

# MI LEGIONNAIRE

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April 2025

## 2025 ORATORICAL CHAMPION



Department of Michigan Commander Dan Cooper with 2025 Oratorical Speech Champion Brianna Zhang

The American Legion Department of Michigan crowned a new Oratorical Speech Contest Champion as the participants' knowledge of the Constitution inspired spectators. When the judges' scores were tallied, Brianna Zhang from the 3rd District and the 2nd Zone came out on top. Her prepared speech "United in Democracy" and her impromptu remarks on the 18th amendment regarding prohibition ranked her first.

Representatives from three of the five Zones participated in the competition. From District 6 and Zone 3, Anne Marie Yarber came in second place. Third place was repeat contestant Wisdom Walker from the 1st District, 1st Zone. The Zone 5 winner couldn't make the trek to the Michigan History Center for the competition in Lansing, and the 4th Zone did not have a representative.



Greg Price, Master of Ceremonies

With the loss of two contestants, the prize money for fourth and fifth places was divided between the winners, with first place taking home \$3,000, second place \$2,000 and third place receiving \$1,500 this year.

The Education and Scholarship Committee Chairman David Kennedy called for a moment of silence to acknowledge the passage of John Bradford, a longtime fixture of the Department Oratorical Speech Contest. After the invocation by Zone One Education and Scholarship Committee Representative James Warunek, Master of Ceremonies Greg Price explained the contest's rules to the audience and introduced the first of the three speakers.

During the first round, each speaker had between eight and 10 minutes to present their prepared speech on a topic focused on the United States Constitution. Wisdom Walker chose the Fourth Amendment and privacy topic: "What happens when the cameras are turned on, and the Fourth Amendment is turned off?" "A Truly Free Press" was 2nd Place Anne Marie Yarber's title in her treatise on the First Amendment.

The Prohibition Amendment was chosen randomly from four potential topics that the contestants had the opportunity to study before the competition. The three contestants then had five minutes to prepare a three to five-minute unrehearsed speech. Every contestant provided excellent objective performances, but only one could take home first place.

Brianna Zhang will now represent the Department of Michigan when the National Oratorical Speech contest convenes in Hillsdale on May 16th through 18th. The National Organization is still seeking local volunteers to help in various roles. You can download a form at <https://register.legion.org/oratorical/volunteer/form>



L-R Jim Austin, Dan Cooper, Brianna Zhang, Wisdom Walker, Anna Marie Yarber, and David Kennedy

 **AMERICAN  
LEGION**  
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

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STATE OFFICERS

State Commander. . . . . Dan Cooper  
State Adjutant. . . . . Ron Runyan  
1st Vice Commander . . . . . Wayne Blank  
2nd Vice Commander . . . . . Jim Austin  
1st Zone . . . . . Gary DeMars  
2nd Zone. . . . . David Buist  
3rd Zone . . . . . Mike Fitzgerald  
4th Zone. . . . . Charles Bowman  
5th Zone. . . . . Tom Chernetski  
Chaplain. . . . . Mike Schlaack  
Finance Officer. . . . . Leo Cowdry  
Historian . . . . . Robert Higley Jr.  
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Immediate PDC. . . . . Brian Mohlman  
Alt. N.E.C . . . . . Brett Holt  
VA and R Director . . . . . Gary Easterling

DEADLINE DATES  
May 2025 is April 14th  
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If you have a photo you would like to submit for the Michigan Legionnaire and/or website use, E-mail it to us at [media@michiganlegion.org](mailto:media@michiganlegion.org) or mail it to Department, Attn: Jim Showers.  
Please keep the photo at least 200 dpi or larger. If you are submitting a hard copy photo, please note photos printed from a home printer cannot be used, nor can photos clipped from newspapers.  
We look for photos showing Legion caps in action whenever possible.  
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## Commander's Comments!



**Dan Cooper**  
Department Commander

Welcome to Spring. This is a wonderful time of year, time to get outside, work in the yard, or have a BBQ with family and friends. It is also a crucial time as Legionnaires. We should be looking forward to Post and District elections and filing the required pa-

perwork (Post Data Forms, Consolidated Post Reports).

