

ON THE ROAD FOR VETERANS: FROM TAMPA TO DETROIT, SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED



Roger Avie
Department Commander

It has been a busy and rewarding month as I continue traveling across our great state, meeting with fellow Legionnaires, veterans, and community partners. Each visit reminds me of the dedication of our membership and the vital role the American Legion plays in supporting veterans, active-duty personnel, and their families.

A highlight was an 18-hour drive to the National Convention in Tampa,



Florida. The trip was well worth it — a strong convention with productive caucuses, excellent meetings, and mem-

orable dinners, including the Michigan party aboard a Tampa Bay dinner cruise. At the convention, Commander



Dan Wiley was elected, and donations from the Department of Michigan were proudly accepted. On the return trip, I met Sheriff C.J. Madison near Atlanta and spent time with the Department of Vermont's Commander



and leadership team, who wanted photos with my car — proof that even travel can create connections.

Back in Michigan, I attended a 9/11 remembrance ceremony at Post 32 in Li-



von, honoring police and firefighters. I

also installed officers at the Groves Post 346 in Farmington Hills. I joined the Le



gion Riders at the re-interment of WWII veteran Ensign Eugene Mandenberg at Beth El Memorial Park in Livonia. Each event reflected the commitment of our posts to honoring and serving.

As many of you know, my Special Project this year is supporting the Freedom Centers at Detroit Metro Airport. These centers serve over a million guests annually, and new furniture and equipment are urgently needed. To fund this effort, I am offering my Commander's Challenge Coin for \$10, with all proceeds going directly to the Freedom Centers.



Membership is ahead of schedule, but we must continue pressing forward to reach 75 percent by December 10th. Together, we will meet this goal.

Stay safe, and may God bless the Legion, the USA, and all of you.

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

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"The transition from military to civilian life was a complete change. My time at CSU has largely given me the tools I have needed to succeed professionally."

— Joshua McGinnis, Master of Public Administration

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If you have a photo you would like to submit for the Michigan Legionnaire and/or website use, E-mail it to us at media@michiganlegion.org or mail it to Department, Attn: Jim Showers.

Please keep the photo at JPG. Do not submit a hard copy photo. Also photos printed from a home printer cannot be used, nor can photos clipped from newspapers.

We look for photos showing Legion caps in action whenever possible.

Interested in placing an ad in the Michigan Legionnaire?

Please Contact Jim Showers

media@michiganlegion.org

517-220-2747

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Ron Runyan
Dept. Adjutant

M e m b e r s h i p is the lifeblood of The American Legion. "Just Ask" is The American Legion's motto for membership recruitment.

I know many of you talk to other veterans about becoming Legionnaires. As you go about your day, don't forget to talk to National Guard and Reserve members about joining The American Legion, too. They are required to meet the same eligibility requirements as federal active-duty veterans, but this can be a sticking point if you don't know the eligibility requirements. Let me make it simple for you.

National Guardsman and reserve members' eligibility: 1. Must have served at least one day on federal active duty during the periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1 of The American Legion Constitution. 2. Must either have an honorable discharge or currently be serving either in the Guard, reserve, or on federal active duty.

Hint: Basic training qualifies for federal Title 10 duty. This training must have taken place during eligible periods. Yes, the guard and reserve members are given a DD 214 from basic training.

The authority line on his or her activation orders is the determining factor on if the Guard or reservist has been on or is currently serving on federal active duty: 1. Yes: Title 10, Subsection 672 or 12301 (Federal orders from the Secretary of Defense) 2. No: Title 32 (governor-activated, weekend drills and annual training for National Guard) and Title 10, Subsection 270 (Reserve activation for weekend drills and annual training).

Your story is powerful. Did you join the American Legion upon discharge or a few years later? Tell the Guard or Reserve member how being in contact with veterans helped you transition into

Runyan's Ramblings

civilian life. Maybe you didn't connect with other veterans by joining the legion until decades after you left the military. Do you wish you had had the camaraderie earlier? Let them know what you would have done differently. Have you volunteered at a post-event reaching out to veterans? Share with the prospective member how that felt. Ask both current and former members of the Guard and reserve.

Posts that want to reach out to local National Guard and Reserve units and installations need to follow The Ameri-

can Legion guidelines by going through their district and state commander. There is a prescribed protocol to follow when contacting a unit commander. National has materials that will assist you in your presentation. Ask your district commander for more information. Let's review the requirements: One day on federal active duty during eligible periods; honorable discharge or currently serving; Title 10, Subsection 672 or 12301. Oh, yes, and "Just Ask!" It really is that simple

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Membership Report



Jim Austin
1st Vice Commander

Greetings from your Membership team!

By the time you read this, your Zone Commanders should have your new membership goals. I hope you agree with them, and I am confident they are attainable because of the hard work that all of you have been doing to maintain our high standards for membership. Membership is all about sales: to make a sale, you need to offer a product. Our product is our camaraderie, our programs, and our dedication to helping Veterans in any way possible. I would like to place special emphasis on our programs. You must know your programs just like you must know any product you desire to sell effectively. There are programs for everybody, so if you haven't found your preferred program, reach out to your post leadership to see what is available.

In our modern age, the tools and resources available to improve ourselves are far superior to those of the past. Use all the tools we have, including training materials available through the National and Department. We can always learn and grow to better ourselves.

As important as membership is for our organization, we must do a better job of recognizing young leaders and mentoring them to ensure the future of this awesome organization.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or positive words of affirmation, please don't hesitate to reach out to me, your post leadership, or any member of your membership team. We can always learn, do better, and move forward.



Developing New Members Into Effective Leaders

Dan Cooper, Past Department Commander

We have all seen them. New members at the post-meeting looked a bit uncertain, kept quiet, and hung in the back of the room. And we have all heard the many tales of what can alienate new members: being ignored, not being allowed to participate, and being told "we don't do that" when they make suggestions. Or my least favorite practice... giving a new member an important job at the first meeting that they attend.

Many Posts have taken positive steps to avoid these pitfalls, as I cited in the examples. There is one suggestion that is often overlooked in efforts to improve recruitment and retention, but may be one of our most important member retention programs. I'm referring to the Leadership Development and Training program.

The American Legion has an ongoing need for leadership at all levels. Our leaders come from within, and at every level. Our leaders, when chosen by their peers, are asked, "If elect-

Americanism Report



Roger Deaton
2nd Vice Commander

Oh no!!! Summer will end this month.... But the Legion is still vibrant, and many fun events to consider to stay in touch with the Legion Family. As the September issue of the MI Legionnaire hits the streets, our Fall Conference will be in the books. Items from the Americanism Chair included the rollout of the "Passport Program," where we encourage members to take a "American Legion Rider" approach to visit posts, embracing camaraderie and learning some of the unique history of our posts statewide. We will establish both the Michigan American Legion College Alumni Association (MALCA) and the Boys State Alumni Association (BSAA) this year, with rollouts in 2026.

Many American Legion Rider groups will have poker runs, cider mill rides, and dinner rides, as the cooler temperatures make it perfect riding conditions. If you ride, I encourage you to join your local ALR Chapter, as you and your family will have a great time with this energetic and giving community of Legionnaires.

Upcoming Program Deadlines for 2025-2026:
December 5, Oratorical Registration Deadline
January 1, Baseball Registration opens on baseball.legion.org
January 5, "Brewer/Wilson Scholarship Deadline
January 9, Law Officer of the Year submission Deadline
January 9, Firefighter of the Year submission Deadline
January 25, District Oratorical Contest Deadline

I want to thank all who attended the Fall Conference in Battle Creek, as we had a great Americanism meeting that is driving the flow of information to our program leaders, with the ultimate goal of growing our programs through increased participation and attendance.

ed, will you serve?" Good leadership requires more than a willingness to lead.

Leaders also need specific skills and knowledge to be effective. A new member may have developed some leadership skills - they are veterans, after all - and they may be willing to serve. Still, without a working knowledge of the Legion, they are at a serious disadvantage.

