

MI LEGIONNAIRE

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September 2026

Loss of a Legend



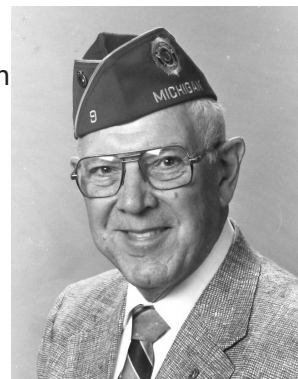
F. Gerrit Veldman, age 104, passed away Friday, August 14, 2026. He was born in Muskegon, MI, on September 29, 1921 and was the only child of Francis and Letha (Hibbard) Veldman.

Gerrit received his education at Bunker Junior High and Muskegon Senior High, with a Semester at Muskegon Community College, where he pursued a course in Industrial Supervision. He worked at the E.H. Sheldon Co. from 1940 to 1970 with a time-out for military service in the U.S. Army, where he served in North Africa, Italy, France and Germany during WWII.

Upon returning home from service, Gerrit married Grace M. Zimmerman on September 4, 1945, and together they raised two children. Grace preceded him in death in 2004.

Gerrit served a year as the State Commander of The American Legion. Upon leaving office, he accepted a job as the State Adjutant for The American Legion and retired again in 1987. After retirement, he returned to Muskegon and continued his service in The American Legion Post No. 9.

Gerrit was a life member of The American Legion; Muskegon Elks, VFW 446, DAV, Purple Heart 18, AMVETS 120; and the 70th Division Infantry Assoc. He was also a member of the Non-commissioned Officers Assoc. and served on the Board of Managers of the Michigan Veterans Homes for twenty-three years. Gerrit was a communicant of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.



Survivors include a son, Burt and wife Sharon Veldman; a daughter, Barbara and spouse Arie Veldman-Bronkhorst. Grandchildren, Barbara (Pablo) Crowe, Jodi Tatum-Cook, John and Elizabeth Bronkhorst; great-grandchildren, Ashley, Nikolas, Zachery, Caroline, Brian; great-great-grandchildren, Jolene, Newton, Salah; brother-in-law, Alan Ortquist. He was preceded in death by his spouse, Grace Veldman; parents, Francis & Letha Veldman; sisters-in-law, Dorothy Ortquist & Charlotte Schoonbeck; and brother-in-law, William (Bill) Schoonbeck.

 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

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DEADLINE DATES

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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.

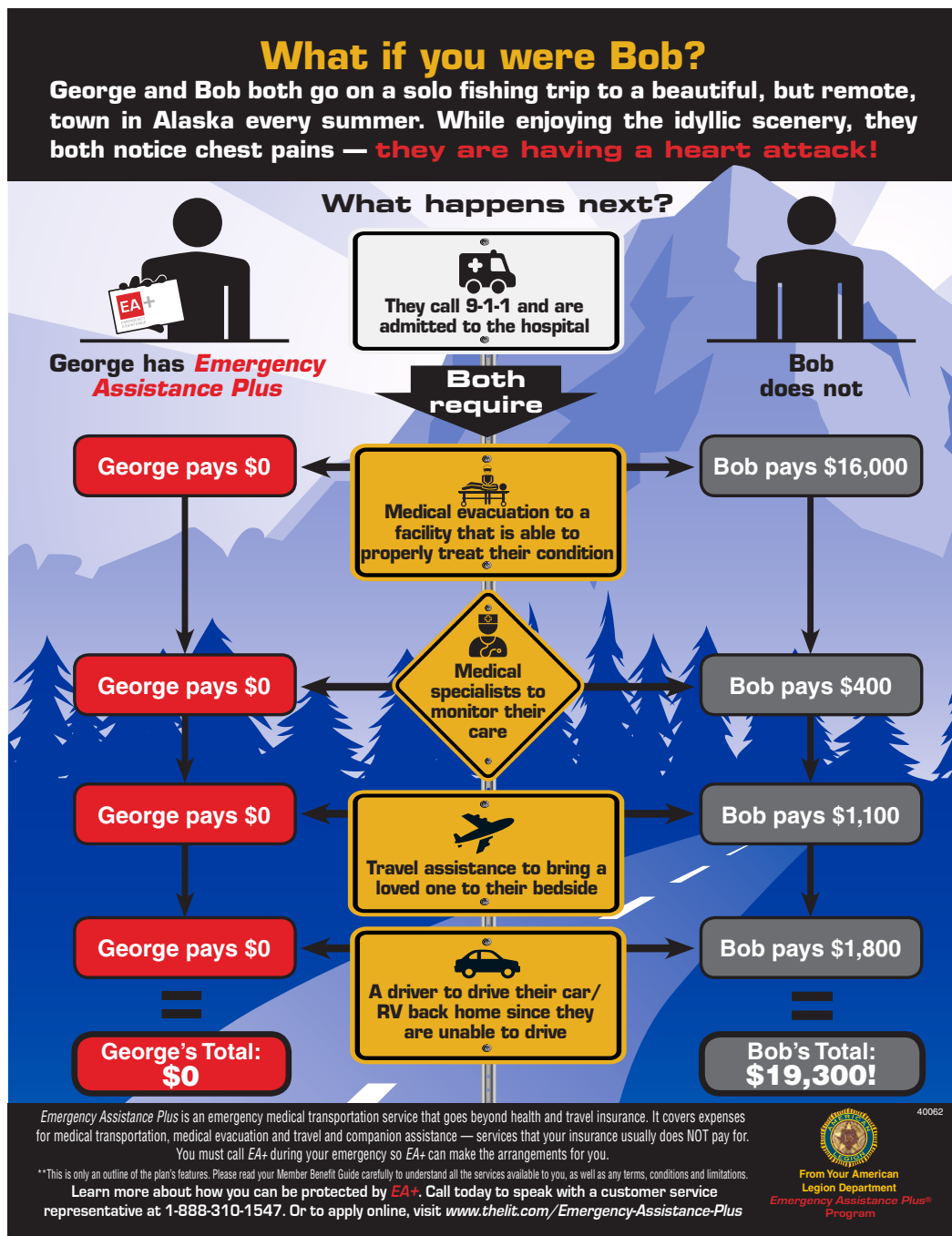
We look for photos showing Legion caps in action whenever possible.

Interested in placing an ad in the Michigan Legionnaire?

Please Contact Jim Showers

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AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE & AUXILIAIRE

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VA and R Director. Gary Easterling



Jim Austin
Department Commander

I have been out and about putting miles in the new Bronco. The first lady and I have been everywhere from the National Membership meetings in Indianapolis, to the U.P. for Veteran of the Year, to Higgins Lake for Service Officers School (Which had an awesome showing), to

the Legion State baseball tournament at Adrian College, and on to this year's National Convention in Louisville. Congratulations to the newly elected National Commander, and may he have a productive and fruitful year of service. His program is a continuation of the "Be the One" campaign. His is called "Be part of the Solution", or B.P.O.T.S. for short. You will see that acronym on national memorabilia moving forward.

Coming back from our very productive Membership meeting at the National Headquarters, we have our Membership goals for 2027. The goal is to reach 51,500 members for the Department of Michigan. This is about a 1.5 percent increase from our actual numbers posted last year. District Commanders will notify Post Commanders of individual Post goals. The membership committee has been off and running from Day One. Membership incentives have already been approved and posted. We look forward to a very exciting membership year.

In my conversation with members on my travels throughout the state, I have been getting a ton of feedback on the lack of information on statewide legion events and results, the baseball tournament for example. There is a department calendar on the website with contact information for the statewide media chairman who is Jim Showers, if you need an event added to the calendar, you can reach out to him directly to get your event added. Speaking of results, the 3rd annual Hell to Paradise ride was again completed by our Legion Rider Team with no incidents and great financial results. At the time of writing this article, \$44,000 has been raised with more donations still coming in. This is the kind of work that we should be

Greetings From the Road!

doing and makes me proud when we do it.

