Time to Renew: The Value of Membership

Three reasons to renew your membership today

During this time of government-imposed shutdowns, and self-isolation, American Legion Posts are not able to meet or gather as they did in 2019. For Posts with a building and a lounge, some members derive the value of their membership in going there together with friends. Other Posts are now only able to meet via the phone, or a computer, it just is not the same.

In this unique time in history, one might question if they should renew when the notice comes in. Let me provide three reasons for how your continued membership makes the world a better place.

For most members, 80 to 90 percent of your membership dues goes to support the Department and National operations. It provides the funding for Legionnaires to provide services to our American Heroes and their families. What do they do with the due’s revenue?

1. In Michigan, dues go to support 22 American Legion Accredited Veteran Service officers who directly help Veterans who are filing claims for benefits with the U.S. Department of Veterans Administration. Because of your dues and support since October 1, 2019, you have helped bring back over $80,000,000 of direct payment to Michigan Veterans in VA Compensation and Benefits. On the National level, you support a team of 14 Accredited Service Officers who support the Michigan Team and other Departments when a direct appeal to Washington, is needed.

2. The State House and Senate, and the U.S. Congress are still in session and still working on legislation. On the State level, we are working hard to keep programs for Veterans from being cut, in this time of less revenue. We are working to bring five more State Veteran Homes and finish the two underway. We are fighting to keep the grants that provide additional funding for our accredited service officers in the field. In Washington, the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs passed 12 bipartisan bills to support Veterans and their benefits. The American Legion testifies, provides information, and works with both parties to further the interests of Veterans who served America.

3. American Legion Programs. Your dues support programs that teach Americanism, American values, and our system of government. Boys State, Girls State, Constitutional Speech Contest, Scouting, Junior Shooting Sports, and Youth Law Enforcement Cadet Program, teach our young people discipline, process, and provide life experiences.

We all miss normal, and we hope it will come back soon, but in the meantime, The American Legion continues working every day, sometimes in different ways to achieve the goals. As a supporter of Team Legion through your membership, you make life better for Veterans every day.

For less than 20 cents per day, you are helping hundreds of Veterans each month deal with the red tape of the VA and helping them receive life-changing treatments and compensation due to injuries suffered while serving their country.

Thank you for being a part of TEAM LEGION, and your continued membership. If you want to renew by credit card today, visit www.legion.org/renew, your local Post will receive notice that you renewed online, and they will receive the Posts portion of their dues.

Renew your membership online at:
www.legion.org/renew

National POW/MIA Recognition Day
September 19

National POW/MIA Recognition Day was established in 1979 through a proclamation signed by President Jimmy Carter. Since then, each subsequent president has issued an annual proclamation commemorating the third Friday in September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

A national-level ceremony is held on every National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Traditionally held at the Pentagon, it features members from each branch of military service and participation from high-ranking officials.

In addition to the national-level ceremony, observances of National POW/MIA Recognition Day are held across the country on military installations, ships at sea, state capitol, schools and veterans’ facilities.

No matter where they are held, these National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies share the common purpose of honoring those who were held captive and returned, as well as those who remain missing.

To date there are still 2,857 service members from Michigan unaccounted for from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War.

Please keep the families of these service members in your prayers.

NOTE: 2020 Fall Conference has been canceled, details page 2.
“Being Relentless”
Larry Vollink
Department Chaplain

Today I received a phone call from a person where our lives crossed over 26 years ago, and we had never heard from each other until today, thanks to Facebook friend search. He told me he was the person who was on my CPE Board (Clinical Pastoral Education) with two others, and they interviewed me for the advanced level. Basically, they said, “Thanks, but no thanks” for my advancement to the next level. They saw the disappointment in my mannerisms, and it was over. So my next move was to continue again, and again, four more times into the basic course. I was too scared to think I would never make the highest level! Here, he was today talking to me and apologizing for not letting me reach the highest level. After all these years, it bothered him in his heart of what he did to me!

That reminded me of people in the military as well, who are excellent officers, and soldiers. Still, not everyone rises to the highest level because of people who have the power to do so. Should we then quit, or move on to greater accomplishments? My guide has always been the Bible as a chaplain/pastor, which says, “Don’t stop talking to me and apologizing for not letting me reach the highest level. If I quit, however, it lasts forever.” – Lance Armstrong

Tell yourself that you will be relentless in your pursuits and never allow the desire to quit to beat you. When you are relentless, you look at life in a completely different way. You know that you will succeed. It’s just a matter of when.

Do you have a desire to be RELENTLESS in your life? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word relentless as “showing or promising no abatement of severity, intensity, strength, or pace.” Can we be Relentless in our actions? Relentless in our efforts? Relentless in our ability to keep going? Successful people don’t get to where they are because they quit. They get to where they are and beyond because they have developed the ability to hold on and persevere despite all odds. If you pursue something that you love 100% regardless of the outcome, you will have lived a life worth living. Being relentless means that you keep pushing no matter what. Whatever it is that you’re doing, do something to get better at it every day, even if it’s something small. The simple fact is that those who remain persistent and relentless. Are you willing to go that far in pursuit of greatness?

“Pain is temporary. It may last a minute, or an hour, or a day, or a year, but eventually, it will subside, and something else will take its place. If I quit, however, it lasts forever.” – Lance Armstrong

The DEC will meet via ZOOM to conduct business on a date to be determined.

2020 Fall Conference has been canceled.
The Department Executive Committee voted on Friday, August 21 to cancel the in person gathering for the 2020 Fall Conference in Flint.

Discussions with the hotel and the current executive orders in place make it impossible to meet.

If you made hotel reservations, please cancel those reservations. The convention corporation in charge of the event will be refunding fees in the next couple of weeks.

The DEC will meet via ZOOM to conduct business on a date to be determined.

2020 Michigan Boys State Golf Outing has been canceled.
Due to restrictions in place by executive orders this event has been canceled.
Indianapolis in March. I hope that we will be able to send (a) representative(s) to the convention. The date of the convention has been postponed until March of 2021. I certainly hope that a solution is found soon, and activities can get back to some level of normalcy. Please be safe.

The latest program to have been affected by the pandemic is the National American Legion College (NALC). The Department is making preparations to send applications into (NALC). We have received notice that the Legion College is being postponed until March of 2021. I certainly hope that we will be able to send (a) representative(s) to Indianapolis in March.

I thank the Department Executive Committee (DEC), Department Committees, and Department Staff for adapting to Zoom and TEAM meetings so quickly. We have been able to accomplish Department business through electronic communications. I am learning the advantages of having this means to communicate. One good thing that has been learned from our current crisis is the importance of this means of communication. This allows us to meet and communicate without a lot of travel and face-to-face activities. I encourage all of us to embrace this means of conducting our business. One of my hopes is that this will encourage us to meet and communicate more often so we can move our business forward in a timelier manner.

We are in the early part of the 2021 membership year. You will begin to question how you can work your membership. Of course, you will have those that always pay their dues when they receive notice from National, but how do you reach those that tend to be somewhat slower? I ask that you continue buddy-checks, use your newsletters, Facebook pages, and there is always that trusted phone. Continue to let your members know what is happening at the post, district, department, and national. You can keep yourself informed by going to legion.org and michiganlegion.org. There is a lot of important information at these sites. Look for opportunities to participate (safely) within your communities. Wear an article of clothing that advertises The American Legion and use this as a means to kick off a conversation about how your post supports veterans, their families, and your community. Thank you for your membership and your involvement in The American Legion.

As I write this article, I and other Legionnaires from the department, and across all departments, are attending the 57th Membership Workshop virtually. A lot of good information is being provided. These sessions are being recorded and will be available for viewing on August 10 on the National website. The theme for the workshop is “Growing a Post.” This is something that your post membership committee should take the time to view.

The First Lady, Margaret, and I exercise on a regular basis and have chosen to join National Commander Oxford’s “100 Miles for Hope campaign.” I encourage you to join also. However, whether you join the campaign or not, I do encourage you to walk, run, or bike and record your mileage. Set a goal for yourself and record your results each day. You might be surprised how quickly the miles add up. Maybe you can get something going at your post to participate together while keeping social distancing. Get outside and enjoy the sun and warm days.

**Healing PTSD**

Ron Runyan
Department Adjutant

As we all watch the TV or news source of our choice, we all watching what is happening across our great country. When I get asked my opinion on this, there is one thing that comes to my mind. I stress to my friends and family that no matter what the issue, that law, and order must be maintained. I watched many Wild West movies with my father growing up, but I would have never wanted to live in those times of lawlessness and shooting people without true justice. It is our duty and responsibility as veterans and Legionnaires to Promote Peace & Goodwill on Earth.

Department is also posed with a question daily on what the Post can do and what they can’t do, and do they need to follow executive orders. My advice I always share is that ultimately the posts are the judges and decision-makers of their property and business. I share with them that I have compassion and understanding of how tough these times can be. Regardless, we must abide by our best ability to follow the laws our state and government declares for us all. If we disagree with laws and rules, it is your right to speak your mind, write resolutions, and try to make a change.

I also site that within our American Legion preamble that we will “maintain Law and Order.” To that point, please do your best at making wise decisions within your Post when making decisions. I will leave you with the entire American Legion Prayer that we all recite together in meetings. Read each sentence and look inward at yourself and focus on determining if your Post is following the preamble.

“For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

- To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
- To maintain law and order;
- To foster and perpetuate a 100-percent Americanism;
- To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;
- To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation;
- To combat the autonomy of both the classes and the masses;
- To make right the master of might;
- To promote peace and goodwill on earth;
- To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy;
- To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”

I want to encourage every member of our Legion family to stay safe and healthy during this troubled time in our country and in a manner that meets your needs.

- **Support PTSD Treatment through the U.S. Postal Service**

Did you know on December 2, 2019, the U.S. Post Office unveiled the PTSD Stamp?

From the U.S. Post Office Press Release:

With this semipostal stamp, the U.S. Post Office will raise funds to help treat those impacted by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The stamp features a photo illustration of a green plant sprouting from the ground, which is covered in fallen leaves. The image is intended to symbolize the PTSD healing process, growth, and hope. Art director Greg Breeding designed the stamp with original art by Mark Laita.