A lack of knowledge is something that the Leadership Development and Training Committee addresses by hosting several in-person leadership schools each year. The courses can be taught in one day, over multiple days, or even virtually. Holding instructions in person makes the training a social event, builds contacts, camaraderie, and friendship that are often just as meaningful as the training.

Members, especially new members, are the most important asset that the American Legion has. Developing members into leaders makes sense, provides exceptional member value, and ensures the future success of The American legion.

2026 Membership: September 26th Goal = 53,120
Current Total: 29,336 - 55.22%



4th Zone

Mike Pergande, Zone Commander

The 4th zone focus for this year is to continue and expand our Community Service and Support.

The true character of America is measured by its communities and the people who work to improve them. Whether at the national level or in their own backyards, our members dedicate millions of hours each year to spreading patriotism, honoring our nation's heroes, and improving their communities.

The American Legion has long been a critical part of numerous communities throughout Michigan. It's what we have done for years, and what we will continue to do. We fill the void in some areas for every community in our state.

Every post brings its own unique contribution to its local community. Some of the things that we do are:

- Provide Veteran Service Officers
- Support Veteran Funerals with an Honor Guard
- Provide help to homebound veterans
- Conduct care package drives for deployed troops

- Support local homeless shelters
- Support Youth sports (baseball, football)
- Support local Scout programs
- Support Boys Nation and Girls Nation
- Support Scholarship Programs
- Support Fundraising benefit dinners
- Sponsor Blood drives
- Make Donations for local families for school supplies
- Support Send Santa to the troops
- Provide a local Food pantry
- Teach flag etiquette at local schools

This list is not all-inclusive. Many posts do things that are not on this list. However, all of these activities and others support the four pillars of the American Legion: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

You know your community best. Continue to do what you do for your community, and consider starting a new program that your community needs. Doing so will keep you relevant and hopefully bring in some new members.



1st District

Karl Burnett, Commander

Greetings from the American Legion Department of Michigan 1st District! There have been some significant developments in our part of the state over the past few months.

First and foremost, our Finance Officer, Roger Avie, was elected Department Commander! Roger is no stranger to our Department Headquarters. He has been a member of Michigan Legion Post #390 for many years, most recently serving as the Chairperson of the Department Finance Committee. Please join me and the rest of our membership in wishing Roger success in all the things he has in store for us this coming year!

We all know that this world never stops changing, and in the District, we have had two of our Executive Board members leave their former positions to assume new and even more challenging ones, creating vacancies here. Our 1st Vice Commander, Daniel McCrary, has chosen to step down due to serious health challenges, continuing to serve at his home Post, #303. Our former Zone 1 Commander, Gary De Mars, has chosen to serve his local Post #32 as servicing officer in Livonia. I invite you all to extend congratulations and appreciation to them both as we continue to support Legionnaires in Michigan and our Nation!

Also, after several months of discussion, meetings, and filing the necessary documents, under the leadership of Commander Charles ("Chuck") Atwater, during our 2025 Summer Convention, Post #202 was approved for return to the 1st District. We all welcome "Chuck" and his membership as we acquire an interested and dedicated 202 members to the District, possibly filling vacant positions on our Executive Committee and becoming part of our family.

Several of our individual Posts have achieved specific membership goals this year and earned numerous award plaques and certificates, for which I found I needed assistance carrying them back to my room. Those awards and additional prizes are to be delivered to those 1st District Posts at our very next District membership meeting, Wednesday, 24 September! On and on, we continue as a family supporting Legionnaires every day!



4th District

Rodney Tolbert, Commander

Hello to everyone in the Fabulous 4th district. As summer waves goodbye it's time for district meetings to start up.

By the time you read this, our meetings at Lawton will be past. Our meetings will be held at the following post. November 2 at Benton Harbor post 105, January 11 at Otsego post 84, March 8 at Paw Paw post 68, and May 17 Diamond Island post 335. Times are 1 pm, and service officer training will start an hour before the regular meeting. I encourage at least two people to attend our district meeting. We can only get stronger and learn more as we learn from each other. Please attend; everybody's input is important to all of us. We will have training on subjects important to all posts at the beginning of every meeting. This information can be brought back to your post, and the more we know, the stronger we can become. We also hold our meetings on Zoom. If you are unable to attend in person, we would appreciate it if you could join us via Zoom. The Zoom information will be sent out at least 2 weeks before the meetings. Our district is large and strong; let's prove it by getting our membership turned in to the department in a timely manner.

If, by chance, meeting times and places change, we will let you know in advance. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions. I'm here to help your post be its best.

The County Commanders and I will be reaching out to your post to attend your meetings and help with any questions you may have for us. Again, it would be great if you could attend our meetings or join us on Zoom.

We will be sending out our district handbooks as soon as we receive all the necessary information. Please let us know who your Commander and Adjutant are, and when your meeting dates and times are.



AUXILIAIRE

From the Desk of the President

October 2025



Dawn Gramza
Department President
2025-2026

We are family, We're all in this together, now that I have your attention, I hope you realize this is our organization. The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and Riders are all there to honor and support our veterans.

I joined the ALA because a friend invited me to a meeting, I thought it was something to do on a Wednesday. The women I met were friendly and inviting. As I sat there, I realized it wasn't just a social club. The women spoke of VA gift shops, helping a legionnaire and plan-

ning a Christmas party for the community children. I was in awe of the things this group did to help others.

I went home and realized this was the thing I was missing, The American Legion Auxiliary allows me the opportunity to honor my family's veterans. The ALA allows me to do things I would have never been able to do, visiting this beautiful state or even the country I call home. Every time I visit Wilwin I think of my dad, Don Stewart, and regret he never was able to visit such a beautiful place. I love helping visiting veterans and family members and explaining what our organization can do to help and support.

Celebrating the Family

When the Legion family works together, we can do everything to honor and support our veterans. It doesn't have to be a big thing, sometimes the littlest thing brings the biggest results.

When the members of your post work together and support each other, you can move mountains, all the negativity only hurts. As an ALA member I remember it is an honor to be a member because of the service of my father and brother I am allowed to join the Legion family. I hope that you also remember and are thankful for the service of the veteran who served so you can be a member of the family.

Children and Youth

Holly Fletcher, Chairperson

Have you ever heard about a child performing an act of bravery? How about a child that has been serving veterans or other community service projects? We have a program in the American Legion Auxiliary that can help you honor their service. These awards that you can enter your youth for are called the Youth Hero Award and the Good Deed Award. You can find information on the National American Legion Auxiliary website to enter them for awards. The Good Deed Award recognizes a youth who takes a leadership role in planning and execution of a project to benefit an individual or their community. The Youth Hero Award recognizes a youth who demonstrates a physical act of valor. These awards are bestowed throughout the year and submissions should be on going. Membership is not required.

April is the Month of the Military Child. Units should consider hosting an event on April 15th for Purple Up! Day. Contact your local government officials to request a Proclamation for the month of the military child month. You can find a sample Proclamation at www.legion-aux.org/proclamation. Promote activities throughout the month to recognize military children.

This year our goals for the 2025/2026 Children and Youth Committee are the following: One Youth Hero Award per Unit, two Good Deed Awards per unit, 100% Unit participation in Month of the Military Child activities, 100% Unit participation in "Purple Up!" for Military Kids on April 15th.

We are also excited to announce the DAWN GRAMZA CITATION. This is a new citation for the 2025/2026 year and is for all Units to enter. Units that have 100% participation in the 2025/2026 Mission Goals can earn this new citation. Report must be typed in a narrative form, contain no more than 500 words and contain photos of your unit participating in said activities. Each entry must contain the following: unit name, unit number, Chairperson's name and address. Each entry must be signed by the District President or District "Children and Youth" Chairperson by the deadline.

We are looking forward to a great year for the Children and Youth programs.

Education

Connie Kovacs Education Chairman

The American Legion Auxiliary's Michigan Education Program is dedicated to promoting quality education for children and adults, particularly those connected to military families. The program emphasizes the importance of education in fostering responsible citizenship and invests in the future by providing scholarships and resources. Key initiatives include, Scholarships, Commitment to Education and Support of the Military Families.

