



MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE

Michigan Legionnaire & Wolverine Auxiliaire Vol. LXXXIII No.5

UNDERSTANDING THE GROSS DOMESTIC EXPENDITURE REPORT FROM THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

Is Michigan Really In Last Place?

Over the past 2 years there has been many stories talking about how Michigan is in last place or at the lower ends of the kind of service going to our 680,000 veterans. Does the "average" really reflect the kind of service our veterans are receiving? To understand what the media is speaking about we wanted to give you the Legionnaire information about this GDX report. We will lay out what is in the report, some facts overlooked in the report, characteristics of Michigan often not mentioned, and a list of options available to increase the total amount coming back to Michigan from the Veterans Administration.

What is the GDX (Gross Domestic Expenditure) report? The GDX is a report issued by the Veteran Administration each year on how much money the VA spends in a state. The report covers ten categories, they are:

1. Compensation and Pensions paid

out to Veterans in the State – All monies sent to veterans who have applied for and were awarded through the process of a filed claim.

2. Construction and maintenance – Total money VA spends on construction of VA facilities and general maintenance and upkeep at current ones.
3. Education and Vocational Reimbursement – G.I. Bill old and new programs being used by veterans and currently serving military personnel. It includes all vocational and educational rehabilitation being conducted in the state.
4. Loan Guaranty – VA Home Loans being issued, note no state except Texas receives money for this category since that is where the process takes place for that entire program.
5. General Operating Expense - GOE represents the costs necessary to provide administration and oversight for the benefits provided by VA. These costs include those for overhead (lights, heating and cooling, etc.) and human resources. Think of all of the VA employees in the state, from the hospitals to the CBOC's to the regional office.
6. Insurance and Indemnity- estimates of VA expenditures for death claims, matured endowments, dividends, cash surrender payments, total disability income provision payments, and total and permanent disability benefits payments.
7. Medical Care - The specific programs reported for this category are: medical care; national program administration; general post fund; medical and prosthetic research; and miscellaneous accounts
8. Unique Patients - The count of unique patients is based on the home residence of the patient. Unique patients may include a small number of non-veteran patients treated at a VA facility.

According to the 2012 report, the VA spent \$2,768,689,000 (yes, that's billion), in the State of Michigan for VA related items. Divide that dollar amount by the number of veterans (680,417) we have and you come up with an average per veteran.

With so much information given in the GDX report focusing on 1 item, like any other type of number, people lose sight of other items in the report, for example did you know? **Michigan is 13th in the total amount of VA Expenditure coming to states (out of 53).** The District of Columbia has 37,000 veterans, a total expenditure of 1.9 billion dollars, giving them an average of \$52,000+ per veteran. How does Michigan compete with that? The VA is headquartered there hence the large amount of expenditure. Does this reflect better service there compared to Michigan?

Is Guam Really Better than Michigan?

Guam had a higher rating than Michigan in 2010; they ranked at 22 based on average per veteran. How is that? Guam only has 8,144 Veterans, but total VA expenditure is \$40 million dollars giving them an average of \$4900 per veteran. In 2012 in Guam, no money was spent on construction, general operating expenses and had zero unique patients; total expenditure was over 53 million dollars raising their average to \$5900. They rank last in total expenditures to the territory.

Texas receives an \$800 billion advantage over ALL states and territories because all Loan Guarantees are processed through Texas.

Construction projects matter; spikes in construction of a VA hospital or facility will increase a states expenditure for a year or 2. In 2010 Michigan's Construction Expenditure was 25 million dollars, but fell to 10 million in 2012, most of which comes from Saginaw VA Medical Center receiving the money to provide upgrades and additions to the center.

Characteristics of Michigan

What are some characteristics of Michigan reflected in the GDX report? **Michigan ranks 12th in total Compensation and Pension expenditure. This is the area our accredited Veteran Services Officers concentrate their efforts.** There are only approximately 2,858 (as of 2009) active duty military personnel in the State. Michigan is home to zero major military bases.

Michigan has seen 19 base closures in the past 30 years. Major military bases make a state attractive to military retirees to take full advantage of their retirement benefits and provide an influx of educational benefits to a state when the service members of the major bases attend higher education within that state using their G.I. Bill benefits.

Michigan, with its manufacturing base and unionstrong history, has many older veterans who benefit from defined retirement packages. Many of these packages have healthcare benefits that do not require them to go to the VA. Although in recent years those benefits have been cut or reduced, there are still a large number of veterans on those plans.

Compare 2010 to 2012 (before the MVAA) using the "average expenditure per veteran" has increased by \$600. How so? We have seen a decrease of veterans living or living in the state by 15,000, compensation and pensions have increased by \$260 million; education

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MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE & AUXILIAIRE

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Do you have a photo you would like to submit for the Michigan Legionnaire and/or website use? E-mail it to us at info@michiganlegion.org or mail it to department attn: Mark Sutton. Please keep the photo at least 200 dpi or larger. If you are submitting a hard copy photo, please note photos printed from home printers 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 Mark Sutton at: info@michiganlegion.org or by phone at 517-371-4720 ext 16.



Chaplain

Jennifer L. Smith, State Chaplain

FOLLOW THE LEADER

By now, we are in 2014 and I am hoping this publication finds you well. This is especially true after the hustle and bustle of the holidays, which I pray were also joyous. Now, borrowing a bit from the style of departed WWII comrade and journalist, Andy Rooney, I ask with an intent tone, 'Have you ever wondered what makes a good leader?'

Okay, if you are still following along, bless you and I will get to the point [grin]. In terms of your Posts, Districts, and Units, having the proper motivation is key. I have long asked why each of you joined our Legion Family. When you honestly evaluate your motivations, I hope you discover they include a need and passion to help others found within the Four Pillars. Proverbs 3:27 ESV advises, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it." That trait is a great foundation, with camaraderie, satisfaction from giving, and building upon a noble legacy added bonuses.

I humbly assert that the best leaders are selfless and not selfish; decisive but open to consider other ideas; caring for others and seeking cooperation; willing to mentor and empower; and desire that their organization lasts long after

their respective leadership terms end. Most importantly, the best leaders do not let ego overwhelm reason or ethics. In our jobs and lives, many of us have seen those too self-absorbed with their own needs. However, no one can lead you forward when they spend their time looking at themselves in the mirror; that view is narrow and (literally) backwards. Instead, As Philippians 2:3-5 ESV relates, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Therefore, let us endeavor to be good leaders and followers with a focus upon worthy Legion goals, as both roles are needed for organizational sustainability and all can positively lead-by-example. We certainly need those that are willing to try new things and/or improve upon existing techniques to increase membership, better serve others, and ensure we remain strong. In short -- Good leaders are also able followers. Let us support each other and always push forward as we follow and lead.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Winter Conference. May God richly bless you.

EAGLE SCOUT AWARD \$1000 and \$10,000

Eagle Scout Awards are due by March 1st of this year. Remember the Department is now giving \$1000 to the winner at the Department level. They then go on to compete for the \$10,000 National Eagle Scout Award. Get your applications in see more at www.michiganlegion.org/scholarships

**March 1st, 2014
Deadline**

STATE OFFICERS

- State Commander Raymond Moore, Lake City
- State Adjutant Patrick W. Lafferty, Farwell
- 1st Zone Ernest Berry
- 2nd Zone Jerry Andrus
- 3rd Zone August Miele
- 4th Zone Gary Hlavka
- 5th Zone David Spencer
- Finance Officer George Dolan, Grand Blanc
- Historian Mitch Louth, St. Johns
- Chaplain Jennifer Smith, Lansing
- Sergeant-at-Arms Michael Buda, Dearborn
- Judge Advocate F. Garrit Veldman, Muskegon
- National Executive Committeeman John Skinner, Schoolcraft
- Alt. National Executive Committeeman Roger Webster, Croton
- Immediate Past Commander Thomas Brown, Oscoda
- Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Director James Topps, Adrian
- Membership Director Larry Money, Buchanan
- Public Relations Director Mark Sutton, Eaton Rapids

**MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE
OPT OUT FORM**

Yes!

I would like to view the Legionnaire online at www.michiganlegion.org instead of receiving it through the mail. Please permanently remove me from the Legionnaire mailing list. This option will not effect any other Legion mailings.



Name: _____

Membership No.: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

E-mail: _____

Signature: _____

Please mail this form to: The American Legion, Department of Michigan, 212 N. Verlinden Ave, Lansing, MI 48915 or fax this form to (517) 371-2401

Headquarters

Raymond Moore, State Commander

Community involvement matters

A NEW YEAR TO PUBLICIZE OUR ORGANIZATION



Raymond Moore
State Commander

Here we are beginning a new calendar year in which we can continue to promote our Organization. However we need to continue to complete the mission of our current American Legion year. You all know the need to renew,

reinstate and recruit new members if we are to continue our programs.

Have you lined up contestants for Boys State, Student Trooper, Oratorical, Girls State? Are you promoting applications for Wilson and Brewer Scholarships? Have you determined how to fund these very important programs?

I was privileged to attend a dinner at Taylor Post 200 at Thanksgiving wherein the Post Family provided dinner for Veterans who are patients at the Detroit VAMC and homeless or other Veterans who may not have had

another place to gather for a GREAT MEAL. This event was attended by not only me but also the Department Auxiliary President and the Sons of The American Legion Commander. We all had a hearty meal and camaraderie with these Veterans. My hat is off to the Legion Family at Post 200 for providing this meal and comradeship for 44 years now. What a great way to meet the pillars of our organization, and what a great way to publicize what our Organization does.

We also were present at the Great Lakes National Cemetery on November 11th for a very solemn remembrance of those who have preceded us. I trust each of you also attended a remembrance somewhere.

There have been many District tours, meetings and events where I have learned of many ways in which our members are fulfilling the true intention of those who met and organized this Organization so many years ago.

Having noted all of that, I just wonder how much effort is exerted in a fol-

low up to see that some publicity is generated in your local media to tell your story? Each of these events should have had some prior notification to the media and additional notification after the event. This is how we will generate participation by the non-veteran, non-member Veteran to support those fundraising efforts we undertake to pay for these events and hopefully also get that non-member Veteran to join us so our next event can be even larger and far reaching.

The Auxiliary has been holding their annual Christmas Gift Shops at the VA Hospitals and the State Veteran Homes. Again, I was privileged to attend the opening at the Grand Rapids Home. My hat is off to the Auxiliary members who work so hard to co-ordinate this undertaking. What a feeling to see these patients and members being assisted in the ability to choose gifts to present to their family members, knowing that this may be the only gifts they are able to provide. Way to go Auxiliary and thanks for being a part of The American Legion

Family

And NO, I haven't forgotten the Sons of The American Legion. Their Commander or his representative was present at all of these functions. You all should know that our Sons are providing personal, monetary and whatever other kind of support that may be available to make these events happen along with carrying out their own programs in support of our American Legion Family.