The stamp dedication ceremony is free and open to the public. News of the stamp is being shared with the hashtags #HealingPTSDStamp and #semipostalStamps.

Tens of millions of Americans will experience PTSD in their lifetimes. Today, the nation is increasingly dedicated to compassionately treating this mental health issue.

Many kinds of trauma can lead people to experience persistent symptoms such as intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and difficulty sleeping. Depression, anxiety, and fear can also occur. Though these symptoms may initially interrupt one's daily life, for most people, they typically dissipate over time. However, if these problems continue for more than a month, PTSD may have developed. Symptoms associated with the disorder often can be broken down into four categories: avoidance, hyperarousal, increased negative beliefs and feelings, and reliving.

The two most common treatments for PTSD are medication and psychotherapy, also known as talk therapy. The disorder cuts across demographic lines, though women are at a greater risk than men. Women are more than twice as likely as men to suffer PTSD at some point in their lives.

Sold at a price of 65 cents per First-Class stamp, the PTSD stamp is a semipostal. The price of a semipostal stamp pays for the First-Class single-piece postage rate in effect at the time of purchase plus an amount to fund causes that have been determined to be in the national public interest. By law, revenue from sales (minus postage and the reasonable reimbursement of costs to the Postal Service) is to be transferred to a selected executive agency or agencies. Net proceeds from this stamp will be distributed to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which oversees the National Center for PTSD.
Greetings from

YOUR Membership Committee

Brian Molhman
Membership Director

By this time, every Post in our Department has received its’ 2021 Membership Goal. This membership year, Posts and Districts were invited to provide direct input to their membership goal determination. By being involved in the discussion, you had the opportunity to explore Programs and Plans that will help you reach a successful result in your Post’s Goals. Your Membership Committee is here to provide you with the tools you need to make it a reality!

Your Membership Team has been hard at work this Summer, finalizing its’ goals and developing a plan of action to ensure your Post’s Membership Team has the tools and motivation it needs to make a difference.

Every Legionnaire is a Recruiter

A Recruiter is defined as a person whose job it is to enlist or enroll people as employees, in the Armed Forces, or as Members of an Organization. Members of this Great Veteran’s Organization, it is up to all of us to share our experiences with those we come into contact with. This may be through a circle of friends, someone we meet on the street, or someone who calls on you asking for information about The American Legion.

Honesty is the Best Policy

There is a reason each of us joined, and although it’s different for everyone when you share that reason from your heart, you will inspire others to follow suit. Speaking passionately from your heart is a good reason for belonging to The American Legion is the best tool in your kit. A prospective Member will pick up on your sincerity and will undoubtedly realize that there is much more to this organization than they ever realized. Share your experiences, share your convictions, share your knowledge of the impact that your Post has on Veterans and your Community.

Ask the Questions

Is your Post a vital part of your community? Does your Post give value back to the community that supports it? Are Veterans better off because of the efforts of your Post? If the answer to any of these questions isn’t a resounding YES, there are opportunities to provide necessary services within your local community. Events such as Blood Drives, Adopt-A-Highway, and Flag Education for Youth, create activity in your community, and activity creates interest in your Programs. The more your community sees your Post as a relevant Community Partner, the more your community will become involved in your Post.

Just Bring One!

All it takes is one new member! I challenge every Legionnaire in the Department of Michigan to share your story with ONE friend or acquaintance…just one.

One Last Word…or Acronym, YCSMSOYA…stay tuned for more!

District Meetings

1st District
2nd District
3rd District
4th District
5th District
6th District
7th District
8th District
9th District
10th District
11th District/12th District/UP Association Meetings
16th District

2021 Department Membership Goal: 61094
Leading by example starts with us ends with us

I hope that all are doing well and virus free. With the onset of the COVID-19 virus, many meetings and gatherings have been postponed or canceled, taking into consideration the well-being of our members as a priority. Our Governor has implemented several executive orders during our State of Emergency that has had some effect on us as an organization. We will more than likely have the need to continue virtual meetings.

We have been fortunate to have developed ways to continue our mission of Service Not Self to our veterans and their families. There have been virtual meetings with National and meetings with our DEC via the internet. We will more than likely have the need to continue virtual meetings. When meeting in person, we should all be practicing preventive measures by safe distancing and wearing face masks.

Every organization has problems with civility, and our organization is not exempt from disruptive, contrary members. Creating and promoting goodwill must start with us and end with us. As leaders, we are held accountable for our actions, not only personally, but on behalf of our organization. What we do or say ultimately affects the Auxiliary. Therefore, we must build a trusting relationship and raise that level of trust. “Raising” trust means it must be earned... upward. Units and Districts will trust their Departments when they see their Department leaders behaving toward them and each other with respect. Department leaders will trust national leaders when they see their national leaders behaving toward them and each other with respect.

Trust is a two-way street. We must lead by example of respectful behavior to others so others will feel valued. When people feel valued, it takes away the need for them to act out in order to be noticed. And that is a root cause of much ill will in the Auxiliary. Members who want to be become leaders, and members who are forced into leadership positions, need to know they are supported. If they don’t feel supported, they will either give up or act out, kind of like kids. It begins with us. It doesn’t matter what we “say” we believe; it only matters what we “do.” Our attitude, demeanor, actions and even what we say and how we say it, are all under a microscope. Members, whether on the national, department, or unit level, are watching us. We must be the example of a good leader. So ultimately, it will end with us because all of these factors trickle down to the unit level. What does that mean? Members notice the actions and attitudes of officers who are in disagreement, always bickering, and not working together as a team. The officers are not setting a good example or exhibiting positive behavior. Does it affect the Department’s membership? Of course. What about the members’ desire to work the programs? Some members even quit because they do not want to deal with the bickering, rudeness, and unruliness. Leading by example starts with each one of us, and it ends with each one of us. The Auxiliary’s future depends on our ability to engage, communicate, develop positive relationships with diverse people. We all want to be known as kind, respectful, trustworthy, and a person of integrity. We also know we have to earn that trust, respect, and the right to be called a person of integrity. We are ALL in this together, we need to share positive attitudes.

Seven Simple Truths

1. Most ALA members don’t think of themselves as leaders unless they have a title. Leadership is not a rank to attain; it is a mantle of responsibility. True leaders put the organization’s needs before their own. Not all ALA leaders have titles.

2. Our organization operates with layers of leadership. Those who don’t hold a title may not have a sense of ownership that empowers them to solve problems.

3. When members accept a position of responsibility and don’t fulfill it, they break down trust. Documents that outline Roles & Responsibilities must address accountability and establish a basis for replacement.

4. In general, we are struggling with being welcoming, especially to people who are not like us. Until we improve this, we are unlikely to match the diversity of the military.

5. Lack of information is a significant barrier to leadership development. Leadership Committee members can help members become informed and make use of tools.

6. Different leadership positions require different skills. The rigid, cumbersome process in most departments does not allow the necessary flexibility to make adjustments when a candidate is already in line for office but doesn’t demonstrate the ability to be successful at the next level. Departments should evaluate whether their succession process still serves their needs.

7. Succession planning should be part of leadership development. Good leaders leave a legacy of new leaders who are set up for even greater success. We must be cultivating the next generation of ALA leaders.

Ref: alaforveterans.org

Another Opportunity to Celebrate our 80th!
Beryl Robbins, Girls State Chairman

For the first time in our history, we had to cancel Michigan’s ALA Girls State in 2020. It was a disappointing year for our committee members, loyal sponsors, and the students who were so excited to have the opportunity to attend. Our Department office is in the process of issuing refunds for those sponsors who requested one. A letter of cancellation was also made available to the sponsors that they could provide to their delegates and alternates in hopes they use it when applying for a military academy and colleges. We know for sure it was used successfully by some who applied to West Point. We will be issuing new reservation numbers and delegate letters this fall for those of you who decided to carry your sponsorship funds over to 2021.

Moving forward, we are continuing plans for a successful 80th session in 2021. We are working closely with ALA National Headquarters, who are hoping for the best with all the programs next year but preparing for the worse so we can be ready for anything that comes our way. ALA Department President Georgia Downs has kept ALA Girls State as her special project. We hope that the American Legion family and their communities will continue to support us to make this a special 80th-anniversary celebration. It’s not too early to start your search for delegates. Check with your members, maybe they have an eligible student in their family. If you need contact information for your local high schools, please contact Beryl Robbins, who has access to that information.

For questions, concerns, or to request a copy of the cancellation letter, contact Beryl and Rysta at alamigirlstate@gmail.com. The ALA Girls State Committee is here to help you!
From the Desk of the Executive Director
Brandy A. Nelson
Executive Director / Department Secretary / Treasurer

We'd like to reiterate that due to safety precautions that members contact Department to make an appointment, as is our current policy outlined below.

For the continued safety of our members and staff, the Department office will be open by appointment only.

Most Department business can be handled via mail, email, and phone calls. We ask that you please conduct business in this manner.

To make an appointment, please email info@michalaux.org or call (517) 267-8809. We will confirm with you if the requested date and time is available.

We will be limiting appointment times to no longer than 20 minutes if possible.

When visiting the office for a scheduled appointment the following guidelines are in place:

Please enter and exit through the front door on Verlinden only. Please maintain proper social distancing and wear a face mask.

If you’ve had any of the following symptoms that is not attributable to another condition you will be asked to reschedule your appointment:

Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever – TEMPS that exceed 100 degrees will not be admitted into the office, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.

FALL CONFERENCE

Fall Conference has been canceled due to gathering limitations. A virtual DEC meeting is being planned. Information regarding the meeting will be provided to DEC members as plans are finalized.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING DONATIONS

Donations for outside organizations can no longer be accepted at Department for distribution. If a donation is received, it will be returned to the Unit.