The school year has begun for children across our state. Please try to have your unit participate in one of the following activities:

To give to education, you can participate in the "Give 10 to Education" program, which encourages donations of school supplies in multiples of 10. Place a donation box out at each unit meeting. Send "Support a classroom" form with a list of items needed by your local schools.

American Education Week 2025 will be celebrated from November 17 to November 21, focusing on the importance of public education and honoring educators and support staff. Festivities honor the team of people who work in our nation's public schools, everyone from the bus driver and classroom teacher to the cafeteria worker and administrative staff, plus countless others. Make it a week to remember for those who educate our future leaders.

Veterans in Community Schools, an American Legion Family program embraced by members of the American Legion Auxiliary, brings history to life as local veterans tell students about their experiences in the military. Students gain firsthand knowledge from the one who lived the story they are telling.

Constitution and Bylaws

Sharon Schulte, *Chairman*

Should Your Unit Conduct Meetings Virtually?

Do your governing documents have a provision for emergency operations? When emergency circumstances prevent the Unit from meeting in person, the Unit's governing documents should spell out how business will be conducted in compliance with the laws of the State of Michigan. The State of Michigan Corporate and non-profit statutes do allow for business to be conducted electronically (both general membership meetings and executive committee meetings) provided all participants can hear each other simultaneously. These regulations also allow for electronic meetings as a general business practice. Please consider amending your Standing Rules to include a procedure for dealing with the unexpected.

The Auxiliary has authorized the formation of eUnits-Units that conduct all business meetings virtually, including elections and fundraising efforts. During the COVID pandemic, some Units went to virtual meetings because they were not allowed to meet in person. Today, many Units are doing hybrid meetings. They hold an in-person meeting for those able to attend, but the members unable to attend in person sign in via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Go to Meeting or other platforms. This method is especially beneficial for working members,

students attending college and provides a great opportunity for those members unable to leave their homes because of health or mobility issues to remain involved in the American Legion Auxiliary. Hybrid meetings can do much to increase both interest and participation. Another benefit of virtual meetings is that it can prevent quorum problems. There are many meeting platforms available. Find the one that works for your Unit. If you have a platform, you are currently using, please let me know what you like about it, if there is a cost, time or participant limit, so we can spread the options available to our other Units.

Virtual and hybrid meetings are like all other Unit meetings. You must take minutes, call roll and determine if a quorum is present. Some other things to keep in mind:

1. Email or mail an agenda and any documents that participants will need to reference.
2. Begin the meeting with instructions to the participants that the meeting is being held electronically and how to mute, ask questions and vote.
3. State the business clearly and succinctly. Look into the camera to make eye contact with the participants.

And remember, it doesn't matter how you meet as a Unit- it matters that you check in regularly with each other to carry out the ALA mission of serving veterans, the military and their families.

VA&R Battle Creek

Chris Reed *VA&R Representative*

Hello from the Battle Creek VAMC! We hope everyone has had a great summer! We are busy with the various events the Auxiliary has hosted. At the PGA Golf Outing, we served burgers and hot dogs for both the golfers and the Veterans who caddied for them. It was a great event that everyone enjoyed.

On July 17, our Summer Concert was held outside on the Pavilion. The Iconix were back, and pulled pork was served, catered by GMC Catering in Galesburg. This year, the American Red Cross sponsored the annual Watermelon Fest. and the Knights of Co-

lumbus sponsored a Car Show. We had a great turnout, but had to end the day a little early due to a storm.

The monthly Bingos continue, thanks to Units 454 Colon, 51 Buchanan, 298 Battle Creek, 73 Sturgis, and 344 Galien, which stepped up to help. Thank you to all the units that are helping make our Veterans feel special.



L-R Barb Parks, Jackie Skinner



L-R Brian Pegouske, Chris Reed and Natasha Watson

at the luncheon. Barb Parks, Penny Wright, Jackie Skinner and I attended the event, and it was exceptional.

We will be wrapping up the calendar year with the Patient Carnival on September 10, the Holiday Parade on December 4, and our Christmas Gift Shop on December 10. If your Unit is interested in participating in one of these events, please reach out to me at ckhud@mei.net.

Thank you to all the units that have sent monetary donations and to those units that have helped sponsor our events at the Battle Creek VAMC. Your generosity and help are greatly appreciated, and our Veterans are also very thankful.



L-R - Jennifer Picketts, Brian Pegoske, Chris Reed, Natasha Watson, Jackie Skinner, Penny Wright, Joe Devyak, Barb Parks(seated)

Each year, the Battle Creek VA hosts a Volunteer Recognition Luncheon for all who volunteer their time. Each year, they recognize an organization for its unwavering dedication and outstanding contribution to the community. This year, out of 29 volunteer organizations, the American Legion Auxiliary was the recipient of this recognition! We were presented with a beautiful award and received special attention

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

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

Information Share



Shannon Werner
Executive Director,
Secretary &
Treasurer

We are just getting back to work after attending the Department Fall Conference in Battle Creek, Michigan. I hope you were able to join us. It was such a great learning and networking opportunity with American Legion Auxiliary members from across the state. If you could not attend, try to connect with someone within your unit or district who was in attendance. They just may be able to provide you with information you missed.

New member applications can now be entered in ALAMIS or sent to headquarters to be processed. Make sure all fields are completed, questions answered, form(s) signed and all information provided. Be sure to double check your arithmetic and confirm the check is made out correctly. These are the main reasons that transmittals and checks are returned. Remember, checks should be payable to the ALA Department of Michigan.

The ALAMIS access renewal period begins on November 1, 2025 and continues through January 1, 2026. Send in your completed application with a check for your access level—please do not combine it with anything else. If we do not receive a renewal, you will lose your access to ALAMIS in mid-January (this process is completed by National so we do not have an exact date).

Remember, most of your questions can be answered by visiting the ALA Department of Michigan website at www.michalaux.org or ALA National's website at www.legion-aux.org.

Legislative Update

Anita L. Mennel, Chairman

Greetings! As we start our new administrative year, I encourage you to look at our national website: alaforvet-erans.org as well as our department website: michalaux.org and gain more information about our legislative program. There you will find places to sign up and learn how to make your voice heard. A purpose of ALA Legislative program is to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion. Start tracking your communications and effectiveness now.

Remember "While we may think that one voice may not make a difference on its own, that one voice added to the voice of others quickly becomes a collective power of influence that can impact the decisions of our elected officials. Joining together, Auxiliary members can and do make a difference when they advocate for veterans, service members and their families." Will you 'BeTheOne'? It only takes a few moments to sign up, to any or all the available sites. It really is that easy to make your voice heard. Start now to plan for a meet the candidates' night or just an informative time for any proposals on the ballot, to be voted on, in your local communities. While it is imperative to always remember that the American Legion Family is non-partisan, you can host a meeting, if you invite all candidates. Helping to educate our communities can lead to more informed voters. It's also a great opportunity to promote our American Legion Family and our Mission. Thanks for reading, and all the best as you begin to join in promoting legislation for our Veterans and Servicepeople and their families.

100 Years of Friendship and Support Marcella Barricklow and Doris Morningstar-Bayes Commemorate a Century of Service

Lifelong friends Marcella Barricklow and Doris Morningstar-Bayes marked their 100th birthdays during a celebration held at Onsted Post 550. They are the only two living charter members, and have been honored with a special remembrance at the event.



Then and now Doris (Dentel) Morningstar-Bayes (left) and Marcella (Onsted) Barricklow (right) cut the Units 27th anniversary cake in 1975



Unit 550 in Onsted honored the two centurions legacy with a memorial at the post

Why you should Renew

Carol Burke, Department Membership Chairperson

"Your why" is the core motivation guiding your choices, your personal mission that shapes your actions and decisions. Recognizing your underlying motivation enables you to act in accordance with your values, maintain focus on your objectives, and experience greater fulfillment. Your "why" represents the driving force behind your commitment to the American Legion Auxiliary, whether it is honoring a veteran, serving your community, or demonstrating patriotism. By remaining engaged, you support these principles and contribute to the organization's strength.

