

TOURING THE UPPER PENINSULA WITH NATIONAL COMMANDERS



National Vice Commander Stephan Wiesmann, A UP Tour First! This marks the first time a representative from National has come on the Tour.



National SAL Commander Bill Clancy Also Represented National on this year's UP Tour.



**AMERICAN
LEGION**

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

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DEADLINE DATES

January 2026 Deadline is December 14th

Circulation: electronic

HEADQUARTERS DIRECTORY

Publisher: Ronald Runyan

Editor: Jim Showers

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MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE & AUXILIAIRE

is published monthly by The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, 212 N. Verlinden, Lansing, MI 48915-1297. Periodical postage paid at Lansing, MI, and additional mailing offices. Subscription \$12 for member to receive the publication.

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Commander's Message, November Roger Avie Department Commander

In the latter days of October, our Leadership Team of 20, made up of the Legion, Auxiliary and the Sons of the Legion, embarked on a major trip—this time across Michigan's beautiful Upper Peninsula for the Fall Tour. We made stops at posts in Sault Ste. Marie, Hulbert, Newberry, Munising, Marquette, the remarkable D.J. Jacobetti Veterans Home, Greenwood, L'Anse, Hancock, the White Pine Veterans Wall facility, Wakefield, the Stromberg Post, Iron Mountain, and Gladstone. A big shout-out to all of you for your hospitality and support! Your generosity toward my special project, the Freedom Center, was deeply appreciated. Between the many posts and individual donations, we raised over \$1,000 during the trip.

After our UP journey, I continued down into the Lower Peninsula, visiting a post in Traverse City and meeting more dedicated Legionnaires at a local eatery. Another highlight of November was attending the Freedom Center Volunteer Dinner at the Inn at St. John on November 4th. I had the privilege of thanking the volunteers for their hard work and sharing how much we've raised so far to support their mission of serving veterans and their families during their travels.

Another meaningful stop was at the Wilwin facility, where veterans can find peace and rest, especially those dealing with PTSD. I repaired some equipment there, a small but important contribution to keeping that space welcoming and functional. I will be back there, if warmer weather allows, for the completion of the repairs.

I also enjoyed a wonderful evening at Post 76 in Ludington with Commander Mitchell Oakes, his wife, and the Sons of the American Legion. Later that same day, I met in Grand Rapids with Leadership Training Leader Jena Wilmers to discuss the upcoming leadership class she's organizing for November 14th. All potential Leaders should attend these meetings; the information is very valuable for your service throughout the Legion.

Finally, a heartfelt Thank You to the Voiture 1002, 40 & 8 for donating \$1,000 to my Commander's Special Project, the Freedom Center. I'll share more next month about the balance of November events and other visitations. Until then, God bless the Legion, God bless the USA, and God bless every one of you.

COMMANDERS PROJECT

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE PURCHASED A COIN AND TO THE POSTS, UNITS, SQUADRONS AND DISTRICTS THAT HAVE ALREADY DONATED. YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED!

BUY COMMANDER AVIE'S COIN TODAY



Your \$10 donation gets you A special commander coin, with 100% of the donation going to Freedom Center, supporting veterans in Michigan.



Ron Runyan
Dept. Adjutant

Runyan's Ramblings: Season's Greetings

I Hope everyone has the opportunity to gather with friends and family to enjoy this festive season. With that said, it also makes for a special gift to ensure your significant other, spouse, sibling or sons or daughters have their dues paid for the following year. It is an expression of gratitude to be able to pay the dues for those who you love, and continue the tradition of membership for your family is The American Legion.

Our current Second Vice has taken on a task of a program that National advocates, which is the Post Passport program. You can purchase these passports in emblem sales. I encourage ALL posts that would like members from around the state and country to purchase their very own Post Stamp, so you

can stamp a member's passport signifying that they visited your post. There is even a special giveaway pin for those who achieve a specific number of stamps in their passport. You bet that your Department Adjutant has his passport in his car and will be making visits around our great state and nation. I certainly enjoy making post-visit stops to get to know you all when I'm in your area.

I also want to give a special shout-out to Post 722 in Freeland. Other leaders and I visited this post last month for a membership meeting and dinner. Post 722 is on the record as being "The Best" post I have ever witnessed, performing a post-meeting opening ceremony! Great job to the leadership and members of Post 722; keep up your great work!

In closing, enjoy your holidays, stay safe and have a great time.

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Membership Report

Jim Austin
1st Vice Commander



Veterans Day: A day we remember all the sacrifices we made while serving our great Country—things like missed family events and holidays away from home, to name a few.

As I travel throughout the state visiting other Legion Posts, I see the true meaning of Veterans Day. Veterans share a unique bond with one another. We know, we see, and we have lived the struggles. That is one of the greatest reasons to belong to the American Legion, if there is any way to convey that, what a great way to bring your “brothers and sisters” into the welcoming arms of the American Legion.

I recently had the opportunity to visit Post 722 in the Saginaw Correctional Facility. The camaraderie and brotherhood that they displayed was absolutely the truest form of Veterans helping Veterans. That is our bottom line as to why membership is so important. We must bring our brothers and sisters into the Legion so we can share the true bond of Veterans helping Veterans.

We have met the National 65% quota for November 13th. Thank you, and great job on accomplishing this goal. We have re-instituted membership rewards as well as continued with pre-existing programs and incentives that have been successful in the past. You can find the details on the department’s website. The next National Membership goal benchmark is in the middle of December, and we are on pace to accomplish this goal as well. Continue to do your buddy checks to help achieve this goal.

Falling back to Veterans helping Veterans, member or not, continue to be a Veteran helping other Veterans. We know of the 988 program, which is the Veteran Suicide helpline. If you have a Veteran buddy or know of one who is struggling, ask how they are doing and, most importantly, listen. You may be the one to save one. As important as membership is, Veterans helping Veterans is the real reason we are Legion members.

Americanism Report

Roger Deaton
2nd Vice Commander



Balance... Life is about balancing family, work, leisure and Legion. It’s very evident that I love the American Legion, and I have the support of my family and friends as I have created a balance. When the holidays come, I’m at the Lions game for Thanksgiving and enjoying the Detroit area with friends and family. At Christmas, I’m pretty much off the grid enjoying quality time with my family for two weeks, and getting energized for the coming year. These are great resting points for all of us, as they are prominent holidays. Balance is a year-round process. As a leader in our organization, I’m often calling on folks to volunteer more for our great organization. But I understand you can’t volunteer for everything—“Balance”. I bring this up as none of us know exactly what others are going through Don’t worry like Toy Story, “You have a friend in me”.

Our Americanism team has been hard at work for our great organization. The Passport Program for the Michigan Legion family has been kicked off, and please be patient as participating posts order and receive their Passport Stamps. Many Posts that I have been contacting are doing their own marketing to promote this fun, exciting, and amazing way to build camaraderie here in Michigan. Reminder: The Americanism Committee is responsible for issuing the coveted hat pins to members who visit 10 posts. Thank you to Jim Showers for helping promote this fun and important program.

Boys State applications are now live on our website, allowing families to register online for the first time. As a reminder, this year’s Boys State program has moved to Hillsdale College. Dates June 21-27, 2026.

Some January deadlines.

- January 1 – Baseball registration opens at baseball.legion.org
- January 5 – Brewer/Wilson Scholarship submission deadline
- January 9 – Law Officer of the Year submission deadline
- January 9 – Firefighter of the Year Submission deadline
- January 25 – District Oratorical Contests deadline

Wishing the entire American Legion family a safe and happy Holiday season. Don’t forget that the Winter meeting is February 5th – 8th in Port Huron, Michigan. I’m looking forward to seeing all of you.

Chaplains Corner

Sherri Gramlich, Assistant Chaplain

gifts are not wrapped in paper, but shared from the heart.

For many Veterans, this time of year can stir both happiness and sadness. We may find ourselves missing old comrades, remembering holidays spent far from home, or thinking of those who now rest in eternal peace. Yet it is in those memories that we find connection, a reminder that service ties us together across generations and miles.

The fellowship we share within The American Legion is one of the greatest gifts of all. When we come together, whether it’s at a post-meeting, a holiday dinner, or simply over a cup of coffee, we offer each other understanding that few others can. We speak a common language of service, sacrifice, and brotherhood. And through that fellowship, we not only strengthen our organization, but also our own hearts and spirits.

This season, I encourage you to reach out to your fellow Legionnaires, to a Veteran who may be alone, or to a family in need within your community. Make a phone call, plan a visit, share a meal, or even a simple smile can be a blessing that lasts far beyond the holiday season.

As we celebrate the season of giving, let us also give thanks for our families, for our comrades, and for the freedom we’ve been privileged to defend. And let us remember the words found in Scripture: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

May the peace of this season fill your hearts, may fellowship strengthen your spirits, and may the coming year bring renewed hope and unity to all who serve For God and Country. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to you and your families.

As December arrives and another year draws to a close, we find ourselves surrounded by the spirit of giving and reflection. The holidays bring a time to gather with family, friends, and fellow Legionnaires. It’s a season to remember that the most meaningful



Communication is Key

Leo Cowdry, 3rd Zone Commander

In the real estate industry, the success of an investment is often determined by three key factors: location, location, location.

I believe that the success of The American Legion is determined by communications, communications, and communications. Whether it's two people in a relationship or thousands of members in a statewide organization, the ability to communicate effectively is paramount. Strong communications can foster unity, ensure goals are met, and enable our organization to achieve its mission successfully.

Post-level communications

At the Post level, our primary goal is to foster camaraderie and provide an environment similar to what we experience in the service. Keeping members informed of, and engaged in, meetings, social gatherings, and events is essential to strengthening our Post.