If the future is anything like the past, I will see you on the road! Thank you for your continued support and for being awesome Legionnaires. Be Part of The Solution.

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!



Ron Runyan
Dept. Adjutant

Runyan's Ramblings: 4 Topics 1 Article

1. Talk to Your Local Veteran: Sometimes the Most Important Thing We Do Is Start a Conversation.

August 4, the MVAA launched its new "[Talk to Your](#)" campaign, encouraging people to talk with veterans about their military experience, earned benefits, and mental health. It goes perfectly with Buddy Checks and The American Legion's Be the One mission.

We get so wrapped up in meetings, membership reports, and events that we can forget one of our simplest missions: call a veteran. I challenge every Legionnaire to contact one veteran they haven't spoken with lately—not to recruit them, but simply to ask how they're doing.

2. Veterans - Don't Pay for What The American Legion Will Help You Do for Free!

This could be a really useful piece about claims sharks and unaccredited benefits companies. VA specifically warns veterans about companies charging high fees, promising 100% disability ratings, or pressuring veterans into contracts. [VA-accredited VSO](#) representatives assist with benefit claims free of charge. This is also a major [American Legion Legislative Priority](#).

Before you talk to anybody about your disability award, talk to an accredited service officer. It also lets us explain what Department Service Officers actually do and remind members of one of the biggest tangible benefits of having organizations like the American Legion.

3. Are We Leaving Veterans' Benefits on the Table?

Michigan just launched a consolidated [State of Michigan](#)

[Veteran Benefits webpage](#) covering burial, education, employment, entrepreneurship, financial assistance, legal help, housing, taxes, recreation, and transportation.

The State of Michigan is investing more than \$4 million in FY2027 to support accredited service organizations that help veterans apply for compensation, enroll in VA healthcare, and access other benefits they may not know they qualify for.

I challenge Posts to hold a "Veterans Benefits Night"—not a meeting, not a membership pitch, just an open house where veterans can sit down with knowledgeable people and learn what's available. I am sure if done, the Department could commit a Veteran Service Officer to assist. Contact [Gary Easterling](#); his contact information is in the front of this paper.

4. "What Does Your Post Do When They Aren't Having a Meeting?"

This is less about a particular veteran issue and more about American Legion Post's relevance.

If your Post stopped holding meetings tomorrow, what would the community notice? Then talk about food drives, scholarships, veteran outreach, blood drives, youth programs, benefits assistance, emergency relief, community events, and simply providing veterans somewhere they belong. The purpose of this article isn't to criticize Posts—it's to get people thinking about shifting from being meeting-centered to mission-centered. I had the opportunity to visit Post 257 a few weeks ago, and they held an event that brought in current members and many non-members. This showed huge support in that community, and they were able to raise a lot of funds and also promote our Four Pillars.



Roger Deaton
1st Vice Commander

Membership

As a past post adjutant, I know the rigors of processing memberships and the pressure that comes with balancing work, family, and the drive it takes to help a Post reach its membership goals. In August, the Department leadership team traveled to National Headquarters to meet with National Commander Leading Candidate Jay Bowan. This meeting serves as an introduction, for instance, a chance for the National Commander to get to know the Department of Michigan. We answered questions about our membership and retention and negotiated an overall membership total for the 2026-2027 membership year. The number decided on was 51,500 total members for the Department of Michigan.

September 10 is the 50% membership target, and it was exciting to see multiple posts accomplish this first target date. I am encouraging all Posts to source the "Early Bird" stamp or stickers to place on the cards for members that renew before Veterans Day. The membership team has been updating social media apps and has designed a new membership roll-up banner for each district commander. Posts can request to borrow these from your District commanders, and I encourage you to reach out to me if you would like to purchase one for your post.

Lending a Hand

In August, Michigan answered the call from the American Legion Department of West Virginia after historic flooding devastated seven counties, displaced thousands, and prompted a statewide emergency. Our Department leadership quickly launched Operation Helping Hand, in three phases. First Michigan Posts served as donation sites, while posts in West Virginia identified receiving and safe delivery routes. Donated vehicles and volunteers helped deliver urgently needed supplies within 72 hours. The effort then shifted to monetary donations and gift cards sent directly to the Department of West Virginia. Finally, school supplies and gift cards were



Hand a success.

Special Thanks to the collection Posts 71, 53, 351, 29 and 235. To our hosts who are still taking care of folks in Barboursville, WV, Post 177 and CMDR Robert Dunlap. Thank you, Department of West Virginia CMDR Keith Brown and Operation Helping Hand Co-Coordinator Ed Walker. Thanks to our relief drivers who went above and beyond! Tyler "Tex" Willer, Chris Carr, Seth Kunz, Jan & Kurt Lepinski and Brent Singer.

collected for children in affected communities and sent to Post 177 in Barboursville for distribution. It takes a team—a family—the Legion Family to make an effort like this possible. Thank you to everyone who helped make Operation Helping



Keith Brown of Department of West Virginia
an envelope of donations

Americanism

David Yahr
2nd Vice Commander



I am having a Facebook page made for a permanent 2nd Vice Commander/Americanism. This will be an all-in-one for the latest information on our programs and Americanism. I hope posts will share their events promoting Americanism so other members have the opportunity to check them out.

Americanism year is well underway. We need to get into our schools before high school. Show our young children what Americanism is and what the American Legion Stands for. Flag etiquette is a good start. The more visibility we have in our schools, the easier it will be to promote our programs. If we sit and do nothing, waiting for the next Post to do it all, we will never grow as Legion. We are only as strong as our weakest link.

Oratorical is fast approaching. Schools are opening soon, and we need to get a jump on it and promote our programs now. It would be great to see 300 students participate in the contest. We have approximately 350 posts in the state, so I don't want to think too big of an opportunity to give our children the chance to participate in the Legion's scholarships. Remember, it isn't just recruiting these bright students, but they must be mentored and groomed for the competition. Getting them to sign up is just the first step. While we are promoting the Oratorical, don't forget the Brewer/Wilson scholarships. This is an opportunity for our senior high school students to apply for scholarships. Let the students know it is more than just filling out the form. They need to put some thought into the application and write out details. Get recommendation letters and show community involvement. We need to do a better job preparing our young adults for what we have to offer.

A big shout out to the Berryhill Post baseball team as they move to the final stage of the competition. They have won 3 straight games. Let's hope they bring the title back to Michigan.

When I get back from National Convention, I will be on the road promoting the Passport Program. We need more Posts in the northern section to get signed up and have the stamp. The more we visit, the more we grow as a unified Michigan American Legion. Stay safe in your travels and enjoy what other Posts have to offer.

2027 Membership: August 28th Goal = 51,500
Current Total: 25,269 - 49.07%

Passport Post Spotlight

Flint's Oakley Traynor Post 64 — Rebuilding for the Future

For more than six decades, Oakley Traynor American Legion Post 64 has been part of the Flint community, providing veterans, their families, and residents with a place to gather, serve, and enjoy one another's company. The Post's American Legion Home on Carpenter Road was completed in 1965, and today its spacious building and property remain a point of pride for its members.



One of the best times to visit Post 64 is on a Friday evening, particularly when the popular fish dinners return in the fall and during Lent. Add karaoke to the evening, and visitors will quickly see the camaraderie that keeps members coming back. Throughout the week, regulars can also be found enjoying shuffleboard, pool, darts, bingo, euchre, and other activities. The Post's bingo and euchre events are open to the public, making Post 64 as much a community gathering place as a veterans organization.

Post 64's property offers plenty of



room for community involvement. School teams use its ball fields for practice and games, and the pavilion is available for rentals and special events. The Legion Family also stays involved throughout the year with Toys for Tots donations at Christmas, Halloween activities, Easter breakfast and bunny crafts, and other family-oriented events.