As we now go forward into a new calendar year I hope we can all continue to work together for the continuing Mission with which our founders envisioned. These few that are mentioned seem to show that we continue to meet their expectations and the many more that have not been mentioned will only add to the legacy.

Our mission now is to tell the tale and continue the legacy. I know we can make it happen. I look forward to many more visits and learning many more ways in which all of our membership is spreading the word and doing the good deeds.

Patrick W. Lafferty, State Adjutant

The IRS Rules about DD214's has been clarified



Patrick W. Lafferty
State Adjutant

Over the last 6 months many have had questions and concerns about the maintaining of DD-214's on file for every single member in the post. Based on the "Field Guide" of an IRS agent there was confusion and concern with the requirements. Since August we have tried to provide some guidance with the information we had. As of December 11th, 2013, we received the following information from the National

Adjutant, TAL met with the IRS and the IRS has modified their field examination guide. The following is the points modified:

Effective immediately, if an agent needs to determine the composition of membership of a veterans' organization, the agent shall initially request and collect from the organization four sets of documents, as follows:

1. Membership list(s) that contain the names of the members, the military service dates, and the status of each individual member. This status information is to indicate whether the member is active duty, veteran, cadet, or spouse. The organization may provide list(s) from its affiliated parent organ-

ization.

2. A document that shows the dues structure and classes of memberships.
3. The documentary information used by the organization to create the membership list(s) noted above. Organizations should be informed that to satisfy this request they may provide membership applications, membership cards, or other similar documents, other than DD Form 214.
4. Documents showing the organization's policies and procedures on how it decides an individual is eligible for membership, including documents which show the means by which it enforces its membership requirements.

If an agent possesses information that contradicts documentary information provided or if the organization fails to satisfy a reasonable request, agents may then request DD Forms 214 or other discharge documents from the organization in order to ascertain compliance with the federal tax laws cited herein. DD Forms 214 must include the name, department, component and branch of service, and record of service dates. All other personal information may be redacted.

We would recommend that Posts maintain members "SIGNED", properly filled out membership applica-

tion. By marking the military service era and signing the application the member certifies they meet the requirements of the organization. Keep stored in a locked box, file cabinet, or other secure location.

For SAL

Same rules apply above and we recommend each squadron maintain a "SIGNED", properly filled out SAL membership application. The application includes the SAL Members signature that they subscribe to the Constitution of the Sons of the American Legion, the veteran's name, dates of military service and relationship to the member. Keep stored in a locked box, file cabinet, or other secure location. If possible, make a copy of the American Legion member's membership card and attach to the SAL Membership application. Maintaining some sort of proof that a member is qualified is the key to this process. The American Legion has the 501 (c) 19 tax status; it is up to the IRS to ensure organizations that state they want a certain tax status in the tax code maintain the requirements for that status.

We understand the confusion this has brought, we hope this helps clarify the requirements. I would encourage every Post to be a part of MYLegion.org to handle their roster needs. FYI, "Green Sheets" of rosters will no longer be available after January 1st, 2014.

Membership

Recruit, Reinstate, Renew

AS IT SHOULD BE



By Larry Money, Membership Director

Here we are the start of a new year. Deer meat is in the freezer, thanksgiving has past us, we have just finished eating all of those Christmas leftovers and are ready to start our New Year resolutions. As it should be.

But this is always the time that we need to start working a little harder to reach those membership goals. This is the time of year that those who have yet to renew seem to forget.

So we need to remind our Post membership teams that this is where we start making those phone calls or knocking on doors and getting those teams out and start renewing our membership numbers. This is also a great time to start recruiting new members, many veterans have had the opportunity to be home for the holidays, how many have we seen and talked to? How many did we try and recruit?

The task is not going to be an easy one, but if we work together for the common goal we have the ability to achieve.

The Department of Michigan has met or exceeded its current year's membership goals, I believe we can once again be a 100% Department for 2013-2014. AS it should be.

Recruiting Tip

Next time you meet a Veteran, instead of asking them if they would like to join The American Legion, assume they are already a member and ask them "What Post do you belong to?" Assume they are already a member; the response you receive might open up an opportunity to clarify a misconception they may have about The American Legion.

District Meetings 2013-2014

1st District

Meetings begin @ 7PM
 March 3, 2014 @ Joe Louis Post #375
 May 5th, 2014 Memorial Observance Joint Legion/Auxiliary
 Mon. 5-26-2014 Annual Memorial Day Program Roseland Park 10:30 am
 ** 2901 N. Woodward Ave, Berkley, MI. 48072
 June 2, 2014 @ Joe Louis Post #375
 Address: 19486 Sherwood, Detroit, MI. 48234

2nd District

JAN12th, 2014 YPSILANTI POST # 282
 SAL meets @ 12:00pm
 Service Officer Training @ 1:00pm
 American Legion meeting @ 2:00pm
 MARCH 9th, 2014 @ TECUMSEH POST # 34
 SAL meets @ 12:00pm
 Service Officer Training @ 1:00pm
 American Legion meeting @ 2:00pm
 MAY 18th, 2014 JACKSON POST # 29
 SAL meets @ 11:00am
 Service Officer Training @ 12:00pm
 Memorial Service is @ 12:30pm, American Legion meeting to follow.

3rd District

Executive Board meetings at 11:30AM
 Regular District Meeting at 1:00PM
 Sunday, January 5, 2014- Captain Oscar Brady Post No. 298, 228 N. 20th Street, Battle Creek, Michigan 49037- (269.963.7230)- Kitchen Open for Menu Items
 Sunday, March 2, 2014- Charlotte Post No. 42, 1000 W. Lawrence Highway, Charlotte, Michigan 48813- (517.543.1334) This will be a Birthday/Memorial dinner (\$7.00) held by the Auxiliary with distinguished guests, please RSVP). Please join us for this eventful and memorable occasion.
 Sunday, May 4, 2013- (3rd District Election)- Kalamazoo Post No. 36, 1920 E. Kilgore Service Road, Portage, Michigan- (269.735.2544)

4th District

January 5, 2013 Buchanan Post# 51
 March 2, 2013 Constantine Post# 223
 May 4, 2013 Bridgman Post#331
 We have a luncheon at these meeting at 12:30. Then our meetings start at 2:00.

5th District

Meetings start at 7 PM
 Jan 9th, 2014 @ Daniel W. Cassard Post 208
 Mar 13th, 2014 - @ Evans-Swanson Post 123
 May 8th, 2014 @ Charles A. Conklin Post 28
 July 10th To be Announced

6th District

Service officer school @11AM
 Lunch @ 12:00 Noon
 Meetings @ 1:00 PM
 Jan 12, 2014 @ Pinckney Memorial Post 419
 March 9, 2014 @ Devereaux Post 141
 May 4, 2014 @ Grand Blanc Post 413

7th District

Lunch served @ 12:30PM

Jan 12, 2014 @ Lapeer Post 16 Meeting @ 2:00PM
 March 16, 2014 @ Caseville Post 543 Meeting @ 1:30PM
 May 18, 2014 @ Port Huron Post 8 - Memorial Service-Meeting @ 1:30PM
 June @ State Convention - Livonia

8th District

Lunch at 1:30 PM
 Meetings begin at 3 PM
 Jan 5th, 2014 @ Greenville Post 101
 March 2, 2014 @ St. Johns Post 153
 May 4th, 2014 @ Bath Post 412

9th District

Exec Board @ Noon
 Service Officer and Past Cmdr @ 12:30 p.m.
 Lunch @ 1:00 p.m.
 General Membership @ 2:00 p.m.
 March 8, 2014 @ Fife Lake Post 219
 May 10, 2014 @ Traverse City Post 35

10th District

Lunch @ 12:00PM
 Meeting @ 1:00PM
 Jan 4 , 2014 @ Mikado Post 254
 Mar. 1st ,2014 @ Prudenville Post 245
 May 4, 2014 @ Hale Post 422 (MemorialService)
 Jun. 7, 2014 @ TBA

11th & 12th District

January 18th, 2014 @ Iron Mountain Post 50

16th District

Meetings Begin at 7:30 PM
 Jan 14th, 2014 @ Stitt Post 232
 Feb 11th, 2014 @ Fort Dearborn 364 *
 March 12th, 2014 @ Wyandotte Post 217
 April 8th, 2014 @ Trenton Post 426 *
 May 13th, 2014 @ Lincoln Park Post 67 **
 Dual
 June 10th, 2014 @ Garden City Post 396 *
 * Service Officer School 6:30 PM
 ** Memorial Service at 6:30 PM

17th District

Meetings start @ 7PM
 15-Jan @ Northville #147
 19-Feb @ Livonia #32
 19-Mar @ Plymouth #391
 16-Apr @ TBD
 21-May @ Livonia #32
 4-Jun @ Livonia #32 @ 6:30PM

18th District

Meetings start @ 2:00PM
 Jan 12th, 2014 @ Pontiac Post #20
 March 9, 2014 @ Rochester Post #172
 May 18th, 2013 @ Farmington Post #346
 Memorial Service / Election of Officers
 June 8, 2014 @ Royal Oak Post #253

District 19

Dec 8, 2013 @ Gaylord Post
 Mar 9, 2014 @ Elk Rapids Post
 May 17, 2014 @ Onaway Post

If You're a Member In Good Standing With Your Department of The American Legion...



Endorsed by Your Department of The American Legion

You are eligible for LegionCare; \$5,000.00 in Accidental Death Insurance at NO COST TO YOU if a covered accident occurs while traveling on official Legion business*, or \$1,000.00 at NO COST TO YOU for all other covered accidents. This has been arranged on your

behalf by Your Department of The American Legion. As soon as your enrollment is received, LegionCare will take effect, and will continue through August 31, 2016. Your acceptance is guaranteed, so mail your coupon today.

Cut out this section and mail it in today to enroll in LegionCare.

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 DATE OF BIRTH _____ AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERSHIP CARD NO. _____ DEPARTMENT _____
 MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE YOUR DATE OF BIRTH SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Cut it out

Have you filled out all the above information?
 Please mail to: Legionnaire Insurance Trust • P.O. Box 26720 • Phoenix, AZ 85068-6720
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Complete details of the coverage are contained in accident only Master Policy LIT102002 underwritten by Life Insurance Company of North America. This plan is not available in all states.

*For Purposes of the Legionnaire Insurance Trust, a member of The American Legion, with current year's dues paid, could be eligible for the \$5,000 Accidental Death benefit if he/she is traveling to, attending, or returning from an official function at which the Legionnaire represents his/her Post, District, Department, or National Organization in an official capacity.



