VA extends benefits to offshore Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans

BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2019

Law also affects survivors of Veterans, certain dependents and Veteran homebuyers

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) begins deciding Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 claims, Jan. 1, 2020, extending the presumption of herbicide exposure that include toxins such as Agent Orange, to Veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Prior to the measure, only Vietnam War Veterans who served on the ground in Vietnam or within Vietnam’s inland waterways were eligible to receive disability compensation and other benefits based on a presumption of herbicide exposure.

Signed into law June 25, the law specifically affects Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 6, 1962 and May 7, 1975, as well as Veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between Jan. 1, 1967 and Aug. 31, 1971. These Veterans can apply for disability compensation and other benefits if they have since developed one of 14 conditions that are presumed to be related to exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange. Veterans do not need to prove that they were exposed to herbicides. The specific conditions can be found by searching Agent Orange on www.va.gov.

“For six months VA worked diligently to gather and digitize records from the Naval History and Heritage Command in order to support faster claims decisions,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “These efforts will positively impact the claims process for Veterans filing for these benefits.”

Qualifying recipients, in addition to affected Veterans still living, are certain survivors of deceased BWN and Korean DMZ Veterans.

Survivors can file claims for benefits based on the Veteran’s service if the Veteran died from at least one of the 14 presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange. The law also provides benefits for children born with spina bifida if their parent is or was a Veteran with certain verified service in Thailand during a specific period. The Blue Water Navy Act also includes provisions affecting the VA Home Loan Program. The law creates more access for Veterans to obtain no-down payment home loans, regardless of loan amount, and the home loan funding fee is reduced for eligible Reservists and National Guard borrowers who use their home loan benefits for the first time. Certain Purple Heart recipients do not pay a funding fee at all. VA’s website describes these and other benefits.

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for an herbicide-related disability can use VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits or work with a VA-recognized Veterans Service Organization to assist with the application process. Veterans may also contact their state Veterans Affairs Office.

BWN Veterans who previously filed a claim seeking service connection for one of the 14 presumptive conditions that was denied by VA may provide or identify any new and relevant information regarding their claim when reapplying. To re-apply, Veterans may use VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim. As a result of the new law, VA will automatically review claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal.

For more information about the Blue Water Navy Act and the changes that will take effect visit https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/blue-water-navy.asp.

Don’t Face the VA Alone
That includes Veterans, spouses, and widows

Blue Water veterans are finally getting their due.

Who should be seeing an Accredited Veteran Service Officer about the Blue Water issues?

If you are a Vietnam Veteran who served on a ship in the blue waters surrounding Vietnam, the law states 12 nautical miles, but don’t worry if you do not remember, they have created a list of ships that qualify. Unfortunately, they are not giving that list out for us to publish, the veteran needs to apply first.

If you are the widow of a Vietnam Veteran who served on a ship in the blue waters surrounding Vietnam and they may have died due to a heart condition, cancer, or a disease in one of the 14 categories listed should speak to an accredited veteran service officer. To be sure if the disease is covered, talk to an accredited service officer.

Any veteran or widow who previously filed a claim for Agent Orange, but was denied due to not having service on the ground in Vietnam.

Korean war veterans or widows should speak with an accredited veteran service officer if the veteran served on or near the DMZ in South Korea in the 1950s and 1960s and suffers or died from one of the 14 categories listed.

Who is an Accredited Veteran Service Officer?

An accredited veteran service officer is employed by a veterans service organization, like The American Legion, a county veteran service office, or state veteran service officer. The cost to see an accredited veteran service officer is ZERO dollars to the veteran or widow. Do not see an attorney; they will charge you money for a service you can receive for free.

How do you find an accredited service officer near you?

1. Call The American Legion Department of Michigan Veteran Service Officer at (313) 964-6640.
2. Call the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency hotline at (800) MICH-VET

Working with the VA can be a difficult and confusing process, let a qualify and accredited veteran service officer walk you through this process. Veterans do not need to face the VA alone.

See page 7 for the 14 categories of presumptive conditions as listed by the VA.
**Chaplain**

**Having 20/20 Vision!**

Larry Vollink  
Department Chaplain

Yeah! 2020 is here! How did you bring in the New Year? With a bang or sleep in and not watch the celebration in Times Square. Every year I watch the party and fascinated by the large glasses with the year on them, so this one is special with 2020! What is 20/20 vision, according to our doctors? For many years I thought it meant perfect vision, nope . . . It means you are normal . . . When standing 20 feet away, you can see what you normally see at 20 feet. If you are 15/20, you are nearsighted; if you are 25/20, then you are farsighted, so the doctor will give you glasses to help you again to be normal.

Guess what? I went to the VA doctor and found out I am not normal, and I needed two sets of glasses, one for driving distances and the other for reading purposes. Now, I have the difficulty of deciding when to change them as I am so active – driving and reading. I was thrilled for the first time when I drove to Disney World and saw the huge sign come in view. I was again thrilled to hear about my comrades who had stories to tell and a preacher that I admired for years. Now, I am normal according to the eye doctor.

I see a correlation for us, as we approach our new year of 2020. Maybe, we need to put on our glasses to focus on greater futures with new ideas and bigger goals for our veterans in our communities, state, and nation. God, help us to be ‘normal’ again by reaching out to be the best we can be in serving, don’t sleep in as this year goes by! Do more reading to help you to become a better person within. Our prayer is, “Lord, give us a 20/20 vision for the American Legion!”

**The Fifth District Family Holds Chaplain’s Workshop**

The 5th District President, Deb Weatherbee, hosted a Chaplain’s Workshop on Saturday, November 23rd at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. Deb’s “special project” this year is “Military Chaplains and Their Families.” The workshop brought together approximately thirty (30) chaplains from the military, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. Five speakers from each area shared their experience in dealing with the spiritual needs of service members and veterans. The goal of the workshop is to create a network of active and veteran service organization chaplains to provide for the continuity of care across the lifespan of service from the military to the veteran. The workshop was such a success and had so much interest; another workshop is being planned for the spring.
Hello Legionnaires. You will be reading this after the holidays. I do hope that your holidays allowed you to spend quality time with your family and friends. Blessed are the days that this can be done. I certainly hope that the holiday celebrations included your Legion family. This is a beautiful time to grow and solidify these special relationships. This was also an opportune time for us to have reached out to our comrades to ensure their well-being and to make them aware of Post programs. If you did not reach all of your members, please continue your efforts. Your members will appreciate you reaching out to them.

Please continue to contact Legionnaires on your DMS lists. These individuals have expressed a desire to be a part of The American Legion, and when asked to transfer, they might want to get involved in an active post. Provide these 225 members an opportunity to find out what the “active” Legion is all about. Remember to assign an active post member to the new Legionnaire so this newer person can be guided through the routines of meetings and post activities. Keep track of those members that indicate they want to remain in the holding post (225) as we may find another way to track these members to reduce the workload year after year. Remember, an active post is a growing post. Be active within your post, your district AND within your community.