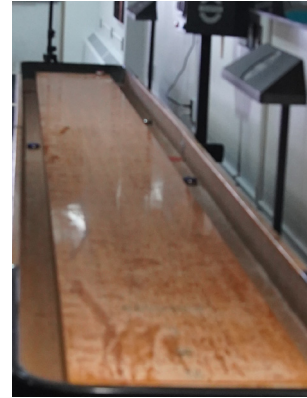
Members are especially proud of the Post's July 4, 2026, celebration commemorating America's 250th anniversary. The event drew a strong public turnout and was described by many members as one of the best events the Post has ever hosted.

While Post 64 has faced challenges in recent years, members of the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and American Legion Riders are working with new leadership to rebuild and strengthen the Post. They aim not only to minimize the loss of older members but also to find and attract younger members.

They are reconnecting with

members for renewal, recruiting younger veterans, improving the building, creating a dedicated space for military memorabilia, and raising funds to support veteran programs. The goal is not simply to restore what once was, but to build a Post prepared to serve the next generation.

As the members of Post 64 put it, "There is strength in numbers." With a strong property, an active Legion Family, community traditions, and leaders committed to moving forward, Oakley Traynor Post 64 is proving that rebuilding begins with people willing to roll up their sleeves and get involved.



See Other Passport Posts or Register at <https://michiganlegion.org/passport/>

Chaplains Corner

Rodney Tolbert
Department Chaplain



to touch on a little bit about faith. Faith serves as an enduring anchor in life, offering personal direction during uncertainty and a shared foundation that unites people into resilient communities with our faith in God.

Calm in anxiety: Faith shifts focus away from personal fear and toward God's care. Rather than holding onto stress, Philippians 4:6-7 encourages bring every concern to God in prayer, resulting in a protective peace that guards the mind and heart. Faith grounds you when circumstances feel out of control offering reassurance that your future and value do not depend entirely on temporary outcomes.

Renewed strength: Personal energy and motivation naturally with your faith in God and spiritual trust keeps us ongoing endurance when we are tried and down.

Meeting you in doubt: Struggling with questions or uncertainty is natural part of human growth. God responds to sincere seeking with patience, using life experiences to deepen your trust over time.

Providing Inner peace: Through faith prayer and reflection, God offers a steadying presence that quiets anxiety and restores clarity when life feels overwhelming.

How God connects us to scripture thru faith: Scripture becomes a living guide rather than just an ancient text when God illuminates its meaning for life. As you read God helps bring specific principles to light that speaks directly to your current choices and struggles.

Faith in God is far more than a passive set of beliefs it is an active lens through which you navigate everyday challenges, choice, and relationships. It shifts how you carry stress, and find purpose in everyday life, and tasks and handle unexpected hardships.

BE THE ONE



AUXILIAIRE

From the Desk of the President

July 2026

Anita L. Mennel
Department President
2026-2027



Change Versus Improvement

I trust your summer has been enjoyable. Maybe a little rest, a little relaxation? Maybe even a little vacation? However you spent your summer, the time has come to move into the 'next year'.

As you should know, SAVE-THE-DATE for Saturday, September 19th, is official. This will be a 'virtual' beginning to our Fall 'Schools of Instruction'. With our in-person 'Fall Conference' being November 6-8, there are programs that really need information shared a bit earlier. We are still working out the details, but my hope is you will put this on your calendar to attend. The session will be approximately two hours and will cover our Americanism, Junior Activities, Membership, and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Programs. Presenting these programs early will also allow more time in our schedule during the Fall conference in November.

The intent is to improve communications. Yes, it's something different, and there will be challenges. We are able, and we will adapt and overcome those challenges. Most of us

don't like "change" – but when you remove the word change and insert the word 'improve', a whole new meaning emerges. Yes, we should all want to improve! Communications need improvement too.

Another goal for this administrative year is to initiate frequent virtual meetings between program chairs. Our national organization has been successfully holding these types of meetings for a few years; they are a great way to get the word out AND share ideas.

Now I ask you to search your heart. What are YOU doing to get involved in your Unit and District? You most likely have some great ideas; are you sharing those with fellow members at a meeting? Take that leap; the stronger your involvement, the stronger our mission and focus can be to accomplish serving our veterans, active-duty servicepeople, their families, our children and youth. The success of our mission is improved by the success and support of our members. Walk that walk as you talk that talk.

Thanks for reading, and thank you for all you do that helps make the ALA great. See you next month L.O.V.E.



What it Takes to be a Good Leader

True leadership isn't about holding a position-it's about creating positive influence through your actions. True leaders create positive ripples wherever they are – whether at home, at work, or within the American Legion Auxiliary. You don't need to be an extrovert or charismatic to be a leader. Most members define leadership as the ability to achieve a position, not the ability to get followers. Leadership is a mindset in action; it stems from social influence, not authority or power. Leadership has nothing to do with titles.

Shannon Werner
Executive Director,
Secretary-Treasurer

ship is a mindset in action; it stems from social influence, not authority or power. Leadership has nothing to do with titles.

Be Knowledgeable-you do not have to know everything, but knowing how to find the answers is essential.

Be Passionate-a good leader exhibits excitement and heart through demonstrated, unwavering commitment to the Auxiliary vision, instills hope, and inspiration in members. Walk the talk and your members will follow.

Be an Active Listener-listening is leadership. When you truly hear our members – you uncover needs, opportunities, and new ideas. Listening fosters trust, innovation, and growth.

Have a Positive Attitude-an upbeat, optimistic atti-

tude serves as a source of inspiration for others. Be a cheerleader and motivate others with your enthusiasm.

Lead with Integrity-a good leader always leads with honesty, consistency, and fairness. Integrity gives you so much as a leader: credibility, trust, confidence, influence and more.

Lead by Example-show, do not just tell. Your actions set the tone for your entire team. Model the behavior you want to see. Be willing to delegate and empower others. Create a climate of goodwill and respect. Recognize effort and say, "thank you" often. Care and show it.

Be Confident-be mindful of how you present yourself, lead with confidence and decisiveness. Members are more likely to follow leaders who are steady, clear, and committed to the mission.

Act Professionally-as a leader, you should be cordial to all your members. Be punctual, prepared and approachable. Be clear and respectful. Communicate your goals and expectations from the beginning and be sure to welcome input from members.

Leadership is not about being in charge. It's about taking care of those in your charge.

For Service, Not Self.

**Article provided by ALA National Headquarters*

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

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

National Security Basics

Linda Kaare, Chairperson

What does "National Security" mean to you? I posed this question to a friend who is not affiliated with any military or veteran organization. She responded with two words: Protection and Safety.

Thus, this committee's purpose is not only "to promote a strong national defense" (ALA Standing Rule #7, Core National Standing Committees) by supporting and strengthening active military, it includes supporting all those who protect us and keep us safe daily, such as local, state and federal law enforcement, firefighters, and those entering these professions.

In Michigan, our primary active military is the Coast Guard, followed by the National Guard and a few Army facilities. This year, let us "adopt" our active military. With 3,224 shoreline miles (NOAA Office for Coastal Management), most Michiganders readily recognize the Coast Guard's orange helicopters and know they are on a search and rescue mission. This year, contact a Coast Guard station and ask what you can do for them. Units that are not near a shoreline, contact your National Guard units or other military fa-

cility.

We also serve by donating blood, being prepared for emergencies, supporting the Legion's programs of Law Officer and Firefighter/EMS of the Year, Youth Law Enforcement Cadet/Student Trooper Program, legislation geared towards National Security, and so much more. Review the program guide for numerous ideas.

In addition, do not forget the following upcoming honorary dates: August 16th - National Airborne Day (honors the elite paratroopers and airborne forces of the US Armed forces and commemorates the first official Army parachute jump in 1940); September 18th (3rd Friday of every Sept) - National POW/MIA Recognition Day; and Oct 26th - the Day of the Deployed which honors all active-duty military personnel serving outside the U.S. and recognizes the sacrifices made by their families. Wear RED that day (and every Friday). You can publicize these events at your Post or Unit, host a special POW/MIA ceremony, and work with your community to locate and support families of our service members.