We never know what challenges a fellow veteran may be facing. By maintaining communication through Buddy Checks, we ensure that no veteran is left behind.

Today, we have multiple communication methods, and we must adapt to the best one to reach our members. A well-rounded communication strategy includes;

- Phone calls - direct outreach to members who are less active online



NEC Review of the UP Tour

Brett Holt NEC

I hope everyone is enjoying the holiday season, with everyone full of Thanksgiving food and Christmas shopping either done or close to being done.

This year's U.P. Tour was a truly historic occasion. Our National Vice Commander, Stephen Wiesmann from Tennessee, flew into Saginaw, where Bonnie and I met him to begin a trip through the Upper Peninsula. What made this so historic is that, to the best of anyone's recollection, there has never been a National Officer from out of state on the UP tour.

The UP Tour did not start until Sunday night, but we chose to arrive a day early, along with Department Commander Avie and the First Lady. Saturday evening, we had the pleasure of sitting at the border crossing for an hour before enjoying a wonderful meal in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. We spent Sunday wandering around a rainy downtown Sault Ste. Marie, but we were treated to seeing the Alpena go through the locks. Dinner was at Post 3, where Bonnie Taylor did a wonderful job of hosting the group of about 17.

Monday morning, Wagon Master and 5th Zone Commander started us out on what would end up being a fantastic tour of, Sault Ste. Marie, Hulbert, Newberry, Munising, Marquette, Greenwood, L'Anse, Hancock, Wakefield, Stambaugh, Iron Mountain, and Gladstone. A few fun and emotionally moving stops were added along the way. At The Moving Wall in White Pine, the Yooper Tourist Trap, and the Ford Woodworking Museum in Alberta. The National Vice Commander was impressed, stating that if the rest of the country had the camaraderie and dedication of the post in the Upper Peninsula, the organization would be in great shape.

National Vice Commander brought with him the greet-

- Text messages - quick and effective event reminders
 - E-mail - regular updates, newsletters, and official announcements
 - Social media and websites - engaging platforms for information sharing, such as Facebook and Zoom
 - Printed newsletters - for those who prefer traditional communications
- By incorporating multiple methods, we ensure no one is left out.

Department-level communications

At the Department level, the goal is to ensure that all Posts and Districts work together to improve The American Legion's impact.

The Department will;

- Provide timely updates on initiatives and events
- Offer platforms for Posts to share their best practices.
- Use digital and in-person meetings to foster collaboration.

Zone level communications

As the 3rd Zone Commander, my goal is to represent you, your Post, and your District at the Department level.

I'm here to listen, support, and advocate for your concerns and ideas.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions that should be brought to the attention of the Department or the DEC, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Together, through effective communication, we will continue to strengthen the American Legion and uphold the values of its four pillars.

ings of the National Commander and his message of the 3 C's; Communication, Community and Camaraderie.

- Communication: Focusing on how posts and districts interact with members and the public, with the goal of increasing visibility for the organization's activities.
- Community: Encouraging posts to be more active and visible in their local communities, moving beyond just membership discussions.
- Camaraderie: Promoting member well-being and mutual support, such as through programs like "Buddy Checks".

The National Commander of The Sons of The American Legion from New York joined us for the leg of Marquette through Iron Mountain and brought his push for joining the America 250 challenge. The post during this leg had the unique opportunity to have both the National Vice Commander of The American Legion and the National Commander of The Sons of The American Legion in their building at the same time!

The UP portion of the tour wrapped up on Thursday. Friday morning, the National Vice, Bonnie, and I headed to Wilwin Lodge at Cygnet Cove for an overnight stay and a chance to tour the facility. Several SAL members and a few Legionnaires were there, helping to clean up and close the facility for the winter. Even Department Adjutant Ron Runyan was spotted working there. Alternate NEC Brian Mohlman also joined us for the evening.

I want everyone to understand that I chose this opportunity to invite the National Vice Commander because, while it is beautiful in the UP in October, I wanted to reinforce the fact that the Yoopers are not a forgotten entity in this organization. In the words of the National Vice, "This can not be a one-off; more leadership needs to visit the more remote locations in our organization. This visit is going to be hard to beat the rest of the year." Mission accomplished! Thank you, Yoopers, for the hospitality.

2026 Membership: November 21th Goal = 53,120
Current Total: 36,310 - 68.35%



Embracing Change

Dan Cooper, PDC

The American Legion is built on a legacy of honor, courage, and commitment. These are values that remain unchanged through the decades. Yet, when it comes to processes and operations outside our cherished traditions, the old adage "because we never did it that way" can at times hinder the process.

In today's evolving world, adopting our methods isn't about discarding existing procedures; it's about enhancing efficiency and effectiveness.

Modern challenges require modern solutions. Take, for example, the shift from postal service to Email communications. Sharing documents online not only speeds up the process but also reduces the risk of loss and delayed items.

Similarly, transitioning from paper checks to electronic payments streamlines dues collections and accounting. Efficiency improvements are essential for this organization, steeped in history and tradition but facing contemporary realities.

Unfortunately, this resistance to change rears its ugly head at all levels of our organization more than I probably suspect.

Not all, but some of our past policies crafted decades ago now impede smooth operations rather than supporting them. Holding tightly to outdated methods can slow us down when agility and responsiveness are needed most.

Change is not an abandonment of our traditions; it is an evolution that can respect our past while preparing us for the future. Our history, filled with lessons of dedication to our founding principles, remains our guiding light, but we must also be open to refining our processes to ensure they serve us well in a world that is constantly transforming. By embracing new technologies and updating outdated policies, we not only honor our legacy but also secure a more efficient, effective, and growth-oriented future for The American Legion.

Let us be the solution. In acknowledging the need for change, we continue to lead by example, ensuring that the American Legion remains strong, resilient and ready to face the challenges of tomorrow.



Legislative Report

Tim Poxson, Legislative Chair

It has been a busy Legislative session since the Michigan budget has been finalized. New Legislation for all Veteran non-profits passed in the Budget process introduced by Rep. Ron Robinson. The budget includes \$4 million to be distributed as grants to Veteran Posts that are in need of funds for much-needed repairs

and other necessary expenses. The final types of grants that will be awarded have not been finalized by the Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency, and the application process have yet to be decided. However, the legislation does say that a grant cannot be over \$300,000 to any one group or origination. I am alerting our Post now so you can look around and see what you would apply for when the grant program is officially announced in the upcoming months, as no timeline has been set yet for the announcement.

We have been busy at the Michigan House and Senate and also getting calls from U.S. Congress members (even though the Federal Government is shut down as of this writing). I hope the interest in Veteran issues continues and we get legislation that will help Veterans. Also, as a reminder, please continue to visit our Legislative Priorities list on the Department's Web page and click on the Priorities to send letters to your State and Federal Officials. You could be the winner of some cash at the 2026 Department Convention based on your involvement with the program.

HELP WANTED!

USA250 Challenge

July 4, 2026, will be the semi-quincentennial (250th) anniversary of our beloved country. Let's ensure the

Department of Michigan does not miss this once-in-a-lifetime change to promote patriotism in our communities and state.

We need volunteers from across the state to serve on the committee with me and ensure we take full advantage of this opportunity.

Email: judge@michiganlegion.org with your contact information if you can donate some time to this important project. Thank You!

Boys State Positions Available

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With our move to Hillsdale College this year we need to fill many staff and volunteer positions. All positions provide free room and board, some are compensated with a small stipend. contact: mark-

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From the Desk of the President

December 2025



Dawn Gramza
Department President
2025-2026

Looking Back, Moving Forward

As the year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on all that we have accomplished together as members of the American Legion Auxiliary. Each month has brought new challenges, opportunities, and moments of pride – and through it all, our shared commitment to Service Not Self has guided the way.

Looking back, I am filled with gratitude for every Unit, every volunteer, and every hour spent serving our veterans, military, and their families. Whether it was hosting a fundraiser, visiting a veterans' home, supporting a military family, or simply offering a kind word – you have each made a difference. These acts of service are the heartbeat of our organization.

Moving forward, let us carry this same energy and dedication into the new year. There is still much work to be done, and together, we can continue to strengthen our mission, grow our membership, and inspire others to serve. The Auxiliary's future is bright because of the compassion and determination each of you brings to our cause.

As we celebrate the holiday season, may you find peace, joy, and renewal in knowing that your service truly matters. Thank you for all you do to support our veterans and keep the spirit of the American Legion Auxiliary shining across Michigan. For God and Country.

Housekeeping, Explanations and Helpful Information



Shannon Werner
Executive Director,
Secretary-Treasurer

I love this time of year. The cooler temperatures, comfort food and the under current of excitement for the approaching holidays. However, I know it is a very difficult period for some folks-especially our Veterans. I do my best to pay attention to those around me who may need a positive conversation, assistance, or help but never ask for it. Go out of your way to be kind and help others, you never know when a "mission possible" will change a life.

Speaking of helping others, if you want to donate to one of our projects or programs, all options are listed on our website under programs/guides and then click "donate". The list will then be displayed. You will also find a list of worthy non-profits and/or programs that we do not accept donations for right below that information. That doesn't mean you can't make a donation to the non-profits listed or to any other project on that list, it just cannot be processed here at headquarters.

When you report members who have passed on our website at www.michalaux.org, please understand that a form must still be completed and sent to headquarters with all information required. You can mail it or use email, whatever works best for you. We then use the details on that form to make the necessary changes in Nationals ALAMIS database.