AUXILIAIRE

**From the Desk of the President***2013 - 2014 Department President, Sandra Snyder*

With the holidays behind us, it is time see where we are in our goals we have set for this year.

- Have we increased our membership? Have we brought back members that were slipping away?
- Have we reached out to the public and told them, Who we are, What we do and Why we do it?

- Have we kept good records? It is almost time for reports. So where are we?
- Set down and write what YOU as a member did so far this year. How many Veterans and families have you served this year? How many hours did you spend on each one? Were monies spent?
- What did you do for children? Again, remember how many, Children, hours and dollars.
- What did you do in your community? You can take each

one of our programs and do a summary of where you are. Have you promoted our Girls State, our Scholarships? Put what you do in the newspaper, on Facebook, put flyers on you events through your community. Spread the good word about our Auxiliary.

-- Now take all this information to your next unit meeting and give it to your President and your Chairmen. This will help them as they put together their reports that go to the Districts.

-- We are part of the LEGION FAMILY, are we working with our family?
I have been in our units and our districts as I have traveled across this state and you tell me what you are doing. Please make sure to share that with your unit, so they can share with your district and department. We are a family who care about those who have served for us, our country, and the world we live in.
Keep doing what you do. Just remember to share it.

CHECKLIST TIME--IN THE UNIT, THE DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT

SCHEDULE FOR THE AUXILIARY WINTER MEETING

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14
(ALL EVENTS AND TIMES ARE
SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

1:00-5:00 p.m.	Registration
1:00-2:30	Executive Board Meeting
3:00-4:00	Meet and Greet Cent. Div. Vice President
6:00-7:00	Social Hour—cash bar Hosted by the American Legion Department of Michigan
7:00	Banquet Honoring the National Commander and the Cent. Div. Vice President

4:00-- Poppy Speaker and Activity

RECAP:
REGISTRATION: \$15.00
BANQUET: Friday, February 14--\$25.00
LOCATION: Holiday Inn Gateway Center
5353 Gateway Center
Flint, MI 48507
810-232-5300 or 800-465-4329-
Use code "ALG" for the room rate of \$85.00/night plus tax.

Auxiliary store will be open 1-5 Friday, and 9-1 Saturday for supplies

Notice to veterans with dentures....

Dr. Bob Erhard is a practicing dentist in the Lansing area. He would like to help a few vets in need this holiday season. He runs a One Day Denture Service - Erhard Dental and Implant Center in Frandor Shopping Center in the eastern part of Lansing.

We have a lab on premise so we can make dentures in one day, under most circumstances. If you people know of a vet that has lost a denture, or has very old and worn dentures, we would love to help make this season better for those in need.

Bob has committed to donating to 6 patients and I want to be the contact person for you. We certainly can go into the New Year, depending on your time lines with your members. We would be looking for vets that are wearing dentures now or are not wearing their dentures due to losing them, or they no longer fit properly.

We know the power of a smile and want to give some back this Christmas season. See what you can do and my cell is 517-862-1177 or the office is 517-351-2146.

Thanks for your help, Donna D'Angelo

Ellen Jackson, Department Chaplain



The Four Chaplains— Strength and Courage

The holiday season is over and after giving thanks for our family, friends, and Nation it is time to remember the strength and courage that our legion family was built on.

We have all been through hard times once or twice however with the love of our God and the strength inside of each and every one of us we have made it through and seen the light to continue on.

Through the continuous dedication in helping veterans, their families, and our country we stay united. Think of the four brave young men, today known as the Four Chaplains, who showed strength and courage that faithful night aboard the U.S.A.T. Dorchester. These four brave individuals lead men to life jackets and boats so they could survive, even giving up their own jackets when the supplies ran out. As the ship was sinking they say you could see the chaplains linked together arm in arm with their heads bowed in prayer. So take time out this year and attend a Chapel of Four Chaplains service in your area.

"We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... we must do that which we think we cannot." ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

8:00-10:00	Fundamentals of Fundraising (legion family workshop)
10:15-2:10	Unit, District and Department Officer Training Workshops
10:15-10:35	President
10:35-10:55	Vice President
10:55-11:15	Chaplain
11:15-11:30	Historian
11:30-12:00	Secretary
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:40	Treasurer
1:40-2:10	Membership
2:10-2:30	POD Info
2:30-2:45	Question Period
2:45-3:00	Break
3:00-3:30	Girls State Workshop—"How to Promote GS in the Community"
3:30-4:00	Guest Speaker—Freedom Center

Nancy Knox Endorsed as Department President

At a regularly scheduled meeting of the Victor I. Rieck Unit 351 of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan held on, July 1, 2013 and the Seventh District Associations of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan held on August 4, 2013. Nancy (Mrs. John) Knox was endorsed for the office of Department President for the year 2014-2015.

Nancy became a member of the Auxiliary in 1971, through the eligibility of her husband John who served in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War, John who is a Past State Commander for the Department of Michigan. Nancy and John have two daughters, one son, five granddaughters and one grandson all who are members of the Legion family. Her mother and mother-in-law are also members of the American Legion Auxiliary. Both father and father-in-law were World War II veterans. Nancy has worked as a bus driver for the Utica Community Schools for 18 years before retiring in 2012. She has served as the Union Secretary for thirteen years. John and Nancy are members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Utica.

In the Unit Nancy has held numerous offices and chairmanships. She held the office of Secretary, Treasurer, Second and First Vice President and in 1988, 2003, and 2005 served as President. She has also been the membership chairman for the past 14 years.

At the District level Nancy has served as Chaplain, Historian, Second and First Vice President and District President in 2005. Nancy has served on many committees and chairmanships including the Distinguished Guest Chairman.

Nancy has served the Department as a member of the Girls State, VA&R, Past President Parley, Children and Youth, Revitalization, and the Americanism Committees. She has served as Chairman of the Credential Committee. She also served as Eastern Area Membership and Membership Chairman for Department President Judy Lynch. Also she has worked for the last 11 years during the Girls State Session. Served as Department Historian for the 2010-2011, Department Chaplain 2011-2012, Department Second Vice President 2012-2013, and is currently serving the Department of Michigan as First Vice President.

We the members of the Seventh District Association, American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan, feel that Nancy is well qualified to serve and ask for your consideration for Nancy to serve as your Department President for the year 2014-2015.

Michelle Nickel, Unit 351 President
Antoinette Stamos, Unit 351 Secretary
Betty J. Cline, 7th District President
Susan Svacha, 7th District Secretary

Ellen Jackson Endorsed as Department 2nd Vice President

At regularly scheduled meetings of the American Legion Auxiliary, 18th District, we voted to endorse Ellen Jackson from Walter Frazier Unit 108 for the Office of Department 2nd Vice President for the year 2014-2015.

At the Department level, Ellen is presently serving as Chaplain and has previously served as Historian and the Americanism Chairman. She also served on the Americanism Committee and the Community Service Committee.

At the Unit level and District level she has dutifully held the offices of President, 1st and 2nd Vice President, Chaplain, Historian and Sgt-at-Arms. She brings her varied experience as Chairman of VA&R, Americanism, Community Service, Membership, Past President's Parley, Girls State, Membership and Education, and is currently the District Publication Relations Chairman.

Before Ellen came to Unit 108 she was a member of Chief Pontiac Unit 377 and served as President, 1st and 2nd Vice President, Chaplain, Historian and Sgt-at Arms. She also served on many Chairmanships at Chief Pontiac.

She has served on the board for the Pontiac Veterans Memorial Wall. She was a Representative for the ALA for the scholarship for the families of Pontiac Veterans. Ellen is also a partner of Salon 224.

Ellen is a dedicated, active Auxiliary member who joined under her deceased father, a Korean War Veteran. She is committed to serving the Veteran and their family and has shown her loyalty over a 15-year period of unselfish giving.

It is our honor and duty to ask for your support of our endorsement of Ellen Jackson for the Office of Department 2nd Vice President for the year 2014-15.

Regards,
Angela Galbraith
President, 18th District

Janice L. Rollin
Secretary, 18th District

Susan Verville Endorsed as 1st Vice President

At a regularly scheduled meeting of Alfred Branchini Unit #17 held on October 8, 2013 and the Upper Peninsula Association of Auxiliaries District meeting held on October 12, 2013, Susan (Mrs. Dwaine) Verville was endorsed for the office of Department 1st Vice President for 2014-2015.

Susan (Sue) became eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary through the service of her father George Rymkos, who served in the U.S. Navy in WWII. Sue has been an active member for 27 years.

On the Unit level, she has held the offices of Unit President (13 yrs.), Secretary (4 yrs.), and Historian (2 yrs.). She has been chairman of many committees for the Unit. Chairmanships as follows: Jr. Activities, Girls State, Constitution & Bylaws, Americanism, Legislative, National Security, Publications and Public Relations, V.A. & R., Leadership, Community Service, Education, Children & Youth and Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

On the District level, Sue has served as the Upper Peninsula Association of Auxiliaries District President (2 yrs.), 1st Vice (2 yrs.), 2nd Vice (2 yrs.), Chaplain (1 yr.) and Historian (2 yrs.). She has been chairman for the following committees: Americanism, National Security, Legislative, Leadership, Constitution & Bylaws (6 yrs.), Girls State (10 yrs.), Girl's State Bus (12 yrs.), and Children & Youth (2 yrs.).

On the Department Level, Sue has served as Chairman for Citizens Flag Alliance (1 yr.), Upper Northern Area Membership Chairman (3 yrs.), Auxiliary Emergency Fund Chairman (1 yr.), Legislative Committee member (1 yr.), Children &

Youth Chairman (3 yrs.), Department Historian (1 yr.), Department Chaplain (1 yr.) and Department 2nd Vice President (1 yr.)

We ask for your support of our candidate for Department 1st Vice President for the year 2014-2015.

Penny McPherson
Unit #17 1st Vice President

Julie Kay Rumann
Unit #17 Secretary

Krystal Oberle
UPAA President

Diana Bancroft
UPAA 1st Vice President



Pictured left to right: Pamela McVeigh, Deputy for the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans; Sarah Brooks, Representative for the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans; Vivian Plummer, auxiliary member; Judy Jones, auxiliary member; Claudia Barber-Martin, 17th district President; Carolyn Bianchi, Deputy for the GRHV; Mary Anne Yuncker, Past Department President; Harriet Sturim, 5th District Chaplain; Ethel Putala, Deputy Ann Arbor VMC. The ladies convocated at the Grand Rapids Homes for Veterans for the Woman Veteran Luncheon with Claudia Barber-Martin as a guest speaker.