It is an honor to serve on this committee, and I hope every Unit finds some way to honor and support our military, law enforcement, and firefighters this year as they continue to protect us and keep us safe. God bless our country.

Finance in 2026 - 2027

Deanna Cortright, Finance Chair

Welcome to a new American Legion Auxiliary year. Your Finance Committee hopes that you have a good year. There are just a couple of things that need to be addressed, especially for those that are new.

First, it will be time very soon for IRS 990s to be filed. As long as you do them in a timely manner, they can be completed as a "postcard". This only involves changing the primary officer's information and checking a couple of boxes. It takes longer to get into the process than it does to complete it. If you are new, you might have to change the password.

Failure to complete the above process will result in having to complete the long form, which is very long due of the number of questions. If this is not completed, your unit may lose its nonprofit status. There are many things that losing this status will cost your unit. You will have to pay \$600 to get your status back and, if you have any donors, they cannot deduct their donation on their Income Tax Return. That could limit the amount of donations you receive.

Second, Poppy funds need to be clarified as "restricted" funds. Poppy funds cannot be mixed with other balances. So, anytime you collect money for poppies, it must be documented separately. This can be done by creating a separate checking account for it, or you can keep it separate on a ledger. Units can only use these funds for direct assistance to Veterans and their families as noted in the Poppy Guide. These rules are determined by the National American Legion Auxiliary, not the Department or Unit.

If you have a separate checking account for poppies, you cannot issue checks from it for anything else. Every effort must be made to keep this separate and accountable. If there is an extenuating circumstance, a note should be sent with the check explaining why.

Lastly, when sending documentation to the Department headquarters with a check, please be sure that everything is correct. The staff at headquarters are not responsible for trying to read your mind. If things are received and the documentation does not agree with the check amount, it will be returned. This causes a delay in the processing of items.

Everything is Coming Up Poppies

Chris Merlington, Poppy Chair

Welcome to the 2026-2027 year of the Poppy Committee. We are looking forward to doing so much this coming year. There were several entries in the Poppy contest category last year, and many awards were given out. I am looking forward to seeing as many, if not more, in the upcoming year. Remember, if you keep your history going each month for all you do with Poppies, by the end of the year it is so easy to fill out and send in. This year, we have a great Poppy Committee that's easily reachable, so don't hesitate to contact us with questions.

Little Miss Poppy is an honor bestowed upon a young lady between 6-12 years old. In the last few years, we have had two very active young ladies fundraising for our Veterans and longing to be the Department of Michigan Little Miss Poppy. I am sure there are more than just two young ladies around the state of Michigan that assist with Poppy donations and getting the word out each year. If you have a young lady in your unit who helps, look up the qualifications and guidelines in the new 2026-2027 guide once it's published. You just may have a Little Miss Poppy contestant in your Unit.

Remember Poppy Day and Veterans Day are the two most popular times of year to get the Poppies out for donations. You can also have a canister or two at events that you have going on, such as bake sales, craft shows and events at your post. Have information next to the canister and be ready to answer questions about the History of the Poppy. You will be surprised how many non-members ask questions about the Poppy. Take full advantage of the event, and you could also recruit and gain a member or two.

Go to alaforveterans.org for printable items to assist you in your Poppy endeavors. There are certificates, canister labels, and so much more you can print and use for your needs. If you need help or cannot print your own, contact us; we will help.

More information will be coming out soon. Make this the year of the poppy for Michigan! We have poppies available: let's get them out to the community and raise money for our Veterans! God Bless.

AMERICANISM

Anita Greca, *Americanism Chair*

I am so very excited and thankful that our Department President, Anita L Mennel, has given me this appointment. Know that I am here to help answer any questions or address any concerns you may have about Americanism.

The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship in our units and community. The list to promote Americanism is vast. Use your imagination to come up with new ideas, but here are a few: fly your flag, wear patriotic clothing, make pocket flags, have a flag retirement ceremony, hold a class to teach flag etiquette, or how to fold the flag and the meaning of each fold. Teaching our youth (adults) to respect the flag and what it stands for is a priority.

Promote the Americanism Essay Contest, which is an excellent opportunity for our youth (grades 3–12) to understand the democratic process. I have attached a picture of the 'America 250' flags and stickers which I personalized with the wording "1776-2026 Michigan ALA". I passed these out at the department convention, my unit, and at the Wilwin fundraiser to promote our 250th celebration of America.



Keep records of all your Americanism activities throughout the year so you have all the information needed for your annual report. A short narrative describing your activities is very helpful. The Americanism team, Georgia Downs, Veronica Flippo, and I look forward to receiving Americanism Essays from all units. Let's always show our Patriotism!

Chaplains Corner

Darlene Jones, *Chaplain*

L.O.V.E. stands for Loyal hearts to be Open-minded and Value those around us, Empowering members to carry forward our mission into the next 250 years. This is the theme for the year chosen by our Department President, Anita L. Mennel.

1 Peter 4:8: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." Loving others helps forgive mistakes.

We have all joined the American Legion Auxiliary to help veterans, the community, and to support our future leaders. It is ok if we don't agree or have the same opinion; we can still work together for the betterment of this organization.

A world where everyone is the same would have no new ideas and no growth. Our differences help us learn and see things in a changed light. We need to listen to other ideas to grow our organization. As we move forward this year, let's do it with kindness in our hearts.

Our mission is service to others, not self. Recently, the American Legion Family collected items for the flood victims in West Virginia. Working together, we collected truckloads of needed items, which were then driven to West Virginia. This would not be possible if we didn't work together for the common good.

So, let's forgive the past, look forward to the future, and work together today to make our world a better place for our communities and our veterans.



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

Membership is My Passion

Candie Chase, Membership Chairman

So, they had a plan... well, we all know that things don't always go as planned. That's the story of National ALA and A.L.A.M.I.S. All didn't go as planned. But all the updates and snags have been worked out, except for a few minor details. Please make sure to view the how-to videos to learn about the updates. We will soon be using it like professionals.

This year's membership theme will be focused on being strong, kind, and to L.O.V.E.

Strong Like a Polar Bear, Kind Like a Purple Heart, Bound Together by Love.

The Districts (Polar Bears) and the Units (consisting of Cubs) will work diligently to increase and retain their membership. In addition to the usual Department awards, there

will be two additional awards for the Polar Bear and Cubs with the highest percentage of goal by 30 days before the Department Convention. So, get those Polar Bears and Cubs on the move! Unit goal objectives will be computed soon, and those numbers will be sent to the District Presidents.

A "Virtual Schools of Instruction Roll-Out" is scheduled for Saturday, September 19th. The school will include Americanism, Junior Activities, VA&R and Membership. Stay tuned for more details.

Our updated membership guide will be published on the Department's website and will contain the complete list of Department and National awards, and more detailed membership information.

Membership is everyone's responsibility; growing membership starts with everyone; membership success is a shared responsibility; everyone recruits- everyone retains; and membership thrives when everyone participates.

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

Connie Kovacs, Chair

This year we are going to work hard under the Junior program. You may be asking yourself, how do we begin? Well, the answer is easy: we are going to rebuild by using the Department of Michigan Junior Program 2026-2027 Revitalization Plan.

To start, we are asking everyone to complete the following courses from the ALA Academy: Junior Mentor Series: Getting Started with Juniors; Junior Mentor Training: Junior Patch Program; Junior Mentor Series: Juniors and The Legion Family; Junior Mentor Series: Junior Meetings; and ALA Junior E-Learning. Next steps: attend the September 19 Zoom Kickoff Conference and attend the Fall Conference in person, being held November 6-8 in Gaylord, Michigan. Looking forward to a great year for our Junior Activity Program.