Membership offers benefits such as eligibility for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund after three consecutive years, discounts on products and insurance, networking opportunities, event participation, helping veterans and military families, scholarship possibilities, and the chance to visit American Legion posts. Above all, it fosters lasting friendships.

Renew now, not later!

- **Pay online:** Go to <https://www.legion-aux.org/renew>. Enter your information or create a new account, and click 'Pay Dues' button.
- **Pay by phone:** Call (317) 569-4570 with your member ID ready. A real person who will assist you in paying your dues.
- **Mail your dues payment to your unit:** Use your renewal notice to mail a check to your local unit.

Renew your Junior members, too. Renewing means honoring the sacrifice of those who made you eligible. Stay engaged and proud of your membership, as it ensures the growth and impact of the American Legion Auxiliary and its mission. Renewing your membership says, "I am a proud member of the American Legion Auxiliary, and because of my veteran, for whom I am eligible through, I renew my commitment to this organization because of their sacrifice."

Starting Media Relationships

Suzanne Knapp, Public Relations Chairman

Our members excel at helping our veterans, military, and their families. But many people outside The American Legion Family still don't know who we are, what we do, and why we matter. We are making a difference, but many people still don't know who we are. It's time to share!

Sometimes, local media outlets can come to your event. Use this opportunity to submit content to build a relationship with your local media so they turn to you as a resource for veteran-related events and news. They will appreciate your time to send your information and photos so their audience can learn about your unit and/or event, even when the media outlet wasn't able to send their own crew.

Always be sure to be branded in ALA attire for photos/videos. Show your ALA pride! Branding can include shirts, hats, table banners, car decals, jewelry, and more. Be creative - think outside the box on how you can use branding to advertise. (Be sure to check out American Legion Flag & Emblem

Sales for branded items.) Being branded will come in handy for visual with media outreach. It will make your story appealing and more likely to be used. Remember: Space is often limited, so everyone should be decked out in the ALA brand. Only one photo may be used, so make sure that whatever photo it is, the Auxiliary is clearly represented.

If events can't happen in person, you can still work the ALA mission in different ways and submit that story to media. Ideas include dropping off groceries for those who are unable to leave their homes, volunteering for yardwork, and more. Work the mission! Let the public know about the Auxiliary and all the positive work we do in our communities.

Need help sharing information about an event? Not sure what the media is looking for? Visit www.ALAForVeterans.org and download the Public Relations Toolkit. This will help you get started working with local media and developing relationships to get the word out. Let's "Toot our own Horn" and get communities to know what we do, who we are and why we matter!

National Convention is now behind us, and our new administrative year has begun. As your Auxiliary Emergency Fund Chairperson for this year, we will be focusing on raising funds to replenish what was unfortunately released last year. Which means that nationally our members had their share of disasters such as fires, hurricanes, and floods to name a few as well as illnesses or some type of personal hardships. The AEF fund more than doubled the number of grants awarded to our members with 240 helped. It was reported that more than \$465,000 was awarded to ALA members in assistance through AEF in the last fiscal year through June 2025.

Over \$364,000 was raised to support the AEF program and our members during their time of need. As you can see this program is very important to our organization and, it's up to our members to raise funds. So, when one of our members needs assistance, we can and will be there to help. Members helping members. Maybe your unit can ask each member to donate \$1.00 to raise funds. Just think of how much can be raised if each member in Michigan was to donate that dollar, WOW, over \$26,000 or, put out a can with AEF funds on it in your club room. I ask you if you have a great fund-raising idea please share them with me so I can share it with others. When your members or units want to donate, please send your donations to the Department of Michigan earmarked AEF donation.

I will take the courtesy, at this time, of saying thank you for your donations in advance because I know Michigan ALA members are very giving.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Ellen Jackson, Chairman

Chaplain's Corner

Dawn Gilbert, Department of Michigan Chaplain

Hello Auxiliary Members and welcome to fall. It was a pleasure to see everyone at Fall Conference and my hope is that you walked away having learned something or been invigorated to work our mission.

Our department memory garden on the website has been updated to reflect those members that have been reported this year. There is now a separate Unit Everlasting file that houses the previously reported members. The unit forms on the website includes an online report form <https://michalaux.org/deceased-member-report/> for sending the Department Chaplain the information on members who have passed. Don't forget your membership person should send notice to Department on the member data form <https://michalaux.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/F-Deceased-Member-Form.pdf>.

Unit Chaplains and other auxiliary members, my goal for this year is to have one prayer from each unit, which would be a minimum of 240 prayers for President Dawn. Please help me realize this goal and fill that book with prayers.

There will be a Chaplain workshop in October put on by the 5th District. It's open to all Legion Family to attend and not just the Chaplains. So, if you are interested watch for more information to be posted this month either on the Department website or Facebook page on how to sign up. Hope to see you there.

Don't forget to connect with those members that can't get out and see if they have a need that your unit can help with. Your caring and concern may be the only outside contact they have.

Let me leave you with this: "Faith is when you praise God in the storm, trust him in the valley, and follow him in the dark."

Girls State Girl

Written By : Reagan Besteman

The following is the Winning entry of this years Girls State Poem Contest

She is lipgloss; She is Lansing
She is smiles; She is dancing
She is giving away hairbands
She is government manual in hand

She is laughter; She is tears
She is facing her own fears
And inspiring other to do the same
For she is much more than her name

She is blisters from her heels
She is laughing too loud at meals
She is sweat in her eyes
And humidity that never dies

She is too loud
Too opinionated
Too wild

She stands up for herself and other
She is looking out for each other
Inside her is a burning flame
Which says she's more than her name



Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan

CLIVE R.A. SEYDELL

Detachment Commander 2025-2026



Since my last article, I have had the privilege of experiencing the balance of service, fellowship, and family that makes our Sons of the American Legion family so special. I recently joined my Cub Scout Pack and Scouts BSA Troop for Relay for Life, where the youth demonstrated that service begins at an early age. Taking part alongside them reminded me that the work we do in the S.A.L. is not only about today, but also about building leaders for tomorrow. Not long after, I attended the 40/8 Grand Promenade, where I was humbled to receive the Legacy Award, an honor closely tied to my father's service and a poignant reminder of why we serve.

Travel then took me and my son, Clive, north for the Upper Peninsula State Fair in Escanaba, where we spent time at the Department of Michigan membership booth with members from the Newberry Squadron, sharing information and engaging with fairgoers. A highlight was viewing the Soo Line steam engine No. 730 in Gladstone, thanks to John Pickard. Along the way, we visited Little Lake Post 349, Munising Post 131, Marquette Post 44, and Greenwood Ishpeming Post 114. We joined the Legion Family for the Reino Post 21 picnic in Iron River, where fellowship thrived despite rainy weather. These visits reminded me how strong our Legion Family is across the state.

I also had the honor of representing Michigan at the National Convention in Tampa, Florida, where I completed the National Commanders Course and celebrated a milestone of 400,000 members nationwide. Between sessions, there was also time for fellowship — from a fishing trip on the Gulf to the Michigan Party dinner cruise.

Congratulations to Detachment Historian Kirk Maves and Squadron 34 of Tecumseh, who earned top honors in the S.A.L. National Scrapbook Contest at both the Detachment and Squadron levels. Their achievement showcases the creativity, pride, and dedication of our members here in Michigan. I encourage all squadrons to continue sharing their photos and stories for future issues so we can showcase your impact across the state.

Work also continues on my Commander's Project at Wilwin at Cygnet Cove, with early support already coming in from across our Legion Family. This dock will provide a lasting place of peace and purpose for veterans, Scouts, and volunteers.

Finally, I closed this season with our family's annual Labor Day trip to CCC Bridge, a tradition nearly 30 years strong. It was a weekend filled with campfires, river trips, side-by-side rides, and family time, reminding me that just as the Legion Family thrives on tradition, so too do our own families.

As we move forward, I encourage every squadron to keep building on the momentum of summer. Recruit, renew, and reconnect. Celebrate milestones, but also keep an eye on service projects in your own communities. Together, we can honor our past, serve our veterans, and inspire the next generation.

I look forward to seeing many of you at DEC 3 in Battle Creek as we continue this important work together.