Department accepts the following donations:

- ALA Girls State
- Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF)
- Current DEPARTMENT President’s Project (Girls State)
- Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Past President’s Parley Medical Career Scholarship
- VA&R Fund - Please indicate which facility you are donating to
- Veteran’s Creative Arts Program
- The following are examples of donations that Department cannot accept:
  - Chapel of Four Chaplains
  - National President’s Project
  - USO
  - Wounded Warriors Project (Please send to the American Legion Department of Michigan, make checks out to The American Legion Foundation) Wilwin Lodge (Please send to the American Legion Department of Michigan)

If your Unit would like to make a donation to one of these organizations, please contact that organization directly. If you have any questions, please email Department: info@michalaux.org

Members of the 18th donated items and money for our Loft at Wilwin Lodge. Not allowed to meet). For God and country!

National Security Report
Marcy Jorae, Chairman

As we begin the 2020-2021 administrative year, we are heading into a year, unlike any other in our organization’s 100-year history. Many challenges face us as a country and as an organization. Among the challenges we are faced with is how to effectively work our programs during these trying times of illness and unrest in our nation.

This is the year that members must put their “thinking caps” on and become creative as we strive to reach our goals and promote our Legion Families in our communities. This year is being looked at as a continuation of the 2019-2020 year, so few changes will occur in the Program Guides that will be available this Fall. Please be sure to look through them for ideas of what your Unit/District can do to work this program. Until we can safely meet again, many members are meeting virtually to keep their Unit together. Use these times to brainstorm and develop a plan of action for your Unit to carry out once the pandemic is behind us, and we can safely gather together again.

Membership Report
Anita Mennel, Membership Chairman

A Whole NEW YEAR

Hello all, welcome to our 2020-21 membership year. Yes, it’s a new year!!! While our positions sheltered in place, we start new for membership numbers. Our action plans (program guides) cover any changes for the National awards. Be sure to check them out online.

With the new goals, we all have our work cut out for us. With last year's “birthday gift” covering membership eligibility changes, there are still many potential members available to join our ranks and help carry on our mission! Yes, it's going to be a challenge, the question is: are you ready and willing?

Membership is not up to the membership chairman, that person is there to help the process, coordinate, cheer us on, and keep us updated on how we are doing with our goals. Membership is up to ALL OF US. I learned last year that there were some potential members I had not yet signed up. I honestly believe that all of us know at least one person who is eligible to join our great organization. Put on you ‘thinking caps”, go thru your address book, I think you will find at least one that you could invite to join us. We need all the help we can muster to work our mission and our programs. With the last five months being what they were, I know I missed being with my unit, district, and department sisters (and now brothers). What a great day it was to be able to see them, and what a great day it will be when we all can meet again.

Keep pushing those 3 R’s; each are equally important, Recruit – Renew—Reinstate. Remember, our continuous years are more than “bragging rights.” For example, they help us meet stipulations to request an AEF Grant. Anyone of us could find ourselves being in need. Don’t let your dropped years be the disqualifying factor.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the Fall Conference (of course, given we are allowed to meet). For God and country!

18th District Report
Darlene Jones, President

This year started with the Covid-19 Virus, Cancelations of Department Convention, and National. The 18th vote to keep all officers the same till 2021, hopefully by then we will be back to normal. I am honored and humbled to serve as the 18th District President again for another year. This year has already started out with so many wonderful things, and a few challenges the members of the 18th are moving forward, working on our mission.

The 18th District is also honored and proud to have the Honorary Department Junior President Leah Daniels who is from Chief Pontiac Unit 377, of the 18th District, I have watched her grow up helping our veterans and working the Auxiliary program what an amazing young lady. Then we also have Kim Champion serving as Department Chaplain again, and we know she will do a great job.

Members of the 18th donated items and money for our Loft at Wilwin Lodge. Not sure what was needed, some of us made the trip with items and money. Once there, we figured out what we needed to go buy and went shopping. What fun five shopping carts later we were almost done. We stopped for dinner then back to the loft to clean and set the loft up. A week later, we were back to finish up with other items purchased.

That being done, we noticed some other items we want to replace for next year, so we decided this year we have decided to make the WilWin Lodge our special project.

The district’s first meeting will be held in August, and all the officers and I are excited about what our plans for the upcoming. Our members in the District have continued to support our veterans and our communities.

Although this year will be challenging, we will get through this working together. We have already many food drives, blood drives, some members made masks and donated them. We are also co-sponsoring a Gold Star Family Memorial. We wish everyone health and happiness.

For God and Country

Continued on page 16
Mike Holley  
SAL Commander

Well, the heartbeat has happened! As you all know by now, all of your state officers and chair- 
aman are staying put.

Since being elected your commander in Ste- 
vensville, last June travels have been plentiful. Legion convention in Kalama- 
zo, headquarters were setting few things up.

The year started on 4th of July in Wyandotte for a 
parade, with a stop off in Chelsea on the way home. 
I attended a few squadron meetings and other 
meetings throughout my travels. August took me up 
up to Wilwin for a good time, and all had fun. Even 
the auction was entertaining. We saw a few old 
friends and made new ones. August, also took us to 
the national convention in Indy for the first time in 
a few years.

In September, we helped at a golf outing for Boy’s 
State, my special project, just before the Fall Con- 
ference in Flint, traveling to the district, and squad- 
ron meetings. October took us back down to Indy 
for officers training, and an opportunity to visit a 
few different posts while there.

Veterans parade in Detroit Thanks PDC Chatman 
for the invite ( hopefully again this year), home for 
a few days then down to Taylor for a thanksgiving 
dinner.

December was visiting the V.A. in Grand Rap- 
ids, Battle Creek, and Saginaw for there Christmas 
parties. The first of the year, we were off to Cedar 
Springs for the red flannel dinner and doing the 
chicken dance. Then it was on to the UP tour; we 
left Friday in anticipation of bad weather. My girl- 
friend Sherri and the Detachment Historian, asst. 
Adjutant, and leading candidate Zac, met up with 
Department Commander Barry dad, Department 
Auxiliary President Georgia, mom her driver and 
assistants Dave & Anita Mennel.

We drove through the UP for a week of fun, 
lunches, and dinners at many different Posts every 
night. The weather was okay for most of the week. 
The caravan, of about six cars, made for an interest- 
ing event. We were meeting old friends and making 
new ones. We Ended up in Iron Mountain for meet- 
ings and a little rest and relaxation for the weekend.

On Sunday, we headed back downstate.

February brought us back to Flint for the mid-winter conference. Also, plans for travel for 
the next few months ahead. In March, Past Det- 
achment Commander/National Chaplain Rodney 
Tolbert and I traveled to Washington, DC, for Na- 
tional legislative events. We met up with Fred and 
Diane Rustkofsky, and Dave and Anita Mennel, 
your chairman for VA&R and Legislative, and other 
members of our state Legion members. The Michi- 
gan Legion Family was significantly represented.

While there, I placed a wreath at the Korean Con-

flict Memorial with National S.A.L. Commander 
Clint Bolt. We had a chance to visit the World War 
II Memorial, the VietNam Wall, and the Korean 
Conflict Memorial. We visited Arlington National 
Cemetery to lay a wreath and watch the changing 
of the guard. Then off on our own, Rodney and I 
went on a tour of D.C. since this was my first time 
being there, we saw more of the monuments, White 
House, U.S. Capitol, Martin Luther King Memorial, 
Pentagon, and the U.S. Marine Corps statue of Iwo 
Jima at night.

Then it was back home to our great state and 
BANG! All of our travels have stopped. Dinners and parades 
were being canceled for reasons beyond our control because of the 

virus going on in our great state 
and nation.

So here we are going forward for 
what I am hoping another year of 
travels throughout our great state.

As commander where ever my 
travels took us. We are known for 
what we do for the VETERANS.

Thank you.

I would also like to thank every- 
everybody for the kind words of my 
brothers passing in June. A memo- 
rial service was held in early July; he served in the U.S. Army Special 
Forces stationed out of Ft Bragg. 
He served for 20 years 1974-1994; 
he was a 41-year member of the 
American Legion Post in Howell 
and a member of many other or- 
ganizations.

Will you help the Michigan Boys State program? 
Unfortunately, the 2020 Annual Boys State Golf 
Outing has been canceled. So a fundraising opportunity 
will not be happening. If your squadron is able to 
makе a donation to the program, or to sponsor a high 
school school, please do.

Thank you for supporting this tremendous 
life-changing program.

DONT FORGET!!! Right now, on Apple TV, if you 
are a subscriber, you can watch the Boys State docu-

mentary filmed at the Texas Boys State program.

Honor Thy Veteran
1st Zone Report
Greg Price, Commander

Normally I would be sharing information about what took place at our S.A.L. State Convention. However, we were not able to hold the convention this year due to Covid-19.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank members from the 16th and 18th Districts that formed a convention committee that worked tirelessly to put on this year’s State Convention only to be disappointed when the official call was made that it could not be held as scheduled.

I have heard that those committee members may have the opportunity to help host our 2021 convention in Southgate. I sure hope so, and I hope that if that happens, everyone will come out and show their support for the many things that our Detachment does to support our veterans and the communities in which we live.

Our 2020 membership renewals have been slowly coming in. If your Squadron has been holding back on sending in your member’s dues, please send them in. Our last membership report that is online at Department (June 25, 2020) shows that some squadrons percentage of renewals and new members are low.

Some of our Zone 1 Squadrons are still showing (0) zeros, Squadron 0126 Detroit, Squadron 0184 Detroit, Squadron 0251 Westland, and Squadron 0271 Redford. I am optimistically hoping that when closed Posts can reopen, and their meetings start again, these squadrons will not have (0) zeros.

Even though there is concern about this ongoing virus, many American Legion Family Members have held or taken part in community events that have been held.

Thank you to everyone for the many things you do to help others.

Missing in America Project
Greg Price, Chairman

The Covid-19 Virus has had an influence on the Interments of Veterans at National Cemeteries. Information on the MIAP website states that VA National Cemeteries has Resumed Committal and Memorial Services that were halted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It looks like they have resumed committal services on June 9 in National Cemeteries. In July, VA national cemeteries began to contact families who were unable to hold a committal service due to the COVID-19 Pandemic to arrange memorial services for their loved ones. Families with interments scheduled on or after June 9 were offered the option of a committal service at the time of burial.

The website also shared information about events for the Interments of Unclaimed Veterans.