Legislative Report

Doug Williams, Legislative Chairman

Well here we go again Its TERM LIMITS time there are 27 seats up for election in the House and 6 seats up for election in the Senate. That means we have 33 new Legislators that we must educate as quickly as possible to the needs of our States Veterans. Here is a list of the Districts and if you reside in one of them I would request that you pay close attention to who is running and what they know about Veterans or their needs. Support those who care about us and reject those who don't. We need friends in both the House and Senate when it comes to appropriations and the only way we can get them, is to know who they are and what they will do to stand up and help. The districts for the House seats are 37, 63, 38, 82, 47, 5, 12, 80, 43, 90, 13, 44, 58, 27, 59, 36, 45, 8, 42, 104, 62, 21, 98, 34, 28, 6, and 19. The Districts for the Senate seats are 6, 28, 32, 13, 17, and 23.

We will be reviewing the Veterans preference legislation currently in place as several issues have been raised with regard to hiring of veterans in State jobs.

This last legislative year we have focused on employment for veterans and have supported the passage of legislation concerning regulations and testing. We will continue to support those not yet acted upon. We wish to thank Representative Gail Haines for her support and sponsorship of legislation that will make it easier for veterans to get employed in specific jobs by changing testing procedures.

I want to also thank the Secretary of State Ruth Johnson for her assistance and support with license plates and having Drivers License's show veteran status these are real game changers for the States Veterans. The new state ID and driver license with veteran designation should be available late spring of 2014.

All proposed legislation having to do with Military or Veterans will pass through The Military Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security Committee for the House and the Senate where they will hear testimony for or against it. If your representative resides on either committee I would suggest that you give them a call whenever there is a need for support of the legislation that helps our States Veteran population.

The Department of Michigan Legislative Committee is Mr. Douglas Williams (Chairman) Legionaries, Mr. Lino Pretto Vice Chair second half, Mr. Rick Donovan Vice Chair first half, and Mr. Richard Tracy. Should you have a legislative concern please do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of a committee member.

We have 3 main legislative goals for the coming year; increase funding to our Veteran services operations for the Michigan Veterans Coalition, the building of a new Veterans cemetery in the Upper Peninsula, and bringing a Veterans Nursing Care Home to the southeastern area of the State.

Again this year we will join with the Commanders Group and hold a Legislative Breakfast in the House Office Building Mackinac Room on the fifth floor. The date for this event is February 5, 2014 starting at 08:00. At this event we will present a program of information for those Representatives and Senators in attendance. We have invited all 110 Representatives and 38 Senators and we hope they all show up for

breakfast. We have also invited the Adjutant General his staff and the entire, new Department of Veterans Affairs to this breakfast to show our support for their efforts.

Michigan currently shows a 9% unemployment rate, the veterans unemployment rate stands at 15% and in the City of Detroit (they currently stand at 18%). It should not be too hard to see why we have supported legislation that will bring jobs into the State and make it easier for our returning veterans to obtain employment.

PTSD & Traumatic Brain Injury as well as Sexual Assault and Homelessness are still important issues facing our returning veterans and we should all do everything we can to keep these issues in front of the Veterans Administration and our own Department of Veterans Affairs. It is important that we initiate a program similar to other States whereby treatment for a veteran suffering from PTSD can be obtained at his/her local hospital and the cost born by the Veterans Administration if it works in other States it can work here. So we will make it a part of our legislative efforts.

Our Veterans organizations have been in the business of serving our Country's Veterans since the American Revolution, in one form or another and we have always had to go to the people to acquire what we need to do this. Since the Legislature is the keeper of the people's money (taxes) we have to rely on them for funding and if they don't know or can't see our needs we suffer. We need those who make the decisions about funding to fully understand why Abraham Lincoln made his comments at Gettysburg and why those who served and are now serving must be always first in our hearts.

10th District Report

Ken Burtch Jr. District Commander

Happy New Year, I hope that your holiday season was safe and joyful. The 10th District now has a Website, and I have been asked by last year's adjutant, Harold Burcham, to be the webmaster. I will do my best to make this endeavor a success for our District. The web address is: www.mi10thdist.org - The email address is: info@mi10thdist.org.

If your Post has an activity that you want the rest of the district to be aware of send that information to me and I will post it on the website under the announcements tab; which you can find under the "More" tab. There is also a tab for the Auxiliary, and the SAL, so I also ask those two groups to send me information.

I continue to impress upon each post that I visit to continue their hard work in the area of membership. My endeavor to make each of us a "Walking Bill Board," by wearing your legion clothing i.e. ball cap, T-Shirt etc., continues. This will allow you to make contact with possible members that you do not see, but they will see you. So far I have made 13 Post visits, and have 2 more scheduled for December. If you have a certain date in mind for me to visit your Post, please contact me (989)94108412. Keep up the good work!

5th District Update

Catherine Buckley District Commander

The months are flying by and the excitement is in the air. The Fighting Fifth is in 4th place in reaching our goal of 100%.

Being the Commander even though it has its trying moments, visiting the other Post has been exhilarating, Cedar Springs Post#287 had their Red Flannel Parade and what a treat for me to ride in it wearing Red Flannels.

November brought us to our Sparta Post#107 a revitalization in the works. It was a great success. Mr. Al Ford can do this with his eyes closed and he will get a new member any way he can. Even when the EMT's are call because he fell, he signs up the Marine that was treating him. You won't know unless you ask.

Veterans Day Kent City Post#123 and the High School puts on a wonderful

Veterans Recognition Day, honoring each Veteran and providing a wonderful lunch. I was also honored to be the guest speaker at Post#28 for their Veterans Day Banquet. Even though the day was unseasonable cold the Veterans Day Parade had a wonderful following.

Our District Meetings are building and we have 3-4 guest to give out valuable information. Our last meeting had a wonderful surprise visit from Commander Moore who gave us some wonderful information.

District Meetings are so important, for there is new valuable information for all veterans and sometimes you'll never learn of it unless you come to a meeting and it may be just what you need.

The New Year and the Brass ring are out there for all of us Legionnaires. All we need to do is reach out, the rewards are numerous.

JOIN US FOR THE 78TH LEGION BOWLING TOURNAMENT

John "Scotty" Graham

The info Packets for the 78th Legion Bowling Tournament were sent out in Mid December. I apologize for the error on the entry form, which states it's the 77th Annual tournament. However, I managed to get Colonial Lanes Address Correct! We have irons in the fire for 2015 & 2016 hopefully we will have more information by the March issue. If there are any questions on the eligibility changes please contact me at 734-422-8670 or email malbowl@sbcglobeal.net.

The info packets were sent to all the posts on the Department mailing list (406) and all the Captains of record of last year's Tournament. For those of you who maybe new or interested in bowling,

the tournament will be held at Colonial Lanes of Flushing, located at 6430 Pierson Rd., during the weekends of April 5, 12 and 26. Saturday squad times for the Doubles and Singles Event are 9:30am & 1:30pm. Team Event will be held on Sunday at noon. Larry Shepard and Dane Carnell will share the Honorary President Duties (subject to change) and the organizers of post functions. Oakley Traynor Post 64 is located in Flushing at G-4314 Carpenter Rd. This is important to all participants, you do not have to bowl in all three events, you may bowl in any combination of events, be it just one or all three. Furthermore, you may bowl in doubles and team event again, provided you have a different partner or team!

Getting Ready for Boys State 2014

Jerry Kelley, State Boys State Director

Since the conclusion of Boys state 2013, the Boys state committee has been working on ideas and procedures to make Boys State 2014 another successful year. We have challenged the District Commanders to have ten young men more in 2014 than they had from their District in 2013. We have set in place with Mark Sutton and the Public Relations Committee a plan to spread the word about Boys State to schools, and American Legion Posts. We attended the Michigan Social Studies Teachers Conference in October and the Michigan School Counselors Conference

in November.

As we get the word out, American Legion Posts will be asked to step forward and help sponsor young men to attend Boys State 2014. We are also asking Posts to reach out to their local schools, National Guard Units and Reserve Units. And yes even your own Post. Won't it be great if your Post sponsored a son or a grandson of one of our own?

January is the kick off for Boys State 2014 and we would like every post to sponsor at least one young man to attend Michigan's outstanding "National Civics Leadership Program". Applications for 2014 are online at www.michiganlegion.org/boysstate.

Continued

UNDERSTANDING REPORT

and vocational benefits have increased by \$40 million; and medical outlays have increased by \$100 million. The state has seen a decrease in the VA's general operating expenditure by \$2 million; insurance down \$1.5 million, and construction down \$15 million.

According to a 2010 State Summary report by the VA just over 10% of Michigan Veterans were receiving compensation or pension benefits. The average dollar amount received by the veteran was \$13,666 per year; which is an average disability rating of 60-70%. This is a reflection of the work accredited veteran service officers do to help the veterans receive the benefits they have earned.

Can Michigan Do Better?

Regardless of how a person uses data to measure success or failure there is always room for improvement. Truth be told, Michigan has left millions of dollars (maybe even a billion) on the table, over the years, because the State of Michigan was not "accredited" with the Veterans Administration. The state now has that accreditation and is working on ways to draw more VA dollars to the area. *The American Legion and other VSO's are working with the new Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency to bring those dollars to the state.*

The Michigan American Legion has been providing assistance with the VA Claim process (known as a Power of Attorney) for more than 80 years in Michigan. It is one of the founding pillars of the organization, so we have seen a thing or two on how to service veterans in the state. We understand the attitudes of veterans when it comes to the VA and bureaucracies, veterans simply hate red tape. We dot the "I" and cross the "t" for the veteran and we represent these veterans free of charge if their claim is denied and goes to appeal. Our staff represents them at the Detroit Regional office and if the case goes to Washington, D.C. The American Legion national organization has a staff of 19 individuals designated to just appealing claims in front of the VA board. All free of charge to the veteran and the Washington Staff is free of charge to the State of Michigan.

3 Steps to more expenditure in the State

The Michigan American Legion believes there are some steps the state can take to increase expenditures to the state in the areas where a state has some control. Those areas are in Compensation and Pension Claims, Education and Vocational Rehabilitation, Medical expenditures, and Unique Patients.

Step one: in the spirit of Governor Snyder's "private, public partnerships" the state should join in complete partnership with the VSO's in the Coalition and allow the funding to have accredited veteran service officers stationed all over the state and ensure the time in those places are adequate for veterans to conveniently see a service officer. The current arrangements do not take into consideration evening hours of operation, "office days" for officers to complete paperwork, or enough officers to cover educational institutions where we find our busier younger veterans. With the understanding that reputation matters when it comes to a veteran trusting a service officer.