I truly believe that Michigan has the best members within the 55 Departments. We are truly changing lives. In my travels around the Department, I have met some amazing Legionnaires and heard some remarkable stories of how Posts are working in their communities, schools and with their veterans. The gift of your time is making an impact on the quality of life for Veterans, including their extended families.

I have also attended several meetings where the Legion Family members have fun while supporting the Four Pillars. This is a very effective way to attract and retain new members. Make your events family-friendly.

April is Children & Youth Month. Set aside a "Family Day" during the month to celebrate veterans, children, and their families. Have a picnic, family-friendly games, or anything that brings members and non-members together.

I want to congratulate everyone for Michigan's strong membership. As of this writing, the Department sits in 7th place nationally, with nowhere to go but up. We need approximately 5,500 renewed or new members to reach 100% by June 30.

The 95% target date is April 9. I'm asking everyone to keep this momentum going, reach out to expired members, and determine what is keeping them from renewing. This is also a great time to contact current and expired Post 225 members and attempt to get them to transfer into your Post. It could take just a quick phone call or email to remind them of all the great things we do. Again, thank you for everything that you do.

Remember to check the new Training Tab on the Department Website, and I hope you had a chance to attend the training on March 22 in Livonia. Ask your District Commander to schedule training in your area.

Never stop learning because life never stops teaching.

## Runyan's Ramblings Just Another Reason



**Ron Runyan**  
Dept. Adjutant

Like so many of our 100,000-plus Legion family members, I too wonder if we are making a difference. We are constantly being asked to volunteer our time and money; even if we don't, we still contribute by paying membership dues. Some of us may ask ourselves, "Why do I continue to do this?" Well, I want to address this question, and provide you with "just another reason why we belong."

My initial thought was to write an article about one of our programs or a pillar of the organization's structure. However, after thinking about why I continue; along with some other recent events, I changed my direction. Last month, we lost another young Michigan female veteran to suicide. I did not know this young lady very well; however, I did know her, and several of our other members did too. Earlier in February, I had a member and friend confide in me that they were also thinking of ending their life due to life circumstances. They, like many others are looking for some hope or help. We all should Be the One to lend an ear and try to assist them.

Yet another reason I continue my membership and advocacy for our veterans. Being trained and getting essential information to share with veterans, veteran advocates and family on recognizing signs and being open to listen and help those in need. Being the One to help prevent someone from ending their life is much larger than an annual dues payment. It is much larger than giving up a half day at the local post helping to set up a fair, dinner or meeting.

Look to the left and right of yourself, at the person next to you; do you know what they are dealing with? We all have lives that I guarantee do not revolve around The American Legion, so take some time and open up to them and see if they need someone to talk to. Maybe it is you that needs someone to listen. If that is the case, find someone that you feel can listen to you and help you as you need. There are professional veteran service officers in the American Legion who are here to help. We have "Be the One" training sessions online and in person to help those in crisis and for those who can help those in need. YOU and I can Be The One to change lives and save lives! Find more information on Be the One at: <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/be-the-one>. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call \*988

## COMMANDERS PROJECT

**THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE PURCHASED A COIN AND TO THE POSTS, UNITS, SQUADRONS AND DISTRICTS THAT HAVE ALREADY DONATED. YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED AND ARE GOING FOR A GREAT CAUSE TO SUPPORT PARALYZED VETERANS IN MICHIGAN.**

Supporting Paralyzed Veterans in Michigan with spinal cord injuries, and to help Veterans regain independent living.



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Back

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## Membership Report



**Wayne Blank**  
1st Vice Commander

We just missed our most recent goal by .2% on our membership goal on March 12. Do you know how much work has gone into getting us to this point? E-mails, text and calls trying to straighten up Posts that don't know how to use My Legion who are still using snail mail. Do you realize eventually membership will go totally to mylegion.org for electronic filing. Posts must ask for help with training in [Mylegion.org](http://Mylegion.org). The Department is there to help not to embarrass your post.

I am asking Posts to call all unrenewed members on April 5-6 to get them to renew. Remind them that their membership has expired. Remind them that their membership helps with veterans aid as much as being active.