On Saturday, August 22, 2020, volunteers will meet at Salt Lake City Harley Davidson in Salt Lake City, UT, to escort 15 recovered Veterans cremated remains to Utah Veterans Cemetery & Memorial Park for Final Military Honors and Interment. These Veterans were recovered from the Wiscombe Mortuary.

On Friday, October 16, 2020, 34 Unclaimed Cremated Remains of Arizona Veterans will be an Escort from Desert Lawn Funeral Home in Bullhead City, AZ to Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Camp Navajo in Bellemont, AZ.

A Coach will be provided by Desert Lawn Funeral Home and will be surrounded by large American flags flying on motorcycles and will be followed by cars that will escort these Heroes to their Final Resting Place.

Thank you again to All of you who Have and Continue to Volunteer searching for those Veterans that have been forgotten for so long while sitting on shelves in Funeral Homes & Mortuaries across this Great Nation.

For God & Country

Support the Children Welfare Foundation!!!!

4th Zone Report
John P. Brown, Commander

We sincerely hope that none of our 4th Zone SAL members or their families have been touched by the Covid-19 pandemic. As this virus still lingers among us, the Detachment urges all of the Legion Family to follow the guidelines mandated, and please stay safe. It has been a troubling time for the last seven months. Hopefully, with a vaccine and other means, we will be able to get back to a more normal lifestyle?

I stated in my last article; there was a National SAL dues increase of $3.00. How the 4th Zone Squadrons handle the increase is up to them. Some squadrons may raise dues or absorb them into their current dues.

As we all know, there was no Convention held for the SAL Detachment. In following the guidelines of the National Department and Detachment, it has been recommended that all post officers remain on for the 2020-2021 year. Some of our Squadrons may have had their elections prior to these recommendations coming into effect.

Whether your squadron had their election or remained with the same officers in place, all squadrons must send in their officers list and bond to receive their 2020-2021 new membership cards.

In these uncertain times, there have been many changes that affect our members and their family’s lives. May we all take a moment of silence to remember those SAL members or family members who are no longer with us…may they rest in peace.

If any of the 4th Zone Squadrons have any questions, please feel free to contact me, either by phone or e-mail.

May God watch over our active service members and keep them safe.

Cell (734) 634-7733 - E: mail: johnbrwn421@aol.com

Get Your Apron and Support the CWF!

The suggested donation price is $20 per apron. Since we will be shipping aprons, I would like to ask that if possible, please consider consolidating your orders into one large order for a detachment or squadron. This will help cut down on the processing time and the cost of shipping. If you would like to donate to help defray the cost of shipping that would greatly be appreciated.

Aprons will be shipped once the donation has been received. Please make sure to include the following information: number of aprons and where you would like them shipped.

Please send donations to the below address:
The American Legion National Headquarters
c/o Child Welfare Foundation, Stacy Cope
P.O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Respectfully,
Stacy Cope, Youth Welfare Program Manager
Americanism Division
317-630-1202 Fax 317-630-1377
Scope@legion.org
Vision, Mission, Values and Motto of The American Legion

WHEREAS, The American Legion was chartered by the United States of America on September 16, 1919, with the initial primary organizational purposes enumerated in 36 USC §21702; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion founders expanded these initial purposes into the American Legion’s Preamble which communicates to the organization the principles of The American Legion and the purpose of the Constitution of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, Current modern business practices have evolved since The American Legion originated and it is leadership’s goal to stay abreast of such evolutions; and

WHEREAS, One such business practice is an organization’s use of a vision statement, a mission statement, value principles and a motto; and

WHEREAS, A vision statement is a short succinct public statement of an organization’s future and long-term directional goals; and

WHEREAS, A mission statement is a short succinct public statement of how an organization intends to fulfill its vision; and

WHEREAS, Value principles guide the organization’s business decisions and actions; and

WHEREAS, A motto is a reiterated phrase that encapsulates the vision and mission of an organization; and

WHEREAS, The vision and mission statements, along with the value principles and motto, help define the purpose of an organization, align the organization’s resources toward a successful future, provide clear and effective decision guidance; form part of a business’s strategic planning tool and publicly communicate the message; and

WHEREAS, In order that The American Legion has clear guidance to act in these turbulent times; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion by electronic mail vote pursuant to Rule 12 of the Rules of the National Executive Committee, That The American Legion adopt the following vision statement:

“The American Legion strengthens America by improving the lives of our veterans, the military and their families.”; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion adopt the following mission statement:

“The American Legion strengthens our communities, states and nation with programs and services for our veterans, the military and their families.”; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion adopt the following value principles:

- A VETERAN IS A VETERAN – which means The American Legion embraces all current and former members of the military and endeavors to help them transition into their communities.
- SELFLESS SERVICE – which means The American Legion celebrates all who contribute to something larger than themselves and inspires others to serve and strengthen America.
- AMERICAN VALUES AND PATRIOTISM – which means The American Legion advocates for upholding and defending the United States Constitution, equal justice and opportunity for everyone and discrimination against no one, youth education, responsible citizenship and honoring military service by observing and participating in patriotic and memorial events.
- FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – which means The American Legion meets the unique needs of local communities.
- ADVANCING THE VISION – which means The American Legion educates, mentors and leads new generations of Americans.
- HONORING THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US – which means The American Legion pays perpetual respect for all past military sacrifices to ensure they are never forgotten by new generations.; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion adopt the following motto:

“Veterans Strengthening America.”

The Other Virus
Bill Oxford, National Commander

There is a virus in America that could cause more long-term destruction than COVID-19. Just as the novel coronavirus can quickly devastate a healthy body this other virus threatens lives, neighborhoods and infrastructures. No person or place is truly safe. It can embed itself inside a peaceful protest and turn it into a nightmare of violent rioting and retribution. It turns Americans against Americans. This virus is called anarchy.

Perhaps no one should be more concerned about this virus than those who justly fight for civil rights and equality. Their cause has been hijacked. George Floyd and Breonna Taylor receive only occasional mentions on the evening news while footage of statue-toppling, tear gas and batons dominates. One network’s description of a live event will usually have the opposite perspective of another network. Division is a symptom of this virus and its cancer has reached a stage unseen since the Civil War. The patient is quickly approaching stage 4.

At our 1962 National Convention, American Legion delegates defined “Americanism” in such an eloquent manner that we still adhere to it. It stated that the essence of Americanism is class, religious and racial tolerance. Written as if it were a vaccine against our current anarchy virus, it further states “law and order are essential to the preservation of Americanism while lawlessness and violence are distinctly un-American.”

That’s worth repeating. “Lawlessness and violence are distinctly un-American.” Peaceful protests against racism are just, admirable and constitutionally protected. It’s ok if protests make people feel uncomfortable. A good protest is supposed to do that. But many people feel unsafe. This is what distinguishes protestors from anarchists and rioters.

Whether generated from the extreme left or the extreme right, the cracked skulls and burning buildings don’t care. They are damaged, sometimes permanently.

Instead of fighting this virus like good scientists, public officials are failing us. People are being killed while local, state and federal agencies fight over jurisdiction. Add partisan politics to the growing list of symptoms.

Most police officers are brave and honorable. Some are not and those who abuse their positions should be held accountable. In the fog of a riot, it is sometimes difficult for officers to distinguish between a peaceful protestor and a violent anarchist. Again, police officers who commit crimes should be prosecuted. Same with a brick-throwing anarchist.

Federal agents are charged with enforcing federal law and protecting federal property. State and local law enforcement officers have parallel responsibilities in their respective areas. Mayors, governors and the federal government must work as one when it comes to public safety. Agencies at every level must collaborate. People are dying. The enemy is not each other. It’s the violent anarchist. Unity is the cure.
### Don’t Face the VA Alone. Contact an American Legion Accredited Service Officer near you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlevoix</td>
<td>Babcock, Phillip</td>
<td>2195 Front St., Suite 700, Cadillac, MI 49601</td>
<td>231.347.5150</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pbabcock@michiganlegion.org">pbabcock@michiganlegion.org</a></td>
<td>8:30am-4:30pm</td>
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<td>Kalkaska</td>
<td>Babcock, Phillip</td>
<td>3500 Ludington Ave., Escanaba, MI 49829</td>
<td>906.225.6890</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pbabcock@michiganlegion.org">pbabcock@michiganlegion.org</a></td>
<td>8:30-12, 12:30-4:30</td>
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<td>Manistee</td>
<td>Babcock, Phillip</td>
<td>12250 James St., Excelsior, MI 49629</td>
<td>906.630.2656</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pbabcock@michiganlegion.org">pbabcock@michiganlegion.org</a></td>
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<td>Mason County</td>
<td>Babcock, Phillip</td>
<td>1201 S. Canal St., Lake City, MI 49651</td>
<td>989.348.7277</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pbabcock@michiganlegion.org">pbabcock@michiganlegion.org</a></td>
<td>8:00-4:00pm</td>
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<td>Wexford County</td>
<td>Babcock, Phillip</td>
<td>2864 Ashmun St., St. Ignace, MI 49871</td>
<td>989.348.7277</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pbabcock@michiganlegion.org">pbabcock@michiganlegion.org</a></td>
<td>8:00-4:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wayne County</td>
<td>Barkell, Angela</td>
<td>2215 Fuller Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105</td>
<td>906.225.6890</td>
<td><a href="mailto:angela.barkell@va.gov">angela.barkell@va.gov</a></td>
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### Office Hours
- **8 am to 4 pm**
- **8 am to 4:30 pm**
- **8 am to 11:30 am**
- **10 am to 3 pm**
- **10 am to 4 pm**
- **10 am to 3:30 pm**
- **10 am to 4:30 pm**
- **11 am to 7 pm**
- **12 to 4 pm**
- **12:30-4:30 pm**
- **8:30-12, 12:30-4:30**
Don’t Face the VA Alone. The current schedule.

