the answer, I will get one. We will learn together. School is starting soon, so let’s help our VFW Posts with their Voice of

DISTRICT 7 PRESIDENT, DAWN HOLMES

Democracy and Patriots Pen scholarships. At the same time, we can start looking for the amazing teachers in our schools that so richly deserve to be recognized for all they do. As we just had our first District Meeting in Edwardsburg, we will have two more this year, November 9th in Marcellus and May 3rd in Decatur. Let’s continue to support our Post and all veterans everywhere.



Greetings from District 8! I am honored and excited to serve as your District President for the 2025–2026 year. I joined the VFW Auxiliary in 2022 and have served as both Senior Vice President and President at my home Auxiliary, 2144 in Holland, Michigan. I became involved under the inspiration of my grandfather, Howard Dekker, a WWII bombardier who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. My husband, Garrett Dickey, who is also serving as the District 8 Commander, and I are proud to support our district and its mission this year. One of our top goals is

to strengthen collaboration between our Posts and Auxiliaries, working closely together to support our veterans and communities. Here is the upcoming District 8 Meeting Schedule: November 8 – Post 8260, Thornapple Valley, Nashville, February 7 – Post 2406, Maple City, Charlotte, and April 25 – Post 2144, Henry Walters Post, Holland. This summer has been full of meaningful events and celebrations across our District. The National Home celebrated its 100th birthday with an epic celebration on June 28, and many Auxiliaries took part in their communities’ 4th of July festivities. Notable activities included: On July 12, the Holland Auxiliary partnered with Fishing with Veterans, helping over 100 veterans enjoy a day on Lake Michigan;

DISTRICT 8 PRESIDENT, HEATHER DICKEY

On July 17, our District 1st Vice President, Millie, and other members from the Augusta Auxiliary attended a funeral at Ft. Custer National Cemetery for two unaccompanied veterans; And on July 27, we had a beautiful day at the National Home for Michigan Day, raising approximately \$25,000 to support their mission. I also want to congratulate our 2024–2025 District 8 President, April Lowery, on receiving the District Achievement Award for the State of Michigan. District 8 also proudly achieved 104.07% in membership for the 2024–2025 year! I look forward to all that we will accomplish together this year and thank you for your dedication. Let’s make this another incredible year for our veterans and their families.





DISTRICT 9 PRESIDENT, DELLA STEEGE

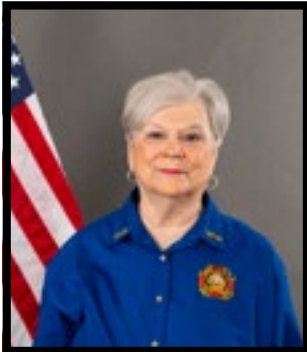
I am very excited to be serving as the District 9 VFW Auxiliary President for the 2025-2026 year. I am a member of VFW Auxiliary Corunna Post 4005. It's an honor and pleasure to play an integral part of such a great organization.

This is my third trip through the District chairs, and I'm happy to announce that our current Sr. & Jr. Vice Presidents are on board and will be coming to many of my official visits this year. Our first District Meeting is in St. Louis at Post #3055 on September 6th, 2025, and it is imperative that every Auxiliary have representation at this meeting. It is also a school of instruction meeting, so be aware that it may be a longer meeting. My official visits have started, and I look forward to assisting each Auxiliary within the District to improve its healthy Auxiliary status. Thank you for the confidence placed in me to be your District 9 President again. In closing, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or the Department Office. After all, we are here to serve you!



DISTRICT 12 PRESIDENT, DONNA MISZEWSKI

This is for the people of District 12. My name is Donna J. Miszewski, and I want to thank you all for having the confidence in me to want me to be your District President for a second time. I first did this in 2014-2015. I became a member of the Auxiliary in 2010. I got in under my dad, who was in WWII. My husband is also a Life Member through his dad in WWII. My son and daughter are also Life Members from their grandpa. In District 12 Auxiliary I have been Treasurer 4 times and Secretary 2 times. We are a District that has 14 Auxiliaries, and to me they are all great and work very hard. Their goal through the year is to help all the veterans they can, as that is the Auxiliary's job—to be a helper to the VFW. In my local Auxiliary I have been President 5 times. Currently my husband and I are in charge of putting the 125 Auxiliary flags in 13 different cemeteries and taking them off in the Fall. We have done this for 15 years; also, we have mapped the cemeteries and added members as needed. As for my local Auxiliary, we have Veteran Service Officers monthly for the veterans should they have questions. We also do a Memorial Day Dinner, Veterans Day Dinner, Taco Tuesdays, Friday night suppers 3X monthly, and we have a pool league. Our local Auxiliary also has an Easter egg hunt and a Christmas party for the kids. As District President, my favorite thing to do is go visit all the Auxiliaries in the District, helping them with what they need help with, such as reporting, filling out paperwork, helping to get their bond, or whatever assistance they might need. I am a person who loves to help others. My favorite thing of all is when I see a veteran, I always say, "Thank you for your service and for keeping us free," and it puts a smile on their face. Especially the older gentlemen; they always seem so proud. I understand District 12 is possibly getting a new Auxiliary so we are growing, and that is a great thing, as that is what we need to do to reach out to more veterans with what they need.