If you are using any forms, please remember to

check the website for the most up to date documents available. This will save time and money for your Unit and our Department. You can avoid lengthy delays and wasted postage which is a benefit for us and our Veterans. We will all have more time and money to further our mission.

As you know, each Unit should receive a membership packet in or around July. Those membership packets are made up of materials provided to us by National, the incoming program representatives and documents we have here at headquarters. Specifically, the Unit roster provided is generated by National in early April every year. Do not use that as your working roster, by the time you receive same, it is already outdated. Up to date membership information can be found on ALAMIS.

I want to clear up some confusion or misunderstanding regarding ALAMIS. In order to have access to ALAMIS, you must first create (or already have) an account on Nationals website www.alaforveterans.org. The sign on information you use for the National website will then become your log in for ALAMIS. If you do not have an account on Nationals website (alaforveterans.org) and you request full access to ALAMIS, the representatives at National will assign one to you. By the way, full access requires training from National before you can utilize their database (ALAMIS).

Be well and keep each other safe. See you in February at our next gathering in Port Huron, Michigan. You will not want to miss it!

**Something Happening at your Unit?
Submit it to the Michigan Auxiliaire!**

Send your articles and Pictures (with Cutline) to : info@michalaux.org

Kyle Ploehn, U.S. Air Force Veteran, Legionnaire, and Adaptive Sports Athlete

Mark Sutton

Kyle Ploehn is a U.S. Air Force Veteran and member of the SSG Michael A. Dickinson II American Legion Post 257, Battle Creek. Kyle's disability stems from a hip disarticulation amputation, which involves the removal of his entire leg up to the hip due to complications related to his military service. This significant life change occurred in December 2019, following a series of health issues stemming from his time in the U.S. Air Force.

Despite the challenges posed by his disability, adaptive sports have played a crucial role in Kyle's life. One of the ways it has improved Kyle's life is rehabilitation and physical fitness. Engaging in adaptive sports has allowed Kyle to focus on his rehabilitation. Participation in these activities has helped him maintain physical fitness, which is essential for his overall health and well-being. The structured nature of adaptive sports training can help regain strength and mobility.

His mental and emotional well-being has improved. Adaptive sports have provided Kyle with a sense of purpose and a way to cope with the emotional impacts of his amputation. Competing and training with fellow athletes who have faced similar challenges fosters a positive mindset and can alleviate feelings of isolation or depression that often accompany significant life changes.

Through his involvement in adaptive sports, Kyle has built meaningful relationships with other athletes. Meeting Vietnam veterans and forming connections with members of the American Legion has created a supportive community where he feels understood and valued. This camaraderie is vital for social integration and emotional support.

Kyle is passionate about raising awareness of adaptive sports and their benefits. His experiences have fueled his commitment to advocating for greater recognition and resources

for adaptive athletes, inspiring others in similar situations to engage in these sports and reclaim their lives after disabilities.

His participation has led to personal growth. Adaptive sports have encouraged Kyle to push beyond his limits, helping him develop resilience and a fighting spirit. The challenges he faces in these sports reflect the broader challenges of living with a disability, allowing him to grow both physically and mentally.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs played a crucial role in Kyle's journey to adaptive sports by providing comprehensive medical support following his leg amputation. They covered all his surgeries and prosthetics, which enabled him to recover and adapt to his new circumstances. Additionally, during his rehabilitation at the VA, Kyle met Vietnam veterans involved with the American Legion, fostering a sense of camaraderie that encouraged him to engage further with the veteran community and explore adaptive sports. This support not only facilitated his physical recovery but also helped him connect with others who share similar experiences, ultimately enhancing his involvement in adaptive sports.

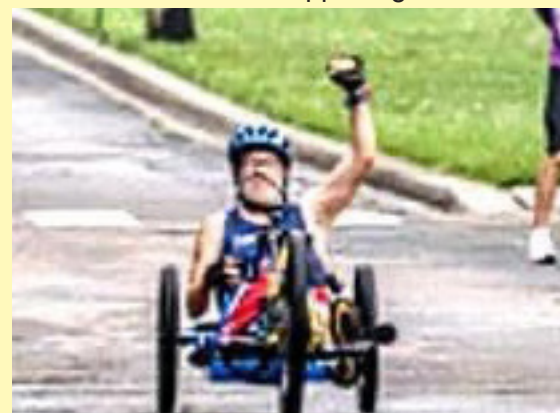
Kyle competes in adaptive sports competitions, including the VA Golden Games, where he has competed against both individuals with disabilities and those without.

In summary, adaptive sports have played a crucial role in Kyle's journey following his amputation. They have not only enhanced his physical capabilities but also provided emotional support, fostered community ties, and instilled a sense of purpose, making significant contributions to his quality of life.

Please consider supporting Madam President's Special



Kyle Ploehn preparing for race



Kyle Ploehn Crossing the finish line

Project to assist Veterans like Kyle become involved in adaptive sports. Donations can be sent to the ALA Department of Michigan, memo: President's Special Project, 212 N. Verlinden Ave, Suite B, Lansing, MI 48915.

Chaplain's Corner

Dawn Gilbert, Department Chaplain

Thank you to the American Legion Auxiliary 5th district for hosting the Chaplain's 101 for Michigan last month at the Armory in Belmont, Michigan. Great topics by some of the presenters on forgiveness and loneliness. If you have a chance to attend one of these in the future, consider it. It's not just for Chaplains; the topics are something that we can all learn from.

As we enter the final month of the year, December brings with it a spirit of reflection, gratitude, and hope. It is a time when we gather with loved ones, honor traditions, and celebrate the blessings of faith, family, and freedom.

This season reminds us of the importance of service—both to our communities and to one another. As members of the American Legion Auxiliary, we are called to embody compassion and support for veterans, military families, and those in need. Let us take time this month to reach out with kindness, whether through a holiday card to a veteran, a warm meal for a neighbor, or a prayer for peace.

In the quiet moments of December, may we reflect on the year behind us with gratitude and look ahead with renewed purpose. Let us remember those who are no longer with us, honor their memory, and carry forward their legacy of service.

May your heart be filled with peace, your home with joy, and your spirit with hope as we celebrate this season together. Blessings to you and yours.

Greetings from the 10th District

Rysta Brown, 10th District President

I am Rysta Brown, humbly serving as President. I would love to tell you all about the mighty things that are happening in the 10th, but that would take more than just an article. I will tell you that from Mikado to Morley, Auxiliary members are ready to serve Veterans, their communities and their families through the Holiday season and beyond.

The Auxiliary Unit in Sanford will host a Toys for Kids event and participate in the Teddy Bear Run with the Riders. The Big Rapids Auxiliary Unit is famous for all its work with ALA Girls State. Their members support Legionnaires at Ferris State University Concerts. They also help build ramps for veterans who need help getting in and out of their homes.

Unit 18 in Bay City has a great group of Auxiliary volunteers who can always be counted on, even if they can't always attend the monthly meetings. Right now, Caoimhe, a junior member of Unit 18, is serving as the Department's Little Miss Poppy. She is raising money for the Wounded and Returning Warriors Project.

Unit 211 is taking donations and gathering supplies (clothing and hygiene products) for veterans who need additional support obtaining everyday necessities. This Auxiliary is also working with Veterans Service Officers to raise awareness of Veterans' benefits to those who have served and their families.

Oscoda is reaping the rewards of teamwork; the officers have opened new lines of communication with the members, the Legion Post and SAL leadership. This teamwork has led to greater productivity.

Mikado is making pasties and has committed itself to collaborating with the local high school to increase the number of scholarships being awarded. The Auxiliary in Grayling always makes Christmas special for veterans in local homes. They are also immensely proud of how they support their post.

Blanchard is proud of their work in helping their Legion Post install new carpet and paint its building. They raised \$1,500 to support Honor Flights, which is also enough to cover the cost of a chaperone for any local member chosen for an Honor Flight. They sponsor three wreaths for veterans who are buried at Arlington National Cemetery during the Wreaths Across America event.

The members of Prudenville provide a turkey dinner, bingo, and give veterans in that area a Merry Christmas. In Harrison, the Auxiliary Unit stays busy with craft shows, bake sales, distributing poppies, volunteering during funerals for veterans and participating in the street fair.

Hale's members will serve Thanksgiving dinner and use any donations received to bring joy to children during their Breakfast with Santa event. The Skidway Auxiliary Unit is proud to always step up. This includes making pasties, hosting Friday dinners with the post, and delivering goodie bags to residents at local nursing homes.

We look forward to hearing about the most wonderful activities from all 23 units within the 10th District. Remember, we are all different, but we have a common goal to serve.



American Legion Auxiliary

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY EXPLAINED

RELATIONSHIP TO VETERAN:



- MOTHER
- DAUGHTER
- SISTER
- GRANDMOTHER
- GRANDDAUGHTER
- SELF — FEMALE VETERANS WHO HAVE SERVED
- MALE or FEMALE SPOUSE

ELIGIBILITY PERIODS: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941

TWO PATHS FOR ALA ELIGIBILITY

PATH ONE

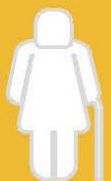
The potential member is related to a living veteran by one of the relationships stated above and the veteran is living AND a current member of The American Legion.



If the potential member is a female veteran, she only needs to have served during the eligible time periods to be eligible for ALA membership.

PATH TWO

The potential member is related to a deceased veteran who served during the eligible time periods and was honorably discharged.



The deceased veteran did not have to be a member of The American Legion in order for the potential member to join the ALA.