Location: American Legion Post 245, 3564 S. Reserve Rd, Prudenville, MI 48651
Schedule: Office hours: 8 am to 4 pm

St. Clair County
Cuddington, Elizbeth
Email: ecuddington@michiganlegion.org
Phone no.: 213.893.4752
Location: St. Clair Co. OVA, 105 S. Canal St., Lake City, MI 49651
Schedule: Thurs
Office hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Missaukee County
David, Eric
Email: edavid@michiganlegion.org
Phone no.: 269.345.5670
Location: Missaukee County OVA, 307 Franklin St., M-32, PO Box 789, Atlanta, MI 49707
Schedule: Thurs
Office hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Wayne County
Drumsta, Debra
Email: debbie.drumsta@va.gov
Phone no.: 313.964.6640
Location: American Legion Post #317, 19415 M-32, PO Box 789, Atlanta, MI 49707
Schedule: Tues, Wed, Thurs
Office hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Kent County
Lewis, Rebecca
Email: rebecca@lewis@michiganlegion.org
Phone no.: 313.964.6640
Location: American Legion Post 491, 422 Woodworth St., Leslie, MI 49251
Schedule: 2nd and 4th Thurs
Office hours: 8:00am - 4:00pm

Presque Isle County
Engel, Jeff
Email: ejengel@michiganlegion.org
Phone no.: 989.746.6458 TEMP
Location: American Legion Post 491, 422 Woodworth St., Leslie, MI 49251
Schedule: 2nd and 4th Thurs
Office hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Ingham County
Simpkins, Tommy
Email: simpkins@michiganlegion.org
Phone no.: 810.257.3068
Location: American Legion Post 491, 422 Woodworth St., Leslie, MI 49251
Schedule: 2nd and 4th Thurs
Office hours: 8:00am - 4:00pm

Genesee County
Simpkins, Tommy
Email: simpkins@michiganlegion.org
Phone no.: 810.257.3068
Location: American Legion Post 491, 422 Woodworth St., Leslie, MI 49251
Schedule: 2nd and 4th Thurs
Office hours: 8:00am - 4:00pm

Calhoun County
Engle, Jeff
Email: jengle@michiganlegion.org
Phone no.: 989.793.4021, Ext 11730
Location: American Legion Post 104, 3221 N. M-76, PO Box 523, Standish, MI 48658
Schedule: Mon
Office hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm
These officers comprise your Department Executive Committee. They represent your membership in each respective territory, with the Department Commander having overall responsibility. With them and the assistance from our 386 posts and department level committees, Michigan will once again deliver a very successful and progressive Legion year for our veterans, their families and their communities.
National Emergency Fund, Children Welfare Foundation, and Editors Report
Sandy Lipman, Chairman

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to send thoughts, prayers, and more during my recent heart attack. Bypass surgery and time in the hospital, Life has truly changed for me! And I am sure for many of you with everything that is going on. Please stay safe and healthy!

Please do not forget about the 4 Pillars of our Organization; and also the charities that we support so greatly. Currently, the NEF is helping the members and their families affected by the damn breaking in the Sanford and Midland area, as well as the areas of Texas that just got hit with Hurricane Hanna!

As for the CWF, we did not meet our goal for Commander Bolt’s year of a dollar per person, yet we were still the top fundraiser of the Legion Family. The Sons raised over $253,000.00 job well done! Please continue to support these worthy causes as well as all of the other charities of our Organization.

Joe Holloman and I have posted the dates for the upcoming editions. Please submit pictures and articles. Pictures must be at least 300 DPI (high-resolution) in jpg format, and please send the picture file as a separate attachment, do not embed the photo into the article. Microsoft Word is the preferred program to use for writing the article. However, an article written in the text of an email is also acceptable. No formatting is necessary. Brag about your Squadron for all of the great things that you do, and we know you do a lot! If you have any questions or want to send items for publishing, please send it to sandylipman95@hotmail.com, or call me at (248) 483-1119.

Again the support system within this Legion Family of ours is unbelievable, and it helped me get through my 11 days in the hospital and more! Kim and I thank you and love you all!

National Membership Report

Good afternoon gentlemen,

While we may have missed our goal of 105% we came in with a 93.97% and with all of the state wide closures due to Covid-19, our membership continues to grow, slow and steady...

Congratulations to the 11 detachments that met or exceeded the target! They were the Hawaii, Philippines, Alabama, and Louisiana. Seven of these detachments have All Time Highs in membership. Congratulations to Puerto Rico, South Dakota, Mississippi, Idaho, North Carolina, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

Traditionally the 2020 Delegate Strength Report is based on this target date, however with National Convention being canceled this year it gives us the opportunity to continue working on our renewals and hitting that 100% overall.

*** As we are only 22,834 members away from hitting 100%, we need to focus on reaching out to those that haven’t renewed. Let’s not let an over 40 year tradition of meeting or exceeding 100% in membership stop, do all you can to make it happen before years end!!

Remember our membership goals for the year.

Recruit, Retain, and Reinstate to reach 400,000 members

Bring Renewal Rate Above the 95% Range

Obtain 105% in membership by National Convention in Louisville

Recognize our achievements

We need to keep the pressure on renewals. As of July 29th we had a 85.28% renewal rate. We are less than 10% away from our goal. Reach out throughout our Detachments and Squadrons and provide that “Buddy Check” and remind them the benefits of being a member of our great organization.

While this may be a very difficult time for all those affected by Covid-19, we need to remember that we are a family and we need to all come together to get through this. There will be an end to all the closures and quarantines and The Sons of The American Legion will come out on top!

Congratulations on your continued efforts and Thank You for all you do for the Sons!

Be Thankful
Gary L. LaMunyon, Past Detachment Commander

Comrades:

If you were to make a list of all of the good things and all of the bad things associated with the current pandemic, there would be numerous items on the bad list and maybe not any on the good list. Well, I have one for you. While I was enduring the “involuntary house arrest,” I had the opportunity to reflect on all of the wonderful Legion Family members I was with during 2018 and 2019 as S.A.L. Detachment Commander. This gave me enough time to assemble a display of all of the gifts presented to me on behalf of the Sons.

The picture below is the final result. Whenever I look at this wall, it reminds me of all of the kindness and friendship you showed to me and my wife Pat during the most memorable year of our lives. It is true that “absence makes the heart grow fonder,” and I can’t tell you how much Pat and I are looking forward to seeing all of you again. Hopefully, it will be very soon.

God Bless You & God Bless America

“Congratulations”
Thank you for all your efforts so far this membership year. Our standings as of the 105% Membership Target Date (07-29-2020) are posted below:

2020 Membership Goal: 378,495
Total Membership: 355,661
Percentage of Goal: 93.967%
Year-to-Date: -13,144 (compared to 2019 Membership Year)
Renewal Rate: 85.28%

Detachments making Goal: 11
Alabama  Louisiana  Puerto Rico
Hawaii  Mississippi  South Dakota
Idaho  North Carolina  Wisconsin
Iowa  Philippines

Michiganlegion.org | September 2020 | MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE & AUXILIAIRE | 13
The Sons of The American Legion was founded for preserving The American Legion traditions and programs while improving the quality of life for our nation’s children, caring for veterans and their families, and teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship.

New Officers of the Gladstone Squadron have been nominated and elected for the upcoming year, and they continue to be active in the community. Flag Retirement to honoring Veterans on Veterans Day and Placing Flags on the Graves of Veterans on Memorial Day. The Gladstone Son’s give to the Gladstone Salvation Army every year with money coming from the Chicken dinners and through membership dues.

Sons of the American Legion Make Donation to August Mattson Legion Post Medical Loan Closet.

The August Mattson Squadron #71 of the Sons of the American Legion, Gladstone, has made a $4000 donation in materials and labor to the August Mattson American Legion Post #71 Medical Loan Closet for a new roof.

According to Son’s Commander Randy Bruntjens, “Our group was looking for a great way to give back to the Legion Post and Medical Loan Closet and thought this was a great way to help. A new roof was needed as the old one was leaking and in need of repair. The Son’s rolled up their sleeves and went to work with dismantling the old roof and replacing the wooden and asphalt shingles with a metal one. Legion #71 member Barry Holm donated the metal roof supplies.

American Legion, Son’s, and Women’s Auxiliary of Post #71 maintain the medical loan closet inspired by a need to help local veterans and the elderly of the community. For over 40 years, the August Mattson Legion Post #71 of Gladstone has maintained the medical loan closet. For those in need of medical equipment, such as shower chairs, walkers, canes, commodes, transfer benches, and wheelchairs, the Legion will provide the item on loan for as long as it is needed at no cost.

The Medical Loan Closet allows those in need to borrow and test wheelchairs, walkers, and a variety of other adaptive devices on a short-term basis. Borrowing equipment can help you select the best option before purchasing their equipment. It also fills the gap during temporary periods of need.

All the Legion requires is that the borrower sign a paper stating what they are borrowing the item. Individuals in our community have donated all of the Legion’s equipment. This program would not exist without the donation of gently used equipment and monetary donations for repairs.

Photo left: In Front, Squadron #71 Son’s Commander Randy Bruntjens hands up another sheet of roofing to other members of Son’s Squadron #71 on the top of the Medical Loan Closet next to the Gladstone American Legion.

The August Mattson Son’s of the American Legion Squad #71, Gladstone, were recently honored with a 100% Membership Certificate. Squadrons who reach the goal set by the Detachment at the beginning of the year receive this certificate from National. This is the eighth year in a row for the Gladstone Squadron.

What a great time to belong to the most exceptional organization on earth! The Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan are making great strides in American Legion programs, helping the local Posts, and working with the community.

The August Mattson Son’s of the American Legion Squad #71 receives a 100% Membership Award.

Sons of the American Legion Detachment received a 100% Membership Award.

Charles A. Conklin Post 28, Grand Haven completes state-of-the-art kitchen renovation project

Since 1939, Charles A. Conklin American Legion Post 28 of Grand Haven, Mich., has served thousands of dinners to veterans, veterans’ families and the general public. The post’s weekly dinner program serves two important functions: raising revenues for the post’s veteran and community outreach programs, and bringing friends and family together to “break bread” and enjoy camaraderie over a delicious meal. On June 15, 2020, local government officials, including the mayor and city manager of Grand Haven, Chamber of Commerce representatives, the Post 28 commander, officers and staff, and Post 28 Family-Unit representatives participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony presented by the Chamber of Commerce (Grand Haven Spring Lake Ferrysburg). The ceremony symbolized the transition of Post 28 into the next century with a new state-of-the-art kitchen. Given COVID-19 conditions, the chamber’s ribbon-cutting was not typical by any means. Safety protocols, including the use of face masks and social distancing, were required and followed.