VA&R

Russell Bayliss, Chairman

Hello to the American Legion family. So far this year, the representatives for the VA & R have been notified of the changes to the means of which they receive the money to go to their homes and hospitals.

I like this method of quarterly checks for our expenses to be distributed to the locations.

We have a new representative for the Iron Mountain home, Steve Jacques, who was the previous representative. Dennis Larson is overseeing Steve's duties related to volunteering.

I recently attended the Ann Arbor quarterly meeting to confirm what I had heard was coming as far as a name

change from VAVS (Veterans Affairs Veterans Rehabilitation). The new name is CDCE, which stands for Center for the Development of Civic Engagement. Whew! Not to question the change, it appears to recognize the other aspects of treating veterans' special needs coming off the street as homeless or emergency medical needs.

Forty veterans receive weekly calls from trained volunteers through the Compassionate Contact Corps Program, a group in Ann Arbor. This is just another means of keeping down the suicides of our veterans, young and old.

Commander Clive Seydell's passion for veterans, along with his special project at Wilwin, will help veterans enjoy fishing on the lake. I hope to travel to the other hospitals later in the fall so I can visit with all the representatives for the Sons of the American Legion.

I hope everyone is well.

2026 SAL Membership: September 19th Goal = 29,187
Current Total: 3,801-13.02%



ADJUTANT'S REPORT

Greg Price

This October edition of the Michigan Legionnaire will mark the fourth month since we elected Commander Clive Seydell. Commander Clive has been traveling across the Upper and Lower parts of this Great State, asking, "What can we Sons do to help support your Post, and the Veterans that live in your community?"

The Commander and his Officers and Chairmen have been working with all of us to help better support the Programs of the American Legion. Some programs that we Sons have joined together with other Legion Family Members are riding and supporting the National Legacy Run, which helps support the Veterans & Children Fund. We also continue to support the Child Welfare Foundation (Child Well Being), Boys State and Girls State, as well as the American Legion Department of Michigan Baseball.

Those Michigan Sons members who represented us at the National Convention in Tampa, Florida, were outstanding. Tecumseh Squadron members from Post #34 won the National Scrapbook Award (congratulations). Commander Clive shared his Commander's Project dream of building a dedicated fishing dock for the Veterans at Wilwin Lodge at Cygnet Cove. Thanks, gentlemen, for making us proud.

Sharing these stories reminds me of how proud I am to be a Proud possessor Of A Priceless heritage.



5TH ZONE

Zack Pendell, Commander

It was a pleasure and another learning experience working the booth at the Upper Peninsula State Fair. The joy of the fair, with the rides, food, animals, arts and culture, concerts and competitions, is an adventure each year. We gather at the booth to answer questions about The American Legion and to qualify and enlist new members.

But there is another side to the fair I did not recognize until this year. THE FAMILY SIDE!

Families arrive to enjoy the fair together, as do groups of friends. The fair offers a variety of attractions, providing everyone with the opportunity to find something to do or engage in, just as The American Legion and the programs under the four pillars offer us in the legion family.

Thursday is Veterans Day in the Upper Peninsula, when they celebrate the Veteran of the Year. State officials and veteran organizations gather to honor the selected veteran. This year, that honor went to one of our own, Ray Carlson. Ray, like previous recipients, was humbled by the experience. The event celebrated his contributions to our country, state, and community.

I still say that our Legion veterans are extraordinary. Yes, they are Veterans, but they also want to serve their comrades and help their communities. This is what our legion family looks to represent. Leaders who have that family and community working together.

I hope you can appreciate our Legion leaders for what they did as a veterans, and what they do for us and our community. Never forget our priceless heritage and our forefathers whom we honor. It was a privilege to be at the fair this year. It is always an honor to be part of the legion family.



HISTORY

Kirk Maves

Hi guys, this past month I attended the National Convention in Tampa, Florida. With me were four other Tecumseh Squadron 36 officers, Commander Keith Kapnick, Sgt.-@- Arms Tom Pollock, Chaplain Lynn Gubbe, and 1st Vice Earl Ruttkofsky. I am ecstatic to report that Squadron 34 Tecumseh won the National Scrapbook Award for 2025.

Also, I am happy to report that the Detachment of Michigan Scrapbook also won the National award. The Detachment also won 3 more awards. It was a fun time and a productive National Convention for Michigan.



4TH ZONE

John Brown, Commander

Hello to all SAL members and their families in the 4th Zone.

We held our fall Conference in Battle Creek at the end of September; I will pass on any updates for next month's article.

The 10th district has a new squadron in East Tawas, Post #211. I attended their SAL meeting in

September.

All Membership cards are in. If you do not have yours, then your Squadron did not forward an officer's list to Deanna Clark. You must do this to receive your 2026 cards.

We mentioned last month the importance of the Legion Family working together as one. The Family can accomplish many good things for our Legion programs and our community. May God watch over and protect all our active service members. Please contact me with your concerns.

ROSE CITY POST 324 CHICKEN BARBECUE



L-R Dane Elmore, Kyle Howard Squadron 2nd vice, Henry Van Dusen, David Seydell Detachment Chaplain & Randy Whiting 2nd Dist. Chaplain

Post 324 had six this summer honoring our veterans. What a great turn out, with a lot of help from the Son's, legion members some Auxiliary members and some good friends.

SQUADRON 426 SAL HELPED PREP FOR POST'S RIDERS 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY



District Meetings

First District

TBD

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

October 19, 2025

Chelsea Post 31

January 11, 2026

Ida Post 514

March 8, 2026

Milan Post 268

May 17, 2026

Blissfield Post 325

Third District

Lunch is at 11 am, and Meeting at Noon.

November 9th 2025

at Post 55, Albion

January 11th 2026

at Post 257, Battle Creek

March 8th 2026

at Post 54, Battle Creek

May 3rd 2026

at Post 36, Kalamazoo

Fourth District

Meetings begin at 1:00 pm.

November 2, 2025

Benton Harbor Post 105

January 11, 2026

Otesego Post 84

March 8, 2026

Paw Paw Post 68

May 17 2026

Diamond Island Post 335

Fifth District

Meetings are on the 2nd Thurs of every month meal @ 5:30 pm & meeting @ 7 pm.

November 13th 2025

at post 0047

January 8th 2026

at post 258

March 12th 2026

at post 305

May 7th 2026

at post 28

July 9th 2026

Location TBD by the next commander's post

Sixth District

Service Officer School at 11:10 am (when scheduled), Lunch at Noon, Meetings at 1 pm

November 9, 2025

Stockbridge Post 510

January 18, 2026

Howell Post 141

March 15, 2026

Swartz Creek Post 294

May 17, 2026

Holt Post 238

Seventh District

Lunch at 12:30 with meetings at 2:00 pm

October 19, 2025

Seabewaing Post 293

January 11, 2026

Lapeer Post 16

March 16, 2026

Port Huron Post 8

May 17, 2026 TBD

June 2026

State Summer Convention

Eighth District

Trainings will start at Noon, Dinner at 1:00pm with Legion and Auxiliary meetings immediately following

November 16, 2025

Belding Post 203

121 S. Broas Street

Belding, Michigan 48809

Phone: (616) 794-2841

January 18, 2026

Owosso Post 57

201 E. Mason Street

Owosso, Michigan 48867

Phone: 989 723-4046

March 15, 2026

Saginaw Post 439

5190 Weiss Street

Saginaw, Michigan 48603

Phone: (989) 792-2000

May 3, 2026

Portland Post 129

1324 E. Bridge Street

Portland, Michigan 48875

Phone: (517) 647-4980

Ninth District

Executive meetings are at 11:00am with Lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm
December 6, 2025
Post 9 Muskegon

Tenth District

All meetings will start with lunch at noon. Meetings at 1:00 pm.

November 1, 2025

Morley Post 554

2560 Northland Dr.

Morley Mi, 49336

Eleventh District

All Meetings Start at 10 am, with Lunch to after.

TBD

Twelfth District

Coffee and Doughnuts at 9, meeting at 10 am, with a lunch and additional hour after lunch if needed.