Membership is on us. All of us! We, at times, will fail in our efforts but, we need to stand tall and continue to work membership. The success of our programs and The American Legion depend on every one of us continuing to ensure the efforts within our posts help to reach our ultimate goals.

Please, please, please ensure you are working Children and Youth programs. Baseball, boys state, junior shooting, scholarships, scouting, and student trooper should all be looking to organize and begin. Oratorical should already be happening by the time you read this as contestants needed to be registered with the department by November 19, 2019. Look to your community to assist with the recruitment and financing of these programs. Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Sheriff and Police Departments, local businesses and resources within your posts are all great contacts to support sending our youth to these programs.

Have you ever wondered when our representatives talk about veterans benefits whether they are concerned about the veteran benefits or the vote? Regardless, The American Legion works both at the federal and state levels to ensure veteran benefits while, at the same time, letting the legislators know veterans vote. Our collective efforts bring about results that each of us individually cannot possibly bring to the table. Our strength and effectiveness come from our membership numbers. Unfortunately, our numbers are declining. I receive the attitude, at times, that we need growth, but not in my “back yard.” “Growth means work, and it means my post will change.” Negative attitudes mean that posts will stay stagnant. A stagnant post, of course, will not grow, and it will not attract new members. If you do not attract new members, the post will eventually go away due to the lack of participation. Please do not take the attitude, “I like my post just the way it is.” Help your post to grow. It seems we forget that we must continue to grow to maintain our representation at the State and Federal levels.

The American Legion was honored at the Annual Detroit Veterans Day parade on November 10 for its 100th anniversary. I was honored to represent The American Legion, Department of Michigan, by being the Grand Marshall and providing the keynote address to the attendees of the pre-parade gathering and presentations. The next day, November 11, Veterans Day, concluded the 15-month celebration of the 100-years of service for The American Legion. Thank you, Legionnaires, for being a part of the great services we bring to veterans, their families and this great nation.

The Scouting sub-committee held a very successful Camporee the third weekend in October. Approximately 200 scouts and leaders, plus Legion staff, were present. Numerous events were held, helping Scouts advance in rank. It also gave leaders a chance to evaluate their units to facilitate training for future events. The Camporee is the type of event I would like to see continue at WILWIN, consequently the reason for my special project of “Scouting at WILWIN.” Coins are available for a suggested donation of at least $20.00 to help build a fund to be able to put the infrastructure in at WILWIN to support the scouting program. The American Legion has been sponsoring scouting units for 100 years, and “Scouting at WILWIN” is a great way to continuing this effort.

I have six more months to reach out and to visit your posts and to participate in your important activities. There are many activities already scheduled; however, there are plenty of open dates. I want to participate in your activities as I am available. Be sure to contact Kim at Legion headquarters and we will do our best to work your request into the schedule. Please ensure Kim knows the date, time, dress (to include the First Lady), address of the event, and whether we should eat before we arrive or whether a meal is included. Also, provide a contact number for last-minute questions or in case of delays while traveling to your location.

I have a special request for all of you reading this. Please send any photos of my visits or activities at your locations, along with any associated narrative, to the Department Historian. The pictures will assist Richard with putting together a history of activity for the year. Just contact Kim at HQ for Richard Tracy’s email address so you can forward photos. A special thanks to all who send photos.

Set aside February 14-16, this is the Winter Meeting, and I am sure you all want to attend, and planning in advance will make this happen. Some exciting information about what the redistricting committee has been doing will be revealed at the Winter Meeting. Posts, please have conversations with your District Commanders before the Winter Meeting about the redistricting efforts to help facilitate any discussion that will take place. The National Commander will be our special guest. Get your registration sent in and make your reservations with the hotel. All the information is on the Department website and in the Michigan Legionnaire. See you in Flint.

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Join us for the American Legion Family Testimonial

Department Commander Barry Wood, Department President Georgia Downs, and Detachment Commander Mike Holley invites all American Legion Family members to join them at the Greenawalt-Flaherty Post 42 in Charlotte to celebrate their year.

Date: April 4, 2020
Social begins at 5 p.m.
Dinner begins at 6 p.m.
Cost: $40 per person

Make and send checks to:
Margaret Wood
811 N. Kelly St.
Hastings, MI 49058
Include email address for confirmation of receipt of reservation and payment

Hotel information:
Holiday Inn Express
500 Meijer St
Charlotte, MI 48813
(855) 479-0732
$98.99 + tax (king or queen)

Comfort Inn
1302 Packard Hwy
Charlotte, MI 48813
(844) 773-8179
$75 + tax Queen
$70 + tax King

Greenawalt-Flaherty
American Legion
Post 42
1000 W. Lawrence Highway
Charlotte, MI 48813
Charlotte is approximately 18 miles south west of Lansing off of I-69
So, what the heck is EMOAMA?

I borrowed this from another organization. It stands for “Each Member Owe a Member Annually.” Every Legionnaire should be actively recruiting new members. It is not just up to the post officers and membership committee to recruit. It is everyone’s job. Can you imagine if every member recruited just one new member in a year? Our membership would double the first year. And don’t forget about those former members that didn’t renew. Contact them and find out why they didn’t renew. It could be they simply forgot or were upset about something they have forgotten about. Use the National membership impact statement to help in recruiting new members. This statement explains what the Legion did during the previous months. It can be found at https://www legion.org/membership/impact.

We still have six more months in our membership year. I would like to see Michigan finish the year with a bang not a whimper. We have plenty of time to get to 100% of our goal. Post Commanders get your membership committee together and start making those calls and knocking on doors to get your members renewed. Go through your expired membership list and contact those members who haven’t renewed from two years ago. Legionnaires, please talk to your relatives, friends, co-workers that are veterans and get them signed up. We need everyone on board to help Michigan finish the year strong.
CELEBRATING OUR VETERANS
Cruising for our Veterans

Welcome to 2020! A New Year and New Ideas to move us into our next century of celebrating our 100 years of service to our Veterans and their families. Wishing everyone a successful and prosperous New Year.

It has been quite a journey so far. I participated in Michigan hosting the hospitality room and the game room for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, held in Kalamazoo at the Radisson. Battle Creek VA and National VA, along with our National Auxiliary, were the host for the Veterans. Watching the faces on the Veterans and their caregivers as they relaxed in the hospitality room and the game room was worth attending. The Department had a committee of 5 with 45 Volunteers that worked throughout the week in both the Hospitality Room and the Game Room. There are no words to express the wonderful job they did. I am speechless and cannot give them enough praise.

There were 915 visitors to the hospitality room, and 178 visitors signed in at the game room. Michigan received the highest compliments from National President Nicole Clapp and Past National President Kristi West. Ms. Gillespie from the VA in Washington, DC, gave the highest of compliments to the hospitality room. This was the best NVCAF overall, including the performance on Sunday. If you have never attended a Veterans Creative Arts Performance, put it on your bucket list, it is a life-changing experience.