The Post 28 kitchen renovation project - officially titled “Operation KP (Kitchen Project)” - began as a vision in 2019. Implementation began in early 2020. Two committees - coordinated by Post 28 Commander Janet E. Fonger during the implementation phase - were formed: a kitchen renovation committee and kitchen fundraising committee. The kitchen renovation committee was charged with providing contractors the vision and details about the post’s kitchen look and function while the fundraising committee was charged with raising the needed funds to bring the project to fruition. The initial fundraising goal was $200,000. However, the age of the kitchen (last renovated in 1945) in conjunction with contemporary building code requirements found Post 28 needing to raise additional funds. Donors included Legionnaires, businesses, Family-Unit members, and the general public. Post 28 Commander Fonger obtained a Home Depot Foundation grant in the amount of $20,000, while the Post 28 SAL Squadron and Auxiliary donated $30,000 and $10,000, respectively. In sum, the fundraising committee raised more than $200,000 with net overages placed into the post’s Capital Fund for future capital projects. With all working together for a common goal, Post 28 now enjoys greater kitchen capacity, efficiency and expanded food offerings.

Photo above:The Jesse B. Cooley Sons of the American Legion Squadron 235, Brighton

Lou Scott 54 years (49 years as Adjutant), Don Rose Sr. 40 Years, Commander Scott Price and Jim Shekell 20 Years.
HOW CAN WE PROMOTE AMERICANISM IF WE ARE STAYING AT HOME?
Margo Forrester, Chairman

At home, if you have a flagstaff, fly our U.S. flag proudly. It is the universal custom to display the flag from sunrise to sunset on buildings or stationary flagstaffs. The flag may be displayed 24 hours a day if illuminated during the hours of darkness. If tattered, please retire it properly. Perhaps your Post could have a flag retirement ceremony outdoors and invite the public.

Thank businesses and other residents for flying our flag. You can do this verbally if you are out, “I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit ________, and we appreciate your patriotism and flying our flag.” You could mail a note to Businesses (banks, car dealers, schools) that says “Thank You for making patriotism a priority and flying our U.S. Flag, from American Legion Auxiliary Unit ________. (Look for printable flyers, that can be downloaded from our website michalaux.org under Americanism Activities).

Exercise your right to vote, whether in person at your Precinct or by absentee ballot. At Michigan.gov, you can: view your sample ballot for the upcoming election, request & track your absentee ballot, verify your voter registration, find your polling place, contact your local official, find answers to frequently asked questions. If called, serve your jury duty if you are able.

Teach your children well. When the National Anthem is played, we should face the flag (or face the music if there is no flag), stand at attention and place your right hand over your heart. Veterans and current military should give and hold a military salute during the Anthem.

Watch a patriotic movie with your family and discuss it afterward. In the past few years, there have been some inspiring historical movies like Midway, American Sniper, Lincoln, Zero Dark Thirty, Pearl Harbor, USS Indianapolis, and Unbroken. Some may not be kid-friendly, but PBS may have other offerings and documentaries.

There are numerous kid-friendly books available through your library (or to purchase and later donate!). For example, “A is for America” by Devin Scillian, “This Land is Your Land” by Woody Guthrie and Kathy Jacobsen, “We The Kids” by David Calkthrow, “Patriots Handbook” by Caroline Kennedy. TALs own https://emblem.legion.org/ has lots of patriotic materials, including comic books and flag education.

If you know a teacher or other school (public, private, or homeschool) contacts, see if they would incorporate our Americanism Essay Contest in their curriculum. Or you could introduce this contest to your children, grandchildren, neighborhood kids, church youth group, Scouts, etc. Your Unit would have to judge the essays according to Contest rules. This contest has monetary prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd Place in 6 different age/class groups. The 1st Place for each Class will advance onto the Division Americanism Chairman. The word count varies from 150-500 depending on the student’s grade. This year’s theme is: “How can we address the health and well-being of our Veterans, military and their families”?

UNITS as an incentive for participation in the Americanism Essay Contest, this Chair will present 3 Units with a $25 reward for having one or more essays submitted. After promoting and receiving the essay(s) inform me, that Unit had this # of essays and you will be placed in the random drawing held in early April 2021. That’s it, whether your Unit had 1 or 75 entries. Mail to: Margo Forrester, 936 Ellsmere St NE, Grand Rapids, MI, or email mscottforrester@gmail.com.

This is a challenging time to promote patriotism in our communities. I urge Units to try as best you can. Read the Department Americanism Guide, track your efforts, and enter our contests. Odds of winning may be better than ever.

Ann Arbor VA Healthcare System Report
Krystal Hall, ALA VAVS Representative

Due to the COVID19 situation(s), a ‘typical’ annual report, with detail figures, cannot be compiled. On-site Volunteer activities/involvements were discontinued beginning mid-March 2020. Although on-site Volunteer involvements have been halted, there is much to report from the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System.

As noted/reported by the Administration, the “VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System has been in COVID-19 preparations for months, reallocating resources and personnel and converting inpatient and intensive care units to accept patients who have contracted the disease. We continue to closely track the occurrence of COVID-19, and we are committed to keeping our communities, our Veterans, and our staff members safe, healthy, and informed.”

As I have previously reported: Since 1953, the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System has provided state-of-the-art healthcare services to the men and women who have so proudly served our nation. The Department of Veterans Affairs designated the Ann Arbor Medical Center as a 1A facility, meaning we are at the highest level of complexity of care. Neurosurgery, coronary artery bypass, and laparoscopic surgeries are examples of the sophisticated level of care provided at the VA Ann Arbor Medical Center. The facility includes state-of-the-art ambulatory care clinics, operating rooms, cardiac catherization suite, intensive care units, laboratory, and diagnostic services.

The Ann Arbor System, with the main hospital campus located in Ann Arbor and with clinics in Flint, Jackson, and Toledo (Ohio), serviced over 73,000 Veterans living in a 15-county area of Michigan and Northwest Ohio during the past fiscal year. The main hospital campus located in Ann Arbor serves as a referral center for specialty care and operates 102 acute care beds and 40 Community Living Center (extended care) beds. More than 913,000 outpatient (clinical/encounter) visits were made at our facilities; there were more than 5,700 outpatient episodes of care provided in the hospital and extended care center.

VAAAHS is active in several programs; some are presented here: the campaign to end Veteran Homelessness; Veteran Jus-
Veteran Homelessness

Chris Moore

I work with people and families, many who are veterans, experiencing homelessness every day. I hear their stories and work to support them on their journey to find a place to call home. Veterans experience homelessness at a much higher rate than the general population, and the contributing factors are amplified because of their service to our country. The most common causative elements of veteran homelessness are access to affordable housing, physical disabilities, mental health issues (many undiagnosed) and trauma, struggles with re-entry and legal matters, employment, stagnant wages, underemployment or fixed incomes, health care, transportation, credit and criminal history, racial disparities and substance abuse.

The facts are these: 599 Michigan veterans are “Literally” homeless each night, according to the 2019 Point in Time count in Michigan (https://www.va.gov/homeless/). Which means they are living in places not meant for human habitation or in situations. About 5,250 Michigan veterans are presently facing eviction (https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/michigans-moratorium-on-evictions-ends-tonight). Michigan Veteran homeless rates are approximately 7% of the current homeless population, and estimates of the current backlog of eviction filings in Michigan is 75,000. These figures do not include veterans living in motels, hotels, and couch surfing, which is significantly underreported.

There are many ways we, as the American Legion family, can help: Educate our membership and communities about the VA’s Housing First initiative, needs, and the resources available to veterans. Outreach to veterans in need throughout our communities. Coordinate housing efforts. Boost access to affordable housing. Help provide funding and mitigation efforts for eviction prevention, partner with veterans navigating housing options. Assist with move-in costs. Expand transportation options. Collect and distribute move-in essentials. Promote and encourage veteran employment and employers who hire veterans. Share legal services information and encourage rehabilitation programs. Finally, expand VSO services and help with accessing benefits.

So this is my challenge to every Auxiliary in Michigan: Stand up to help end veteran homelessness. Chose one way you can help and focus on that mission, research ideas, and solutions. Educate your membership about your plan and the reasons behind it. Vote on it. Encourage and include all volunteers who want to help contribute time, talent, and resources. Connect and partner with others in the community who wish to back the project. Promote your fundraiser/event/service project. Host the function(s). Report back to your membership about the success of the project.

Additionally, Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness are strongly encouraged to contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for assistance. There is some funding available from the VA including Healthcare of Homeless Veterans (HCHV), HUD-VASH, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVf) and Veterans Justice Outreach Program (VJO): https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/

Also, the State of Michigan currently has an Eviction Diversion Program: https://www.michigan.gov/shda/0,4641,7-141-5555-533463--,00.html

Ann Arbor VA Report continued from page 15

nice Outreach; Telehealth Clinics; My HealthyVet web-access services and information for Veteran; Click 2 Benefits (allows Veterans to speak directly with a VBA claims specialist); SCAN-ECHO (Specially Care Access Network Extension of Community Healthcare Outcomes, VAAHHS is 1 of 11 nationwide medical centers to implement); Healthy Teaching Kitchen Class; Veteran Transportation Service (one of only four national sites selected for a two-year pilot project); first VA in the US with a high-powered holmium laser (‘Stone Dusting’-stone removal procedure); eBeThere (program to help prevent Veteran suicide; and, No Veteran Dies Alone (specially trained volunteers provide companionship and assistance as Veterans enter the final stages of life). This past December (2019), the Center hosted its seventh annual Baby Shower.