We as veterans are the strongest of our total population. We need to show our strength during peace time wars. Our membership is a peace time war. Maintain your superiority during our struggle for 100% membership with other states. I am calling on your strengths one more time.



## Chaplains Corner

**Mike Schlaack,**  
Department Chaplain

The month of April is providing us with the opportunity to put into practice our faith traditions that may otherwise be neglected for the rest of the year. While Christmas and Hanukkah in December get a lot of attention even in our secularly oriented world, Christianity and Judaism have two more religious celebrations that converge in the same month, providing an opportunity to not only renew our religious convictions but also to learn more about the other traditions that share observances during the same time-frame each year.

Those of the Jewish faith observe the Passover, a celebration commemorating God saving of the Hebrews who were under Egyptian slavery. The 12th chapter of Exodus describes how God communicated through Moses and Aaron the fate

of their Egyptian captors and the requirement of the Hebrews to ensure their safe deliverance from captivity and death. By the spreading of the blood of a sacrificed lamb on the doorposts of their homes, the angel of death "passed over" the obedient Hebrews, sparing their firstborn children from death. Pharaoh, of course, did not observe this requirement and, as a result, lost the life of his son and heir. The annual celebration of Passover helps us to remember God's saving mercy and our release from bondage through their faith and obedience.

For Christians, this April will bring our spiritual focus back to the life-saving Passion and Resurrection of Jesus as described in the Gospels. This, too, is a release from bondage; humanity is no longer slaves to sin and death since Jesus destroyed the power of death by His Resurrection from the dead. This is the Gospel's promise not only for those who would later be known as "Christians" but for all people everywhere who call on Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The Or-

## Americanism Report



**Jim Austin**  
2nd Vice Commander

Happy Spring! For starters, I'd like to congratulate Brianna Zhang from Post 36 for winning the Department's Oratorical contest. Whenever you think that America is not heading in the right direction, you meet one of these young contestants and realize the future of America is in good hands. Also, just a reminder that the National Oratorical Contest is May 16th-18th at Hillsdale College.

Please keep checking the program dates so we do not miss submission deadlines. Remember, these programs are important, and it is imperative that we keep them fully manned and operational for them and the American Legion to grow effectively.

Do you have any success stories of programs you have participated in? If so, I'd love for you to share them with me, as well as all your fellow Legionnaires. These programs are every Legionnaire's responsibility to ensure the great future of our great organization as well as our great Nation. Our obligation is Veterans helping veterans, and the success of these programs directly reflects your hard work and our future.

Keep up the good work, and a friendly reminder that motorcycle season is upon us. Please be diligent with keeping an eye open for your fellow rider brethren on the road.

Continue to practice everyday Americanism!

thodox Christian Troparion (hymn) for Easter declares: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!" Easter is the Christian "Passover," where we can avoid the eternal death caused by sin through the redemptive work of Christ and His defeat of our ultimate enemy, which is death and the separation from God. The Eastern Christian word for Easter, after all, is "Pascha," which is a transliteration of the Hebrew word Pesach, which means Passover.

Whichever way you and your family celebrate, take some time to consider what the Passover means to you. Make it a meaningful part of a Michigan Spring as we enjoy the re-awakening of God's wonderful creation. Take part in the religious traditions that help emphasize the season's spiritual significance. And to everyone, let me say with love and joy those same words that have been proclaimed by Christians throughout the centuries: "Christ is risen! Indeed, He has risen!"

**2025 Membership: March 28<sup>th</sup> Goal = 55,154**  
**Current Total: 50,248 - 91.10%**



## American Legion Riders

### Robert "Skip" Kamin ALR Chairman

Greetings Riders. Hope this finds everyone in good health. The weather is getting better every day. The Legacy Ride and the Hell to Paradise Ride teams are working very hard to make these memorable rides. I hope you can make one of the rides if not both of them.