BEE Of Service To Your Community - Debbie Weatherbee,

Community Service Chair

Community Service is getting out in our community and getting involved. Some suggestions include participating in donations to Ronald McDonald House, St. Jude's or other similar charities. Or maybe help at a senior center or nursing facility by doing crafts, giving gifts or visiting with residents.

One project I would encourage this year is looking into helping with Homeless Shelters or Food Banks. Food Banks are always in need of food or a donation to help purchase food. Call your local Homeless Shelter and ask if there is anything they need such as a coat drive or pillow drive. Maybe they are in need of new personal undergarments. Either of these organizations may need volunteers to help. The possibilities for helping are endless.

When your Unit does a project, please email me pictures and a description of your project. I would like to get this on the American Legion Auxiliary National FB page showcasing your volunteer efforts in Community Service.

A big Thank You to Carol Burke and Kathy Cope-land who stepped up to be on this committee. Let's get buzzing around in your Communities! You can contact me with any questions at deb560@hotmail.com or call 616-723-2398.

Ann Arbor VA Healthcare System

Krystal A. Hall, Representative

Since 1953, the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (LTC Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center) has provided state-of-the-art health-care service to the men and women who have proudly served our nation. It is considered a privilege to serve in meeting their health-care needs.

The Ann Arbor System, with the main hospital campus located in Ann Arbor and with clinics in Adrian, Canton, Howell, Jackson, Flint, Lansing, and three locations in Northern Ohio (Toledo, Findley, and Lima), has serviced over 80,250 Veterans living in a 15-county area of Michigan and Northwest Ohio during the past fiscal year. The main hospital campus in Ann Arbor serves as a referral center for specialty care. It operates 114 acute care beds (with an average in-patient stay of 6.5 days) and 40 Community Living Center (extended care) beds. More than 704,590 outpatient (clinical/encounter) visits were made at the facilities; more than 5,814 inpatient episodes of care were provided in the hospital and care centers. Also, the Medical Center Staff handled 140,634 telehealth visits during that same period.

Volunteers continue to have a huge impact here in Ann Arbor. This includes in-kind donations, which increased by 60%; monetary donations, by 130%; volunteers, by 50%; and volunteer hours, by 55%.

As the Department of Michigan representative, I hope to recruit more volunteers (new or returning) to support several new and on-going initiatives and programs. Such as: (CCC) Compassionate Contact Corps-a program where volunteers will be able to communicate with Veterans (identified by VA staff) off-site (phone contact); currently there are 45 veterans enrolled and 41 volunteers.

Working with the Red Cross to promote blood drives (not a new initiative but restarting following the COVID restriction removal).

Coordinating the CLC bingo program that occurs on the second Saturday afternoon of each month (local ALA Units from the 2nd and 6th Districts have signed up this past year, but we can always use more).

My Life My Story is a veteran experience program where the veteran is interviewed, and their story is compiled and included in their medical record.

Veteran Whole Health is a program to help veterans receive more life support (besides medical needs); aspects included are primary care, volunteer help/support, recreational therapy, life guidance, family support care (outside of the hospital environment), as well as arts and crafts opportunities.

In closing, I am honored and humbled to have the opportunity to work with such dedicated staff, volunteers and other supporters (especially my Deputy, Ethel Putala-thanks for all you do) here at the Ann Arbor VA Health System.



**Department Commander
Jim Austin**



**Department 1st Vice Commander
Roger Deaton**



**Department 2nd Vice Commander
David Yahr**



**Department Chaplain
Rodnet Tolbert**



**Finance Officer
Scott Nichols**



**Department Historian
Pete Ramik**



**Department Sargeant-at-Arms
Duane Miller**



**Department Judge Advocate
Brett Holt**



**1st Zone Commander
Mark Holthus**



**2nd Zone Commander
Sheil Overholts**



**3rd Zone Commander
Tim Shosey**



**4th Zone Commander
Ed Herter**



**5th Zone Commander
Mark Maida**



**National Executive Committeeman
Brett Holt**



**Alternate N.E.C
Brian Mohlman**



**Alternate Judge Advocate
Charles Boman**



**1st District Commander
Mark Sutton**



**2nd District Commander
William McMurray**



**3rd District Commander
Steve Caudill**



**4th District Commander
Earl Lash**



**5th District Commander
Doug Cox**



**6th District Commander
John Brauer**



**7th District Commander
Robert Montgomery**



**8th District Commander
Wendy Retzloff**



**9th District Commander
Yvonne Herter**



**10th District Commander
Elizabeth Cuddington**



**11th District Commander
Jan Lepinski**



**12th District Commander
James Wallis**



**16th District Commander
Tom Viger**



**18th District Commander
Dennis Daugherty**



**19th District Commander
Patrick McGinn**



**VA & R Director
Gary Easterling**



Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan

MIKE GLOBKE

Detachment Commander 2026-2027



Greetings, fellow Sons. Hope everyone is doing well. So far, it's been pretty quiet as far as my travel is concerned. But it is early yet. I had the privilege of trying to throw out the first pitch at the Legion Baseball playoffs. I almost made it to the catcher and didn't throw out my shoulder. I made a couple of trips to Lansing. It's always nice to talk to the folks that work up there. Thanks to all they do for the organizations. I was invited to attend the ceremony at the White Chapel Cemetery in Troy along with my wife, First Lady and 16th District Auxiliary President, Pam.

President Mom Anita Mennel, along with her husband PDC Dave Mennel. I was able to represent the Sons riding in the escort ride for the Wall That Heals traveling to Taylor's Heritage Park from Monroe, Michigan. I was also invited to go to the opening ceremony at the park. I also volunteered to help take it down to move to the next site. Just to pass it on, I am available to visit your event. You can send a request to Department or Clive. While on one of my visits to Department, I was able to pick up my Squadron's membership cards. As of now, all Squads that have sent in the proper documents should have their cards by now. At a minimum, you must have your officers' list in.

Looking forward to the Legion National Convention and Fall Conference. Till then, take care and be safe.



HELP US TELL THE SAL STORY Victor Fisher, Media

I'm asking our Sons of The American Legion members, squadrons, districts, zones, officers, and chairmen across Michigan to help us share the great things happening throughout our Detachment.

If your squadron or district has an upcoming event, fundraiser, community project, membership success, or other news worth sharing, please send me an article and photos for consideration in the Michigan Legionnaire.

When submitting photos, please include the names of the people pictured whenever possible. Photos showing our members proudly representing the Sons of The American Legion are always encouraged. Articles are due by the 1st of each month.

Thank you for helping us recognize our members and tell the story of the Sons of The American Legion across Michigan

ZONE 1 John Beeman, Commander



Wow! Where did the summer go? It seems like yesterday we were all at the SAL State Convention at Houghton Lake. Then there was Boys State in Hillsdale, followed by the Department State Convention at Battle Creek. All of this happened in June, what a busy month. The month of July was just as busy, with the July 4th celebration and the July 8th celebration at the State Capitol, celebrating 250 years of this great nation, America! Then to Wilwin for their annual fundraiser. Scottville Clown Band entertained the crowd, Squadron 34 cooked lunch for everyone, and Duane did a good job doing the auction. Everyone had a good time, and we raised some money for Wilwin. I am done traveling for a while.

It is time for me to get to work helping squadrons get their officers' list and their ACH (Direct Deposit) forms sent to the department. Membership cards came in mid-July, and you should have received them by the time you read this article. If you have not received them, you should call Deanna at the department.

Looking forward to running into old friends and ready to make new ones while carrying out the mission that the Sons of American Legion stands for. As a zone commander, I'm here to help you with any questions or problems that you might have. Keep looking for new members, and don't forget to reach out to help a veteran any way you can. Buddy checks are a good way to help them.