The drastic cuts in the grant funding from the State of Michigan (Executive Order No. 2009-22 cut the grants from \$4.2 million to 3.2 million, the current budget is set at 2.4 million for 2014) has reduced the amount of trained service officers on the road by over 30% since 2008. Changes to VA policies have also made it difficult to have volunteers assist in the process. Increased costs in fuel and healthcare have made the reductions in funding multiply.

Step two: once the human assets are in place run a "Pure Michigan Veteran" campaign to let veterans know where to go for services. (Thank you Rob Weiss of the VFW for that idea, many years ago). This campaign would cover a phone app, website advertising, radio, and TV. We must remember 73% of Michigan's veteran population is over 55 years old.

Step three; allow the hundreds of Veteran Service Organization Post homes to be used as VA Health Benefit sign up centers. Give incentives to a group who could advertise to their local veteran community the 10-10ez forms and sign veterans up for their veteran healthcare. Training and requirements would have to be established, along with oversight. This provides a grass roots effort to increase unique patients.

Is Michigan under serving its veterans? In some cases yes, in some no, is there room for improvement, plenty. The Michigan American Legion believes there are ways to improve service to our veterans and we are working with the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency every day to bring those ways to the attention of the Governor and the legislature to promote more funding. In the meantime we press forward one day at a time, one veteran at a time, because here at The American Legion "every day is veterans day".

Notes: All VA data is available at www.va.gov/vetdata

4th Zone Commander Update

Gary HLavka, Zone Commander

Legionnaires, Happy New Year 2014, where does time go? We are half way through our year and I wanted to update you on my activities for the year. I have had an amazing time meeting with Legionnaires, the District meetings I have been able attend have shown me the great leaders we have in our District Commanders. I have attended the 10th District and 9th District meetings, had the pleasure of meeting with leading candidate for Department Commander Jim Wallace, attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Grand Rapids Veterans Home canopy. The veterans will now load and

off-load from buses without being rained on or snowed on. Bob Johnson, Post 35, is a board member and doing a great job for the Legion. Thank you to former board member Gerrit Veldman for getting that project started.

I had the privilege to attend the AmVets Post 120 Brotherhood dinner and they mentioned the renovations they did with the help of Home Depot Grants. I would encourage any post in need of repairs to consider contacting Home Depot to help with Post repairs or upgrades.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Winter Meeting in Flint, MI. Be safe and God Bless you all.

Public Relations Update

David Loop, Chairman

I attended the 2nd District Meeting as the public relations chairman, there were 13 Posts represented. Out of the 13 only 2 had a public relations representative at their Post.

As I have stated before public relations starts at the post level. Ask yourself this; what is your Post missing with not having a Post public relations person?

Surely your post has activities that should be made known to the community, yes? How else is your community going to know what your Legion is doing if you do not report it? Creating a strong network of contacts on the

local level of radio, newspapers, and TV helps publicize the activities at your post. You knowing them and them knowing about the 4 pillars, The Legion programs your Post supports prepare them to write and cover stories of the Legion. I want to encourage each Post to assign a PR position.

I would also encourage everyone to attend the Leadership Colleges coming in January, the program provides a good guidance on what the Legion represents. Mark Sutton contributes to the schools with good information on Public Relation ideas. The remaining dates can be found at www.michiganlegion.org.



The American Legion Family

Department of Michigan - Leadership College 2013/14

Leadership College classes will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **Check in begins at 8:00 a.m.**

January 11, 2014
January 25, 2014

Grand Haven Post 28
Port Huron Area - Location TBD

Register Today! There is no cost to you and Lunch provided!! So, don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to learn more about and with The American Legion Family.

Some of classes being presented are: Protocol, Meeting Rituals, Roberts Rules of Order, Resolutions, Leadership Skills, Duties of Office and Form importance, Legion Family Programs, Post/District/Dept. Relationship, Post Development & Revitalization, Membership, Public Relations, in addition all attendees receive numerous handouts (CD rom, flyers, etc.)

Register on-line at Michiganlegion.org, or e-mail your information to mark@michiganlegion.org (subject: leadership), or call Mark at Department Headquarters (517) 371-4720 x 16, or Mail completed registration form to:

The American Legion Dept. of MI, Attn: Leadership College,
212 N. Verlinden Ave, Suite A, Lansing, MI 48915

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Post #: _____

E-mail: _____

Member: Legion Auxiliary SAL

What other topics you would like to see covered either this time or in the future:

Mark which class you will be attending:

January 11, 2014
 January 25, 2014

Grand Haven Post 28
Port Huron Area - Location TBD

ARE YOU A "HAM RADIO" Operator?



The American Legion has a new Amateur Radio Club and they are looking for other Legion Posts who have a Club too. Here in Michigan the Ravenna American Legion Post #297 has created a Amateur Radio Club and is looking for other clubs in the state. Or are you interested in starting a club? They can help.

Their club recently showed why they formed when a recent storm moved through the area, the radio club members hit the streets (see pictures) to report damage throughout the area to authorities. Once the club is established, working with the local disaster preparedness groups they bring a valuable asset to assessing damage or reporting emergencies in the area.

For further information about The American Legion Amateur Radio Club or amateur radio at the Ravenna American Legion Sherman Moore Post #297, please contact Richard Strait, 231-788-6305 or email: RavennaAmericanLegionAmateurRadio@comcast.net

Department Veteran Services Director Jimmy Topps Announces Retirement



Jimmy Topps, Department Veterans Services Division Director, announced his retirement and will retire in June of 2014. Jim started his career in 1998 as a Department Veterans Service Officer. Tirelessly helping veterans receive benefits they have earned. A Vietnam War veteran Jim was promoted in 2009 to the Director position

and has been overseeing the DVSO staff since. He looks forward to volunteering and continuing to help our Veterans in retirement.

The search for a new director has begun and we look to have a new hire in place by Feb 1st, 2014 to begin working with Mr. Topps on transitioning.

Thank you Jimmy for your years of faithful service and dedication to our Veterans and the Legion Family.

Barb Money Retires After 35 years of Dedicated and Loyal Service



Barb Money started with The American Legion in 1978, on December 31st, 2013 retired from the Department of Michigan. Barb leaves big shoes to fill in the office and her joyful attitude and dedication to her job will be missed by many. We wish Barb a great new chapter in her life.

Bring the Legion Family and Community together for service Elsie Post 502 Creates a Family Support Group



When the new Commander was faced with how to bring help to a local veteran in need of a ramp, he ran in to many obstacles. Through dedication and determination he found the right people and the money to get the ramp built. Through his search for help he found a bigger

need in the community. Knowing the Post could not do it alone the Post created a "Family Support Group". The group is run by the Legion, but anyone in the community, veteran, non-veteran, young, old, a little to give, a lot to give, anyone with the desire to help veterans, service members, and their families can help and have input on the activities of the group. Truly a reach into the community, if you would like to learn more about what Commander Evert Hendley is creating call him at (989) 834-6192.

2nd Zone Report

Jerry Andrus, Commander

To All Posts in the 2nd Zone, I look forward to seeing and meeting everyone at your District Meetings. We have a strong push from National to reach a all time high before our 100 year anniversary and we can do this. In order to get new members it will be about Public Relations and Community Involvement. Promoting our programs, Boys State, Student Trooper, Oratorical and other scholarships; giving awards to Police and Fire, to Teachers. These are all opportunities to be in the community and promote to the press.

One way I am getting in to the community schools is with a dictionary for third graders. I have a copy of the book that I take to all district meetings and post meetings that I attend. The first two-thirds is the dictionary and then it has the weights and measures, The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. It also has all the Presidents of the United States, all the States in our Union and all the countries of the World; all for just \$2.00 per book. First get the Principals permission, then the names of all the 3rd graders. On the inside of the cover make a sheet with the American Legion emblem and your post name and number and donated to the third grade class of. Across the page is a line for the third graders name. Have a presentation and make sure to invite the local media to cover it.

Frank Flores Candidate for Department Sgt At Arms



The 18th District proudly supports Frank Flores of Post 354 and current Department assistant Sgt At Arms for the 2014-2015 Department Sgt At Arms. Frank received his eligibility from his service in the US Marine Corps during the Vietnam War.

Veterans' Service

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency: No Wrong Door for Michigan Veterans



Jeff Barnes, Director of the MVAA

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) opened its doors in March 2013 and serves as the central coordinating point, connecting those who have served in the United States Armed Forces and their families, to services and benefits throughout the state of

Michigan.

No matter where they start or what they need, our goal is for Michigan veterans to find "no wrong doors" in their search for benefits or services. Our initiatives and service include:

- We provide strategic direction and coordination of services in four focus areas: **employment, education, health care**, and issues that affect **quality of life** for Michigan veterans and their families. The agency also provides support, training and a veteran friendly credentialing program for employers and educational institutions.
- We are committed to **improving dialogue** between veterans of all eras and every state department and agency that serve veterans.
- The **Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (MVTFF)** provides discretionary grants to war-era veterans or their families to assist with unforeseen, temporary financial emergencies. Grant applications are made to county committees made up of local veterans.
- The **Michigan Veterans Housing Assistance Program (MiVHAP)** grants relief to eligible service members and veterans who are facing

foreclosure or who have already lost their home, using \$5 million in one-time funds authorized by the Attorney General.

- We assist veterans who need copies of their **discharge documents**. The following DD214s can be accessed and retrieved through our office: World War II, Korean Conflict and Vietnam Conflict bonus records; copy six from 1980 forward.
- The **Grand Rapids Home for Veterans** and the **Dominic J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans** in Marquette are open to eligible veterans and their spouses who need skilled nursing, dementia, special needs or domiciliary care. Admitted veterans may be eligible for financial assistance from the US Department of Veterans Affairs for some of the cost of their care.

Web portal serves as one-stop shop for veterans

The new MVAA web portal, www.michiganveterans.com, is an important step in helping Michigan veterans connect with the benefits they have earned. It serves as a "one-stop shop" on the web, putting information about benefits and resources from across the state in one centralized location.

Mirroring MVAA's priorities, the site focuses on the four key areas of **education, employment, healthcare** and **quality of life**, as well as our two veterans' homes, putting an array of information and resources at visitors' fingertips, where they can put it to immediate use. Visitors can also register for email updates on benefit changes, new laws affecting veterans and other news.

For more information about MVAA, visit www.michiganveterans.com or call 517-284-5298.

SAFEGUARD YOUR VA CARD!

Mark Sutton, PR Director

LEGIONNAIRES- FOR YOUR INFORMATION: Recently it was reported on a Florida TV News broadcast that the barcode on your VA issued card can be scanned by a simple barcode scanning app on a smart-phone and reveal your social security number. **IS THIS TRUE? YES**, it is, with the help of a veteran visiting the office I used a app on my phone to scan the barcode. Once it was read it revealed his social security number. Like other pieces of information in your wallet or purse keep it safe.