Auxiliary members from the 2nd, 17th, and 18th Districts continue to be active/supportive of the Annual Gift Shop (Nov 2019 event had 35 volunteers for 200 hours with donations of $11,565), monthly Bingo parties (suspended April 2020), special need donations (flat-screen TV, Micro-waves (patient floors), iPads—for patient use to communicate with families/friends during the ‘closure’, comfort items, etc.), and finally, our annual Father’s Day program was canceled.

Despite the restrictions and limitations that have impacted the Auxiliary involvement at the AA VA, there is some exciting news to share! The Fisher House was completed and officially turned to the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System by the Fisher House Foundation on April 30, 2020! The VA Ann Arbor Fisher House is a 16-suite ‘home away from home’ for families of veterans and active-duty military personnel receiving care from the VA Ann Arbor Medical Center and VA-authorized community care at area hospitals. The house provides free, temporary lodging, so military and

National Security Report Continued from page 7

Please consider using Facebook and your local media to draw attention to the third Friday in September. September 18 is POW/MIA Recognition Day. We remember those men and women of the military who never made it home it is our duty and honor to remember them and give them the respect that they deserve.

Another promotion that can be done through Facebook and your local media – R.E.D. Fridays – or “Red Shirt Fridays,” as they are sometimes called. It stands for Remember Everyone Deployed. If you have a creative writer in your group, ask them to write an article that can be published in your local newspaper explaining why we wear Red Shirts on Fridays. Let your community members know that we need to think of and appreciate our troops who are currently serving abroad.

And speaking of appreciation, if your Unit/Post/Legion Family does not already do so, this would be a great year to show the Legion Family’s appreciation to our First Responders – to our law enforcement officers, our firefighters, and other first responders who put their lives on the line every day that they go to work. Many Units/Posts/Legion Families already do this, but wouldn’t it be great if all of us did so. The pandemic and unrest have made their jobs more difficult to carry out – we need to show them that they are appreciated. Whether you send Thank You cards, plan a recognition dinner for a time in the future when we are able to hold them, have an awards ceremony and share pictures with the public – or any combination of these ideas, please show these hardworking individuals that the American Legion Family supports them and appreciates all that they do for our communities. This is not to say that we don’t also appreciate our other essential workers. Where would we be without our medical professionals, our retail workers, and truck drivers – and many more positions too numerous to mention. We are blessed in this nation to have so many good people who have stepped up to the plate during these uncertain times.

Please remember that there are two citations related to this that Units may apply for when we report in the spring:

The Imogene Cowgill Citation is presented to the Unit promoting the best crime prevention program or honoring a local officer.

The Phyllis VanHill Citation is presented to the Unit promoting the best fire prevention program or honoring a firefighter.

Even if your Unit is unable to meet at this time, you can plan for a great year ahead and work this program.

Thank You for all you do as American Legion Auxiliary members in your communities and especially all you do for our Veterans.

Veteran families who live at least 50 miles or further from the treating facility can be close to their hospitalized loved one during a medical crisis. The Fisher House officially opened on Monday, June 1, and welcomed their first guests on June 2. April LaRoch, Fisher House Manager, shared with me that during June, the Fisher House had the honor of serving 53 veteran families.

Although Volunteers are still restricted from being on the medical center campus, which includes the Fisher House, permission was given to have volunteers help with grocery shopping by using donated gift cards. This past Wednesday (July 29), 1 was one of those volunteers. Upon arrival (to get the shopping list and gift card), I was met by John (staff member) and was rewarded with a personal walk-through of the facility—what a beautiful, functional, needed House. I met briefly with some of the ‘residents’—an honor. Please note: gift cards (especially for local grocery stores—i.e., Kroger, gift cards for Visa, Amazon, Walmart, Target, gas cards, local AA restaurants) are needed—and will be greatly appreciated.

As in past years, the goal will be to provide the best care and support for our country’s veterans and to support the VAAHHS programs. As I complete my seventh year as Department of Michigan American Legion Auxiliary appointed representative, one of my goals (our project) continues to gather donations to obtain special needs (especially to support the building of the Fisher House in Ann Arbor) and to have a successful Gift Shop (Gift Shop for 2020 is tentatively planned for November 23rd - 25th ). One of my continuing goals for this year will be to increase the number of ALA volunteers (both in Ann Arbor and Toledo) and to increase volunteer opportunities within the VA Hospital/Clinics; I suspect the volunteer involvement will indeed be a great challenge in the coming year.

In closing, I offer that I am honored—and humbled—to have the opportunities to work with such dedicated staff, volunteers, and other supporters (including ‘my Deputy’ Ethel Putala—thanks Ethel for all you do) here at the Ann Arbor VA Health System as we service and support our Veterans.

On a final note, I was honored to be mentored by a past VA Departmental Rep, Mrs. Betty White; Betty volunteered at the AA VA for many years and was instrumented in promoting Auxiliary Volunteer involvement—not only at the AA VA but within her Unit (Saline #46), the 2nd District, Department, as well as the Washtenaw County 8/40. Betty passed away peacefully Sunday, July 26. Thanks, Betty, for all your involvement, support, knowledge, and passion involving our Veterans.
From 1972 to 1982, approximately 1,500 to 2,100 Air Force Reserve personnel trained and worked on C-123 aircraft that were previously used to spray herbicides, including Agent Orange, in Vietnam. Learn about health effects from working on C-123 aircraft and VA benefits.

C-123 Airplanes and Agent Orange Residue
Fairchild C-123K Provider

U.S. Air Force

Some Air Force Reservists who were crew members on C-123 Provider aircraft, formerly used to spray Agent Orange during the Vietnam War, have raised health concerns about exposure to residual amounts of herbicides on plane surfaces.

Responding to these concerns, VA asked the Health and Medicine Division (HMD) (formally known as the Institute of Medicine) of the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to study possible exposure and increase in adverse health effects in C-123 crew members.

HMD's scientific report on C-123 contaminated aircraft

HMD released its report, Post-Vietnam Dioxin Exposure in Agent Orange-Contaminated C-123 Aircraft, Jan. 9, 2015. According to the report, from 1972 to 1982, approximately 1,500 to 2,100 Air Force Reserve personnel trained and worked on C-123 aircraft that previously had been used to spray herbicides, including Agent Orange, in Vietnam. Those aircraft were used for military airlift, medical transport, and cargo transport operations in the United States and internationally.

HMD found that Reservists who served as flight crew (pilot, navigator, flight engineer, and loadmaster), ground maintenance crew, and aero-medical personnel had regular contact with the aircraft, and would have experienced some exposure to chemicals from herbicide residue. The report determined that it is possible that this exposure contributed to some adverse health effects.

How Reservists may have been exposed

TCDD, the toxic substance in Agent Orange, may be inhaled as an aerosol or ingested by contaminated food or water or from hand-to-mouth transfer.

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. Air Force used C-123 aircraft to spray Agent Orange to clear jungles that provided enemy cover in Vietnam. At the end of the spraying campaign in 1971, the remaining C-123 planes were reassigned to reserve units in the U.S. for routine cargo and medical evacuation missions spanning the next 10 years.

C-123 Airplanes and the Agent Orange Registry

Veterans (including some Reservists) who state that they flew on or worked on a C-123 aircraft between 1969 and 1986 are eligible for the Agent Orange Registry.

Health concerns?

If you have health concerns about Agent Orange, talk to your health care provider or contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator to help you get more information from a health care provider.

Not enrolled in the VA health care system? Find out if you qualify for VA health care.

Compensation benefits for health problems

Based on the HMD report, VA has decided to acknowledge exposure to Agent Orange for personnel whose military service involved regular contact with the contaminated C-123 aircraft. This includes individuals who performed service in the Air Force or Air Force Reserve who regularly operated, maintained, or served onboard C-123 aircraft known to have been used to spray herbicides during the Vietnam era.

The following individuals may qualify for benefits related to Agent Orange exposure:

Active duty personnel who served in a regular USAF unit location where a contaminated C-123 was assigned who had regular contact with the aircraft through flight, ground, or medical duties between 1969 and 1986, and who developed an Agent Orange related disability.

Reservists who were assigned to flight, ground, or medical duties at the following locations between 1969 and 1986, and who developed an Agent Orange related disability.

Lockbourne/Rickenbacker Air Force Base in Ohio (906th and 907th Tactical Air Groups or 355th and 356th Tactical Airlift Squadron)

Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts (731st Tactical Air Squadron and 74th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron)

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, International Airport (758th Airlift Squadron)

Veterans may file a claim for disability compensation for health problems they believe are related to exposure to Agent Orange residue on post-Vietnam C-123 airplanes.

Veterans must show on a factual basis that they were exposed in order to receive disability compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure. VA decides these claims on a case-by-case basis. File a claim online.
The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death! - Patrick Henry 1775

Seattle, Portland, Detroit, Milwaukee, the list goes on and on of cities under siege in our nation. Fires blaze as buildings burn, statues were torn down, and our flag desecrated. How did this happen? How did we get to such a place in the life of America? Who is responsible?

Those are all excellent questions, and ones each of us should consider. Then we each have a choice to make. Shall we as Legionnaires continue to stand idly by, or shall we honor the oath we took?

In a recent message, National Commander James “Bill” Oxford reminded us that we each have pledged to maintain law and order and to pass forward the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy to those who follow. He then reminded us that America is better than that, we are better than this, and the unlawful activities must stop.

I agree with the Commander. It has to stop. But just pledging to maintain law and order, and pledging to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy just aren’t enough. To make a difference takes action, and action means you and I must give up the easy chair and TV for a while. We can’t afford to leave it up to someone else. Each of us must fight the enemy, and the enemy is ignorance.

I don’t mean “ignorance” in a mean-spirited way, but rather a lack of experience or exposure to worldly things, as well as a general lack of knowledge regarding the Constitution. A 2016 study by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni found that 80 percent of college seniors at top-ranked institutions would earn a grade of “D” or “F” on a test of basic civic knowledge. Only a handful of colleges, the study shows, require even a single course in American history or government.

For Legionnaires, this is a call to action. We need to talk to people and share the uniqueness of our country and our way of life. That’s something that the majority of us should be experts at, for we have seen how others live, all around the world, from Southeast Asia to the Middle East. Share what you saw while serving. How did people live, did they have homes like ours, did they drive fine cars, did they enjoy free speech, freedom of religion? So much of what we have is unique to America, but young people won’t know that unless you tell and show them.