I survived taking the scenic tours in reaching our Gift Shops throughout the state. Each VA home has a different setup and a way of doing its own thing. I was very impressed and thankful for the beautiful Christmas trees that were donated by Past Department President Sandra Snyder from the previous 17th District. The trees had been purchased from Bronner’s and decorated with military branch of service ornaments. What a wonderful memorial to our Veterans. Thank you from the Department of Michigan for thinking of our Veterans and the VA Homes and Medical Centers.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Winter Meeting. Remember, we are still going back in time, so that means we will want to dress for the Era of our choice.

I look forward to more of my travels.

Special prayers for our active Servicemen and women and their families.

D.J. Jacobetti Veterans Home Report
Wanda Westman, Jacobetti Hospital Rep for the American Legion Auxiliary

We had a busy 2019 at Jacobetti. Thanks to our many dedicated volunteers, our programs are going well. We host a bingo party and provide and serve snacks every Monday, with 50-60 residents attending.

We subscribe to 50 different magazines annually for the resident’s library and lounges, trying to meet their varying interests. We can only accept current magazines, no more than two months old, per DJJHV regulations.

The greeting card rack is well stocked, except we need more Sympathy cards and for holidays like Valentines, Thanksgiving, and Men’s birthday cards. But they should be generic birthday cards, not like- to- my Dad.

During the Mid Winter Tour in January, we welcome the state officers to come and take a tour of the Jacobetti home.

In January and February, the residents get fewer visitors after the holidays & winter travel makes it difficult. In March, winter is still here but we take part in Vegas Days and it is fun for all, along with all the bingo parties, music, and movies.

In April, Spring gets us planning the outdoor gardens, and also the Volunteer Banquet is held. More outings are planned for May Thru October like picnics, drives along the lakeshore, and visits to the units for lunch or dinner.

We also host an Art Show in May, where we invite residents to showcase their art. Each participant gets a $10 Gift card.

We have an Adopt A Vet Program where we choose certain residents that could use extra “TLC” in visits or money. We ask units to “Adopt” them to enrich their lives, helping to make them feel cared for.

For Mother’s Day and Christmas, Marquette Unit #44 hosts a party for our women residents, with gifts for all. We are looking for more embroidered handkerchiefs for the Mother’s Day cards. On Father’s Day, we give each man a card and put $2 in each of their accounts.

In August, we take part in the Carnival hosted by the Jacobetti home. Each service organization works different games. We usually run the Plinko game and man the ticket booth, and one auxiliary member Lois Westman plays with the band entertaining all the residents while they eat lunch.

In September and October, we also harvest the garden produce that was grown in the gardens.

November brings Thanksgiving and all kinds of baking. Our biggest program is Christmas Gift Shop. Our U.P. Auxiliaries and a few from downstate send us gifts or money to sponsor Gift Shop. Each resident gets to choose up to 5 gifts for their family members or themselves. After the gifts are chosen, we wrap the gifts and deliver them before Christmas or mail them, if necessary.

Many thanks to my Home Unit Greenwood #114, who invite our residents out to post #114 for lunch and bingo eight times a year. (15-20 residents come each time).

Also Thank you to Munising Unit 131 Post members for coming over to cook all that Whitefish every year. Yummy!

We couldn’t do all of this without our wonderful volunteers who support the programs. Kudos also to the caring staff who work with us to ensure the resident’s needs are met.

Thanks to all of the Units who support us financially, but are just too far away to come and visit. If your group wants to come and tour Jacobetti or take part with us in a Bingo on a Monday, we can show you around and share our programs. Call me and I will set it up for you.

We want to thank our residents for their sacrifices they made for the freedoms we enjoy today. We love getting to know each of you and your family. We are here for you. God Bless you!
“WHAT IS THE “AEF” AND HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THE PROGRAM?”

Linda Wallace, Auxiliary Emergency Fund Chairman, 2019-2020

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund is a program for temporary financial assistance that helps eligible members during times of a financial crisis, weather-related emergency, and natural disasters. The maximum grant amount is $2,400 which is disbursed as the Auxiliary Emergency Fund Chairman, 2019-2020

878-6633, and I will be happy to mail a form to you. Be sure to have available “AEF” applications and the “AEF” brochure for any member who may need assistance.

Consult the “AEF” Guide to determine eligibility and for application forms. All information can be found on the department website: www.michalaux.org. Proceed to programs, click on “administrative information,” and then to “AEF” Guide 2019-2020.

There are awards for the department with the largest contribution per division, member award for individual contributions of $50 or more, Unit Award for largest contribution by a Unit and Department Award for Largest contribution by a Department.

“Keep in mind; we never know when a member may need assistance during a financial crisis, flood, fire, tornado, or hurricane happens.”

Send checks to department headquarters earmarked “AEF” on the memo line and include your Unit #.

“NO CONTRIBUTION IS TOO SMALL”

Mary Dubay for Department President 2020 - 2021

At a regularly scheduled meeting of the Seventh District Association of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan held on August 4, 2019 and at a regularly scheduled meeting of Harry Olrich Unit #4 of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan held on July 22, 2015, Mary (Mrs. Richard) Dubay was endorsed for the office of Department President.

Mary is eligible for membership through her husband, Richard T. Dubay, a Vietnam Veteran who served in the Air Force from 1966 to 1969. She is also eligible through the service of her late father, Charles Desmet, who served in World War II.

Mary has been a member of Harry Olrich Unit #4 for 30 years. During this time she has held most offices and chairmanships. She served as Unit President for 2 years and is currently serving as Chaplain.

On the District level, Mary has held many chairmanships and offices and served as District President in 1999-2000. She is currently serving her ninth consecutive term as District Treasurer.

On the Department level, Mary has served as Americanism, Poppy, Public Relations, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Revolutions, Education, Eastern Area Membership, Community Service and National Security Chairman, Historian, Chaplain and Second Vice-President. Mary has also served as a committee member on Americanism, Poppy, and Public Relations. As a District Chairman, Mary won the Best Overall Program in Americanism for the Central Division, the American Legion Education Award, and the Community Service Department award for the most outstanding program of the Community Service program by a Department in the Central Division. Mary is currently serving the Department as First Vice-President and Legislative Chairman. On the National level, Mary has served as Central Division Chairman and Committee Member for National Security and as Vice Chairman on the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

Mary is currently employed as a Medical Secretary by Michigan Healthcare Professionals, where she has worked for the last 30 years. She and her husband, Richard, have been married for 49 years, and have 4 children and 11 grandchildren, all of which are members of the Legion family. Mary and her family are members of St. Peters Catholic Church in Mt. Clemens. Mary has been a member of Macomb County Salons #86 of the 8 & 40 for 16 years.

We, the members of the Seventh District and Harry Olrich Unit #4 ask for your support of our candidate, Mary Dubay, for the office of President for the Department of Michigan for the 2020-2021 year.
The American Legion Emblem & Cap - Political Campaigns and Events.