A lot of work has been going on with the riders at a department level. We now have

a calendar on the riders tab. Please send anything you want on there for your chapter to [alr@michiganlegion.org](mailto:alr@michiganlegion.org). If I see an ALR event or hear of one, I will do my best to get it on the calendar for everyone to see. This will give everyone a one-stop place to see what others are doing and go and support them. This is for ALR events only. If you are putting it on, it is an ALR event.

See ya on the road, keep the rubber side down.



## National Security

### Michael Buda

What do you think of when someone says National Security, most would think of the security of the United States of America. Some consider that as our Southern border, which is the current news but encompasses more than just that region. It includes Canada, Mexico, and anywhere our military forces are deployed. In addition, it covers the POW/MIA's and Blood and Vital Organs. That's why it's called National Security and Foreign Relations.

Although when we as Legionaries attend the Fall, Winter & Summer conventions, this committee has some low attendance; why?

Every Post within our Department should have one representative to attend each committee meeting; the same is true for each District.

The committee has three sections: National Security, POW/MIA, & Blood and Vital Organs. Each committee member is responsible for informing the representatives so that the Posts and Districts are well-informed. We also give these representatives websites to get the latest information on each subject. We receive the latest information and pass it to each committee formed within our state and respective area. So, even if your Post or District has someone assigned to National Security, you should attend these committee meetings. Your involvement can assist your Post to understand what is going on.

The information covered will help your Posts and Districts in many ways. For example, hosting a Blood Drive is a gift that saves many lives. Every day in the news, we see catastrophes and accidents on the road. These individuals need that one life-saving gift: Blood! So, holding a blood drive at your post saves someone.

Each war and conflict has those who are missing in action and or are prisoners. Their families need to know what happened, and the sites we supply you with can assist the individual member in making a difference in someone's life. Knowing the outcome can help their healing through the information you, the Legionnaire, provided, but your Post is at a loss when you fail to attend these committee meetings. The decision rests with you.

## The Times They are a Changin'

### Scott Nichols

Growing up in the early 70's, I didn't listen to a lot of music from the decade before on the radio. By the time I became a teen, Rock and Roll had moved on from social commentary to long guitar solos, big hair and lots of makeup. I recently saw the movie Complete Unknown, based on the early life and music of Bob Dylan and was surprised to learn how much of his music I did know but paid little attention to during my life.

One song, The Times They Are A-Changin', struck a chord with me when I received a call from a local cannabis shop. They wanted to donate \$1,000.00 to the post as part of the state program. Last year, Michigan received 87 mil in tax revenue from these shops.

The caller had no idea who I was or what my background was. How would he know I retired from the Michigan State Police or that I worked on or ran multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement teams all over the state for most of my career? He also didn't know halfway through my career, I came to understand the war on drugs was mostly pointless. Through more than a decade of experience of arrests, search warrants and trials coupled with research and education, I came to understand the drug addiction crisis America faced was more of a medical treatment crisis and not one that could be solved solely by criminal enforcement.

Some post members wanted to reject the donation; others were just skeptical. For me, it was a great opportunity for a paradigm shift. With a VA hospital in our backyard and with the passage of The VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2023, which mandates research on the effects of cannabis on veterans, particularly those with PTSD, the decision was easy.

I went to the shop, received the check and took a picture of myself and the owner. We laughed when I told me what I did for a living. We said we probably knew a lot of the same people: he socially, me professionally. I told him we would put the money to good use, such as sponsoring a local youth to Boys/Girls State or the Student Trooper Program. If you have a local cannabis shop in your area, know they are looking to donate to non-profits. The times, they surely are a changing!



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# AUXILIAIRE



*From the Desk of the President*

*April 2025*



**Julie Becker**  
Department President  
2024-2025

## SPRING IS IN THE AIR !!!

April 11th is PURPLE UP DAY! So, make sure you wear purple to show your support for our military children and the sacrifices they make. More than 1.6 million military children face many challenges and unique experiences due to their parents' service.

While military members serve our country, we forget about the challenges their children may face. On average, military families relocate every 2-3 years. As a child, this can be very overwhelming. Saying goodbye to friends, support network, new school and making new friends. Now add in a parent who has been deployed.