For more information, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org



Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan

CLIVE R.A. SEYDELL**Detachment Commander 2025-2026**

As we enter the holiday season, I'm filled with gratitude for the incredible people, places, and purpose that unite us as Sons of The American Legion. This year's Upper Peninsula Fall Tour was a shining example of that fellowship, stretching from Sault Ste. Marie to Wilwin Lodge at Cygnet Cove.

We began in the Sault Ste. Marie Post 3, with a wonderful dinner that set the tone for the trip. The following days brought visits to Hulbert Post 393, Newberry Post 74, a scenic stop at Miners Falls, and Munising Post 131, before an evening of fellowship at Marquette Post 44. That night became even more special when National Commander Bill Clancy joined us. His plane landed in Iron Mountain, where the Iron Mountain American Legion Family greeted him, and the Little Lake American Legion Riders proudly escorted him to Marquette, an inspiring show of Legion Family unity.

From there, our journey continued through the D.J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans, Da Yoopers Tourist Trap, Greenwood Post 114, and Nature's Way Woodworking in Alberta, where owner Dave shared a fascinating talk on the history of Ford's early lumber operations in the area. We carried on to L'Anse Post 144 and Hancock Post 186, followed by a stop at Lake Linden Post 90, where I had the honor of presenting Christian Kilpela, the 2025 Michigan Young Son of the Year, with two SAL shirts and a Certificate of Appreciation.

The tour continued west to White Pine, where we visited the Vietnam Moving Wall and met the dedicated volunteers who preserve this traveling memorial. Later, we made our way through the Porcupine Mountains to the breathtaking Lake of the Clouds, sharing that unforgettable moment with National Commander Clancy, Department President Dawn Gramza, PDC John Beeman, and NEC Mike Holley. We wrapped up the western leg with visits to Wakefield Post 11, Stambaugh/Reino Post 21, and Iron Mountain Post 50, where PNVJ John Mella hosted a fantastic dinner and PDC Dennis Larson and his crew put on an incredible meal.

The next morning, we visited the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain. We were welcomed by the dedicated staff who selflessly provide outstanding care for our veterans. From there, we traveled to Gladstone Post 71, where the Legion Family hosted a wonderful reception that truly captured the warmth and hospitality of the U.P. spirit.

On our final morning of the tour, we visited the Upper Peninsula Military Museum in Escanaba for an excellent guided presentation before beginning our journey south toward Wilwin Lodge. On the way, Department President Gramza, PDC Beeman, and I made a couple of classic U.P. stops, a visit to the Deer Ranch in St. Ignace and a lunch stop at Leh-

to's Pasties, both full of laughter and great memories. A very special thank-you goes out to 5th Zone Department Commander Mike Trickey, whose coordination, communication, and leadership made the tour such a success.

As we wrap up the year, I remind every Squadron that membership is the heartbeat of our organization. Our next national milestone is 45% by December 10. Let's finish strong. Reach out, renew, recruit, and turn in those cards promptly to strengthen Michigan at both the Detachment and National levels.

I also want to thank Department President Dawn Gramza for her invitation to the City of Luna Pier's 12th Annual Veterans Day Parade and Commemorative Service, where she proudly served as Mistress of Ceremonies. My special lady, Stephanie, and I were honored to attend and take part in a moving program that truly reflected the patriotism and unity of the Luna Pier community.

Later that evening, Stephanie and I joined Department President Gramza at American Legion Auxiliary Unit 514 in Ida for their 3rd Annual "Eat, Drink & Dance" event. As a proud member of the unit, Dawn helped collect non-perishable food donations to benefit the Bedford Township Veterans Center, supporting local veterans in need. It was another great example of the American Legion Family working together to serve those who served us.

Looking forward, my Special Project for this next year is continuing to gain momentum. I am raising funds that support the construction of a fishing-only dock at Wilwin Lodge at Cygnet Cove.

The first way to help me support the project is through my raffle, now underway. Tickets are \$20 each or three for \$50. The grand prize drawing is on February 2, 2026. Every ticket sold helps bring this meaningful project closer to reality for veterans, their families, and young people.

The second opportunity to support this project will be my Special Project Fundraiser Dinner on March 14, 2026. It will be held at the Commonwealth Commerce Center in Jackson. Dinner tickets will go on sale just after the first of the year. It will be an evening of great food, raffles, and auctions. All proceeds raised will benefit the Wilwin Lodge dock project.

I want to thank all of our Detachment officers and chairmen for the time, travel, and "heart" you've given this year. The work you do behind the scenes keeps our Detachment thriving and our mission alive.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Winter Conference in Port Huron. Let's carry our progress forward into the new year and continue building momentum toward the 2026 Detachment Convention in Houghton Lake.

On behalf of Stephanie and me, I wish you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and continued blessings as we carry the spirit of service and fellowship into 2026.



Commander Seydell, National Vice Commander Stephan Wiesman, NEC Brett Holt, & 5th Zone Commander Mike Trickey

SARGEANT AT ARMS

Clive C.A. Seydell, Asst. Sgt at Arms

Hello, my name is Clive C.A. Seydell, though many people know me as "Dude." I am 12 years old and a proud member of Squadron 324. I currently serve as the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms for the Detachment of Michigan. I became a member of the Sons of the American Legion at birth in 2013, inspired by my grandfather, Clive Lee Seydell. With the guidance and support of my father, Clive R.A. Seydell, who serves as the Detachment Commander, I have grown into the role I hold today.

Throughout my time in the Sons of the American Legion, I have made many lasting friendships and look forward to making even more in the future. Being part of the SAL has truly changed my life—it has helped me become a better person and has taught me valuable lessons about leadership, service, and respect. I am honored and grateful to be part of this outstanding organization.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

David Seydell, Detachment Chaplain

As we approach the end of the year and the holidays are upon us, I would like to encourage everyone to check in on our veterans. The holidays can be a difficult time for many, so even a simple "hello, how are you?" can make a significant difference in someone's life.

I have been quite busy lately. Following our Fall conference, I had the pleasure of joining Commander Clive, his son, and many other members from the Sons at Post 351 in Utica, Michigan, for the ultimate Nerf battle. It was a blast! I want to extend a special "hats off" to the young Son, Braygen Gomez, for organizing this fantastic event.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to attend the fall cleanup at Wilwin and participated in my first-ever Chaplain's workshop in Belleville, Michigan. The workshop was incredibly insightful, and I look forward to attending it again in the future. I hope to see everyone at the winter conference in Port Huron.

I pray for all our service members and our veterans; may God bless them all.

BLUE BRIGADE JACKET

Daniel Fitzpatrick, SAL Commander of Reino Post 21 in Stambaugh MI recently received his Blue Brigade Jacket during the Department of Michigan's Fall UP Tour. The Blue Brigade Jacket was awarded to Fitzpatrick for recruiting 30 new members in 2024.



L to R National SAL Commander Bill Clancy, Squadron #21 Commander Daniel Fitzpatrick, & Commander Clive Seydell



NEC REPORT

Mike Holley, NEC 2024-26

The National Executive Committee Fall Conference took place on the first weekend of October 2025. I attended as the representative from Michigan for the NEC. I am the SAL's liaison for the Americanism committee. The programs that fall under this committee are Baseball, Boys State, and Child

Well-Being.

One of the programs is FFFH, which is Flying Flags for Heroes. They are asking all detachment squadrons, posts, and units that place flags on veterans' graves to report the number of flags each squadron places. Their website is flyingflagsforheroes.com. They would like everyone to please respond to this inquiry by August 8th, 2026, before the SAL national convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

On October 19th, my traveling companion, Sherri and I went to Iron Mountain, where we had the honor of escorting the National Commander William (Bill) Clancy III during the UP tour. He flew in on Monday, greeted by the Legion family from Iron Mountain and Gladstone before being escorted to Marquette by two legion riders. Commander Seydell and PDC Beeman joined us before we headed out for the whole tour the next day.

After two days of an amazing UP Tour with dignitaries from the Legion and Auxiliary, and National Vice Commander Steven T. Weismann, we took Commander Bill to Porcupine Mountain and to the Lake of the Clouds outlook. We ended up in Iron Mountain and the Veterans Memorial, where we met PDC Dennis Larson and SAL member John Pickard.

On Thursday morning, we said goodbye as the National Commander left for the National President's homecoming in Illinois. We spent the night in Escanaba before beginning our journey home. It was a great week, despite a little rain, but it was also a lot of fun.



CWF REPORT

Sandy Lipman, National Vice Chair Child Well-Being Foundation

Congratulations to the Detachment of Michigan on leading the way in the 2024-2025 term with the largest donation in the central region of \$12,047.00. We are halfway there this year with \$6550.00; let's continue on the upward curve and surpass last year's donations. We currently sit in second place behind our friends in Ohio!

This committee is given a list of grant applications to review after the national convention. And we must decide the ones that the SAL wants to recommend. This year, we had 50 to review out of 275 that were submitted to the foundation. We selected the following: Comfort Crew for Military Kids \$25,000, Mercy Medical Angels \$16,000, National Braille Press \$17,829, Young Marines Inc. \$50,000, ASXL Rare Research Endowment Foundation \$19,600, Our Military Kids \$50,356.

As most of you know, the Legion now receives two grants. This year, the grants totaled \$675,000 out of the \$850,000 that we had to distribute. All of our grant selections came to \$178,429, and that is before the foundation receives the choices of the Legion and the Auxiliary.

The selections this year were the hardest we have had in all the years I have been on this committee. I wish we could have given each a portion of what they had requested, so no one was left behind. If anyone would like to see the list, I have copies and can send them to you. Please support your Legion Family Charities!