The Beginning of the Silly, I mean Election Season
Ron Runyan
Department Adjutant

According to Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of The American Legion, “The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.” The National Charter, approved by Congress, also stipulates The American Legion as an organization is nonpolitical* which has been interpreted by the National Judge Advocate as “nonpartisan” in modern lingo. Therefore, The American Legion as an organization is prohibited from contributing, helping, or endorsing a candidate. However, a member, as a private citizen and not representing the organization, can employ whatever legal and ethical means to advance his or her candidate.

The Legion cap is considered the official Legion uniform. It is not an individual Legion member’s decision on the appropriate usage of the cap and emblem. If attending a political event, The American Legion cap, or any clothing with the emblem visible, should be removed so as not to imply endorsement by The American Legion. The problem is the assumption of endorsement by those who see the emblem or name worn at an improper location, such as a partisan rally.

If the post has a hall that a person or group may rent, it is my recommendation that the post not rent the hall to a candidate or political party for an event. If the post does rent the hall, ALL Legion emblems, and memorabilia must be covered up or removed to avoid any impression of endorsements.

Note: All members of the House of Representatives and US Senator Gary Peters are up for reelection in 2020.

An exception to this rule is to hold a town hall for your community. If the post wants to hold a Veterans Town Hall and hear from the candidates, the post must host an event provided ALL candidates for that office are invited to attend, and that the town hall is open to the public. Candidates for all parties must be presented an equal opportunity at the same time to use the facilities on the same terms and conditions as other competing candidates.

The American Legion wants every member to participate and get out and vote; we ask that you leave The American Legion logo at home.

If you have any questions please contact me at 517-371-4720 ext 114, or email at adj@michiganlegation.org.

“A vote is like a rifle: its usefulness depends upon the character of the user.”

Theodore Roosevelt

14 Presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange.

VA assumes that certain diseases can be related to a Veteran's qualifying military service. We call these “presumptive diseases.”

VA has recognized certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for benefits for these diseases.

**AL Amyloidosis**
A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs

**Chronic B-cell Leukemias**
A type of cancer which affects white blood cells

**Chloracne (or similar acneform disease)**
A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

**Diabetes Mellitus Type 2**
A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin

**Hodgkin's Disease**
A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia

**Ischemic Heart Disease**
A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart, that leads to chest pain

**Multiple Myeloma**
A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow

**Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma**
A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue

**Parkinson's Disease**
A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement

**Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset**
A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of herbicide exposure.

**Porphyria Cutanea Tarda**
A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

**Prostate Cancer**
Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men

**Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer)**
Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus

**Soft Tissue Sarcomas** (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)
A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues

Charles A. Conklin Post 28 embraces their 100th Anniversary

GRAND HAVEN (November 2, 2019) – The American Legion has been promoting to local posts to learn, promote, and celebrate their posts 100th anniversary. A member of the Charles A. Conklin Post, Sons of the American Legion Squadron in Grand Haven, made it his mission to the past year to research the history of his post home and namesake.

Dr. Christoper Petras's love of history drove him to dive deep into the history of Post 28. Months of research paid off on November 2, 2019, when the department, post, and members of the public were invited to watch a 30- minute documentary about Charles A. Conklin and the American Legion Post that bears his name. Chris sought help from videographer Daniel Joel Dea to put together this documentary, based on Chris's research, which is being made into a one-hour long documentary to be played on local PBS stations soon.

After the showing of the documentary in a local movie theater, everyone was invited back to the post where the Post Commander and Post Chaplain held a blessing of the Post and Building ceremony.

Chris has also written a book based on his research starting in January 1917 to June 2019, when Representative Bill Huizenga read a resolution on the floor of the US House of Representatives commemorating the work and history of the Charles A. Conklin Post.

The documentary will be shown at the Department Winter Meeting on Saturday, February 15, to attendees.
Anne Zerbe Named Executive Director of Michigan Veterans' Facility Authority

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Sept. 25 appointed Anne Zerbe as executive director of the Michigan Veterans’ Facility Authority (MVFA), the governing board for the Michigan Veteran Homes.

“The men and women who have served our nation earned access to quality services, support, and respect,” Whitmer said. “Anne is a proven professional who will bring the reverence and dedication that is needed to the Michigan Veterans’ Facility Authority. Veterans, along with all of our men and women in uniform, deserve to know that we have their backs.”

Zerbe, of Lansing, currently serves as the transition executive for the MVFA, a position she has held since August 2018. In that role, she has developed current and long-range plans and policies to support the strategic objectives of the MVFA Board of Directors; developed and implemented a transition plan related to governance, oversight and future operations of all new state veterans homes; and directed the day-to-day duties of MVFA staff. Prior to working with the MVFA, Zerbe was vice president of business affairs for the Michigan Veterans Health System where she oversaw the business offices of Michigan’s two state veterans’ skilled nursing facilities.

Zerbe earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and American Culture from the University of Michigan, a Juris Doctor from the University of Florida and Master of Public Policy from the University of Michigan. She is appointed to serve for a term expiring at the pleasure of the governor.

“I am humbled and honored to have been selected by the Board of Directors and governor to lead the Michigan Veteran Homes as we embark on our next exciting chapter,” Zerbe said. “We have a long and proud history of serving our veterans and their families dating back to 1885. As we continue construction on our two new homes and continue operations at our existing homes in Marquette and Grand Rapids, I am excited to be a part of an amazing team of caregivers and support staff who are committed to providing outstanding care to those who so selflessly served our state and nation.”

The position of executive director of the MVFA was created in 2018 to administer the business operations of existing Michigan veterans’ facilities, new veterans’ facilities developed and operated under the authority’s statute, and the authority itself. The executive director also serves as CEO of the existing Michigan Veterans Health System and will facilitate the transition to one unified system of management and operation for existing and new veterans’ facilities. The governor receives a recommendation for the executive director from the MVFA Board of Directors.

This appointment is not subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

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Detroit Veteran’s Day Parade

DETROIT – (November 10, 2019) Hundreds of Veterans, local leaders, American Legion members, and Legion Riders, high school ROTC Units, and others gathered in Corktown in Detroit for the Annual Detroit’s Veterans Day Parade. The parade celebrated the 100th Anniversary of The American Legion and naming Department Commander Barry Wood as the Parade Grand Marshall.

WORLD WAR II TOUR

13-DAY TOUR DEPARTING MAY 21, 2020 INCLUDES:

- **FRANCE**: first night in Paris, 3 nights in Normandy, visiting Omaha Beach, Pointe du Hoc, cemeteries, villages, Utah Beach & more
- **BELGIUM**: Battle of the Bulge area
- **GERMANY**: Nuremberg, Dachau Concentration Camp, Hitler’s Eagle Nest & more

**Only $3,295** per person. Includes airfare from Chicago O’Hare, luxury motorcoach, 4 star hotels, many meals, all admissions, professional WWII guide, escorted by Vi Ranney, Yankton, SD. Tour designed originally by Dr. Brooks Ranney, WWII medical officer who served in Europe.