Hear ye, hear ye

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District Meetings

First District Meetings at 2 PM

September 27, 2026
Knights of Columbus, 19801
Farmington Rd,
Livonia, MI 48152
Sunday, November 15
Location TBD
Sunday, February 21
Location TBD
Sunday, May 23
Location TBD

Second District

Meetings: 11 am SAL, Riders@
Noon with Lunch, PSO training at
1 pm, Auxiliary & Legion @ 2 pm

October 11, 2026
Blissfield Post 325
451 High St.
Blissfield, MI 49228
January 10, 2027
Ida Post 514
11601 Lewis Ave.
Ida, MI 48140
March 14, 2027 (Nominations)
Springport Post 313
230 Mechanic St.
Springport, MI 49284
April 24, 2027 (Post Everlasting)
Tecumseh Post 34
300 N. Evans St.
Tecumseh, MI 49286
Post Everlasting ceremony will
begin promptly at 3:30
May 16, 2027 (Elections)
Tecumseh Post 34
300 N. Evans St.
Tecumseh, MI 49286
June 12, 2027 (Organizational
Meeting Promptly at 2pm)
Dexter Post 557
8225 Dexter-Chelsea Rd.
Dexter, MI 48130

Third District

Lunch@12 pm, Business@1:00 pm.

September 13, 2026
Post 79
11401 17 Mile Road
Marshall, MI 49068

Fourth District

Service officers training @ 11 am
meal @ 12:30 Meetings @ 1:30

September 13, 2026
Hastings
November 1, 2026
Barod
January 10, 2027
Three Rivers

March 7, 2027
Decatur
May 16, 2027
Door

Fifth District

Meal @ 5:30 pm & meeting @ 7 pm.

September 10, 2026
Post 305 9548 Cherry Valley Ave
SE, Caledonia, MI 49316
November 12, 2026
TBA
January 14, 2027
Post 179 2327 Wilson Ave SW,
Grand Rapids, MI 49534
March 11, 2027 (Nominations)
Post 47 3811 W River Dr NE, Com-
stock Park, MI 49321
May 13, 2027 (Elections)
Post 28 700 S Harbor Dr, Grand
Haven, MI 49417

Sixth District

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

September 13, 2026
Pinkney Memorial Post 419
9807 Whitewood Rd.
Pinkney, Michigan 48169
734-878-9522

November 1, 2026
Brighton Post 235
10590 E. Grand River
Brighton, Michigan 48114
810-229-9088

January 10, 2027
Devereaux Post 141
3265 W. Grand River Ave.
Howell, Michigan 48855
517-546-2534

March 14, 2027
Buck-Reasoner Post 238
1785 Cedar Street
Holt, Michigan 48842
517-699-2235
May 16, 2027
Bernard A. Bendle Post 294
3440 Morrish Road
Swartz Creek, Michigan 48473
810-635-7333

Seventh District

Lunch@12:30 meetings at 2:00 pm

October 18, 2026
Post 293 Sebewaing
March 10, 2027
Post 4 Mt clemens
May 18, 2027
Post 382 St clair
June 24, 2027
Department Convention

Eighth District

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

September 20, 2026
Owosso Post 57
Guest Speaker: District 1 Com-
mander, Mark Sutton
November 15, 2026
Chesaning Post 212
Guest Speaker: Department 2nd
Vice Commander, David Yahr
January 7, 2027
Breckenridge Post 295
Guest Speaker: Gary Tanner

March 21, 2027

Elsie Post 502
Guest Speaker: TBD

May 16, 2027

Carson City Post 380 - Tentative
District Elections & Memorial
Services

Ninth District

Executive meetings @ 11:00am with
Lunch at noon. Meetings@1:00 pm

Tenth District

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

Eleventh District

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

October 24, 2026
Manistique Post 83

Twelfth District

Coffee and Doughnuts at 9, meet-
ing at 10 am, with a lunch and ad-
ditional hour after lunch if needed.

October 3, 2026

Iron Wood Post 5
320 E McLeod Ave Ironwood MI,
49938 Phone: 313-381-2245

Sixteenth District

All meetings start at 7:30 pm

* Service Officer School at 6:30 pm

**Memorial Service & Elections

Eighteenth District

Meetings @ 2:00 pm

Nineteenth District

Meetings will be held at the
**Gaylord Bowling Center, 1200
Gornick Ave, Gaylord, MI 49735**
Training at 10:00 am, Social Meet
and Greet at 11:00 am, lunch
served at noon. The both the Le-
gion and Auxiliary will start at 1:00
pm

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Caleb Mims
B.S. Information Systems and Cyber Security



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Joseph Weber — The Formerly “Unknown” soldier



Pat McGinn
19th District Commander

While still an immigrant Joseph Weber enlisted in the Ohio National Guard in Cincinnati and served with a hospital unit near the Mexican border before entering the U.S. Army during World War I. In February of 1918, Weber was traveling from Sault Ste. Marie to Detroit when a severe winter storm stranded him in Mackinaw City where he died of exposure at the railroad docks. When authorities discovered his body that spring, they found military discharge papers and a train ticket in his pockets, but no relatives came forward to claim him.

He was buried at Lakeview Cemetery in Mackinaw City and eventually became known simply as the cemetery's Unknown Soldier. As the decades passed, his actual identity was lost. 108 years after his death the Sons of the American Revolution undertook research to identify the man, as Joseph Weber, whose name can now be restored to the memorial.

The rededication of his grave isn't simply a new ceremony for an old monument. It represents the completion of a century-old obligation: an American serviceman who died alone and was buried alone without his name, and has finally been identified and remembered.



American Legion Department of Michigan 19th District proudly participated in the ceremony honoring not only Weber, but also the principle that no veteran should remain forgotten. Representatives included the 19th District Honor Guards, host Post 159 Mackinaw City, Post 95 Cheboygan, Post 194 Petoskey, and Post 227 East Jordan.

7th District
Robert Montgomery,
Commander



It appears to be a busy year shaping up for our district, so let's start out with membership, I just received the district goals the other day, and I have been studying them to figure out what needs to be done. We need to add 56 new members to get to 100%, and I know you might think I am smoking something funny, but I believe it is very doable if we all work together. I know some will say the young members are not there, but they are, the numbers show that we have only tapped into about 10% of the population and being the second-largest district in the state means we have the ability to make this work. Encourage members to carry applications and talk to everyone who might be a veteran. Last, please review the numbers for your post and give me feedback on your numbers. Keep something else in mind: I am here to help!! With any or all aspects of making your post run smoothly and effectively. So please do not be shy.

At our last District meeting on Sunday, August 16th we installed the new district officers. Our Next Meeting will be October 18th at Post 293 in Sebawaing. I hope you will make plans to attend. We will have much to talk about.

A New Era for Michigan Legion Post 372 Salvador Martinez, Adjutant



For years, American Legion Post 372 was known as the "Ghost Post." Founded in 1927 as the Businessmen's and Professionals American Legion Post 372, it built a proud legacy of service to veterans and the Grosse Pointe community—but never had a permanent home.

Members met wherever they could: restaurants, private clubs, hotels, and community spaces. Wherever veterans could gather, share stories, and continue serving others, Post 372

found a home. Even as longtime members passed, membership declined, and the pandemic made fellowship more difficult, the mission never disappeared.

Today, the "Ghost Post" has finally found a home at The War Memorial in Grosse Pointe Farms. Commander David Douglas, Charles Huebner, and Bruce Vollmer helped make that possible through their leadership and persistence. The new location gives Post 372 a place to rebuild fellowship, welcome new members, and strengthen its role in the community.

The Post is also entering a new chapter under a new name: Frederick M. Alger American Legion Post 372, honoring the Alger family's tradition of patriotism, public service, and support for veterans. Frederick M. Alger played an important role in the early establishment of The American Legion in Michigan, making the name a meaningful connection between the Post's history and future.