Property Tax Exemption for 100% Disabled Veterans in Michigan



In November Governor Snyder signed into law SB 352 giving a tax exemption to veterans rated with a 100% disability rating or unmarried surviving spouses of a qualifying veterans. Veterans or spouses who feel they qualify should contact their local tax assessor's office for what paper work is needed and important deadlines for admission. These vary from place to place, but most require a DD214, a Disability Rating letter from the VA, and the signing of an affidavit form. Most offices need this information by March 1st of each tax year to qualify for the exemption.

SUPPORTING THE ECONOMY OF MICHIGAN

How Are We Doing?

Jimmy Topps, State Veteran Services Director

When your Department Veteran Service officer starts a claim for a veteran it might take months and years for that veteran to finally receive the benefit. So what does that mean to the State of Michigan's economy? For just the month of November 2013, 243

benefit claims were awarded which means a shot into the Michigan economy for \$5,161,551. We keep record of each month and we consistently provide numbers similar to this each month. Thank you to my staff for the hard work and counseling they give to our veterans, and their families in need.

American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

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. Assist you and your Dependents in getting the Benefits that you have earned by your service to your Country

American Legion Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Mr. James C. Topps, Director

Patrick V. McNamara Federal Building Room 1210

477 Michigan Avenue Detroit, MI 48226

Office Phone - (313)-964-6640 or (313)-964-6641 Office Fax (313)-964-5697

Cell Phone - (269)-312-2239 - e-mail - james.topps@va.gov - toppsjamesc@yahoo.com

Monday thru Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm



James C. Topps
Director

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Gary Garvin, Department Service Officer - gary.garvin@va.gov
Gary Easterling, Department Service Officer
Lena Payton-Webb, Department Service Officer
Call the Detroit office for Field Service Officer schedule.

It May Be Winter, But It's time to Plant!

Margo Forrester, Poppy Chairman

Those who attended the Fall Conference Schools of Instruction have already learned about the Poppy Program and how to plant Poppy Seeds! They learned ways to Bring Awareness, Increase Poppy Revenues and how to grow our Poppy Program!

We can bring awareness by ordering our "Made in Michigan" poppies and distributing them to our members and the general public. Inform them about the Poppy Story, the Flanders Field Poem and how veterans benefit from monies raised, too.

ALA's Got Talent! Our members can enter in the Artistic Creation Contests and design Centerpieces, Unique Displays and Corsages using the ALA Poppy as the main element in their creations. These arrangements can also be displayed as decorations at future Post events.

Know a teacher, try and reach her (or him)? Ask if they can incorporate our Poppy Poster Contest as part of their curriculum! Its art, history and patriotism all rolled into one assignment. And they are a joy to judge!

Does your Unit sponsor a Miss Poppy or Little Miss Poppy? She is a Unit Junior who promotes the Poppy Program and assembles a scrapbook about her efforts.

Increasing revenues can be as simple as ordering and distributing poppies to just taking up a collection! But it can also be a creative like: hosting a Poppy Party, offer Poppy Memory Sheets for a donation for Valentine's Day, have a Poppy cookie or cupcake sale, "Put For Poppies" indoors using a putting cup or what is an Legion without a 50/50?

Our Department Website, michalaux.org has our Program Guides with deadlines, Unit Mailings and Poppy order forms. Our National Website, alaforveterans.org has extensive information about the Poppy, its history and printable Unit bookmarks. There are examples of Poppy Posters and Artistic Creations at north-eastern459.org/Poppy Museum and on Facebook at American Legion Auxiliary Northeastern Post-Unit 459 Poppy Museum, inside Photos, Albums. For any questions, feel free to contact me at 616 363-6688 or msscottforrester@gmail.com.

Have you heard about Resolution 20? The National Executive Committee has authorized new flexibility in Poppy Fund spending. Units can spend Poppy money on veterans as they always have! But monies raised after May 9, 2013 can also be spent on active military in two cases: where a financial or medical need is evident.

History Project Request

Deanna Cortright, Department Historian

This year I would like to have our units do something different and fun. In addition to your normal unit history, I would like for you to pick a long time member of your unit and write a story about them. This can be done in any manner you choose.

Unless your unit is a fairly new one, there is at least one member that has been a member for 40 or 50 years, or more. That member has seen many changes in membership and has done about anything that could be thought of at one point in time or another.

If your unit keeps an annual history, you might get a lot of data from those documents. You can also get with that member and set a time to interview them. Once you have compiled the information, please put it in writing and send it to me. Again, I have no preference as far as how the data is put in writing. I would

like to have you include the members name, number of years that they have been a member, and as much data as they can give you about the years they have belonged. You might find that back when they first joined there was a special project that allowed the unit to make a fairly large amount of money or donate to specific programs your unit no longer supports.

In most cases, you will find that the member used to be there for everything, support all of the programs, and was an officer for many, many years.

At the end of the year, depending on the number we receive, we will find a way to put them together and get a copy to all units.

I look forward to getting at least one from each unit. If you want to do more than one you are welcome to do so.

Let me know if you need anything or have questions.

Volunteering at Oscar G. Johnson Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Barbara Larson, Representative, Iron Mountain

Volunteering can be very busy at the Oscar G. Johnson Veterans Affairs Medical Center, OGJVAMC. Besides doing Bingo every month at the facility, we sponsored a game at the Patient Carnival, served ice cream, and socialized in the month of July. We served refreshments at an outing at the U.P. Veterans Memorial and Park in the month of August. Our Auxiliary helped out at the Pine Mountain Veterans Recovery Festival in order to make our Veterans fill welcomed. In October, we helped with the flu clinics by handing out and helping patients fill out the forms.

On a monthly basis, we help out with escorting patients to and from appointments, outpatient services and visitation, help with special

outings and football parties. We have served cake for every National Veterans Appreciation Week to the outpatient Veterans. The CLC kicks off the event after our VAVS Committee Meeting and the events end with a party for the CLC Residents at the end of the week.

Our Annual Christmas Gift Shop is one of our bigger events, in which we help the CLC Resident Veterans pick out items for their family members for Christmas. We help decorate and coordinate for the hospital for Christmas.

Overall, we are in need of new volunteers as it was requested to help with the growing changes that occur at the OGJVAMC. Volunteering is a very fun as well as rewarding experience. If you are interested, please contact me at blsuzie@gmail.com

Another Year of Great Success for Our Veterans

Sarah Brooks, Representative, Grand Rapids

Our volunteers are so dedicated to our veterans and widows. Also the volunteers from the 5th, 7th, 9th and 19th Districts are very helpful, especially with the Christmas Gift Shop.

We have many events throughout the year, such as:

- Bingo
- Service Cart
- Blanket Drive for the homeless veterans
- Ladies Tea/Bingo
- Carnival
- Luncheon honoring women veterans, as well as wives and widows
- Mother's Day Card Program
- Hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves for the members
- Gift of money to the non-income members who receive no income

- Poppy Bonanza to show how poppies are made
- And our biggest project – Christmas Gift Shop, which is held for three days. Members are able to shop for up to five members of their family. Gifts are wrapped and mailed.

These are not one time projects but are year round.

We believe in letting our members know that we are here for them. We currently have 472 members at the Home.

We don't volunteer for praise, but we do it to let the veterans know they are not forgotten.

I can't begin to count all the hours that our volunteers do each week. As we say, the Lord gives us strength to give back that they gave to us. Our thanks to all, not only the veterans' organizations that help, but to people as a whole. May you be blessed for all you do.

We are “On Track for our Veterans”

Betty Cline, Seventh District President

The Seventh District is striving for First Place. Thank You Units for keeping those Dues coming in. My goal again this year is to Communicate with each other. My Unit #8 held a “Meet and Greet your District President”. With Unit 8 members and Unit 382-449 and 525, around 40 members enjoyed good food and a good time. Next I had lunch with Almont #479 and Lapeer #16. More Unit visits coming with Utica #35 and Harbor Beach #197.

Veterans Day I was honored to be Guest Speaker for the Allied Veterans Council. What a good time I had telling about what all the Auxiliary Members do for our Veterans and their Families.

Thank You Unit #449 for collecting Toys for Tots and Unit #8 For the “Tunes for Tots” party they collect toys for Christmas.

Public Relations DVD has been airing. This is a great awareness for all the good works the Auxiliary does. I thought it was great and so have others I have talked to.

Just to let Alyssa know the Jar is getting filled every time we have a function. The Public and members will be aware of “CHILD ABUSE AND BULLYING” when your year ends as our Junior President.

Reminder that Post #8 will host a Leadership Class on Jan. 25, 2014 in Port Huron. Registration is at 8 a.m. with coffee and rolls. Class is at 9 a.m. and lunch at Noon (no charge). After the class, you receive a citation and pin. Please try to attend.

Seventh District meets next at Lapeer Post #16 on Jan. 12, 2014.

My Project this year is collecting donations for the Freedom Center and Wilwin Lodge. We are keeping the Train moving on track for President Sandra and Membership Susan.

Promote ALA

Janice Rollin, Public Relations Committee Member

Do you wear the ALA brand? You know, the ALA brand. The American Legion Auxiliary emblem. In Michigan, we wear professional team jackets, collegiate team hats and high school team shirts. But, do we wear American Legion Auxiliary jackets, hats, shirts or ALA stickers on our vehicle? Look around right now...from where you're sitting...do you see the ALA emblem anywhere in sight? Start NOW .. to get our ALA brand out....so EVERYONE can see it. Can you explain the ALA mission? Have your Unit schedule a 5 minute session on how to spread the ALA message to a wider audience: who we are, what we do and why we matter..... use the public relations guide which has been created by visiting alaforveterans.org

Do you promote events in newspapers? Do you know a TV reporter that covers military organizations? Build a relationship with the media (telephone, email, press releases). Offer a well prepared interview that conveys your message. Don't forget to give thanks.

Promote through social media. Yes, I said it....social media: Facebook and Twitter followers read short posts. Include the 5 W's: who, what, where, when and why in your posts. Stay engaged with real time conversations, tweets, pictures and videos. Create a Facebook event two weeks prior to the date, invite fans to RSVP and share with friends. After the event, always thank fans.

Write a letter to the editor inviting eligible parties to join the ALA...by serving and supporting those who have given so much.

Promote events through your website and newsletter. Members who don't get to meetings can spread the word too.

Invite public officials to attract media. Have a local celebrity autograph items for a fundraiser.

Create and distribute flyers containing your promotion, location, date, time and description. Place these flyers where there's a lot of foot traffic.