Call for brochure: 605-665-3596 or e-mail: viranney@yvn.midco.net
Tour sponsored by and sold at cost by the Southeast SD Germans from Russia Heritage Society.

See Oberammergau, Germany’s world famous Passion Play on our European tour of Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France, Monaco, Italy & Spain departing Sept. 11.

Deadline approaching, everyone welcome!
First Annual Scouting Camporee held at Wilwin Lodge

**CAMPOREE SUCCESS!!!**

Clyde Sinclair, Scouting Chairman

The weekend of October 18th, 200 scouts from all over Michigan attended a camporee on the rustic wooded grounds of Wilwin at Cygnet Cove. Wilwin is a beautiful 1,184-acre property owned by the Department of Michigan, located just 15 miles east of Ludington, in the beautiful Huron-Manistee National Forest. This exciting camporee was the first of many Scouting camporees that the Department has planned at Wilwin.

Some of the activities that tested and improved scouting skills included lashings, compass work, knot tying, fire building, signaling, first aid, and animal trace and tracking. The camporee coincided with the Jamboree On The Air (JOTA), a worldwide scouting event, featuring HAM radio communications. Scouts participating in JOTA had the opportunity to visit with scouts all over the world. Late Saturday afternoon, a special radio connection was made with a HAM Radio Operator named Steve, call sign KB1006P. Steve was broadcasting from a Scouting Jamboree being held at historic Gilwell Park, located in London, England (the birthplace of Scouting in 1910).

Activities ended late Saturday evening with a rousing campfire filled with skits, songs, and plain old fun. After working up an appetite at the campfire, everyone gathered under the HQ tent for a delicious cracker-barrel and an opportunity for fellowship.

Members of the Department Scouting Committee are looking forward to 2020 when we can build upon our success. Plans for the 2020 Wilwin Camporee are already in progress, so mark your calendar for October 16th – 18th, 2020! Don't miss out on this great event! See you at the Camporee!

Don't Forget! 2020 Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship Award entries must be received on or before March 1, 2020. Applications may be downloaded from www.michiganlegion.org/scouting. Please contact Clyde Sinclair at milegionscouting.com with questions regarding the award.

Scouts honor our Veterans

On November 8, Scout Pack 3990 in Hale, honored our veterans for their military service. The scouts did an American flag folding ceremony by folding the flag and telling what each fold stood for.

Pictured are the scouts with the veterans and some of the scouts folding the flag.

Mark your calendar October 16th – 18th, 2020 for the next Camporee, hosted by the American Legion Department of Michigan
MOMENTOUS COMMEMORATION OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO IN THE WORKS

YANKIE AIR MUSEUM

On May 8, 1945, Germany unconditionally surrendered, and on August 14, 1945, the Empire of Japan unconditionally surrendered to the Allied Powers, which included the United States of America. This ended the greatest conflict in modern history, World War Two.

As the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War Two draws near, a grassroots organization led by Yankee Air Museum and others is ensuring that the service of Michigan's Greatest Generation is remembered. The national commemoration of this historic event includes a planned flyover of Washington D.C. on May 8, 2020, by a huge armada of World War Two aircraft. The Yankee Air Museum will be sending World War Two historic aircraft to represent Michigan.

The following weekend, the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War Two, Home Front Victory Celebration-Michigan, kickoff event is May 15-17, 2020, at the Yankee Air Museum and the Ann Arbor Marriott Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest Resort. There is a weekend of free events planned in observance of the sacrifices made during World War Two, starting Friday evening and running through Sunday afternoon, and the details will be announced soon.

A dinner banquet is being served from 6-10 pm in the Ann Arbor Marriott Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest Resort’s Ball Room. There will be a short, reverent ceremony followed by the Depot Town Big Band playing selections of World War Two period music.

“Coffee with Rosie” is slated for Sunday morning from 9-11 am at the Yankee Air Museum. Come and enjoy coffee and doughnuts. Original Rosie’s, World War Two Veterans and Holocaust Survivors are being invited as honored guests.

Yankee Air Museum will be flying Air Adventure rides on the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and the North American B-25 Mitchell bombers beginning at approximately 11:00 AM. Air Adventure rides can be purchased online at YankeeAirMuseum.org/ fly, and these will sell out fast.

The Washhtenaw Community Concert Band, a proud partner in the Home Front Victory Celebration, is staging an extraordinary musical event entitled “A Salute to Victory – 75 Years” at the historic Michigan Theater in Downtown Ann Arbor. A guest speaker will put the concert in perspective, with a special historical presentation, beginning at 1:10 pm for guests.

All of the events except for the Saturday night dinner, special historical presentation, and Air Adventure rides on Sunday are free to the public.

The Association of Michigan Military Organizations has events planned for this historic anniversary throughout the state of Michigan until September 2, 2020. Visit their Facebook page for more details.

For more information about the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War Two, Home Front Victory Celebration-Michigan, and how you can be involved, contact: worldwar2victory@yankeeairmuseum.org or 734 483 4030 ext 233.

About Yankee Air Museum: Established in 1981, the Yankee Air Museum is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. The Yankee Air Museum dedicates itself to educating individuals through the history of American aeronautics, aerospace industry and its associated technologies while inspiring generations through personal experiences to instill pride in our national accomplishments. Yankee Air Museum, located at 47884 D Street, Belleville, Michigan on the grounds of historic Willow Run Airport, is open Tuesday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Visit www.yankeairmuseum.org to discover more or call 734-483-4030.

ECONOMIC AWARDS DUE JANUARY 15TH

JERRY MERRILL, VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION CHAIRMAN

History: The Veterans Employment and Education (VE&E) Commission expanded its Employer Awards Program in 1969 when it created an award category for employers of veterans. Originally, departments were permitted to submit one nomination each for a large and a small employer of veterans. In 1992, the number of awards for employers of veterans was increased. Today, departments may submit a total of three nominations for this category for national consideration.

- One nomination for a small company with 50 or fewer employees
- One nomination for a medium sized company with workforces of 51 to 200
- One nomination for a large company with 201 or more employees

National Awards: These awards, one in each of the three employers of veterans size categories, are presented at the National Convention. In order to be eligible for the Employer of Veterans Awards, nominees must meet the following criteria:

- At least 10 percent of the nominee's workforce must be veterans.
- The nominee must have been in business for at least five years.
- The nominee cannot restrict employment to veterans only.

The nominee must be a private sector employer. In other words, the nominee cannot be a city, state or federal employer.

A department that submits a nomination for an employer of veterans that does not meet the above criteria will receive a plaque for presentation. However, that nominee will not be eligible for a national award.

Selections of the Employer of Veterans Awards are made by the VE&E Commission Award Subcommittee, which meets during the annual Washington Conference.

Deadline: The deadline for submission of nominations of employers of veterans is no later than January 15th. Nominations received after that date will not be eligible for consideration for the national award.

AWARD TO ENHANCE THE LIVES OF DISABLED PERSONS

The National Organization on disability awards certificates to organizations that significantly improve the ability of persons with disabilities to participate in the public life of the community. The purpose of that program is to confer national recognition on private sector organizations, like The American Legion, for their efforts to enhance the lives of disabled persons.