TBD

Sixteenth District

All meetings start at 7:30 pm

October 14, 2025 *

Riverview 389

734-767-3786

November 11th, 2025

Allen Park Post 67

Phone: 313-388-2088

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 *

Trenton Post 426

May 12th, 2025 **

Lincoln Park Post 67

Phone: 313-388-2088

June 10th, 2025

Garden City 396

Phone: 313-381-2245

* Service Officer School at 6:30 pm

**Memorial Service & Elections

Eighteenth District

All meetings Meeting for the District Legion and Auxiliary Convene at 2:00 pm

October 26, 2025

Post 253, 1505 N. Main St.

Royal Oak, MI 48067

Phone: 248-546-0490

January 25, 2026

Post 108, 130 E. Drahn 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

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 1:00 pm All meetings will be held at:

The Landing Zone Gaylord Bowling Center 1200 Gornick Ave, Gaylord, MI 49735.

December 6, 2025

March 14, 2026

May 9, 2026



7th District

**Robert Montgomery,
Commander**

I pray that everyone had a safe, fun summer. I know I did, and it was fun watching the grandkids grow. One of the first acts of being your newly elected commander is to implement a district-wide \$500.00 scholarship program. This program will be open to all High School Seniors with a GPA above 2.5 who are looking to further their education in College or Trade Schools. This program will be a family program with the Auxiliary assisting at every step of the way. To help fund this program, I will be holding a district fundraiser at Post #566 in Memphis on October 12th, starting at noon. If you or your post would like to donate a door prize or contribute cash to the cause, please get in touch with me.

Last month, I was humbled by my trip down to Indianapolis for leadership training, I met folks from all over the country, and like me, they were looking for ways to better their Posts/District and state programs. If you had a question, all you had to do was ask the person sitting next to you. Walking through the halls of national headquarters was very inspirational, and I even got to sit in the national commander's chair.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone about the upcoming holiday of Halloween. Please consider promoting local safety or even hosting a "Trunk or Treat" night for the kids; I am sure it would be popular in some of our rural areas.

Great Lakes National Cemetery Update

Steve Striggow, Liaison

September Great Lakes National Cemetery Update from the September 2025 Advisory Council meeting.

There have been 3,969 burials this fiscal year, and 70,224 total Burials since October of 2005.

The bathrooms will be finished by October 15th. The Comital Shelter #4 should be ready for use then also.

We were informed Director Andre Logan has accepted the Directors Job for the Commonwealth of Virginia VA Cemeteries. He is from Virginia, and we wish him well returning home. It was a pleasure working with him during his time at Great Lakes National Cemetery.

Every April and October we have a Headstone Cleaning. This is done by volunteers. The October Cleaning will be on the 18th. To pre-register for burial at a national cemetery, follow the link <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/eligibility/>.

Tentative Program Dates and Deadlines

2025-2026

December 2025

December 5th- Oratorical Registrations deadline
December TBD- JSSP First round postal match competition target set sales and registration closes.

January 2026

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

February 2026

February TBD- JSSP Targets due to the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) - must be postmarked on or before this date to be eligible for scoring.
February 22nd- Zone Oratorical Contests deadline.
February TBD- JSSP Second round postal match competition targets mailed out by CMP.

March 2026

March 1st-Eagle Scout of the Year Award submission deadline
March 6th- Teacher of the Year Nominations deadline
March 28th-Oratorical State Contest at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing.

April 2026

April TBD- End of 2nd round postal match competition. Targets due to CMP - must be postmarked on or before this date to be eligible for scoring.
April 3rd- Skilled Trades Scholarship Application deadline

May 2026

May TBD-Boys State Application submission deadline
May 1st- Student Trooper Application submission deadline
May 15th- Baseball insurance purchase deadline
May 15th-17th- National Oratorical Contest at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, MI

June 2026

June 1st- Final day for Baseball teams to register
June TBD -Boys State program at TBD

July 2026

July 1st-Robert Turner Baseball Scholarship submission deadline
July 15th- Diamond Baseball Scholarship deadline
July 19th-24th- Student Trooper Program
July TBD- JSSP American Legion National Championship(Individual Tournament)
July TBD- Class AA, Class A Senior Baseball State Tournaments in TBD.
July TBD- Junior Baseball State Tournament in TBD (Class A Senior Baseball Tournament Date/location TBD in December 2025)

Law and Order

Jim Wallace, Chairperson

The American Legion, Department of Michigan, is proud to continue its commitment to recognizing our community's heroes and developing tomorrow's leaders through our Law & Order programs. Applications for this year's awards and programs are now available online and deadlines are listed below.

Law Officer & Firefighter/EMS of the Year:

Due Date: January 9, 2026

Recognizes exceptional Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, EMTs, and Paramedics who have gone above and beyond the call of duty. These awards honor the courage, professionalism, and community service of first responders who safeguard our families and communities every day.

Youth Law Cadet Law Enforcement Program AKA Student Trooper

Due Date: May 1, 2026 Program Dates: July 19-24, 2026

Location: Michigan State Police Training Academy, Lansing, Michigan

Open to all high school students (male and female, grades 10-12) with an interest in law enforcement. Students will live and train at the Academy, gaining first-hand experience in law enforcement techniques, teamwork, and leadership.

Why These Programs Matter

The Law Officer & Firefighter/EMS of the Year Awards shine a spotlight on the unsung heroes who serve with courage and sacrifice, both in career and volunteer roles. Recognizing these individuals not only honors their service but also strengthens the bond between Posts and the communities they serve.

The Youth Law Cadet Program offers students a rare and valuable opportunity to explore law enforcement as a career path while instilling discipline, civic responsibility, and respect for public service. Many graduates of the program go on to serve their communities as law enforcement professionals.

We urge every Post to:

- Spread the word: Share application information with your local police, sheriff, fire, and EMS departments. Please encourage them to nominate deserving personnel.
- Engage local schools: Distribute Student Trooper applications to high schools in your area, and encourage students with an interest in public service to apply.
- Support applicants: Posts can assist with sponsorships, guidance, or simply by helping students and first responders navigate the application process.

These programs represent the best of what The American Legion stands for: service, recognition, and investment in the future. With your help, we can ensure that Michigan's finest are recognized, and our youth are inspired to carry forward the values of citizenship and service.

For applications and complete program details, visit www.michiganlegion.org/programs.

Let's make 2026 a year of recognition and opportunity by lifting up our first responders and mentoring the next generation.

BE THE ONE



Scouting Report

Gary Tanner, Scouting Chairman

The Scouting Sub-Committee aims to expand and support scouting throughout the state in the following ways. With the rising costs of goods and services, the scouting program is also feeling the pinch. The annual cost for the Michigan Crossroads Council to provide programming and all associated resources for one scout is now over \$270.00. Our goal is to raise \$100,000.00 for Scouting to help offset rising costs, provide camperships to scouts in need and ensure that finances are never a barrier for any scout! To achieve this, we are launching a major fundraising program to support the Michigan Crossroads Council's Eagle Scout recognition events throughout the state. It is a simple ask that every post in the Department of Michigan consider donating \$250.00 in honor of our nation's 250th birthday, and then challenge the American Legion Family in their post to do the same! Imagine the impact we can make in the lives of our young leaders of tomorrow if every squadron, unit, and chapter were also willing to donate \$250.00! Watch for the official launch of this event soon! Please remember to share this at your Post, District and Zone meetings as well as throughout your community. Local businesses and organizations may also like to support scouting with your help!

Although scouting is primarily a Scout/Youth-led program, it cannot function without properly trained adult leadership, whether as Adult Leaders, Unit Committee Members, Drivers, and the ever-important 'Event Volunteers.' Scouting is committed to providing safe, two-deep leadership for our scouts during any activity or meeting. Second to the military, you will not find anything more rewarding or critical to our nation's future than participating in the scouting program as a registered adult leader!