Make sure you follow up with any potential member.

Wear the ALA brand. Yes, I said it. Wear the ALA brand.

ALL ABOARD at the D.J. JACOBETTI HOME FOR VETERANS

Wanda Westman, Representative, Marquette

As I'm writing this article on Veteran's Day, we just concluded our 11am ceremony. But here at the Jacobetti Home, we honor our veterans 365 days a year. I am so thankful to our many volunteers and the Auxiliary units who show special care to our veterans and improve their quality of life. We have 190 residents here and we try to include them in many activities. We sponsor bingo every Monday afternoon. We are looking for donations for this program at a cost of \$100 only once a month. The other Mondays are sponsored by local Auxiliaries. We work in the library, keeping magazine subscriptions current at a cost of approximately \$400 a year. We also maintain the greeting card rack for the resident's use.

My special project is activities and entertainment. The Home issues a Wish List every other month, so we can use our donations to the best use to benefit the most residents. We work with other service groups to host the holiday parties. At most of the parties, we play bingo and serve a snack after. For the past two years, we have hosted an Art Show to

showcase all the creativity of our residents. We have a hobby shop and wood shop. Our Marquette Unit #44 sponsors a sewing and fellowship group that meets twice a month with our women residents. We also have many music events including one of our Auxiliary members from Greenwood #114 who performs three times a month.

Our biggest project is Christmas Gift Shop where every resident gets a gift for themselves and up to 5 more gifts for their family members. I think it helps to maintain their dignity when our residents have a gift to give their wife, son or daughter for Christmas. We are busy getting all the donations from all the Auxiliaries in the U.P. and organizing everything for December 5th -6th. Please keep the Jacobetti Home in your thoughts and prayers during the cold winter months. Send your donations to Department, earmarked for Jacobetti Home and what project you wish to support. On this Veteran's Day and all year long, we honor our veterans. We appreciate the sacrifice that you and your family have given to allow us the freedoms we have today. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

Serving our Veterans!

Krystal Oberle, UPAA President

This past Veterans Day saw many tributes to our veterans from high schools to tv specials! There were dinners honoring our veterans, fundraisers and the distribution of poppies.

Is your unit helping a veteran this year at Christmas time? Are you seeking out the needs of a veteran's family in your community? Is there a veteran next door who needs a helping hand with yard chores, a ride to an appointment, or help

with a Christmas list?

This year make it a point to become more aware of the veterans in your community. Invite a veteran's family to a post dinner, and present them with a certificate honoring their service!

And by the way, those buttons out there with the veteran's photo on it honoring their service makes a nice memento for a veteran's family! They can be ordered through the American legion auxiliary website. They certainly are a gift that keeps on giving!!

5th Zone Report

Dave Spencer, Zone Commander

Thank you to all of the Post's in the 11th and 12th District for your work on membership. 11th needs to pick it up a little, but as an idea if you have members struggling financially to pay their dues maybe holding a fund raiser to cover those dues would help.

I am looking forward to the U.P. Tour coming up January 12th, 2014 starting in Pickford Post 323 and ending in Iron Mountain at Post 50 on the 17th, 2014.

LEADERSHIP CLASS UPDATE

Bud Hansbarger, Leadership Committee Chairman

The Leadership College Class's for 2013-2014 are going well. Attendance from our Legion Family members has been good and diverse. A fair reflection of our membership, Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Son's, and Riders have contributed to class content. Sharing what's new, what's worth repeating, idea exchanges, questions, and answers. In some cases answers to questions we didn't even know we had. Interaction with others in attendance and instructors promotes not only The American Legion Family as a family and all we accomplish, but also our passions and dedications to and for our veterans and our programs.

If you haven't taken the opportunity to attend Leadership College or have attended in the past, content has been changed and/or updated. There is still a couple to sign up for. During the Duties of Office presentation and immediately following, form importance is discussed. Forms like the CPR, what it is and why it's so important. Another form given and asked for its completion is Leadership College Evaluation. This evaluation gives feedback on The Leadership Committee performance, college content, instructors, needed subjects, etc. I'd like to

Concluding with district meetings on January 18th, 2014 at Post 50. The District Commanders have the stopping points and they are on www.michiganlegion.org/fyi, please find a post close to you and come for a visit. The State Commander and the State President will be there to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Hope to see all of you this year, thank you for all the work you do for our Legion, our communities, our Veterans, and their families.

share a few comments given and answer a couple questions written.

Comments: "excited to learn more - I can be a Leader!" (4th zone) "Very well done, interesting & informative" (5th zone) "Took a lot of notes, good question and answering time" (2nd zone).

Questions or constructive criticism was given: "Package hand out items into one bag and give out before class starts" We have thought about making a bag of all handout material, however placing them on a centrally located table allows each person to take the materials they need or are interested in. "Add and expand topic materials on IRS." The IRS is a difficult topic to cover; we are sharing the information available to us. Letters from the IRS to The American Legion, advice from The American Legion national office, and current IRS hand outs. "Expand training, 2 or 3 days." Department and leadership committee are working at the same goal to provide training to all members, with coming to zone's & districts and giving single topic training at Department meetings. National LEAD class's have been and are scheduled for Department meetings, listings and sign up information is available in the Legionnaire and on line at michiganlegion.org.

Children and Youth Update

Ron Geiger, Chairman Children and Youth Chairman

I hope every post has set their goals as too which program or programs they are going to support for Children and Youth this Legion year.

At the Fall Conference our committee chose the National program Temporary Financial Assistance as the highlighted program this year. There are needy children of eligible veterans across our entire Department who may be eligible for some assistance. Contact me or a Children and Youth committee member for more information. home 231 546 3281 cell 989 350 6137 e-mail loggerman948@yahoo.com

Any post that has been involved with the Student Dictionary project should continue to do so. The Child Welfare Foundation program/ and the save our

pennies and spare change for Children's Miracle Network are also being supported.

Children and Youth have pins for sale again this year for a \$3.00 donation. At your District or Post meetings if one of the committee members has pins available please support us.

We are not asking that a post do all programs but pick 1 or 2 and do them well. Department Commander Moore is asking that each post get the local newspaper and media involved so as to let the community know what we do for veterans and children, don't forget the oratorical contest and scholarship programs. also make sure to keep records of what you do and report your accomplishments at the end of the year on the Consolidated Post Report. Thank you for supporting kids they are our future.

For God, Country, and our youth.

WILWIN LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING

Bill Hafeman, PDC and Wilwin Lodge Board Director

The Board of Directors wishes to thank each and every one of you for your continuous generous donations.

The care-taker's cabin is up and enclosed. Electrical, plumbing and interior work will be done as soon as the weather permits.

Wilwin's Board of Directors meeting held at the Farwell Post 558 on November 23, 2013 nominated and elected Dan Crisp of Harrison to the board to replace PDC Bill Miller and his son Larry who resigned their positions in September. The Board gave Bill and Larry special thanks for all the unselfish work and time they had generously given to the success of Wilwin. Board member Steve Striggow was elected Secretary to replace PDC Bill Miller's position; director Pat Laine was appointed Recording Secretary to replace Larry Miller. The Board will ask the DEC to approve Dan Crisp nomination at the winter meeting in Flint.

The Board also hired Past National S.A.L. Commander, Earl Ruttkofsky as caretaker for Wilwin for the coming year. Directors Lou Oberle and PDC Bill Hafeman agreed to fill in as caretaker when Earl is not available.

Heating at the lodge is a priority item. The old boiler, repaired many time, is irreparable and needs to be replaced. Several options will be considered for heating the lodge, not to include a new boiler. Wood being an inexpensive commodity at Wilwin, the Board

is leaning toward installing an outside wood burner.

National Commander Dellinger and his wife are expected to visit Wilwin in early August, 2014. Alternate NEC, PDC and Wilwin Lodge Board Director Roger Webster was appointed to take the lead on his visit.

The Building and Grounds Committee reported and recommended that a rustic campground be placed to the right as you enter Wilwin on the 77 acres in Chippewa County. The area is quite level and has easy access inside the front entrance. The area will easily accommodate larger RVs.

The Wilwin website should be updated and current by the time you receive the current Legionnaire. Also, easier access for our veterans to stay at Wilwin will be updated. Please make plans to spend a few days of your summer vacation and visit your facility.

The Board of Directors has approved a new "Donations Wish List" for the future needs for Wilwin for the upcoming year. The wish list is available at our website www.wilwin.org Anyone who can help Wilwin fulfill these needs please call Lou Oberle at 477-6229 or 906-440-0338. Anyone donating any items will receive a certified appraisal certificate for tax purposes. Most labor for construction projects has been donated by our Legion family.

Please plan on attending the Wilwin board meeting at the Winter Meetings at the Holiday Inn in Flint.

"What Ever it Takes" 9th District Report

Neal Horning, District Commander

Our 9th District is forging ahead with new membership working together to solve some Post problems. I want to commend the individuals who are making the difference. This past Veteran's Day made me think of the past when things were rough for a lot of us. But it made me reflect on us who survived and are trying to still do the right thing. Not all of us have seen battle or been in a fire fight, but we all signed up and made the commitment if necessary to make the ultimate sacrifice. We are all WARRIORS, it's a calling and not everyone was called to serve. Thank You for answering the call. I looked up in the dictionary the definition of a Warrior - It stated, "A man engaged or experienced in War" In my Native American Culture - "A Warrior is the protector of his family, his clan, and his tribe. A Warrior is the Living Spirit of our Grandfathers."

The Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition, includes a five county region, consisting Veterans Organizations and Civilian Concerns that number 35, selects a Veteran of the Year. This veteran not only has to be active in his Organization, but also has to make a difference in his community serving veterans. I'm very proud to congratulate John Lefler of Post 35 of Traverse City receiving the Eagle Award at an annual dinner sponsored by Traverse City Elks. Last January 2013, John took over the DAV Van

Program. With his outstanding efforts including; recruiting drivers, setting up a very workable dispatch system, he has turned the DAV Van System around 180 degrees heading in the right direction. As a result, Veterans are being served in three counties. "WHOOAAH - OUTSTANDING".

On the 9th of November I was invited to a Special Dinner Program at Post 10 by the Ladies Auxiliary and youth. Their program was very inspirational and really impressed my wife, Marilyn, and I. They started with the Pledge of Allegiance; each young lady was assigned phrases, (such as I Pledge, Allegiance, etc.). These phrases were on a poster and would give the meaning of their phrase. Then later each young lady would stand up front and speak of their Dad, Grandfather, Uncle, Aunt, who served, explaining what they did in the service along with pictures of their relative. It was OUTSTANDING.