Describe what your nominee has done that makes that American Legion post or employer worthy of one of this award. What special accommodations have you included for your workforce? What project has that post or employer instituted that enhances the lives of disabled persons by helping them to participate in community activities? Was this solely a post project or were other community organizations involved? What tangible assets were involved in your nominee's project (e.g., volunteer hours, funds, etc.)? What measurable impact, if any, has your nominee's project had on the community as a whole? What measurable impact on disabled veterans, if any? Please limit your written narrative to two pages.

Only those nominations that include adequate documentation on the nominee's employment practices concerning veterans will be considered for the National Award to Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons. The nominator should provide a copy of the company's written policy on employment of veterans if available, a description of how the employer supports veterans’ activities in the community, and any other reasons why the nominee should be selected to be the National Award to Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons winner.

Nominations by posts and individuals must be sent to department headquarters as soon as possible so that the department will have time to review all nominations received and make the selection of its winners.

All nominations from departments must arrive at National Headquarters on or before January 15th. Either the department adjutant or department employment chairman must approve this nomination.

Visit michigalegion.org/vee for nomination forms, instructions, and other awards.
Fifth District Update
Sarah Brooks, Hospital Representative, Grand Rapids Home for Veterans

We continue to serve our veterans at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans in many ways throughout the year. While the number of members at the Home continues to decline (currently at 220), we make sure we provide the best service to them that they deserve.

Construction continues on the new facility, which is scheduled for completion in the Fall of 2021. Because of the limited space, we have had to restrict or eliminate some of our normal activities. However, we are doing everything we can within the limits to continue activities for the members.

Monthly events that continue include the Service Cart with personal care items twice a month, monthly Bingo for the ladies at the Home, and Auxiliary District Bingo on the third Thursday of each month. We also help with the Legion District Bingo on the first Thursday, as well as assist with activities put on by the Home such as Halloween, Las Vegas Day, etc. We also can provide special requests from the members throughout the year.

Several of our other events include:

Honoring the veterans in February during the annual Salute to Veteran Patients Week and also on Veterans Day.

The Mother’s Day program in May.

Annual Carnival – This past summer, this event was held in a different area with some limitations, but it was still a successful event for the members and their families.

Provide hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves to the members for the winter months.

Blanket drive in October for the homeless veterans in two local shelters.

November, we presented the women members at the Home with a gift of money. Non-income veterans were also given a gift of money.

Our biggest event is the Christmas Gift Shop, which allows members at the Home to select Christmas gifts for their families at no cost. This year it is being held in a smaller space so we had to make some adjustments to accommodate the members when they shop.

We are fortunate to have a wonderful group of volunteers at the GRHV, not only from the 5th District, but also from the 7th, 9th, and 19th Districts who contribute to the Christmas Gift Shop and the Mother’s Day Program. We appreciate all that they do to help our veterans so we can all honor the men and women for their service to our country. Many thanks also to our dedicated deputies – Pam McVeigh, Judy Jones, and Harriet Sturim.

On November 4 we delivered 13 blankets to the veterans residing at Verne Barry Place Apartments on Division (10 men and 3 women) and 11 veterans at Ferguson Apartments on Sheldon (all men). In the picture (left to right) are Christina Slosftra, Resident Services Coordinator at Ferguson, Sarah Brooks, Hospital Representative at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans, and Pam McVeigh, 1st Deputy at GRHV.
100th Anniversary Committee
Marcy Jorae, 100th Anniversary Celebration Committee Chairman

Even though we are now past November 10, 2019, which was the “official anniversary” of the American Legion Auxiliary, we should not be done celebrating the 100-year legacy of our service to veterans. November 10th was the day designated as the ALA anniversary because The American Legion created an auxiliary as part of their constitution at their first National Convention on November 10, 1919.

Even though we have just passed the November 10th anniversary, nationally, the Auxiliary will be celebrating 100 years of Service, Not Self through the end of the 2020 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. After all, 100 years is a long time to celebrate on just one day. The Department of Michigan celebration will continue through Department Convention in June 2020.

The American Legion, Auxiliary Department of Michigan’s charter, was executed on August 29, 1922, and signed by the 1st National President, Edith Hobart. That charter hangs at Department Headquarters along with pictures of both the current National and Department Presidents. Unit charters have two dates - one when the National President and Secretary signed it and one when the Department President and Secretary signed it.

As you can see, there will be many opportunities coming up in the next several years for the ALA to celebrate 100 years. Many of the very early Posts and Units have or will reach those important milestones soon; for others, it will be several years. If you are a Unit newly organized, take the opportunity to celebrate smaller milestones – five years, ten years, etc. Celebrating the existence of a Post or Unit is an excellent way to get some PR and promote the Legion Family in your community.

As you celebrate your milestones, please remember to send in write-ups and pictures of your celebration. We would love to include them in our year-end celebration at the Department Convention in June. I would ask that you have someone take a sharp, clear picture of your Unit charter and send it to me as well as a picture of your Post. If you have other items of historical significance that you think might be of interest, don’t hesitate to send pictures or written accounts of them. Let’s make our year-end celebration one to remember for many years to come.

Items (pictures or written accounts that you have) may be sent to me via my email: marcyjorae1952@gmail.com or copies may be sent to me at 5122 Alward Rd, Laingsburg, MI 48848.

National Security Report
Marcy Jorae, National Security Chairman

As work the National Security program, here are some tips offered by Anne Parker, Western Division Chairman passed on by our Central Division Chairman Joan Ghwala.

Your unit can go to www.anysoldier.org and find a unit that can give their address to you along with their needs. This is an easy way to put a smile on a soldier’s face.

If a unit is near a base or have a National Guard unit or Reserve unit in your county, these young men and women could certainly use holiday cheer with gifts for their children, help with a holiday dinner, and last but not least, a big thank you for what they are doing.

Poplar items in holiday boxes include small artificial Christmas trees, Santa hats, protein bars, Little Debbie holiday cakes, and beef jerky. When you use www.anysoldier.org, the soldiers who have signed up often tell you of the requested items.

And speaking of National Guard units, look on www.yellowribbon.mil and locate these events in your state. If you are not familiar with this program, it is a reintigration program for the Guard that promotes the well-being of these soldiers during and after deployments.

Many times there are opportunities to share membership with these families in the American Legion Family at these events as well as help with the actual events.

Another component of National Security is CERT (Community Emergency Response Training), which educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Check out this website for resources on providing such training for your community: https://www.fema.gov/media-library/resources/documents/collections

ALA National Security Facebook Group Page

If you use Facebook, please join our group called “ALA National Security” as we have photos posted there already, and want to chat back and forth and share our ideas and successes. If you have any pictures, that would be a bonus. Please send it to me by December 20th at either marcyjorae1952@gmail.com or 5122 Alward Rd, Laingsburg, MI 48848.

I look forward to having many activities to report for the Department of Michigan.