The American Legion National Commander's Square Knot Award was created to recognize members of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion who are actively involved in the Scouting program. If you are a registered adult leader and have not earned the Square Knot Award, you can find the award requirements on the national website at: <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/scouting/scouting-square-knot-award>

Scouting at Wilwin has continued to grow each year, thanks to ongoing infrastructure improvements and the annual Camporees. This is a wonderful opportunity for Scouts to interact with our veterans while earning much-needed advancement requirements and Outdoor skills. Camping at Wilwin is free for scouting units, and scouting service projects benefiting Wilwin have also been completed by the scouts attending. This year's Camporee, titled "The Freedom Torch," will take place at Wilwin from October 17 to 19. Information and registration can be found at: <https://www.wilwinlodge.com/scouting>

Nominations for the American Legion Department of Michigan Eagle Scout of the Year close March 1, 2026. Please be sure to

encourage units to nominate worthy Eagle Scouts for this prestigious honor. Applications and details can be found at: <https://www.michiganlegion.org/scouting>

Please be sure to promote this prestigious award in your communities! We want every Eagle Scout affiliated with the American Legion who qualifies to have an opportunity to receive this recognition!

We encourage every post that has the proper facilities to consider chartering a scouting unit. Currently, there are around 70 scouting units chartered by the American Legion family here in Michigan. With just under 400 posts, I am certain there is room to increase that number significantly. In fact, Scouting was the first organization the Legion partnered with after its charter in 1919. The American Legion recognized the efforts and impact scouting contributed to the war effort, assisting the United States in winning World War I. They also recognized the impact scouting had in their communities. Scouts learned life and leadership skills that, in turn, grew into confident leadership in the civic community and the business world. Those same skills continue to serve our communities today.

Simply put, Scouting is the most comprehensive youth program around and continues to develop tomorrow's leaders today! A solid Chartered Organization is the key to a successful scouting unit, and some units have recently lost their Chartered Organization, potentially forcing them to shut down. If your Post does not have the necessary facilities to charter a scouting unit, consider becoming the Chartered Organization for a new or existing scouting unit that meets elsewhere in the community. Even if your post is not up to chartering a scouting unit, adopting a local scouting unit in your area can make all the difference and provide necessary funding, resources and even volunteers to help them succeed! Many existing Chartered Organizations are unable to provide much beyond a meeting location, so adoption by the American Legion Family can breathe new life into a unit, fostering success and stability. Either option will help strengthen the Children and Youth Pillar for your Post, Unit, Squadron, or chapter.



Eagle Scout Candidate Andrew Affeldt with Post 374 Commander William "Ike" Isenhour

Berkley Post Sponsors Eagle Scout Project

Eagle Scout candidate Andrew Affeldt from Troop 1634, designed, built, and presented a new podium with a two microphone sound system, to the membership during the September 8th monthly meeting, where it was warmly received by the membership.



The Rest is History! Bob Higgins, Historian

I want to thank Commander Avie for appointing me as the Department Historian for the 2025-2026 year. It is a privilege and honor to serve. Every year, Posts can submit a history book for judging by the Department, which then submits it to the National level for an award. For several years, we have not had a history book submitted for judging. This year, there will be three categories. This year, there will be a hard copy, a digital copy, and a post-yearbook. The guidelines for a post history book or yearbook will be available after the fall NEC meeting. History books are very important to every post. As our older members are called to post everlasting by our Supreme Commander, the history of the post is lost forever if it is not recorded. History books can also serve as a good recruiting tool. When a prospective member asks what this post does, you can always pull out the history books and show them what the post has accomplished over the past years. I hope to see some history books submitted for the 2025-2026 membership year for judging. Books are due at Department Headquarters by June 25, 2026. The Department will also accept them at the 2026 Department Convention if submitted by 4:00 p.m. on June 26, 2026.

If Department Commander Avie visits your Post or District for a function, please send me photos of his visit. I would like to include them in his yearbook. You can email the images to bob.higleyjr@gmail.com.

Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program

**Gary Tanner,
Founder/Chairman**

The Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program has consistently set the bar for military and veteran assistance in Michigan. The past few years have been busier than ever, with extremely high request volumes, as well as an increase in fundraising events held by both our Legion Family and community supporters. Some larger supporters include the Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council, 3 Balls Racing, Greater Flint Bowling Association, White Chapel Memorial Park, and Goya Sports Marketing.

As wonderful as these larger community supporters are, the smaller donations from members of the Legion Family have truly been the backbone

of this vital program! In the past three years, the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program has awarded nearly half a million dollars in temporary emergency need assistance to over 400 families, and the need continues to grow.

We were recently honored to have a hand in bringing the Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance, run by the Romans Warriors Foundation, to Michigan for the very first time during the Patriot Race at White Chapel Memorial Park! This wall is the only one of its kind in the nation. It contains over ten thousand names of the fallen from the barracks bombing in Beirut to the thirteen during the withdrawal from Afghanistan on the front, and a complete historical timeline of world events.

The National Guard has also recognized the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program with their Family Program Community Purple Award,

which recognizes businesses and programs that support the values of the National Guard and enhance the quality of life for their families. This award was established in 2011, and only one recipient is selected annually per region by the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C. The Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program was chosen as the 2025 Region 5 recipient, and they have shared that it is the first recipient in Michigan since the award was established.

Region 5 consists of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. This year, only eight were awarded nationally. The official award presentation will take place in November at their annual Gala.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your continued support! Without you, we would not be able to do what we do!



Chaplains Corner
Mike Schlaack, Dept. Chaplain

We often find ourselves struggling to come up with some "big project" for our Post that will elevate the American Legion in the eyes of our community. Big things make big headlines, and the "go big or go home" mentality may cause some of us to neglect the works of charity altogether. The big projects require many hours of planning, coordination and workers to pull them off. Then there is the issue of funding. For the smaller Posts, the cost of large community projects can be prohibitive.

But not everything we do needs to be on a grand scale. Even small projects done for those in need can provide a great benefit to both the giver and the recipient. In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus teaches that it is not the size of the act of mercy that matters, but the heart behind the giving. "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward" (Matt. 10:42). A simple act of kindness, given from the heart, will not only provide relief but will also bless the giver. Thinking "small" will allow even the Posts with limited resources to be the blessing to someone in need. Even if it is just a loving presence for someone going through a rough patch in their life, all it will cost you is some time.

Sometimes, small acts of kindness can produce big results. The size of the project should not reflect the value of the work for the community. Look for small ways to reach out to our veteran community, even through modest efforts. You can "Be the One" in a small way that can be a huge blessing for someone in need.



Legislative Report
Tim Poxson, Legislative Chariman

The Legislative Chair has been working tirelessly to get many of our priorities turned into bills. As of this writing, we have three bills that have passed the Senate and are now awaiting House action. The House has introduced some bills for us, and those have been met with favorable committee hearings for the most part. One bill that failed to receive a hearing as of this writing, due to objections from the Department of Natural Resources, is now being rewritten to address concerns about potential revenue loss. The bill, if passed by the House and the Senate, will provide all honorably discharged veterans with free access to all State Parks and State boat ramps. The draft I reviewed will require the Veteran to apply to the MVAA for the pass. What form the pass will take has not been finalized. I do not expect the bill to take effect until the 2026 -27 budget year.

We have been working diligently to get legislation for a cemetery in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I am working with a committee of Veterans from the U.P. and have also been able to have a U.P. Representative staff member work on the legislation with us. This will again require State budget money, so it will also be included in the 2026-27 budget year, I hope. In that regard, I traveled to Escanaba, Michigan, in August for a meeting with all the Representatives at one time in one location to get everyone on the same page for this project.

I hope you were able to attend the Fall Conference in Battle Creek, where the Legislative Committee hosted Representative Ron Robinson. Rep. Robison is the Chair of the Veterans Appropriations Committee in the House. He was able to conduct a town hall-style meeting and took questions from the Veterans present at the meeting regarding the issues Michigan Veterans were facing and what they hoped would be added or improved for Michigan Veterans.

We look forward to working with him to address many of these issues.

Fun at the UP Fair

Written by Jan Lepinski

The U.P. State Fair was a rousing success! The booth looked fantastic, and the Legion Family shone brightly. We were excited to have Ray Carlson recognized as the Upper Peninsula Veteran of the Year. Thank you, Commander Avie, for coming up to help with this recognition.