Despite all the frequent changes, military children show remarkable resilience like a dandelion. This is why the dandelion is the official flower of the military child. A dandelion takes root and blooms wherever it is planted. It also symbolizes perseverance, endurance, and hope, the traits shown by our military children.

During April (the month of the military child), there are ways we can show our support as a Legion family. Host a meal at your post/unit for the military families in your community. This is an opportunity for families to get acquainted and make friendships. Also, as the American Legion Family, we must let the families know who we are and what we do.

Does your Legion post have a marquee? Use the marquee to inform the community that April is the month of the military child and include April 11th as Purple Up Day. It is essential to let these children know we acknowledge their sacrifices and their parents.

April 26th is American Legion Family Day. What a great opportunity to showcase who we are, what we do, and why we do it. How can we do this...easy. Hold an open house and invite the community. Have handouts available for the American Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, and Legion Riders, along with membership applications, ready. Do not forget to have the

BE THE ONE information available as well. As the American Legion Family we have many resources to assist members in our communities. Unfortunately, we have a stereotype of being a bunch of "old people" who sit at the bar and have bake sales. It is time to break that misconception. Veteran families in our community have not joined our family because of the stereotype.

There may be a Veteran who may be feeling alone or suicidal. BE THE ONE to let that Veteran know they are not alone and help guide them to get the help they may need. Let's not forget about the caretakers caring for our Veterans. The ALA can assist caretakers with various needs as well. This holds true for the SAL and the ALR. As a family, we do so many amazing things for our Veterans and their families within our communities. The problem is a majority of people do not know what we do. Show the community that we are made of different entities, but we work as a FAMILY to benefit our veterans, their families and our community.

Reminder: District reports are due to the Department Chairmen by April 15th. I am so excited to read about all the amazing activities you have done this past year. Are you entering for awards? Do not forget to include the 'Green Sheet' along with your submission. Thank you for everything you all do. You are appreciated.

He rocks in the treetops all day long  
Hoppin and a boppin and singing his song  
All the little birdies on Jaybird street  
Love to hear the robin go tweet tweet tweet

Rockin robin, rock rock  
Rockin robin,  
Blow rockin robin  
'Cause we're really gonna rock tonight

--Jimmie Thomas

## Battle Creek VA Medical Center

*VA&R Chairperson. Chris Reed*

We need Units to step up and assist with our monthly Bingo for the Veterans. Bingo is held on the 4th Wednesday of every month and starts at 6:00 p.m. You will need to be at the VA for approximately 90 minutes. It doesn't require a lot of volunteers – it can easily be handled with 3-4 people. It is a heartwarming experience, and the Veterans love it. I have more information regarding Bingo, if you think your Unit could help with hosting. My contact information is below.

There are many events at the Battle Creek VA. We are always looking for volunteers to join the fun. If you have any questions regarding events, contact me. We would love to see some new faces, and so would the Veterans! We also accept monetary donations throughout the year that support the activities. Your generosity is appreciated.

According to Todd Greenman in Community Volunteer Services, they are currently in need of the following items: Men's tennis shoes sizes 8, 10, 10-1/2, 12 & 13, size medium men's boxer briefs, men's shower shoes sizes 9, 10, 12, or larger, and other miscellaneous-playing cards, lotion, postage stamps, etc. Ship donated Items to Battle Creek VAMC, Community and Volunteer Service (135) – Building 10, 5500 Armstrong Road, Battle Creek, MI 49037

Lastly, thank you to my 1st Deputy, Barb Parks, and my 2nd Deputy, Penny Wright, for their help and support throughout the year. We couldn't accomplish all we do without these ladies!

Chris Reed cell - 269-4201488; email: [ckhud@mei.net](mailto:ckhud@mei.net)



## Upcoming Deadlines and Reminders

Unit reports are due to Districts March 30, 2025.

District reports are due to your Department Committee Chairman by April 15.

Don't forget to register for the April 26 "Paperwork 101 and Navigating ALAMIS" training by Mike Marriott. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in person at State Headquarters or via ZOOM.

The Committee Chairman's final reports are due to Department President Julie Becker by May 1.