VETERANS FROM SAGINAW TO MACKINAW
Bonnie Holt, VA&R Chairman, Saginaw VAVS Representative

I would like to talk to the ALA to say thank you to so many people good friends that have helped myself and the Saginaw VA Medical Center. Last year I could not go shopping for the gift shop, two auxiliary members stepped up and did it and one got hurt. I know it’s a big job so thank you very much.

Another good friend, an SAL member, buys and brings donuts each year, traveling over 2 hours to get them there on time. The donuts are so yummy thank you very much.

My husband, past department commander, Brett Holt, thank you for the truck that you drive and store all the gifts that unload them at the Saginaw VA Medical Center. Thank you very much for all your time.

7th District Report
Alicia Minster, President

Greetings to all! Hoping everyone had a wonderful holiday season and happy new year wishes to you all. I want to invite you all to keep celebrating 100 years of service not-self. Just because the date has come and gone, we should continue to celebrate. As well we should continue to work our programs serving our veterans, military, and their families. The Seventh District has been hard at work, working our programs diligently. I have attended and will be attending more unit meetings in the near future. Port Huron Unit #8, for example, has held bings and dinners as fundraisers to help our veterans, military, and their families better. They were also eager to see a new veterans home coming soon to our district. It is in Bad Axe. I am also working hard to raise money and awareness for my special project, Vets Returning Home. A homeless shelter in our district strictly for veterans, male and female, in Roseville. They not only shelter and feed our homeless vets but they help them find jobs, homes, vehicles, and much more. I am very pleased with our District’s work as well as our entire Department of Michigan for our service, not-self, can-do attitude. Keep up the great work everyone. Remember, we can now sign up spouses of both genders to the Auxiliary, so get out there and help our membership grow.

8th District Report
Dawn Burton, President

The first five months of my presidency has been a whirlwind. Learning duties, attending events, and meeting fellow members throughout our district. With every day, every event, my presidency evolves. For example, my “special project” started as one thing and has shifted. We’ll get back to that later.

First, let me tell you about my amazing district and the units within. We celebrate our towns and veterans, and we support our schools. Saint Johns has the Mint Festival, with a parade that perfectly blends tradition and pride, setting the standard. I was elated to be asked to be a part of it. Stanton puts on a Thanksgiving meal that serves enough people to compete with the big city but done with small-town charm that starts off the Holiday season right. Saginaw honored Veterans by laying a wreath at Veterans Park. Not only did Greenville donate over a hundred boxes of Kleenex to elementary schools, but they also recognized the Auxiliary’s 100th Anniversary by donating $100

Like most, my special project was born from something close and personal. My wife works with homeless veterans, and I found a way to work with her. I did my project to support her work. The units helped by making bags and baskets to help newly housed veterans. A few helped by using Poppy Funds to pick up where her program left off; Belding held a fund-raiser, supporting her organization. However, something happened that veered my project in a different direction.

On October 19th, 2019, the Army National Guard, Charlie Company, out of Grand Ledge, was deployed. One of our local heroes was one of the soldiers sent. His deployment left his wife at home with three young children. My special project, which I have dubbed “Operation Backup,” has many facets and continues throughout the entire deployment (which could be up to 450 days). We helped during a diaper crisis, built some food baskets and have started working on Christmas. We adopted the family and are making sure our soldier knows that while he is protecting us, we are taking care of his family. Although my project has been challenged, we are not abandoning the mission. We will continue to help support homeless veterans; that will not stop. But, we can and will do so much more. Eight is Great!
The 2020 Census begins
Your participation is critical to supporting Veterans

From the Census.gov website: Why We Ask Questions About Veteran Status

We ask questions about a person’s military service and service-connected disability rating to create estimates of veterans and their needs at the community level.

Data about veterans help plan and fund government programs that provide assistance or services for veterans and evaluate other government programs and policies to ensure they fairly and equitably serve the needs of veterans. These statistics are also used to enforce laws, policies, and regulations against discrimination in society. Though the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) maintains veterans’ records, these statistics do not provide federal program planners, policymakers, and researchers with additional statistics about all veterans, regardless of whether they use VA services.

Your privacy concerns

We use your confidential survey answers to create statistics like those in the results below and in the full tables that contain all the data—no one is able to figure out your survey answers from the statistics we produce. The Census Bureau is legally bound to strict confidentiality requirements. Individual records are not shared with anyone, including federal agencies and law enforcement entities. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents’ answers with anyone—not the IRS, not the FBI, not the CIA, and not with any other government agency.

Questions as they appear on the form

We ask three questions about active duty service, the period of active duty, and service-connected disability status and rating to create a profile of our nation’s veterans.

View Questions

Results from these questions

We compile the results from these questions to provide communities with important statistics to help plan assistance programs. You can see some of these published statistics here for the nation, states, and your community.

Veteran data help communities: Administer Programs for Veterans

We want to know more about the numbers and characteristics of veterans eligible for federal programs benefiting veterans, such as:

- VA Home Loan Guarantee program.
- Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- Job training and hiring preference programs.

This information helps communities and the federal government estimate the future demand for these programs and services. These data are also used to evaluate these programs to determine whether they are benefiting veterans as intended.

- Provide Health Care for Veterans
- Local communities and the federal government want to know about the number of veterans eligible to use VA health care in combination with age, disability, and service-connected disability ratings, to estimate the future demand for health care services and facilities. Communities in need of major VA medical facilities throughout the country make a case for new construction projects using these data to estimate the expected usage of new facilities.

- Plan End-of-Life Options for Veterans
- Information about where veterans are living toward the end of their lives is important, as the VA estimates the number of nursing home and domiciliary beds needed based on the concentrations of eligible veterans over age 65. These data are also important for the VA National Cemetery Administration, whose goal is to have a VA burial option within 75 miles of a veteran’s residence. These data are used to plan construction of new cemeteries near the communities where veterans choose to live.

- Ensure Equal Opportunity
- We want to know about the veteran and service-connected disability rating status of people in the community in combination with information about housing, employment, and education, to help the government and communities enforce against discrimination based on veteran or disability status.

- Understand New Challenges for Veterans
- Information about the characteristics of veterans returning to civilian life is also important to combat specific problems they may face. For example, researchers use these data to understand why veteran status is a predictor of homelessness. Such data have been combined with administrative data produced by shelters in an attempt to understand and document which interventions reduce homelessness among veterans.

- History of veterans questions
- The first question related to veterans was included in the 1890 Census. Questions about veteran status and period of military service were transferred to the ACS in 2005 when it replaced the decennial census long form. The current VA service-connected disability rating question was added to the ACS in 2008.

Is it called the Congressional Medal of Honor?

What is correct?


The award is not called the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Contrary to popular belief, the official title of the highest U.S. military distinction is simply the Medal of Honor, not the Congressional Medal of Honor. The confusion may have arisen because the president presents the award “in the name of Congress.” There is also a Congressional Medal of Honor Society, which represents recipients of the Medal of Honor, maintains their records and organizes reunion events, among other responsibilities.

