

Report of the Great Lakes National Cemetery Advisory Council

The New Director at GLNC Rodney Heard Jr. was introduced at the January Advisory Council meeting. He was previously the Director at Fort Custer National Cemetery in Battle Creek.

Director Heard reported that the NCA Complexity Model is made up of 4 levels. GLNC is in Level 2 and ranks #10 out of 157 cemeteries. In the Midwest District, GLNC is #2. In terms of size, GLNC is #12 (544 acres) and #3 in Midwest District.

The new bathrooms have finally been turned over by the contractor to the cemetery for use. Funeral Shelter #4 has not yet been turned over to the cemetery for use. When shelter #4 is made available for use, shelters 1 & 2 will be refurbished one at a time. During the time Shelter #1 is being refurbished, golf carts will be provided to the Honor Guards to travel between the Honor Guard building and shelter 4.

On November 17th, the flags on the Avenue of Flags were changed from Cotton Burial Flags to Polyester All-Weather Flags. On December 29th the avenue was reduced to 55 flags or 55%. This is done each year during the severe winter weather to keep maintenance and cost under control. On March 30th, the avenue will be restored to 100 flags. On May 18th, the Avenue will be changed back to Cotton Burial Flags. Some of the Cotton Burial Flags have been donated by families of veterans for use on the Avenue. When flags are donated, they receive a Certificate of Appreciation from the cemetery. Last year the Advisory Council purchased 200 Cotton Burial Flags and 200 Polyester All-Weather Flags. All the maintenance on the Avenue of Flags is done each Monday at 0930 by a group of volunteers. All flags needing repair or retirement are replaced with a serviceable flag. We hold several flag retirement ceremonies during the year to keep up with those that we retire. The Great Lakes National Cemetery Advisory Council has fund raisers and takes donations to purchase the flags; do maintenance on the 100 flagpoles on the avenue and other activities we provide support for. In 2024 over \$68,000.00 was spent by the Council to refurbish the 100 flagpoles on the avenue.

Yes, we purchase the flags we use from Emblem Sales.

The Advisory Council also provides snacks for the Honor Guards and VSO meetings. It puts on all the ceremonies and Headstone Cleaning at the cemetery. The cemetery only provides a place to do them. Anything other than burials is not provided by the cemetery.

Wreaths Across America has no connection with the advisory council or the cemetery.

Numbers as of December 31, 2025

For Fiscal Year (2026) that started on October 1, 2025

Burials in December 2025 - 245

Fiscal Year To Date – 988

Total burials since opening on September 17, 2005 - 71,624

For God and Country,

PDC Steve Striggow – American Legion Liaison

PDC Carnie D. Jackson - Alternate

*M/ Tolbert 4th Dist
2/ Overhoffs 3rd Dist
to accept
PASS*

Americanism Committee Zoom Meeting

January 26, 2026

Members in Attendance: Roger Deaton, Mark Downing, Gary Tanner

Guests in Attendance: Ashley Zimmer, Jim Ellis, Dept Adj. Ron Runyan

Meeting was called to order at 8:31am.

There was discussion on the Passport Program. Posts are encouraged to order self-inking stamps from Emblem Sales but note there are some supply chain issues with Emblem Sales at the moment.

Motion by Tanner for \$100.00 to pay for "Passport Table top Banner". Seconded by Downing. Motion passed.

There will be a new Passport Program Spotlight in the Legionnaire with Sanford Post being the first featured Post.

Mark Downing Discussed JSSP events.

Motion by Tanner for \$350.00 to pay for "Shooting Sports" Scanner for Grand Rapids JSSP Team. Seconded by Downing. Motion passed.

Discussion on the Winter Conference. The Americanism Committee does NOT have a meeting.

Report from Ashley Zimmer, Programs Coordinator, on the following items:

- The 2026 Law and Firefighter awards were selected by Law and Order Chairman Jim Wallace. Firefighter of the Year is Firefighter Joshua Piontek of Fowlerville Fire Department. Law Officer of the Year is Conservation Officer Marc Mankowski of the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources (Ingham County).
- Student Trooper program needs student cadets: One application received so far. Application deadline is May 1st. Program date: July 19-24. Cost is \$475.

Gary Tanner Discussed Scouting America events, requesting that posts support scouting with \$250 pledge in honor of America 250. American Legion Post 394, Farmington Hills, has started a new scout troop. There are multiple scouting troops that could use Legion Post sponsorships.

A quick reminder that Eagle Scout of the Year nominations are due March 1st. Currently there are none submitted to Department Headquarters.

Ron Runyan was nominated and selected as one of seven to be awarded the Outstanding Eagle Scout of the Year Award through Scouting America.

"Marty's Brass Band to play in Washington DC looking for donations = \$40k estimated needed to fund trip

Motion by Tanner to adjourn meeting at 0859. Seconded by Downing. Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roger Deaton
Americanism Chairman/2nd Vice Commander

m / McMurray 2nd Dist
2 / Overhoffs 3rd Dist
to Adopt
PASS