All Officers and Chairman – Your report for the 2024-2025 edition of the Book of Reports is due on May 1, 2025. Unit Dues Form w/remit to information due May 1.

Newly elected Officer updates are due at the State Headquarters as soon as the elections have been completed by June 1, at the latest. They can be emailed to [info@michalaux.org](mailto:info@michalaux.org). They can be mailed to 212 North Verlinden Avenue, Suite B, Lansing, Michigan 48915.

If you have a resolution to present at the Department Convention, it must be received at State Headquarters

by May 15 for review and distribution to the appropriate representatives.

Unit Delegate forms are required to participate in the elections at our Department Convention by June 1, 2025. The credential fee for delegates is still \$10.00 per person (vote). You cannot register as a Delegate on-site at the Convention-no exception.

As you may know, our fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. If you have reimbursement requests (with receipts), they are due no later than June 15, 2025. This is a mandate by our accountants and auditors. If received after the due date, it will not be reimbursed.

See you in the Soo! Keep rocking 4 our Veterans!



Shannon Werner  
Executive Director,  
Secretary & Treasurer

### 3rd District

*Penny Wright, President*

At this time, the Third District is at 90% of its membership goal. Let's get Membership finished up so we can focus on programs and activities. Four Units have already reached 100%, and several Units are close. We can do this!

Does your Unit use ALAMIS for membership renewals? If not, it's a good time to start migrating that way. ALAMIS will save you from mailing most documents to the state headquarters. You can get answers to many of your membership questions through the ALAMIS help module. This is a very productive way to process your membership, add new members, and make address and/or name changes for your members. I highly suggest you get on board with this process – you won't regret it. It saves time, resources and stamps!

Unfortunately, I had to deal with some conflicts within units this year, which broke my heart. Members forgetting their "why" they joined the American Legion Auxiliary. Your "why" was never to be disgruntled, your "why" was not to challenge every decision made, and your "why" was not to be "my way or the highway." Take time to digest what is being presented and try to see each side of the options. Just because "it's always been done that way" does not mean it has to continue. Embrace the changes and new ideas. Please be nice, be kind, be helpful. None of us are in the American Legion Auxiliary for the unnecessary drama.

As we get closer to the end of the 2024-2025 year, I hope it was productive and time well spent on programs. I always look forward to awards presentations at the Department Convention to see each Unit shine in what they do. Keep the Mission in your Vision, and everything else will fall into place.

### National Security

*Carol Burke, Chairperson*

Presenting the blue star banner recognizes military families and serves as a public relations tool. It encourages eligible individuals to join and supports your Unit's community outreach efforts. The Blue Star Service Banner was designed and patented in 1917 by World War I Army Capt. Robert L. Queisser of the 5th Ohio Infantry. His two sons were serving on the front line. The banner quickly became the unofficial symbol for parents with a child in active military service. Each blue star on the banner represents one serving family member, and if a servicemember dies while deployed, a smaller golden star is placed over the blue star.

These banners can be purchased through Emblem Sales and presented to families anytime, with or without a ceremony. Conducting a ceremony familiarizes the community with our organization and its significance.

Armed Services Day, Blue Star Salute Day on May 17, and American Legion Family Day on April 26 are suitable for ceremonies. The American Legion has a guide for planning a Blue Star Salute event, including timelines, schedules, talking points, and public relations samples, all available on their website. Certificates for servicemembers and their families can also be downloaded from the event planning page. An individual family presentation demonstrates our organization's purpose and mission, encouraging eligible individuals to join and support our causes.

It is important to acknowledge that families also serve. April is Military Child Month, and May 9 is Military Spouse Day. Both can be used to promote campaigns that identify families of active military personnel. Social media, church bulletins, local newspapers, recruiters, and school counselors can aid these efforts. They do not need to be deployed to be recognized. Effective campaigns should be sincere and heartfelt.