Thus far the post's I have visited, I am very impressed with the dedication, honor, loyalty, and effort that the members I have met are accomplishing. Even though your Post might be going through some trying times, there are Veterans counting on us. Remember, a mountain, an obstruction, a problem is an opportunity. If we all work together, The Legionnaires, Legion Riders, The SAL, and the Auxiliary, in other words The Legion Family we can meet and surpass our goals.

WHAT EVER IT TAKES.

Renewable Fuel Standard: Separating Myth from Facts

Myth: EPA's proposed 2014 RFS mandates will increase oil imports.

Fact: EPA's 2014 RFS proposal is one of many policies which promotes an all-of-the-above strategy to protect America's energy and national security.

From the beginning of 2008 through the end of 2012 net U.S. oil imports have declined by more than 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) while domestic production has increased by almost 1.5 million bpd.¹ Other policies such as approving the Keystone XL Pipeline, supporting hydraulic fracturing and opening offshore energy access will further decrease oil imports and increase our energy and national security.

What are others saying?

"We produce more oil at home than we have in 15 years. We have doubled the distance our cars will go on a gallon of gas, and the amount of renewable energy we generate from sources like wind and solar - with tens of thousands of good American jobs to show for it. We produce more natural gas than ever before.... And over the last four years, our emissions of the dangerous carbon pollution that threatens our planet have actually fallen."²

President Barack Obama, President of the United States

The Bakken boom is a perfect example of how new and improved technology is allowing industry to tap previously inaccessible or unknown energy resources to create jobs, decrease our dependence on foreign oil, and grow our economy..."

Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior³

The Value of Energy to Michigan

- Economic Security.** Generating jobs and revenue.
- Energy Security.** Increased domestic oil and natural gas resources.
- National Security.** Securing our energy and economic interests.

GREAT LAKES
ENERGY
FORUM

GreatLakes EnergyForum.com

Vets4Energy

Vets4Energy.com

1. Bob Greco. *Domestic Oil Production Growth and Lower Net Imports*. April 30, 2013.
2. President Barack Obama. *Remarks by the President in the State of the Union Address*. February 12, 2013. 3. Sally Jewell. *Secretary Jewell Visits North Dakota's Bakken Region*. August 7, 2013. Retrieved from: <http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-visits-north-dakotas-bakken-region.cfm>.

2014 NATIONAL COMMANDER BANQUET RESERVATION FORM

Friday, February 14, 2014 At The Holiday Inn Gateway Centre, Flint, MI
 Cash Social Hour: 6:00 p.m. - Dinner: 7:00 p.m. \$25.00 per person



Select # of Each: Beef _____ Chicken _____ Fish _____

Enclosed is \$ _____ for a total of _____ tickets at \$25 each

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____ City _____

Zip _____ Phone (____) _____ POST/UNIT # _____

Make checks payable and mail to:

The American Legion, Department of Michigan, Attn: Kim, 212 N. Verlinden, Ste A,
 Lansing, MI 48915

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF RESERVATIONS AT DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

FEBRUARY 10, 2014 No Refunds after 2/10/2014

GENESEE COUNTY CONVENTION CORPORATION

IS PROUD TO PRESENT

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN
 NATIONAL COMMANDER'S BANQUET

AND

WINTER MEETING

FEBRUARY 14-16 2014



REGISTRATION: \$15.00 per person, you must be registered to attend meetings.

PAYABLE TO: Genesee County Convention Corporation

MAILED TO: Bernie Langlois, 12248 E. Atherton Rd., Davison, MI 48423

CHECKS ONLY PLEASE

Name _____ Legion Auxiliary SAL Leg. Riders _____

Name _____ Legion Auxiliary SAL Leg. Riders _____

Name _____ Legion Auxiliary SAL Leg. Riders _____

Name _____ Legion Auxiliary SAL Leg. Riders _____

Number x \$15.00= _____

All room requests and special needs are to be placed through:

THE HOLIDAY INN GATEWAY CENTRE

5353 GATEWAY CENTRE, FLINT, MI 48507

PHONE: 1-810-232-5300

If the Holiday Inn is full please call the Courtyard 1-810-232-3500

CODE: ALG

DEADLINE: January 14, 2015

Located in Mundy Twp. - Hill Rd. at Gateway Center

Note: The Code # ALG will allow the hotel to access the room rate of \$85.00 + 11% tax. All major credit cards are acceptable.

When you call for your reservation you should be greeted with "It's a great day at the Holiday Inn in Flint." If this is not your greeting please hang up and try your call again in 10 to 15 minutes.

The Flint phone # is 1-810-232-5300. If the hotel is full please asked to be transferred to Courtyard.

If you have asked the hotel for any special needs and would like to verify them please drop a note in with your registration and we will verify them for you.

Please feel free to contact one of the following with any questions:

Bernie Langlois (Leg.) 810-653-6517 Venus Langlois (Aux.) 810-653-6517

Dolores Smith (Aux.) 810-694-6018

LEAD



State Adjutant Pat Lafferty presents Leadership Chairman Bud Hansbarger his LEAD Pin, Michigan's first recipient. LEAD pins are given to any Legionnaire who is documented to have completed 8 hours of LEAD Training. Be sure to register at the event, Department keeps track of each class to issue pins.

WINTER MEETING LEAD TRAINING!!

Saturday February 15th, 2014

Fundamentals of Fundraising: Saturday 8AM-10AM – Learn the basics of running fundraisers to fund your local programs.

Legion Riders: Saturday 10AM-12PM – Learn about the Legion Riders, group building and organization for your Post

Saturday afternoon 1PM-4PM: Officer Training: Department will be giving training on Post Commander, Adjutant, Finance, and Membership

Panel Discussion: 4PM-5PM: Join us for a panel discussion about Posts and membership recruitment.

Register for LEAD Training at www.michiganlegion.org/lead
Walk-ins welcome.

Classifieds

"The contents of advertisements which appear in the Legionnaire are solely the responsibility of the advertisers. Appearance of any advertisement in the Legionnaire does not constitute either a recommendation, nor an endorsement of the goods and services offered therein."

Buying Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, 40/8, VFW, DAV, Masonic, and FOE medals, badges, pins, caps, bars, membership cards and Stamp Collections. Contact **Craig R. Wotring**, PO Box 1743 Owosso, MI 48867, **989-725-9728** Legion Member

PRIVATE COLLECTOR BUYING

German, Japanese, U.S. military items from all wars. Top cash paid for Airborne, Aviation, Pilot, Seal, Special Forces, OSS, Ranger, Marine items. Also German medals, daggers, swords, guns, personality items and billion flags. Also Japanese swords, helmets and guns.

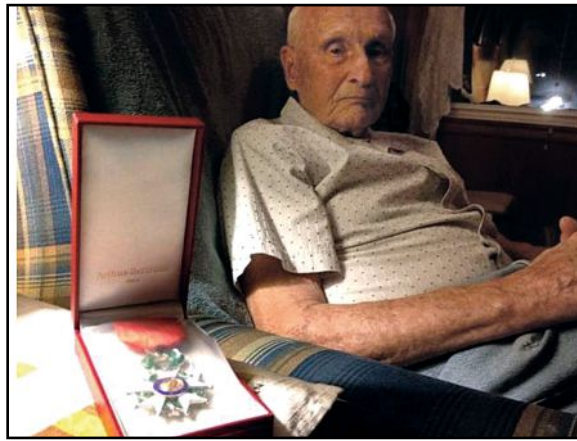
Call for top cash offer

Combat wounded vet
 James Leslie (member),
 3540 Timberline Drive
 Clyde, MI 48049
 (810) 989-9866

To Honor



The Lakeshore Marching Band performs music of their "D-Day" show to veterans at the Cornerstone University of Grand Rapids on Veterans Day. L-R Students Kathleen Risk and Liz Ender with WWII Veteran Wilbur Huston to learn about his years of service.



Legionnaire Ernie Lutz, Post 148, Mason, MI received a "Knight of the Legion of Honor" Medal from the people of France for his courage and service in liberating France. Mr. Lutz flew 65 bomber missions in WWII in a B-26. Picture and story from Ingham County Comm. News, Will Kangas



Legionnaire Robert Mitchell and his wife Lillian, Robert holding his 70 years as a Legion Member certificate. Frank Wendland Post 253 presented Robert his award at a September ceremony.

Americanism



The Legion Family of Post 158 has entered schools teaching the kids in their community about the US Flag. Legionnaires and Auxiliaries members participate in the program. Picture Legionnaires finish showing how to properly fold a flag.



American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars members participated in the departure ceremony, of MI Army NG Soldiers from the Grand Ledge Army Aviation Support Facility deploying to Kuwait after training in Fort Hood, Texas. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jim Downen/Released)



L-R Gary Wear (Commander Post 45), Russ Hammand (Fin Officer Post 45), Gary Wiczorek (BINGO Chair Post 45), In August the Post made it a mission and provided 250 flags to the local school, with hangers and provided the labor to install them. They also gave instruction to classrooms on proper flag etiquette.

Service



Morley American Legion Post # 554 has a "Victory Garden". The food grown in this garden is taken inside the Post, and Veterans can take all they need. (Picture) Left to Right - Robert Bauder 10th District Chaplain, Tom Roesly Founder and Gardener, Don Meskill District 10 Adjutant, Kenneth Burtch 10th District Commander, Ron Morse Commander of Post.



When a Korean War era veteran needed help putting on a new roof The Whole Legion Family from Post 32, during a cold, windy day, sprung into action and got it done in a few hours. His neighbor who works at Post 32 and is a veteran saw his need and called in reinforcements. "Every day is Veterans Day"



From left: Furniture City Post 258's Tom Yalacki, Jim Wykstra VFW Post 830, and George Niewiadomski Post 258 plus VFW Post 830. George Niewiadomski is 92 years old with 34 years as a Post 258 member. He is also a VFW member, with the help of VFW Post 830 donated 16 pales of tabs to Post 258's tabs for tots program.



Leadership College 2013: State Chaplain Jennifer Smith poses with her classmates in the National Commanders Office while on a tour of The American Legion Natl. Headquarters.



VFW Post 5014 in Republic, MI, members Jim Hofbauer and Arvo Lyyski donated over 315 pounds of tabs to the American Legion "Tabs for Tots" program. The tabs were collected from all over the community. It takes approximately 1600 tabs to equal 1 pound.



A Veterans Town hall meeting held at Post 150 in Frankenmuth. (left to right) are Jason Allen, Senior Deputy Director of Veterans Affairs; Lavern Spolarich, American Legion Post 212; Michael Knutson, Human Resources Specialist, Compensation and Classification Service, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs; Brett Holt, American Legion Adjutant Post 439-8th District; Tim Kelly, State Representative, 94th House District.