I want to thank everyone who helped at the booth. Legionnaires included from Post 21, Gary Lane, Post 44, Ray Carlson, Post 71, Bill Smith and Louis LaFleur, Post 82, Jay Krummich Jr., Post 83, Dale DuFour and Dick Kesick. There were also representatives from Post 114, including Tim Walters, Den Hendrickson, and Bill Mankee. Post 115, Reino Maki and Dutch Solis, Post 146, Gary Gladue and Kurt Lepinski, Post 559, Rick Brown. Auxiliary members who helped out were from Post 21, Linda Nasser, and from Post 146, Julie Erickson. SAL members from Post 74 - Joe St, Germain and son, Post 114, Kirk Frechen, Post 146, Steve Van Eyk, also staffed the booth with 5th Zone Commander Zach Pendell, Depart-



ment Commander Clive Seydell and son. You ladies and gentlemen did a great job and made it a fun year.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to our Legion Family. Legionnaires; Post 50: Samuel Babb and Marsha Lippert, Post 83: William A. Reed, Post 114: Benjamin I. Watson and Samuel H. Walton, Post 131: Glen R. Try-

an, Post 301: Donald Bonifield, Jean Archambeau, Melissa Lehman and Donald Scheffer, Post 349: Gary Vadnais and Patricia Vadnais, Post 514: Kristen Joy Smith. New to the Auxiliary are: Unit 71: Tammi A. Edwards and Terry Lynn Cayer, Unit 114: Susan K. Pearson, Unit 131: Donna J. Tryan. And new in the SAL, Post 71: Robert A. Plimpton.

I am looking forward to next year's Fair. I hope that more of you will join in the fun with us!

Be A Voice Not An Echo

AMERICAN LEGION
FEMALE VETERAN LEADERSHIP RETREAT
OCTOBER 16-19
TO REGISTER VISIT
[HTTP://WWW.WILWINLODGE.COM/LEADERSHIP-RETREAT](http://www.wilwinlodge.com/leadership-retreat)

About the Retreat:

Over the course of our retreat, you'll find yourself immersed in an atmosphere of encouragement and empowerment. Surrounded by the beauty of nature, You can anticipate invigorating discussions aimed at cultivating collaboration to enhance your communication, leadership, and team-building skills.



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

Tripp Cantwell, Assistant Director

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

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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
Tripp Cantwell.....	Detroit
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
Rebecca Lewis.....	Farwell, Ionia, Lansing
Courtney Mills.....	Ravenna, Muskegon, Grand Haven
Lisa Misenko.....	Troy, Oxford, Rochester, Detroit
Chad Parenteau.....	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



16th District

**Pete Ramik,
Commander**

As the new District Commander, I will do my best to keep all posts informed. That said, I hope all Posts will communicate with the District and attend District Meetings.

We can't help if we don't know. We have received Data Forms on members who want to transfer out of 225 and into a Post near them. I have given them to the Post Commanders for the posts that we have received. Please contact them to get them transferred into your Post. If any post has questions or an issue they need help with, please contact the District, and we will assist. Let's have a good year.

**WE ARE PROUD TO PARTNER ONCE AGAIN WITH THE
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN AMERICAN LEGION**

**WATCH FOR OUR VETERANS BURIAL BENEFITS BRIEFINGS IN YOUR
AREA WHERE WE EXPLAIN YOUR BENEFITS AND ENJOY A NICE
MEAL TOGETHER**

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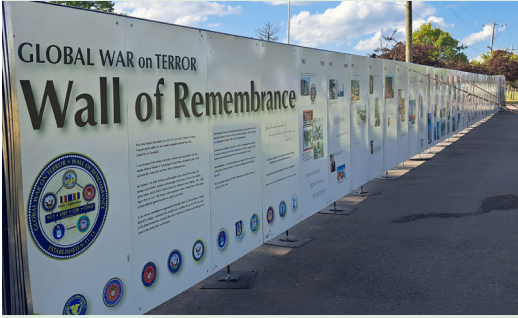
Around the State...

Flag Donation

Dexter American Legion Post # 557 commemorated the opening of the Dexter Senior Center's new facility by presenting the Center with the American Flag and the State of Michigan Flag.



The Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance



We were recently honored to have a hand in bringing the Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance, run by the Romans Warriors Foundation, to Michigan for the very first time during the Patriot Race at White Chapel Memorial Park! This wall is the only one of its kind in the nation. It contains over ten thousand names of the fallen from the barracks bombing in Beirut to the thirteen during the withdrawal from Afghanistan on the front, and a complete historical timeline of world events.

Post 4 Hosts "Toys for Needy Kids" Cruise-In



Post 4 brought the community together for its annual Toys for Needy Kids Car, Van, and Motorcycle Cruise-In, collecting toys for the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. All toys collected will be distributed by Toys for Tots to families throughout the county.

Berkley Post 374 Presents Tactical K9 Vests to Royal Oak Police Department

The vests were presented to the department's two K9 teams. A police K9 tracking vest is a critical piece of tactical equipment designed to allow dogs to follow scent trails effectively and safely. The harness distributes pulling force across the chest rather than the neck, providing comfort and preventing injury during tracking, search, and detection work. These vests also allow for better control, attachment of K9 gear, and durability to meet the rigorous demands of law enforcement duties. Following the presentation, K9 Drax demonstrated his apprehension skills for members of the post, showcasing the vital role police service dogs play in community safety.



Post Commander William Isenhour, Officer Blaine Goertler, Drax, Officer Ryan Moran, Thorvi, and Michael Larson Berkley SAL

Happy 104th Birthday!

PDC (1969/1970) F. Garrit Veldman, turned 104 on September 29th. After serving as Department Commander, Garrit was the Department Adjutant from 1970 to 1987.



PDC Veldman is still going strong at his birthday party in Muskegon Post 9

Backpacks for Homeless Veterans



Don Onyskow of Post 4 in Mt. Clemens identified the urgent needs of homeless veterans in the community and committed himself to addressing them. Since October of 2022, with generous monetary contributions and donations from local businesses and vendors, Don has organized the assembly and distribution of 600 new backpacks filled with supplies. The backpacks have been



packed and shipped directly from Don's basement. Members of Post 4 have also dedicated their time to assist in filling and distributing them.





Michigan Chaplain Workshop

Hosted by the 5th District



**MUST RSVP
for lunch**

When: Saturday October 25, 2025

Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm

Coffee & Donuts will be provided

Box Lunch will be offered for \$5.00

Where: Army National Guard Belmont Armory

1640 House Street NE

Belmont, MI 49306

Topics:

- The Healing Power of Forgiveness
- A Pandemic of Loneliness & Isolation
Help for us & others
- Homelessness
- Chaplain 101

Keynote Speaker: Chaplain Gary Doublestein

*This Workshop is open to **Everyone** in the American
Legion Family from all Post, Units, and Districts*

**YOU MUST RSVP to Deb Weatherbee by October 12, 2025,
for reservation and lunch confirmation.**

email - deb560@hotmail.com

Phone - 616-723-2398

Note: This Workshop will not be recorded,
and will not be available through Zoom

"Integrating Spiritual Needs From Service Member To Veteran"

THE FREEDOM TORCH FALL OUTING FREE EVENT FOR SCOUTS & VETERANS

BSA TROOPS, GSUSA TROOPS (CADETTE & ABOVE)

THIS IS NOT A CUB SCOUT EVENT

ALL VETERANS WELCOME

ACTIVITIES:

- *FLAG ETIQUETTE
- *FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY
- *AIR RIFLE SHOOTING
- *TEAM BUILDING CHALLENGES
- *ROPE CHALLENGES
- *OBSTACLE COURSE
- *GAMES
- *STORIES WITH VETERANS



OCTOBER 17-19, 2025



REGISTRATION OPENS ON AUGUST 1ST, 2025

AT WWW.WILWINLODGE.COM/SCOUTING

REGISTRATION CLOSES **OCTOBER 10TH**

OR WHEN THE **1ST 120 SCOUTS** ARE REGISTERED

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