As Post 372 approaches its 100th anniversary in 2027, its focus is not simply on increasing membership, but on building a Post veterans want to belong to. Veterans of different generations and branches are coming together, including more women and younger veterans. At the same time, the stories and service of longtime Legionnaires remain an important part of the Post's identity.

After nearly a century, the "Ghost Post" has a home, growing ranks, and renewed momentum. The mission remains unchanged: veterans taking care of veterans. As Frederick M. Alger Post 372 prepares for its centennial, its next chapter may be its strongest yet.



L to R: Charles Huebner, Commander David Douglas, and Bruce Vollmer at the new home of post 372

Education And Scholarships

Rev. James K. Warunek

Hello Everybody, Dave Kennedy and I are once again up and running with the Zone 1 Education and Scholarship Committee. We have already started discussing ideas on how to get rolling earlier this year.

School is starting soon. Please consider this an invitation to think about how to reach out to your respective school leadership. We hope all of our districts and posts within the zone are thinking about how we all can promote the Legion's generous scholarships amongst the high schools in our areas this year. Let's not forget to include the homeschoolers, parochial and other schools, too.

This is another great training opportunity for your new members and junior leaders. Larry, our Chairman, Kim, Mark, Charles and Sheryl are ready, willing and able to assist in any way as well. We are here to mentor and serve.

Let's get creative and think about how we all can get our students and school staff involved. Thank you all for your efforts thus far. To all members and leaders, reach out anytime—Rev. James K. Warunek, 313.648.0011, jameskwarunek@gmail.com; David Kennedy, 517.416.7984, davidkennedy1701@gmail.com. If you're emailing or messaging either of us, please send to both of us. Thanks!



EDUCATION AND
SCHOLARSHIP
COMMITTEE

HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

★ A Constitutional Speech Contest ★

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JANUARY 24, 2027

District Oratorical
Contests Deadline



FEBRUARY 27, 2027

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The American Legion Membership Application



(Name)

(Date of Birth)

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Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Gary Easterling Director

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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
Valerie Johnson	Farwell, Ionia, Lansing, Battle Creek Bath, Grand Ledge, Eaton Rapids, Jackson, Laingsburg, Corunna
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



This Article was not written by AI!

Jim Showers, Department Media Coordinator

By now, I think everyone has seen and probably used some AI, whether it was ChatGPT, Claude AI, DaVinci AI, or any of the other ones. And while it will take your photos and details for an event and make a flyer anyone would be proud of they often makes mistakes. I want to help you be aware of what mistakes you have to check for whenever using AI.

Let me get the easy thing out of the way first: QR Codes. Whenever you ask AI to design something you want to include a QR code, ALWAYS grab your camera and check it. I can't tell you how many times I have the perfect flyer made just to check the QR code and it goes nowhere???

Don't get me wrong, you have to check everything the AI makes, as they are notorious for small errors. You may even find typos in words that were uploaded into your prompt (a prompt is what you ask the AI to do). SO you may ask AI to make a flyer, and you copy the time and date of the event to include on the flyer, and AI will list it at the wrong time. Sometimes I wonder if it is testing me to make sure I proofread the work.

So with all that being said, what do you think happens when you ask it to do something with our emblem or our Brand mark? You got it, it gets just slightly changed. So slightly that if you don't have an original next to you. You probably won't notice, but National will.

Last month, while our Leadership team was in Indianapolis for the Membership Training Department, Adjutant Ron Runyan got new orders as it comes to using AI to Generate Marketing Material, and you guessed it, they say ABSOLUTELY not.

There are a couple of ways around this. If you pay for your AI you can upload the "Brandmark and Emblem Branding Guidelines" document from National, and tell the AI that it must conform to that publication. The other is to keep a blank space for the brand Mark and place it in with another image editor like CANVA or Adobe Express.

Keep making those flyers but keep yourself out of trouble.



GET YOUR



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Legion Legislative Report

Tim Poxson, Legislative Chair

It's Election season again. Just a reminder that the American Legion does not endorse any candidate for any position. Furthermore, you cannot have your photo taken with anyone running for office unless you are not wearing anything that identifies you as being a member of the American Legion. You should

not place election signs on or near your Post that imply that you support any candidate. Under MCL257.615 and according to the Michigan Department of Transportation, the adjacent property owner must give approval to place signs in the right-of-way adjacent to their property; however, the signs will be removed if they block the view of traffic, even with your approval. If you invite a candidate in to make a presentation to your Post, you must remove or cover up any paraphernalia that identifies your post as being an American Legion Post. If one candidate comes

in to make a presentation to your Post, you must invite the opposing candidates to come in and make a presentation; we still do not make an endorsement. Remember the American Legion is a nonpartisan organization and anything your Post does affects our ability to get and keep veteran benefits from elected officials. You may put your status as a non-profit in jeopardy by showing support for political candidates or positions.

The American Legion, Department of Michigan Judge Advocate strongly discourages taking a position on any local or regional issue, unless it is specific to veterans in your community. Posts should verify whether the Department and National organization have a written opinion or resolution on any subject before going public with a post opinion. Do not put millage signs in or around the post. The reason for this is that some members might be in favor of a millage while other members might be against. Likewise, some members of the community will be for it while others will be against it. There is no clear benefit to taking a position, but it can certainly cause discontent within the post and community if you do.

LIT Spotlight:

Medicare Supplement Plans

Reaching retirement age brings a long list of financial decisions, and health care should be near the top. While Medicare provides valuable coverage, Original Medicare does not pay 100% of your medical expenses. Deductibles, coinsurance, and other out-of-pocket costs can add up quickly—especially when you are living on a fixed retirement income.

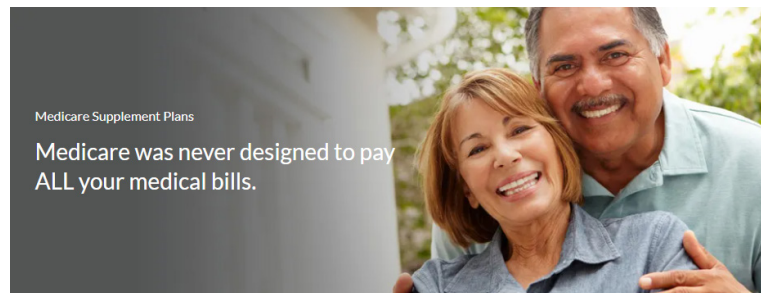
That is where Medicare Supplement Insurance, commonly called Medigap, may be worth considering. Medigap policies are sold by private insurance companies and are designed to help cover some of the costs that Original Medicare Parts A and B leave behind. (Medicare) The American Legion has a partnership with the Legionnaire Insurance Trust www.thelit.com and also with Wellcare. When you plan and take advantage of these benefits using them, the Department of Michigan American Legion also gets back revenue from them. Many of your current Medicare plans can be bought through them, and you can be assisting our Veteran Services here in Michigan.

One important reason to investigate your options early is that Original Medicare does not have an annual out-of-pocket spending limit. Depending on your health and the amount of care you need, unexpected medical expenses could become a significant part of your retirement budget. A Medicare Supplement policy can provide greater predictability by helping reduce certain deductibles and coinsurance costs.

Timing also matters. For most people, the best opportunity to purchase Medigap coverage is during the six-month Medigap

Open Enrollment Period that begins when you are 65 or older and enrolled in Medicare Part B. During that period, insurers generally cannot deny you a Medigap policy or charge you more because of pre-existing health problems. Waiting until later could mean fewer options or higher costs.

Medigap is not right for everyone, and it is different from Medicare Advantage. But as retirement approaches, it is worth taking the time to compare your choices. The goal is not simply to have Medicare—it is to make sure your health coverage fits your needs, your budget, and the retirement you have worked hard to enjoy.



Medicare Supplement Plans

Medicare was never designed to pay
ALL your medical bills.