DISTRICT 14 PRESIDENT, ANN BACKHURST

District 14 is looking forward to another exciting year working for and with our veterans. Again, we will be collecting pounds of coffee to send to the Cuppa Joe monthly program held at the VFW National Home for veterans who meet and talk about what is on their minds. Last year, we doubled our donation from 14 pounds to 28 pounds. This year, we hope to add another 14 pounds and send 42 pounds. Several Auxiliaries have plans for baby showers to help our veteran and active-duty families who are expecting. District 14 and their Auxiliaries have elected new slates of Officers to lead their Auxiliaries in their communities, and we look forward to those activities. If you have any questions for me, I can be reached via phone at (251)604-5998 or via email at vfwaux.annbackhurst@gmail.com.



DISTRICT 15 PRESIDENT, CANDY KANNINEN

Greetings from District 15! Post 8945 held an appreciation dinner for their VFW Commander, Quartermaster, and Adjutant; all three stepped down this year. Between the three of them, they had 59 years of holding a position at the Post Home. The fire department joined us at the celebration, as two of them retired from there as well. We started the evening off with a cocktail hour and shared memories of the years gone by, followed by a short speech and presentation of appreciation awards. Roast beef and all the fixings were served by the Auxiliary. Three weeks later we joined together again as we lost one of these men to cancer. We held an amazing send-off for VFW Life Member David Heikkila, a United States Marine. He served in the Vietnam War from 1966 to 1969; he was also a Life Member of the Keweenaw 1016, Marine Corps, and AMVETS, as well as being a big supporter of Camp Trotter. He was on the Covington Fire Department for 53 years and served as the Covington Deputy Sheriff Constable and Liquor Inspector. Ten fire departments and their trucks met at the VFW to start the procession to the cemetery. Military honors under the direction of the Baraga American Legion Post #444, along with three Marines, attended to present the flag. A luncheon was provided at the Post following the service. David was proud to be a veteran and showed it in all the things he did for our community. Our mission is to support veterans and their families; collaboration is the key to success.



VFW/AUX JOINT AGENDA (PG 1)

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
2025 VFW & AUXILIARY 98th ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE
Comfort Inn and Convention Center, Mt. Pleasant
October 30th – November 2nd
JOINT AGENDA - **Tentative****

Thursday, October 30

9:00 am	(Tentative Casino Excursion at Soaring Eagle – Details will be provided as soon as possible)
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Department Auxiliary Line Officers Meeting
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Auxiliary Pre-Council of Administration Meeting
6:00 pm	Department Auxiliary Line Officers Dinner with the National Auxiliary Representative
6:00 pm – 10:00 pm	Hospitality Room

Friday, October 31

8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Conference Registration (closed for lunch 11:30 am – 1:00 pm)
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Auxiliary Hospital and Camp Trotter Fundraiser tables and VFW Committee and Vendors
9:00 am – 10:00 am	District Auxiliary Sr Vice Presidents meeting with Department Auxiliary Sr. Vice President Jason Manke
10:30 am	VFW/Auxiliary Joint Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VFW National Home Representative • MVAA Representative • Karmanos Cancer Institute Representative check presentation by PSC Kimberly Napoleon, and Co-Directors Mindy Taylor and John Griffith • Blue Star Service Dogs Program Presentation • Training on VFW required Community Service Form from Auxiliaries



VFW/AUX JOINT AGENDA (PG 2)

12:00 pm- 1:00 pm	Lunch on your own
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	District Auxiliary Jr. Vice President meeting with Department Auxiliary Jr. Vice President Jan Passmore
1:15 pm – 3:00 pm	Auxiliary Council of Administration Meeting
3:15 pm – 5:00 pm	Concurrent Auxiliary Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Identify a Red and Yellow Flag Auxiliary • Communication and Chain of Command • Audience Participation
6:30 pm – 9:30 pm	Doors Open for Bingo/Silent Auction/Raffle fundraiser
7:00 pm – 11:00 pm	Hospitality Room Open

Saturday, November 1

8:00 am – 10:00 am	Conference Registration
8:00 am – 12:00 pm	Auxiliary Hospital and Camp Trotter Fundraiser Table
9:00 am	Department Auxiliary Program Chairmen meeting with Department President Debbie and Program Chairman Christine Senko
9:30 am – 12:00 pm	Auxiliary Program Chairmen Presentations
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Auxiliary Past Presidents Luncheon
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Continue Program Chairmen Presentations (Membership will be last)
	Questions and Answers/Wrap-Up
6:30 pm	Fall Conference Dinner & Halloween Costume Party Raffles/Silent Auction

Have a Safe Trip Home

**HOUSING FORM**

**VFW and Auxiliary
Department of Michigan
98th Annual Fall Conference Housing Information
Comfort Inn & Suites
2424 S. Mission St.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858**