DETACHMENT DISASTER FUND

Sandy Lipman, PDC & 18th District Commander

In April 2025, we received a letter from National Internal Affairs Chairman Matthew Herndon regarding the Sons and the National Emergency Fund Trust and Grants. It was determined that the Sons, being a program, was no longer eligible to receive aid by requesting a grant for emergency aid, stating that we are a program of the American Legion and therefore not a member (This is a whole other issue being looked into, and we will update as soon as we know anything). Chairman Herndon stated that after reviewing the National Emergency Fund Trust, it has been determined that participants in the Sons of the American Legion program are not eligible to receive NEF Grant Funding.

The information was presented on the floor at the Detachment convention in June of 2025. TA resolution was created presented, and passed at DEC 2 in the Sault. We sent it to the Department's Judge Advocate, Brett Holt. After minor word-ing changes, the revised resolution was passed at the DEC 3 in Battle Creek. The resolution will now cover our members and their families if there is a natural disaster within our state. Such as ice storms, floods, fire, tornadoes, etc. Resolved that the funding of the Disaster Relief Fund may be raised through donations, fundraisers, grants, and allocations as approved by the Detachment Executive Committee.



4TH ZONE

John Brown, Commander

Hello to all the Sons of the American Legion and their families from the 4th Zone. We are already into December, so let me fill you in on what's been happening. We officially have a new Squadron in the 10th District, Squadron #211, in East Tawas. This happened at the very end of October.

Thanks to Legion Commander Dennis Browne for his effort in helping to form this new

Squadron at his post, and welcoming our new SAL members. I've experienced some delays in distributing the 2026 membership cards to certain squadrons in Oc-tober and early November. Please, Commanders and adjutants, after you have elected officers, please send in an officer's list to Deanna Clark. You can fill out this list online, save it, and then email the list to Deanna's email (member@michiganlegion.org). If you sent in an officers list and did not receive your cards within a couple of weeks, please call Deanna to find out why. If you are unable to reach her, please contact me. I am still trying to distribute some membership cards. I appreciate your patience.

I sincerely hope all of you had a wonderful Thanks-giving and truly wish all of the Legion Family a very joy-ful Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God watch over and protect all of our active service members, and may he bless all who have served, granting us the liber-ties we so dearly enjoy.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

**Dominic R. Merlington,
Constitution and By-Laws Chairman**

I hope you are having a wonderful year. One of Commander Clive's goals is to update our Manual of Committee Responsibilities, which is available online. While this informa-tion is specific to the Detachment of Michi-gan, much of it can also be applied to similar committees at the Squadron level. The updated manual will state that my primary responsibility is to ensure that Squadrons within The Detach-ment of Michigan understand and follow the structural guide-lines and legal framework established by the National Constitu-tion and By-Laws of the Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Educate Squadrons on their responsibilities to their mem-bers in accordance with the governing documents of the Sons of The American Legion.
- Assist Squadrons in drafting or updating their local Con-stitutions and By-Laws.
- Review proposed Squadron Constitutions and By-Laws to ensure compliance with National and Detachment-level gov-erning documents.
- Serve as a resource on matters of structure, policy, and organizational compliance.
- Provide guidance on proper procedures for amendments, voting, officer duties, and other internal governance matters.

Please feel free to contact me at any time — I will gladly assist with any questions you may have. If I don't know the an-swer, I will do my best to find it!



1ST ZONE

Mike "Ponytail" Globke

Hope everyone is doing fine. We are now almost halfway through the Legion year. As of the end of November, Zone 1 is in third place in membership renewals for 2026. District-wise, a little lower. I'm sure renewals will pick up in the next few weeks. We have two Squadrons that haven't received their cards yet because they haven't submit-ted their officers' reports yet. I need to hear from someone in Squad 155 in Britton and 375 in Detroit. Contact me at ponytailmike@sbcglobal.net so we can get them to you.

Over the last couple of months, I've attended Zone meetings, and things are looking good, although atten-dance is a bit sparse. However, they're getting things done. I attended the Commanders Nerf Ball tournament and participated in Riverview's Ride and flag dedication ceremony at the Michigan Memorial Cemetery. It was my first time, but not my last. My wife, Pam, installed the 18th District Auxiliaries Officers, so we got to see some friends. Don't forget to get involved in the Legion's programs. It seems that we are constantly struggling to get folks to participate in them. They are an excellent way for students to win extra funds for their continuing education. I Hope everyone has a good holiday season. Please do your buddy checks and remember those who can't get out.



Wilwin Update

Butch Maxwell, Wilwin Liason

As we wrap up another season at Wilwin Lodge, I wanted to share a few updates and highlights from the past few months. Thanks to the hard work of our members, volunteers, and friends, we've made great progress around the property and have a lot to look forward to in the months ahead. It's been busy and productive!

In August, Dwayne Miller and I poured and formed the concrete around the new bunkhouse. Thanks to several local volunteers who assisted us in completing the job. We only needed to cover the cost of the concrete itself. Dwayne keeps things running smoothly as always. When we returned the last weekend of October, much of the leaf cleanup was done, but we still got out the blowers and finished up around the buildings. My friend Randy Bowman and I also cleared brush around the new building.

A huge thank you to the crew from Tecumseh who came out and tackled a long list of projects! They installed screen covers on the porch, pulled the boats and docks out of the water, and performed maintenance on all the golf carts. Their help made a big difference in wrapping up our season.

With everything in good shape, Wilwin Lodge officially closed for the season on October 31st and will reopen on May 1st. We'll hold our usual cleanup weekend a week or two before opening, and we'll be looking for plenty of volunteers to help with leaf cleanup and general maintenance.

Looking ahead, we're exploring a new fishing dock project — part of Detachment Commander Clive's special initiative, which will provide a great new spot to fish off the water instead of the shore. I'm also planning a fundraiser for Wilwin Lodge at Post 216 in Milford in late March. The theme will be a Beach Party to help us shake off the winter chill and get ready for summer! Expect burgers, hot dogs, coleslaw, potato salad, and plenty of fun, maybe even a little fishing flair.

Over the winter, we hope to begin work on the caretaker's cabin, providing our caretakers with their own personal space separate from the office. For next season, we're also looking into acquiring a skid steer with tracks or similar forestry equipment to help maintain trails and the grounds around the Veterans Village and lodge buildings. If anyone has connections or leads on equipment like that, we'd love to hear from you.

Wilwin Lodge continues to grow and thrive thanks to volunteers and supporters. Our mission to provide a peaceful retreat for veterans and their families to reconnect, relax, and recharge remains unchanged on of 1,100-acre beautiful property. Thank you all for your continued support. Together, we will keep Wilwin Lodge strong.



MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT

Greg Price

The Missing in America Project, also known as MIAP, was launched nationwide in early 2007 by Fred Salanti, a former Major in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. The Missing in America Project is comprised of volunteers who visit funeral homes and mortuaries across the United States to help locate, identify, and inter any unclaimed ashes, sometimes referred to as cremains, of veterans that have been sitting on shelves in storage rooms for years.

In May 2007, at a regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, the American Legion showed its support for the Missing in America Project with Resolution 24. This resolution allows Legionnaires to assist in locating and identifying cremated remains that have been left unclaimed in their local areas.

We Sons of the American Legion have also shown our sup-

COMMANDERS SPECIAL PROJECT

Henry Van Dusen, Chairman



As the "Commander's Special Project Chairman," I've had the privilege of working closely with our Commander Seydell on his special project, the construction of a Fishing-Only Dock at Wilwin at Cygnet Cove.

Our goal is to raise approximately \$40,000.00 to build the dock and access pathways leading to it. We've already received some fantastic donations, both monetary and in-kind. This generosity truly reflects the giving spirit of the great people of Michigan!

You may have read about the Commander's Project Raffle prizes in the November issue, and wow, what great prizes they are! We could use your help in selling these raffle tickets. Anyone willing to help sell tickets, contact me at Henryvd65@gmail.com or 517-474-0927, or reach out to the Commander at salcommander@sons.michiganlegion.org or 517-902-9858. We'll ensure you receive your tickets promptly. For those who have already begun selling, thank you! Your efforts make a real difference.

Mark your calendars! The Detachment Commanders' Special Project Fundraiser Dinner is coming this spring: March 14, 2026, at the Commonwealth Commerce Center in Jackson, Michigan. The event time will be announced once finalized. We're also looking into blocking rooms at a local hotel. If you think you might need a room (no commitment yet), please send us an email or text so we can estimate the number of rooms to reserve. We hope to see everyone there!

On October 11, I had the privilege of attending the Ultimate American Legion Nerf Battle at Post #351 in Utica, Michigan. I commend Braygen Gomez, one of our young Sons of the American Legion, for organizing such a wonderful event. Braygen, along with his parents and Legion Family, clearly put in countless hours to make it a success. There was strong support from the Detachment, including Commander Clive R.A. Seydell, Detachment Officers and Chairmen, as well as Detachment Legionnaire Officers and a Past Auxiliary Department President.

Not only was the event a great success, but part of the proceeds will be donated to the Commander's Special Project. Outstanding work, Braygen!

As we head into the holiday season, I want to wish everyone a joyful and safe time with family and friends. Please take a moment to remember those who are deployed and their families during this season of giving.

port for Resolution 24 and have committed ourselves to visiting funeral homes in our communities to help find unclaimed remains and obtain any necessary documentation to secure a final resting place for these Forgotten Heroes.

Not all unclaimed cremains are Veterans. That is why it is essential to gather as much information as possible to identify any cremains found and verify if they belong to veterans. Ask if a DD-214 is available or if there is military documentation that shows their release from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

If you find the remains of a forgotten veteran, have your post service officer contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 1-800-535-1117 to verify the decedent is a Veteran and eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery. Helping with this project is just one of the many ways we Sons support our veterans.