PRINT PAGE



Medicare Supplement Plans

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Legion

eHealthMedicare.com, a non-government website run by the insurance agency eHealth of eHealthInsurance.com, specializes in helping people with Medicare potentially save money on their health insurance. In as little as 60 seconds, either online or on the telephone, you can find plans from some of the country's highest-rated health insurance companies (including some with A+ ratings) as defined by the credit firms A.M. Best and Standard & Poors.

You deserve Medicare Advantage & more

Wellcare is honored to be The Official Medicare Advantage Provider of The Legionnaire Insurance Trust, to serve those who have served our country. We are committed to delivering the coverage and benefits veterans need to support a healthy quality of life.

Enroll Now

Call now to learn about your enrollment options.

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The Health of Your Post: Strong Posts Build a Strong Legion

Mark Downing, Post Development Chair

Every American Legion Post has a story. Some have decades of history and strong community ties. Others are still building their identity. Regardless of size, age, or resources, every Post should ask: How healthy is our Post today?

Post health is about more than membership numbers, meeting attendance, or owning a building. A healthy Post is active, welcoming, financially responsible, and committed to the mission of The American Legion. It is a place where veterans want to belong, members feel valued, leaders are developed, and the community sees the difference we make.

Membership is our foundation, but success requires more than recruiting. Members must feel welcome, have opportunities to serve, and know their involvement matters. Veterans of every generation are looking for purpose, camaraderie, and ways to continue serving. A membership card alone does not build a Post. Engaged Legionnaires do.

Healthy Posts also develop future leaders. We appreciate the longtime members who have carried the workload for years, but no Post can depend on the same few people forever. Ask: Who are we mentoring today to lead tomorrow? Leadership succession takes planning and opportunities for members to step forward.

Our programs show our commitment to veterans, families, youth, and our communities. Posts that are active and visible build stronger relationships and give members meaningful ways to serve.

Financial responsibility is equally important. Sound practices, regular audits, transparency, and accountability build trust and allow Posts to focus on their mission.

A building does not define a successful Post. Many strong Posts meet in community centers, churches, schools, or other shared spaces. Their programs and community service become their "front door." For Posts with a home, keeping it clean, safe, and welcoming helps create a positive first impression.

Culture may be the most important measure of Post health. Are new members welcomed? Are new ideas encouraged? Do members feel respected and appreciated? People may join because of the mission, but they stay because they feel they belong.

As Chairman of Post Development for The American Legion, Department of Michigan, I challenge every Post to take an honest look at its health. Ask: Where are we strong? Where can we improve? What is our plan for the future?

Use the Post Health Check included with this article as a tool to start that conversation. It is not a report card, but a way to identify strengths, recognize challenges, and plan for continued success.

Strong Posts build a strong Department—and help ensure The American Legion continues serving veterans, families, and communities for generations to come.

(Available online: michiganlegion.org/forms)

Post Health Check: Five Questions Every Post Should Ask

A healthy Post does not happen by accident. It requires an honest assessment of where you are today and a commitment to where you want to be tomorrow. This tool is designed to help your Post identify strengths, recognize challenges, and develop a plan for continued growth and success.

1. Membership — Are We Growing and Engaging?

☐ Are we actively recruiting eligible veterans?
☐ Are new members welcomed and given opportunities to participate?

☐ Are current members encouraged to stay involved?

☐ Do we have a plan for membership growth and retention?

2. Leadership — Are We Preparing the Future?

☐ Are we identifying and mentoring future Post leaders?

☐ Are responsibilities shared among members?

☐ Do we encourage members to take on leadership roles?

☐ Do we have a plan for leadership succession?

3. Mission — Are We Serving Our Veterans and Community?

☐ Are our American Legion programs active and meaningful?

☐ Does our community know who we are and what we do?

☐ Are we supporting veterans, families, youth, and community needs?

☐ Are we visible and engaged beyond our Post meetings?

4. Operations — Are We Good Stewards?

☐ Are our finances transparent and properly managed?

☐ Are required reports, audits, and administrative responsibilities completed?

☐ Are our meetings organized, productive, and focused on the mission?

☐ Are we operating in a way that builds member confidence and trust?

5. Culture — Would Someone Want to Join Us?

☐ Do we create a welcoming environment for new and current members?

☐ Do members feel respected, appreciated, and valued?

☐ Do we encourage participation, teamwork, and new ideas?

☐ Are our meetings and activities something members want to be part of?

Taking Action

After completing this checklist, discuss: What are we doing well? What areas need improvement? What is one action we can take in the next 90 days to make our Post stronger? Remember that healthy Post is not defined by its size, age, or whether it owns a building. A healthy Post is defined by its commitment to serve. If your Post identifies areas where it needs assistance, Post Development is here to provide resources, ideas, and support.

Strong Posts. Strong Members. Strong Mission.

YOU HONORED US WITH YOUR SERVICE.

Now let us honor you.



Join us for a complimentary meal and pre-planning seminar to learn about VA burial benefits available. For more information, contact Anthony.Lauri@DignityMemorial.com or 586-775-2424.

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Around the State...

Bowen-Holliday Post 35

Is trying to find a better way to retire the flags. Burning synthetic flags sends toxic black smoke into the air and tarry black ooze into the ground. They are confident they will find a responsible alternative for other Posts. More to come on this subject.



Post 35 Goes For BINGO!

Starting on June 3rd with 20 players, it grew to over 40 players in just 2 months. Folks came out looking for a win, enjoying some comfort food and rubbing elbows with other patriots. They credit amazing Legion family volunteers for the program's success.



Post Commander Mike Wildman calls out numbers at Post BINGO

Department Helps Out

When we heard about a tattered American Flag flying over a local Veteran's apartment, the Department sprang into action. Adjutant Ron Runyan and Media Coordinator Jim Showers replaced it the next day.



Stevensville Jr. Auxiliary Unit 568

was honored to host a dinner for Post 568 Purple Heart Veterans on National Purple Heart Day on August 7



L to R: Richard "Dick" Killips, & James "Jim" Soteriou both Vietnam Veterans

2026 U.P. Veteran of the Year, Steve Kwarcianny

U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant (Ret.) Steven Kwarcianny, was honored as the Upper Peninsula Veteran of the Year for 2026 at a ceremony at the U.P. State Fair



U.S. Representative Jack Bergman, State Senator John Damoose, State Senator Ed McBroom, and State Representatives Dave Prestin, Karl Bohnak, Greg Markkanen, and Parker Fairbairn surround Veteran of the Year Steve Kwarcianny at center

The McDonald-Osmer Post 451

was Instrumental in the Design and Dedication of the Ada Township Veterans Memorial



The Gladwin County Post 171

dressed up for the 4th of July parade in Beaverton. We had our trailer decorated for the "walking wounded" and the rest marched and handed out candy.



Shown here David Neubauer-Civil War, Joe Ellis-WWII Marine, Buckeye Barney carrying flag of the 13 colonies, Rick Bratton-Civil War, Mike Perry wearing the uniform he wore as a submariner, Todd Gawel-George Washington, The Honor Guard, Kneeling is Rosie the Riveter, Sarah Kyle, Mayor of Gladwin and Jim Volant, Commander in his Tiger stripe camos from Vietnam

16th District Installs Officers

Commander Austin attending 16th District Installation, with the Ritual Team



L to R: Victor Fisher, Mike Buda, Jim Austin, Mike Globke, Gregg Price



Michigan Chaplain Workshop

Hosted by the 5th District



When: Saturday September 26, 2026

Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm

Coffee & Donuts will be provided
Box Lunch will be offered for \$5.00

Where: Michigan Veterans Home at Grand Rapids
2950 Monroe Avenue NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Topics:

- ❖ Michigan Veterans Home – Serving Americas Heros, Then, Now and Next
- ❖ MVHGR Tour
- ❖ ASIST: Suicide Awareness
- ❖ Hospice: What, When & Why
- ❖ Chaplain 101

Open to All American Legion Family

**YOU MUST RSVP to Deb Weatherbee by Sept. 18, 2026
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"