Another great and proven way to promote Americanism is for EVERY Post to charter a Scout unit. Do you realize that every scout recites the Scout Oath hundreds of times per year and commits it to memory for life? Why is that important? Can you imagine chartering a scout troop of 20 members for ten years? You’ll have sent hundreds of young men and women into our communities, pledging to do their duty to God and Country.

And remember, just because members of your Post don’t want to get involved doesn’t mean you can’t join the fight. There are many ways that you can have a personal impact on dozens of youngsters. Remember, it often takes just one person to get the ball rolling and create something awesome. Be that person!

To aid you in this worthy effort, The American Legion has prepared numerous documents and resources regarding Americanism. I encourage you to go to www.emblem.legion.org and pick out some items from the Americanism section that interest you. If the piece interests you, it will interest others and be easier for you to use. Many additional resources can be found at www.legion.org/publications#americanism

Try visiting local classrooms, beginning in the elementary schools (great fun), and then the middle school and high school. Tell the students about yourself and your experience in the military, why you served, and what you saw. While you’re there, pass out one of the resources provided by the Legion. There are great comic books available for students in the elementary grades, along with a great video presentation named “For Which It Stands” that teaches younger students about the flag.

Check out the Legion’s School Award Program and institute it in your high school. This program is presented by Posts to high school graduating students. The Award is based on courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship, and service. Sounds good, right?

Involve your school in the Legion’s Oratorical Contest. This is an awesome opportunity for students to compete at the local, state, and National levels. The High School Oratorical Contest is an official American Legion program promoted successfully by many Posts. Since 1938, the contest has developed knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Go to: https://www.legion.org/oratorical

There are many other opportunities for individuals and Posts to become involved. For additional information regarding these activities and more, contact Mark Sutton at Department Headquarters. And remember, it takes only one person to make a difference. You can do this! This is what the American Legion was created for.

YOU CHOOSE!

To read Commander Oxford’s complete message, go to https://www.legion.org/commander/249460/we-stand-all-veterans-regardless-race-ethnicity-or-gender

YOU HONORED US WITH YOUR SERVICE. Now let us honor you.

Join us for a complimentary meal and pre-planning seminar to learn about VA burial benefits available.
For more information, contact Tony.Lauri@DignityMemorial.com or 248-651-9641.

We’re proud to partner with the Department of Michigan American Legion.

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The Hospice Journey

Seeking Veteran Volunteers

Being at peace. That is what comes to mind when you think of your final moments in life. Don’t get us wrong; aging is a reality. Physical changes, ailments, and the effects of aging typically creep up on folks. For some, symptoms can lead to a medical diagnosis, which can lead to a need for Hospice. This doesn’t mean that you can’t find peace and have your final wishes granted. The following stories show how Grace Hospice goes above and beyond for patients, to make their “Hospice journey” as dignified as possible.

Larry Reed found himself in a facility, relying on staff for all of his care. Larry reached a point where he was unable to get out of bed, and his doctor referred him to Hospice. When someone has a Hospice diagnosis, this does not mean they will die within days. The criteria for a Hospice diagnosis is that the referring physician estimates the patient could die within the next six months. Larry signed on to Grace Hospice.

Grace Hospice is accredited by the Community Health Accreditation Partners (CHAP) and provides patient and family-centered Hospice care that optimizes quality of life. The team works together focusing on the patient’s needs wherever they call home - in their home, home of a loved one, or in long-term care or assisted living facility.

The Grace Hospice Mission is: For each employee to treat every patient as their own treasured loved one, providing care that affords a quality of life that outweighs the quantity of days, and supports caregivers as their hearts find healing.

Grace Hospice is a member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), and also are national partners of “We Honor Veterans” (WHV). WHY is a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, which provides educational tools and resources to promote Veteran-centric activities and improve a Veteran’s quality of life. Hospice agencies are among those organizations that partner with WHV to best serve Veterans who find themselves facing a Hospice diagnosis.

The goal of WHV is simple – to care for and honor those who have served our country when they reach the end of life. Being a WHV partner means we educate, engage, and expand awareness to Veterans and their families regarding hospice services and their Veteran benefits.

Grace Hospice, based in Troy, Michigan, makes serving Veterans a priority. Kari Wright, the Manager of Supportive Services for Grace Hospice has this to say about our WHV program: “Veterans have unique and special needs. Serving Veterans at end-of-life is our gift to those that have already sacrificed so much.” When a Veteran, like Larry, is admitted to Grace Hospice, we determine the Veteran’s branch of service, the need for any VA benefits, and coordinate accordingly.

Another way that Grace Hospice honors Veterans is by offering a Pinning Ceremony. Grace Hospice staff, the patient’s family and friends, as well as area Veteran members from the American Legion (or VFW) are in attendance. Those attending the “pinning” gather around the Veteran, thanking and honoring them for their service. A fellow Veteran “pins” the patient and presents them with a certificate. Typically, the National Anthem or God Bless America is sung.

On the day of Larry’s pinning, his family was present, along with the facility and Grace Hospice staff. Commander Rick Merrigan from the Buck/Reasoner Post 238 in Holt, MI, arrived and met Larry. They exchanged background on their training and service. At the appointed time, Commander Merrigan placed an American flag pin on Larry and then saluted him. The ceremony ended with the singing of the National Anthem. Larry, with tears in his eyes after the pinning, said, “He saluted me!”

There are Veterans who decline a pinning ceremony but might have other wishes. One such wish was for a Veteran who was homebound. He was a huge NASCAR fan, and Jeff Gordon was considered his favorite driver of all time. The WHY Team at the Lansing Grace Hospice office contacted Jeff Gordon’s publicist. Moved by this request, Jeff Gordon recorded a video for the patient. When the patient was shown in the video, there was measurable emotion. The patient’s partner reported that he watched the video every day until his death.

How could American Legion Post members join with WHV and Grace Hospice? One of two ways.

Join those other American Legion and VFW Members who make themselves available to assist with pinnings.

Become a Hospice Volunteer, which requires an investment of time for training and be the “Brother” who spends time with Veterans at end-of-life. This includes enriching their final days by sharing stories or just spending time with a fellow soldier.

Grace Hospice has offices in Troy, Ann Arbor, Marysville, Bay City, Flint, Lansing, Kalamazoo, and Grand Rapids. For information, go to ghospice.com or call 1-855-MYGRACE

‘Why Michigan’ campaign targets transitioning service members

LANSING, Mich. – From high-tech jobs to Great Lakes beauty, and from veteran-friendly colleges to part-time service opportunities in the Michigan National Guard, Michigan is a great place for transitioning service members to live, work, raise a family and retire.

The state’s new Why Michigan campaign highlights the many benefits and resources available to soon-to-be veterans and their families who are transitioning out of active duty status from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

The campaign includes a new WhyMI mobile app designed specifically for transitioning service members and a series of Michigan-specific virtual introductory sessions and job fairs at military installations around the country.

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) is conducting the outreach campaign along with the Michigan National Guard, which are both part of the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA).

“If you’re transitioning out of military active duty and you’re from Michigan, we want you back,” Maj. Gen. Paul Rogers, Adjutant General and Director of the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. “If you’re not from Michigan, we ask that you take some time to consider all that the Great Lakes State has to offer veterans and their families in terms of employment, education, health care and a great quality of life.”

Michigan, the nation’s 10th largest state, has a wealth of veteran resources. These include hundreds of veteran-friendly employers in industries ranging from automotive to agribusiness; over 60 veteran-friendly colleges and universities; a network of Veteran Service Officers who can help veterans file VA claims; and 24/7 support for veterans and their families through the MVAA’s Veteran Resource Service Center at 1-800-MICH-VET.

“Michigan is committed to supporting veterans and National Guard and Reserve members through all phases of their lives,” said Zaneta Adams, Director of the MVAA, which serves as the central coordinating agency for Michigan’s 550,000 veterans. “Once you complete basic training and your skills school, you are a veteran and become eligible for the benefits and services you earned for your service. It’s our mission and passion at the MVAA to connect veterans to their benefits.”

An estimated 200,000 service members transition from the U.S. armed forces to the civilian labor force each year. Among their ranks are skilled technicians, medical personnel and IT professionals – the type of talent Michigan needs to continue developing its workforce and remain competitive in the global economy.

Many transitioning service members wish to continue their uniformed service in the National Guard or Reserve. In the Michigan National Guard, members can achieve their personal and professional goals while enjoying plenty of time with family. Most importantly, they can continue helping people in their communities when they are needed most, while serving the nation with honor and pride.

For more information, call the MVAA at 1-800-MICH-VET or visit the App Store or Google Play and download our WhyMI mobile app.
The Bowen-Holliday American Legion Post 35, and VFW Post 2780, in Traverse City, with generous donations made by area corporations, organizations, and individuals purchased a new 15-passenger van at Bill Marsh Ford, in Kalkaska. Members of the American Legion Post and VFW Post Honor Guard escorted the van to Traverse City.

The van will be used by the honor guard, made up from members of the Legion and VFW, to travel to perform Military Honor Services together, as far as, 50 miles away. In 2019, the honor guard performed 136 Military Honors, and participated in 58 other events.

The Glenn Staley American Legion Post 422, Hale, hosted the Forgotten Eagles of Michigan Chapter 3, representing the north east quarter of the lower peninsula, during a ride on August 8. The post provided the Eagles, a pizza dinner, and a full breakfast in the morning. The Forgotten Eagles fight for the rights of POW/MIA, helping to protect future veterans and veterans in need from all wars, are willing to help us promote our Mission Statement, promote the POW/MIA Mission and helping our Michigan Veterans.

The American Legion Department of Michigan, Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee continues to partner with local Michigan Posts, and Gleaners Food Bank to distribute boxes of non-perishable food to those in need in the community. Events have been held in Mount Clements, Garden City, Milford, and Taylor. At the time of printing eight events in the U.P. are scheduled, in conjunction with the Sault Tribe. The Legion has distributed more than 100,000 pounds of food, to date.