A HOLIDAY MESSAGE

John Beeman, Americanism & Boys State Chairman

As we approach the Christmas holiday and celebrate with family and friends, let us not forget our veterans. The ones deployed, the ones here, and the ones who paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

I am grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of those serving away from home and who cannot be here to attend family functions with loved ones, ensuring we have a safe and carefree holiday. Thank you. If you are able and have the means, send a care package abroad or visit the family of a veteran serving, and thank them for their service and acknowledge the discomfort of not having their entire family surrounding them during this holiday.

Please remember the veterans in our communities who are struggling with mental health issues and/or homelessness. Look for the signs and signals, if possible, of a veteran who may be struggling. There are resources available for them; you could be a lifeline for them. Help as you are able, with a conversation, a pair of warm socks, a meal, or a referral to a veteran organization.

Lastly, I would like us all to never forget the ultimate sacrifices made by so many men and women of our military who will never attend a family holiday again. I will be thinking of them and their families. I am sending love and gratitude to all of those affected by the loss of a veteran in service.

I am also thinking of those who have lost a veteran family member or veteran friend for any reason, old age, suicide, accidents, or disease. I have you on my mind and in my heart as well.

Everyone deserves a joyful holiday; for some, it may not be as joyful as for others. Help them if you can, and at the very least, remember. It brings me pleasure, peace and happiness to this season by remembering our veterans past and present, and doing my part serving our veterans as they so selflessly serve us. Happy Holidays!



MEMBERSHIP

Carvin Chapman, Membership Chair

It's been a busy few months traveling around the state, visiting posts, and working alongside Commander Seydell to keep membership moving strong. I've been distributing membership cards to various squadrons and ensuring that officer lists are submitted for those that are still outstanding.

We need to focus hard on renewals and recruitments. The membership year is coming to a close soon, and all renewals should be submitted by the end of the year. Every renewal matters, and every new member keeps our organization growing and thriving. Let's all do our part - chairmen, submit those renewals, and members, ensure your dues are paid up. Let's finish strong together!

I also had the opportunity to join Commander Seydell and Special Project Chairman Henry Van Dusen at Jay's Sporting Goods. It was a great day spent helping the Commander sell tickets for his Special Project and connecting with supporters from across the area.



FREEDOM TORCH FALL OUTING

Clive R.A. Seydell, Scouting Chair

The spirit of service, teamwork, and patriotism was alive and well at Wilwin Lodge at Cynet Cove this October as Scouts and Veterans gathered for the 2025 Freedom Torch Fall Outing, a free weekend event dedicated to building connections between youth in Scouting and the Veterans of our nation.

Veterans of our nation.

The Freedom Torch weekend October 17-19, offered an engaging mix of outdoor challenges, leadership activities, and learning directly from those who have worn the uniform. Scouts from across Michigan participated in events such as flag etiquette and retirement ceremonies, team-building and rope challenges, an obstacle course, air rifle shooting, and personal stories shared by Veterans who find peace and purpose at Wilwin Lodge.

Even when rain moved through early in the weekend, the Scouts' enthusiasm never faltered. Patrols worked together through the mud and mist to complete field challenges and support one another — embodying the Scouting ideals of perseverance, leadership, and cheerful service. By Saturday evening, the skies cleared, setting the stage for the event's Torch Lighting Ceremony, a powerful symbol of unity and commitment to duty and country.

Sunday morning had a final flag ceremony—a perfect reminder of the values that unite all who serve and those who follow in their footsteps.

Thanks to all the volunteers, Scout leaders, Veterans and the caretakers of Wilwin Lodge who make this event possible, providing a place where learning, healing, and fellowship come together.

Wilwin Lodge remains one of Michigan's great treasures, a place where the next generation can learn about freedom and service directly from those who defended it.



5TH ZONE

Zack Pendell, Commander

It is with great pleasure that I report to you that the 12th District squadrons of The Sons of the American Legion have elected their District Officers. Bylaws have been sent to each squadron for approval, and funding to establish a checking account has begun. It will be a while yet before the 12th District Sons is up and running. Congratulations to the new

Officers, and we are proud of you and those squadrons who have stepped up to help get the 12th District started.

The fall Upper Peninsula tour was exceptional this year. SAL National Commander William Clancy and National Vice Commander Steve Wiseman, Tennessee, for The American Legion, were in attendance and were a joy to have along on the tour. They were impressed by the beauty of the Upper Peninsula and were thrilled to see the legion family at work in the posts we visited. A special thanks to PDC Dennis Larsen for the warm welcome.

Commander Clancy watched the presentation of shirts to the Young Son of the Year, Christian Kilpela, at Lake Linden, and the presentation of 2 Blue Brigade jackets. Gary Pikka, Wakefield, and Danny Fitzpatrick, Stambough. Commander Clive Seydell also presented appreciation awards and certificates at our stops. Having National representatives was a first for the UP tour.

Thank you to all the posts that opened their doors and helped make this a truly exceptional Legion family event for the record books.



AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN DETACHMENT COMMANDER'S SPECIAL PROJECT WILWIN FISHING DOCK

Net Profits Sportfishing Charter

Winner's choice of Walleye or Salmon Charter - 6 hour trip for 4 in 2026

Detroit Red Wings Suite Experience For 2 at Little Ceasars Arena

Red Wings vs. Boston Bruins, March 21, 2026

Thayer Lake Cottages Getaway

2-night stay in a beautiful 2-bedroom, 1 bath lakefront cottage

Huskie Muskie Charters - Half-Day Trip for 4 during the 2026 season.

Kalamazoo Wings Prize Pack - Camo hat, "Fearless Fighter" shirt, 4-ticket game voucher, 50th Anniversary knit hat, dog leash, commemorative pin, & Jarrett #11 banner

Drawing: February 2, 2026 • 4:00 PM

at Department Headquarters • 212 N Verlinden Ave. • Lansing, MI

Tickets: \$20 each or 3 for \$50

Need not be present to win • Five winners will be drawn.

First name drawn chooses any prize from the list. Second name drawn chooses next, and so on until all prizes are claimed. License #C32775

A HOLIDAY WISH FROM THE UP

John Pickard, UP Chairman

It's a time when we joyously express gratitude, give thanks for all our blessings, and are more inspired to help others. This holiday season, our wish is that the desire to help others will spread beyond a few weeks and become a priority throughout the entire year. I know there are dedicated Sons, Auxiliary, and American Legion Family members who give their time in a myriad of ways throughout the year and understand both the power and satisfaction of servant leadership.

They are the unsung heroes of post activities in their local communities. They deliver food, water, and other resources to those in need. They mentor children and youth in their hometowns. They perform honor guard duties. They clean the gravesites of veterans. They perform "Buddy Checks" on fellow veterans, who may need nothing more than to hear a friendly voice or see a familiar face. They are the men and women who make communities stronger through servant leadership. Across America, the need has increased for even more servant leaders.

Let's capture the goodwill we feel in our hearts this season and seek opportunities to serve our veterans, military members, their families, and the communities in which we live. No opportunity is too small, no challenge too large. Join us in expanding the servant leadership we embody this holiday season and carry it forward throughout 2026.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from John Pickard, U.P. Chairman, Zack Pendell, 5th Zone Commander, and Bill Germain, U.P. Membership.

2026 SAL Membership: November 21th Goal = 29,207
Current Total: 12,384-42.40%

District Meetings

TBD	First District	July 9th 2026 Location TBD by the next commander's post	Portland, Michigan 48875 Phone: (517) 647-4980	Trenton Post 426 May 12th, 2025 ** Lincoln Park Post 67 Phone: 313-388-2088
Second District Meetings start at 11 am with the SAL followed by Riders at Noon with a Lunch VSO training at 1 pm and Legion at 2 pm	Sixth District Service Officer School at 11:10 am (when scheduled), Lunch at Noon, Meetings at 1 pm	January 11, 2026 Ida Post 514 March 8, 2026 Milan Post 268 May 17, 2026 Blissfield Post 325	Ninth District Executive meetings are at 11:00am with Lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm December 6, 2025 Post 9 Muskegon	June 10th, 2025 Garden City 396 Phone: 313-381-2245 * Service Officer School at 6:30 pm ** Memorial Service & Elections
Third District Lunch is at 11 am, and Meeting at Noon.	Seventh District Lunch at 12:30 with meetings at 2:00 pm	January 11, 2026 at Post 465, Climax March 8th 2026 at Post 54, Battle Creek May 3rd 2026 at Post 36, Kalamazoo	Tenth District All meetings will start with lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm. January 10, 2026 Post 370, 805 E. Greenwood Rd. Alger, MI 48610 March 7, 2026 Post 96, 219 Terrace Dr. Roscommon MI 48653 May 7, 2026 Post 404, 1267 M-61 Harrison MI 48625	Eighteenth District All meetings Meeting for the District Legion and Auxiliary Convene at 2:00 pm January 25, 2026 Post 108, 130 E. Drahner Rd Oxford, MI Phone: 248-628-9081 February 22, 2026 Post 143, 95 Church St. Auburn Hills, MI Phone: 248-852-4880 March 22, 2026 Post 253, 1505 N. Main St. Royal Oak, MI 48067 Phone: 248-546-0490 May 17, 2026 Holt Post 143, 95 Church St. Auburn Hills, MI Phone: 248-852-4880
Fourth District Meetings begin at 1:00 pm.	Eighth District Trainings will start at Noon, Dinner at 1:00pm with Legion and Auxiliary meetings immediately following	January 11th 2026 Otesego Post 84 March 8, 2026 Paw Paw Post 68 May 17 2026 Diamond Island Post 335	Eleventh District All Meetings Start at 10 am, with Lunch to after. TBD	Nineteenth District Training at 10:00 am, Social Meet and Greet at 11:00 am, lunch served at noon. The both the Legion and Auxiliary will start at 12:30 pm. All meetings will be held at: The Landing Zone Gaylord Bowling Center 1200 Gornick Ave, Gaylord, MI 49735.
Fifth District Meetings are on the 2nd Thurs of every month meal @ 5:30 pm & meeting @ 7 pm.	January 18, 2026 Owosso Post 57 201 E. Mason Street Owosso, Michigan 48867 Phone: 989 723-4046 March 15, 2026 Frankenmouth Post 150 990 Flint Street Frankenmuth, Michigan 48734 Phone (989) 652-3717	January 8th 2026 at post 258 March 12th 2026 at post 305 May 7th 2026 at post 28	Twelfth District Coffee and Doughnuts at 9, meeting at 10 am, with a lunch and additional hour after lunch if needed. TBD	December 6, 2025 March 14, 2026 May 9, 2026
	January 3, 2026 Portland Post 129 1324 E. Bridge Street		Sixteenth District All meetings start at 7:30 pm December 9th, 2025 * Southgate Post 478 January 13th, 2026 Stitt Post 232 February 10th, 2026 * Fort Dearborn Post 364 March 10th, 2026 Wyandotte Post 217 April 14th, 2025 *	