This is to correct a story in the November-December issue of the MI Legionnaire.
The Only Written Official Call Annual Winter Conference
American Legion, Department of Michigan
February 14-16, 2020 Holiday Inn Gateway, Flint, Michigan
Purpose: To implement plans for the upcoming year and otherwise conduct the business of the American Legion, Department of Michigan, through meetings of the Department Executive Committee, taking reports from called Department Committees and Chairmen, presenting public recognition awards, and conducting applicable Schools of Instruction.

Aside from the Department Executive Committee, only the Department Committees and Chairmen listed below are called to officially participate in the Winter Conference. See Program Book for all specific locations.

Registrations • Registration fee of $15.00 will be charged to all delegates, alternates and guests.

* Baseball, Boys State, Education & Scholarships, Finance/Personnel, Internal Affairs, Legislative, Membership, National Security & Foreign Relations, Permanent Time and Place, Post Development, Media & Communications, Reconnect, and VA & R

Department Executive Committee Meeting: Sunday, February 16th, 2020, at 9:00 am

The American Legion Department of Michigan

2020 WINTER MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

All room reservations, requests and special needs are to be placed through the Holiday Inn Gateway Centre, 5353 Gateway Center, Flint, MI 48507 - (810) 232-5300.

A block of rooms will be available at the Holiday Inn Gateway and the Courtyard Marriott until January 23, 2020. Mention reservation code TAL to secure the special room rate of $97.00 + 11% hotel tax.

Contact Tim Hernandez with any questions at 810-653-0314 or 810-444-2502.

Registration fee is $15.00 per person. Make your check payable to:
The Genesee County Convention Corp. or simply to: GCCC.

Mail to: Tim Hernandez, 719 E Chelsea Cir.
Davison MI 48423-1204

The American Legion requires that each person attending must register with the corporation and be issued an official badge to be allowed to attend any meeting, session or event.

2020 Winter Meeting Registrant Information

Name:
Address:
City/Zip:

Additional Registering Names:
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

$15.00 X (number of people registering) = $ (Please enclose).

Hotel reservations are confirmed with the Holiday Inn Gateway (810-232-5300): Yes No
If not, then the Courtyard Marriott (810-232-3500)?: Yes No
Best Western Plus (810-233-9000)?: Yes No
Hyatt Place (810-424-9000)?: Yes No
Other accommodations?: I am commuting daily: Yes No

Please provide the following contact information for registration confirmation:
Cell Ph: email:

National Commander Bill Oxford will be our guest at the Department Winter Meeting in Flint.

The commander is a Marine and U.S. Army Veteran from the Department of North Carolina.

Make your reservations today to join him at the Winter Banquet on February 14, 2020.

The American Legion Department of Michigan

2020 WINTER BANQUET RESERVATION FORM

Friday February 14, 2020

Social: 6:00 pm Dinner: 7:00 pm

$30.00 per person

Name(s):
Email: Phone:

Address:

Please select for type of dinners and quantity of each:

Beef Chicken Fish Vegetarian

Credit Card: Exp CVV

Pay online: www.michiganlegion.org/2020winterbanquet

Make checks payable to: The American Legion, Department of Michigan – Attention Kim
212 N. Verlinden Lansing, MI 48915
Questions? kim@michiganlegion.org
Deadline for reservations is January 13, 2020 No Refunds after this date
2020 WINTER CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, February 14, 2020

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. TRAINING – Liquor Control Commission

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. TRAINING – Charitable Gaming
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Legion Headquarters
3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Meet National Commander Bill Oxford
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Social hour
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Winter Conference Banquet

Saturday, February 15, 2020

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Legion Headquarters
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Legislative Committee
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Post Development Committee
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Baseball Committee
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Boys’ State Committee
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Finance/Personnel Committee
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Media & Communications
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Membership Committee
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch Break
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Past Department Commanders/Wives Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Internal Affairs Committee
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. National Security & Foreign Relations Comm
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Permanent Time & Place
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Administrative Committee
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. VA & R w/VAVS
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. TRAINING – Open to All
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Redistricting Committee
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Wilwin Meeting
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Legion Riders Meeting
2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Grand Haven documentary
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Legion DEC Meeting
8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Reception for National Commander

Sunday, February 16, 2020

8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Headquarters
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Legion DEC Meeting

*SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE*

The Facts On LegionCare:

- This coverage is at NO-COST-TO-YOU
- LegionCare is now available to all Legion Family members: Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and Sons of the American Legion.
- This coverage has been available on a regular basis by your American Legion Department.
- Regardless of your age, health or occupation your acceptance is GUARANTEED**

And did you know that starting 1/1/2015, anyone enrolled in LegionCare will be covered for as long as they maintain their membership in the Legion Family – TAL, ALA, & SAL. This new “one and done” approach will save you from needing to re-enroll every 5 years. The LegionCare program will continue to cover you for $1,000 of AD&D coverage.

If the accidental loss occurs when an official Legion Family Business, we will cover you for $5,000 of AD&D coverage. * This has been arranged on your behalf by Your Department of the American Legion.

As soon as your enrollment is received, LegionCare will take effect. Your acceptance is guaranteed**, so enroll today.

For immediate coverage, enroll online at www.TheLIT.com/No-Cost-LegionCare

Complete details of the coverage are combined in accident only Master Policy 3920356640030-0001A underwritten by Transamerica Premier Life Insurance Company Cedar Rapids, IA. This plan is not available in all states.

*For purposes of the Legionnaires Insurance Trust, a member of the Legion Family, with current year’s due paid, could be eligible for the $5,000 Accident Death benefit if he/she is traveling to, attending, or returning from an official function at which they represent their Post, Squadron, Unit, Division, Department, Detachment or National Organization in an official capacity.

**This is a supplemental health insurance plan that requires to have major medical coverage, Medicare, or other health coverage that meets “minimum essential coverage” as defined by the Affordable Care Act.
BIG RAPIDS – The Harry K. Kunzie Post 98 teamed up with the Ferris State University Men’s Hockey to celebrate Veterans’ at the November 15, 2019 home game. Preparations began in September when Ferris State auctioned the games special jerseys off to the public. That auction raised $5,000 for Post 98. A Korean War Veteran dropped the puck, the Army ROTC presented colors, and the team presented Post Commander Bill Yontz with $5,000 before the game.

U.S. Senator Gary Peters presented Bowen-Holliday Post 35, Traverse City, Commander John Milks (left), and Adjutant Bill Seater (right) a certificate commemorating The American Legion’s 100th Anniversary.

LANSING - A full house of veterans were present at Robinwood’s Senior Living community members on Veteran’s Day. Past Vice Commander Marylin Britten, from James H. McClain Post 178, helped make a fun and heartwarming event.

RAPID RIVER (below) - The Walter W. Cole Post 301, presented Legionnaire Chuck Gendron (center) his 50-year continuous service pin. Congratulations, Chuck and thank you for your service in the military and to The American Legion.


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