Wednesday October 29 – Sunday November 2, 2025

RESERVATION DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

**YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE A RESERVATION AT THE VFW
RATE AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE OR
AFTER THE BLOCK IS FULL!!**

Call for reservations:

Comfort Inn & Suites

989-772-4000

Or

Fairfield Inn

989-775-5000

The Fairfield Inn is across the parking lot from the Comfort Inn

Room Rates:

King bed or 2 Queen beds - \$109.00

Suite - \$129.00 (limited number available)

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE.**

PLEASE REVIEW THE CONFERENCE AGENDA

**WHEN THE ROOM BLOCK IS FULL THERE WILL NOT BE
ADDITIONAL ROOMS ADDED TO THE BLOCK AT THE
BLOCK RATE**

**THERE WILL NOT BE A FALL CONFERENCE GOLF OUTING
DUE TO THE CONFERENCE DATE**



AD BOOK FORM

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN
VFW AND AUXILIARY
98th ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE AD BOOK

AD BOOK RATES:

FULL PAGE AD - \$125.00

1/2 PAGE AD - \$90.00

1/4 PAGE AD - \$70.00

PATRON AD - \$10.00 (Name and Post or Auxiliary Number Only)

Payment can be made by check (made out to Department of Michigan VFW) or by credit card by contacting Jan or Amanda at Department Headquarters at 517-485-9456

MAIL AD TO:

Department of Michigan VFW
924 N. Washington
Lansing, MI 48906
Email: Jan Passmore - bookkeeper@vfwmi.vet

THE DEADLINE FOR ALL ADS IS OCTOBER 3, 2025

MESSAGE: (PLEASE PRINT or ATTACH SEPARATE PRINTED PAGE)

[illegible]



**VFW AND AUXILIARY FALL CONFERENCE 2025
HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY
TICKET ORDER FORM
COMFORT INN & SUITES – MT. PLEASANT**

No tickets sold at the door



DEADLINE DATE FOR ORDERING TICKETS IS
OCTOBER 17, 2025
NO REFUNDS ON TICKETS NOT PICKED UP

Tickets will be available for pick up at registration during Fall Conference

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

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

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

Credit Card # /

<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Email for Receipt</u>
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Raffle/Silent Auction Cash Bar

Dress Code: Halloween costume or casual dress



RAFFLE FLYER

2025 Fall Conference Ticket Raffles

Friday - roll tickets, \$2 each, 6 for \$10 drawing at 9:00 pm in hospitality room

VFW card case	\$17 value
VFW computer bag	\$26 value
VFW padfolio	\$31 value
VFW rolling bag	\$52 value
VFW wallet	\$23 value
Combined value	\$149



Saturday - roll tickets, \$2 each, 6 for \$10 drawing at 9:00 pm at banquet

125 th VFW decanter set	\$90 value
125 th VFW coin set	\$149 value
Combined value	\$240



Friday - Roll tickets, \$2 each, 3 for \$5 drawing at 9:00 pm in hospitality room

WWII Veteran memory book – value \$30

Saturday - Roll tickets, \$2 each, 3 for \$5 drawing at 9:00 pm at banquet

VFW Michigan member book – value \$100

DESIGNER / EDITOR
ALYSSA MCELFRESH

Hello and happy (almost) Fall! I would like to start by thanking everyone who has submitted articles, encouraged me, had faith in me, and most importantly the current and past State Department Commanders and Presidents who have continued my appointment to this position for the past three years. Without you, I would not have had the opportunity and honor of winning the Silver Award from VFW National's Publication Contest in the Small Frequency category. I truly love what I do and could not be more appreciative to have been recognized in such a way. Please continue to submit articles to keep this wonderful publication going, the next deadline is listed below. As many of you know, starting with the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the MOV will be digital only and available via the website at www.vfwmi.org under News > MOV. Please feel free to reach out to myself or the VFW Headquarters office with any questions. As we are quickly moving into my favorite season, I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming Fall Conference at the end of October in Mt. Pleasant. Thank you again for your continued support!

Next deadline = November 7, 2025
Send articles for consideration to:
MOV@VFWMI.VET

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

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



CONTACT INFO UPDATE FORM

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

Name: _____

Member number: _____ Post number: _____

Email address: _____

Address (if changed in last two years): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Are you currently on active duty? YES _____

Please complete and return to:
VFW Headquarters
924 N Washington
Lansing, MI 48906
Or email to: adjutant@vfwmi.vet



- VFWMI.ORG
QUICK LINKS
- vfwmi.org/contact
 - vfwmi.org/vethelp
 - vfwmi.org/join
 - vfwmi.org/directory
 - vfwmi.org/officers
 - vfwmi.org/allstate
 - vfwmi.org/mov
 - vfwmi.org/gallery

TAPS FORM

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

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

Branch of Service :

ARMY AIR FORCE NAVY
MARINE CORP COAST GUARD

Served in :

WWI WWII KOREA VIETNAM
GULF IRAQ/ AFGHANISTAN
OTHER OCCUPATION FORCES

(Last Name)

(First Name)

(Age)

(Date of Death)

(Post)