3rd District
Sheila Overholts, Commander

Greetings all!! First and foremost, I would like to thank our members of the 3rd District for allowing me to be your Commander. Hope you all have enjoyed Fall and had a chance to see the tree leaves turning to bright, beautiful colors. However, that too will end sooner than we would like it to. Then we will have cold temps, possibly snow/ice. YIKES!! On to a personal/pleasant note, I would like to BRAG that the ONLY legionnaire chosen to go to Legion College this year is our Post 36 Commander, Michael Sinclair. Congratulations and good luck, Commander.

This year's Fall Conference was held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Battle Creek. Needless to say, it was nice to go to a new venue for a change. The workshops and committee meetings also went very well. Now we need to prepare for our Winter Meeting, being held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Post Huron from February 5-8, 2026. If you haven't registered for your room yet,

you may want to do so. Rooms go pretty fast, especially the king-size beds.

I recently visited with Patrick Leo Hanlon Post 55 in Albion and found that they are doing an outstanding job with their community involvement and membership. In this edition of the Legionnaire, you will find an article regarding the history that Albion, Michigan, has with France.

Our next meeting will be held on January 11th, and has been changed from Post 257 to Post 465 Climax due to a scheduling conflict. The Post's address is 6101 S. 44th St., Climax, MI 49034. If you are joining us for lunch, please make a courtesy call to the Post to let them know so they can have a somewhat head count for the luncheon. Phone number is: 269-746-4210. Lunch is served at 11 with the meeting to follow at 12 noon. We hope to have great attendance there to start the new year with even more people to gain firsthand, up-to-date knowledge of what is going on in our District. Here's to wishing all of you a safe and enjoyable holiday.



Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Gary Easterling
Director

Our staff is dedicated to providing the very best veterans' advocacy to Michigan Veterans and their families. They can assist with Claims Preparation, Presentation and appeal counsel in Veterans' benefits services. Let us assist you and your dependents in getting the benefits that you have earned by your service to your country.

Gary Easterling, Director

Cell (313) 549-8557

geasterling@michiganlegion.org

Office Phone (313) 964-6640

Fax (313) 964-5697

Call for a Service officer in your area:

833.648.3826 Option 1

e-mail - al.vbadet@va.gov

[like us on Facebook:](#)

[@MichiganVAR](#)

Check out all your benefits at

www.mivabenefits.org

DON'T FACE THE VA ALONE!

Find an American Legion Veteran Service Officer near you. Use an Accredited Veteran Service Officer. Find a Service Officer near you at <https://www.mivabenefits.org/find-service-officer/> OR Call **833.648.3826** Option 1 and they will guide you to an accredited veteran service officer who will help you.

Service Officer

Office Locations

Phil Babcock.....	Charlevoix, Petoskey, Kalkaska, Manistee Ludington, Big Rapids, Lake City
Patty Breas.....	Hastings, Caledonia, Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Wyoming, Holland
Brian Brooks	Ann Arbor
Josh Clark.....	Benton Harbor, Battle Creek, Coldwater
Kieshan Counts.....	Bay City, Saginaw, Vassar
Gary Easterling	Detroit
Stephanie Fisher.....	Onaway, Rogers City
Shay Grady.....	Rapid River, Ishpeming Little Lake, Marquette, Gwin
Thomas Kaiser.....	Battle Creek, Bath, Grand Ledge, Leslie Eaton Rapids, Jackson, Laingsburg, Corunna
Valerie Johnson.....	Farwell, Ionia, Lansing
Courtney Mills.....	Ravenna, Muskegon, Grand Haven
Lisa Misenko.....	Troy, Oxford, Rochester, Detroit
VSO TBD.....	Detroit, Swartz Creek
Matthew Schantz.....	Garden City, Southgate, Detroit
Justin Schave.....	Detroit
Tommy Simpkins.....	Saginaw
Stacy Thill.....	Escanaba, Manistique
Rick Wiles.....	Sault Ste. Marie, St. Ignace, Gaylord
Kimberly Napoleon.....	Saginaw

1 Soldier, 2 Countries & 3 Cities

Al Smith, Commander Post 55

The city of Albion, Michigan, is fortunate to have not 1 but 2 sister cities in France. In 2023, dignitaries from Noisy-le-Roi and Bailly, France, came to Albion for a yearly cultural exchange between the sister cities. It is a week of celebration in Albion to show the best our city has to offer. At a banquet, the Mayor of Noisy-le-Roi gave a speech of how our towns all benefit from our relationship and what American involvement meant to the citizens of France during the World Wars—acknowledging that American soldiers gave their lives for France, including some that may even have come from Albion.

The next morning, they attended a presentation at Post 55 by Historian (now Commander) Smith and member Dave Atchison on the American Legion's founding in Paris and its advocacy for retired service members. Historian Smith told the story of Patrick Leo Hanlon, the Post's namesake, who fought in France and gave his life for his fellow soldiers and the people of France during the Battle of the Juvigny Plateau on August 28, 1918. The presentation included how he was interned just 2 ½ hours away at the Oise Aisne American Cemetery. The delegates were moved by the presentation, saying that they had no idea how close our cities are because of one soldier. Later that year, the town of Noisy-le-Roi commemorated Corporal Hanlon during its Armistice Day celebration.

During the renovations of the Noisy-le-Roi city hall, a room was dedicated to Corporal Hanlon, and a permanent marker was placed in the cemetery. Ensuring that his sacrifice for the people of France will never be forgotten. In 2025, the city of Bailly, France, put a plaque in the cemetery to honor Patrick Leo Hanlon, ensuring that the people of the city will remember him.

We at American Legion Department of Michigan, Patrick Leo Hanlon Post 55, are honored and humbled to have this recognition of our namesake. We are not aware of another American soldier who has been so honored by the people of a foreign city or country.



Corporal Patrick Leo Hanlon



IRS SAL Explained

Brett Holt

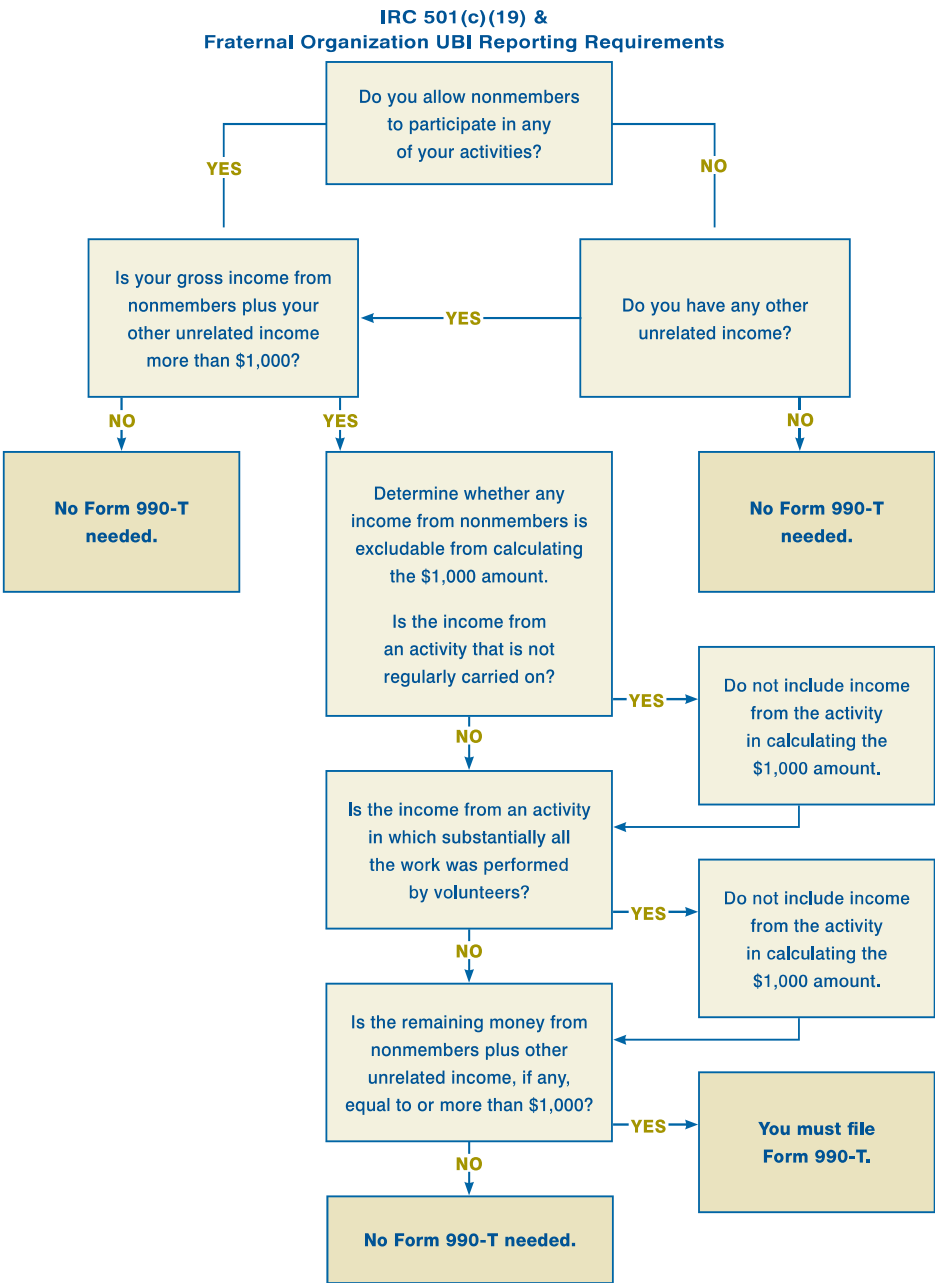
Recently, the National Judge Advocate for the American Legion made a determination regarding Legion Members vs. SAL Members and their "Taxability" [CLICK HERE FOR THAT OPINION](#). The SAL issue is an IRS issue. The Department of Michigan absolutely considers the SAL as a part of the American Legion Family.