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

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

# Poppy Days

*Samantha Swenson, Chairperson*

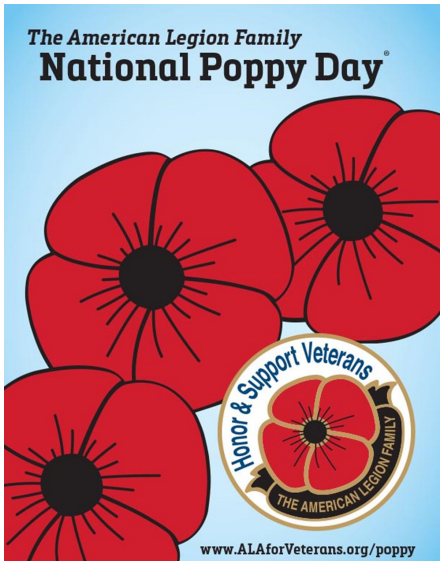
It's that time of year again to start thinking about what your unit will do to participate in Poppy Days. This year, National Poppy Day is Friday, May 23rd. It is a day that encourages everyone to wear a red poppy as a symbol to honor the fallen and support the living.

Traditionally, poppies are distributed in front of businesses, but there are vast possibilities, and poppy distribution doesn't have to be limited to just one event. Host a poppy drive at your local post. Work with one of your local businesses to come up with a unique poppy-themed event. Be creative!

There are tons of helpful resources to assist your unit in promoting the poppy program on National's website, including poster templates, banner templates, and bookmarks that you can print and distribute with poppies.

[www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org).

Flag and Emblem also has various things you can purchase to help celebrate Poppy Days. Use these resources to help promote awareness and educate the public on the meaning and history of the poppy while you are distributing poppies this year. And remember...Poppy Days is an American Legion Family event. Get your American Legion, Sons, Riders, and Juniors involved.



# Auxiliary Emergency Fund

*Ellen Jackson, Chairman*

Members helping members; that's the American Legion Auxiliary's mission of Service Not Self in action. Hard times can fall upon us at any moment. That's when the American Legion Auxiliary is committed to help. AEF is a National grant assistance program that provides financial assistance to eligible members of the American Legion Auxiliary who have endured a significant financial setback due to an act of nature or other personal crisis.

Established in 1969, the AEF was created with a bequest from the estate of Auxiliary member Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wisconsin. Five decades later, the AEF is still helping fellow Auxiliary members get back on their feet. To help carry on the AEF, a national goal is for every unit to donate \$100.00 to the AEF fund. The deadline is approaching soon, and I would love to see Madame President Julie receive an award for one of, if not the highest, donations to the AEF program by a department. Send your donation to the State headquarters at the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan, 212 N. Verlinden Avenue, Suite B, Lansing, Michigan 48915, marked AEF fund. Thank you to the units that have already donated, and thank you in advance to the units that will contribute to the AEF.

# Membership

*Candie Chase, Chairman*

We are ranked second in the Central Division, just 3% behind Ohio. We currently have 641 more members than we had at this time last year. We are amazing! The next deadline is May 23rd, with a 95% goal. Please continue to work hard to reach your Unit's goal.

By publication, Units and Districts should have turned in the Annual Reports. I look forward to reading them and seeing what accomplishments have been made. I will compile the data and prepare my Department report by the end of the month. Next comes looking at numbers and percentages to see which Units qualified for awards this year. Hopefully, your Unit will be announced at the Department Convention.

Our own Mike Marriott will be conducting training on membership paperwork procedures and ALAMIS access on April 26th at Department Headquarters or via ZOOM. Please refer to the Auxiliary website for more information and to register.

A question and answer from the American Legion Auxiliary Department Operations Guide Chapter 8 – Membership: Question #7: Are step-relatives eligible to join the ALA?

Answer: No, IRS regulation for 501(c)(19) organizations do not include step-relatives in their definition of an auxiliary organization.

# Special Project Update

*Abbie Jones, Honorary Junior President*

On February 18th, Abbie Jones, Honorary Junior President, was on Good Morning Mid-Michigan, ABC channel 12. She discussed her special project to raise funds for a Mid-Michigan Honor Flight. Her goal is \$120,000, which is the cost of an entire flight of veterans and chaperones. Abbie talked about how she was a chaperone on an Honor Flight last fall and was able to experience what the Veterans do on the flight.