According to IRS law, a 501(c) (19) is a Veterans Organization with membership restricted to current and former members of the Armed Services and to Veterans Service Organizations Auxiliaries. Those Auxiliaries will have their own Congressional Charter, EIN and file their own 990 tax forms.

Here lies the issue. The SAL as a program of The American Legion, does not have a National Charter and is ineligible to have its own EIN. All SAL property and finances belong to The American Legion. When formed in 1932, the SAL was intended to be similar to the Boy Scouts, a youth program that taught young men with bloodline ties to veterans about patriotism and duty to God and Country. Today, the SAL has grown to be much more, but as a program, it does not qualify as a 501(c) (19) organization. Therefore, the IRS views them as ineligible for

non-taxable income under 501(c)19 rules. The IRS is only interested in taxable income versus non-taxable income. "Members" sales fall under non-taxable income. Non-Members' sales are taxable income. "Guest" signed in by a member, and sales sold to the member for the guest are non-taxable income. This doesn't affect Michigan Liquor Control Club license eligibility, and the SAL should still have a voice on the bar committee. Michigan Liquor Control considers any entity that has a voice on the club bar committee to be members. According to IRS rules, there are two options available. Sign in all SAL as a guest, and all sales will remain non-taxable. OR, continue to sell to the SAL, but the post must record those sales separately and report them as taxable income. Which of these options you choose is up to your post. The Liquor license is issued to the post, and the taxable and non-taxable income, and how they are reported, are the sole responsibility of the post. Lastly, if your post has a class "C" license and not a club license, so it can always sell to the public, then all sales are taxable income.

Again, I strongly recommend reading the [National Judge Legal Opinion from November 6th, which includes the Rules of a Program](#), which we have addressed in the past.



INTERESTED IN A PUFL?

Paid Up For Life- 800-433-3318

2026 Dues Direct Program

The Dues Direct program frees your post officers from the renewal receipt and fulfillment process, which can be time-consuming. The membership records are usually updated much faster, which also reduces the number of renewal notices that need to be mailed. The processing cost is currently only \$0.83 per renewal, which includes the cost of postage. As you know, postage is already up to 76 cents per stamp. **This is a no-brainer for a large post!** In fact, over 5000 post-225 members' dues are processed in this manner.

Briefly, when renewal notices are mailed to your Post members, the return reply is sent directly to National Headquarters for processing. Members also have the option of renewing online through a special website. National processes the renewal payment, updates the membership record, and forwards the member their new membership card, which also includes our Department's contact information.

If you would like more information, contact Adjutant Runyan at adj@michiganlegion.org

BE THE ONE

Around the State...

Veterans' Day Post 426



Post 426 Commander Robert Kamin and Assistant Chaplain Department of Michigan Sharri Gramlich

Joseph B. Westnedge Post 257 Honor Guard

It was an Honor to Post the Colors at the Veterans Day Ceremony at Ft Custer National Cemetery! Thanks to all the volunteers who came together to make it happen!



Legion Honors Community Patriotism

Post 514 in Ida Commander Ken Shreve decided to recognize Great Clips with a Patriot Award after witnessing the display of the American flag, the flags of every military branch of service and the POW/MIA flag. They also recognized Marco Pizza for their generous contributions, assisting the Ida American Legion Post in their activities on behalf of our Veterans.



L to R: Commander Ken Shreve, Great Clips Manager Amber Nicolai, Past S.A.L. Commander Gary LaMunyon, Manager Gina Yount & Past Commander Bill Zornow



L to R: Commander Ken Shreve, Bill Zornow, Gary LaMunyon, Marco's employee Katie Kleparek & Penny Daum

Veterans Dinner in Mt. Pleasant

American Legion Post 110 and Mt. Pleasant VFW Post 3033 honoring Central Michigan Veterans for Veterans Day 2025



Farmington SAFE Community Conversation: Be The One



L to R: Katrina Beshears, Mooderator, Lorrena Black, U.S. Army Veteran, Captain (Ret.) Chuck Fowlkes, Major (Ret.) Laverne Santangelo, & Larry S. Chase, Chairman Michigan Be The One initiative

The event highlighted the **Be The One** initiative, The American Legion's national movement to reduce veteran suicide, decrease stigma, and empower all of us to take action when someone is struggling.

Veterans day Post 396

William Kaledas Post #396 in Garden City held a Veterans Day Service at their post in partnership with the city. Community members, the local high school Junior ROTC color guard, city officials, and other dignitaries attended.



L to R: 16th District Sergeant at Arms and Post #396 Commander Rick Lounsberry, 1st Zone SAL Commander Mike Globke, and Garden City Mayor Mark Jacobs.

American Legion Family Leadership Training

American Legion Post 108
130 E Draher Rd
Oxford, MI 48371

Information:



24 JANUARY, 2026



9:00AM - 4:00 PM

Lunch Provided

Please register to ensure an accurate meal count.



The American Legion Family Department of Michigan Winter Meeting 2026



February 5, 6, 7, and 8, 2026

BlueWater Convention Center,
800 Harker St., Port Huron, MI

On the Water - Below the BlueWater Bridge

Hosted by the Mid-Michigan Convention Corp and Genesee County Convention Corp



REGISTRATION FORM



Online at >> <https://www.zeffv.com/en-US/ticketing/american-legion-family-winter-convention>

Or mail form below

The American Legion requires each person attending register with the corporation and be issued proper credentials to attend any meeting, session, or event in connection with the Conference.

(Please print legibly so we can correctly spell your name on your conference badge.)

Name: _____ Group: ☐ Leg ☐ Aux ☐ Sons ☐ ALR

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

email address: _____ Cellphone: _____

Location Post/Unit (# & city) _____

Additional registrants covered under same payment:

Name: _____ Group: ☐ Leg ☐ Aux ☐ Sons ☐ ALR

Name: _____ Group: ☐ Leg ☐ Aux ☐ Sons ☐ ALR

Name: _____ Group: ☐ Leg ☐ Aux ☐ Sons ☐ ALR

Total registrations _____ times (x) \$25.00 per person = \$ _____

Will you be staying at local hotel? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If staying at local hotel which one? ☐ DoubleTree ☐ Hampton Inn ☐ Holiday Inn Express

Please make your check payable to: **GENESEE COUNTY CONVENTION CORP**

and mail with this form to: **AMERICAN LEGION GCCC, P. O. Box 441, Linden, MI 48451**

Confirmation of registration being received will be emailed back by dianea7171@yahoo.com

Contact: with any questions. Tim Hill at text or call 810-444-8644 timothy_w_hill@yahoo.com

National Commander's Dinner Reservations must be made separately. Refer to TAL

Department Website at <https://michiganlegion.org/>

Room reservations at hotels are your responsibility and should be made directly with them.

Reserve your room early - Limited number of hotel rooms are available at discounted rates

Host Hotel attached to Convention Center

DoubleTree by Hilton

800 Harker St.
Port Huron

810-984-8000
Or Hotel Website

\$144 Plus 11% tax
Reference Code **GCC**

Price is reserved until 1/ 5/ 2026 or sold out

Approx 2.2 miles from Convention Center

Hampton Inn by Hilton

1655 Yeager St.
Port Huron

810-966-9000
Or Hotel Website

\$124 Plus 11% tax
Reference Code **ALD**
Includes free breakfast

Price is reserved until 1/ 6/ 2026 or sold out

Approx 2.2 miles from Convention Center

Holiday Inn Express

2021 Water St.
Port Huron

810-662-3400
Or Hotel Website

check back for updates Plus 11% tax
Reference Code **ALW**
Includes free breakfast

Price is reserved until 12/ 3/ 2026 or sold out