Send donations to the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan and earmark for Abbie's special project, Honor Flight, at 212 North Verlinden Avenue, Suite B, Lansing, Michigan 48915.

# Legislative Update

*Dawn Gramza, 1st Vice President*

The American Legion Auxiliary follows the American Legion's legislative needs and the legion's agenda for Congress. I was fortunate to attend the Washington Conference along with the Legion Department's members in February and met with several members of Congress and Senator Gary Peters. Among the top-level issues, The American Legion will work with Congress to enact our suicide prevention, community care, quality of life, border security, compensation, and pension examinations (C & P).

Meeting with the members, we stressed the importance of community care, especially in rural areas, allowing veterans to see local medical staff instead of having to travel several hours for medical treatment. Border security remains to be addressed by Congress to strengthen national security. C&P examinations, congress must ensure the VA holds its vendors to a higher standard for examinations. Please keep contacting your legislators and remind them to keep up on veterans' issues.



The 104th Annual Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Michigan is hereby called to be held in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan July 10 to July 13, 2025.

The Convention is called for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing year, considering amendments to the Constitution, By-Laws and Standing Rules, receiving reports of the National Executive Committeewoman, Department Officers and Chairmen, electing Delegates and Alternates to the 104th National Convention and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

## REPRESENTATION

ARTICLE VI, SECTION 2: The Annual Convention shall be composed of Delegates and Alternates qualified as follows:

- a. Delegates and Alternates shall have paid their National and Department dues for the current year to Department Headquarters not less than thirty (30) days prior to the convention.
- b. Delegates and Alternates must be over eighteen (18) years of age, except as provided in the Constitution, Article III, Section 2 (a).
- c. Delegates and Alternates must be elected at a Unit meeting duly called for that purpose: notice of said meeting having been given no later than two (2) weeks prior to election.
- d. Alternates shall have priority in order of their election.

ARTICLE VI, SECTION 3: Each Unit of ten (10) or more members shall be entitled to one (1) Delegate and one (1) additional Delegate for every one hundred (100) members or major fraction thereof.

- a. Units may send Delegates or Alternates only if they have paid their Mandatory Funds for the current year to Department Headquarters not less than (30) days prior to Convention.
- b. Units will be permitted to vote from the floor only if they have complied with all mandates and are represented by at least one (1) Delegate or Alternate.
- c. Units organized during the year (after July 1) will be given the privileges of the Convention floor.

## THE NUMBER OF DELEGATES ALLOWED WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE UNIT'S MEMBERSHIP TOTAL ON JUNE 10, 2025.

## UNIT CREDENTIAL FEES

Standing Rules (Department of Administration) credential fee is \$10.00 for each delegate, \$1.00 fee will be charged for lost credentials for Department Convention, must be paid by the Unit for each Delegate to which it is entitled by virtue of its membership.

## DELEGATE AT LARGE

ARTICLE VI, SECTION 4: All elected and appointed Department Officers, all members of Department Standing Committees, the Hospital Representatives and their First Deputies of the VA Hospitals, Grand Rapids Home for Veterans, D.J. Jacobetti Home for Veterans, Chesterfield Home for Veterans and all non-VA Hospital Chairmen and their First Deputies shall be Delegates-at-Large to the annual Convention and entitled to vote.

ARTICLE VI, SECTION 5: All Past Department Presidents, as long as they remain members in good standing in a Unit in this Department, shall be Delegates-at-Large to the annual Convention and entitled to vote.

STANDING RULES (DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION) A credential fee shall be paid for each Delegate-at-Large for the Department Convention. All credential fees collected for Department Convention shall be allocated to the printing account to help defray the cost of the Annual Report Book. Credential fee is \$10.00.

## CONVENTION REGISTRATION FEE

The fee of \$25.00 charged by The American Legion Convention Corporation must be paid by ALL DELEGATES, ALTERNATES, DELEGATES-AT-LARGE, AND GUESTS. The convention program book, badge, etc. will be given only on presentation of the Corporation's receipt at the registration desk. The registration fee of \$25.00 must be paid even if housing is not required. The convention registration fee of \$25.00 is to be mailed to UPA Convention Corporation, Attn: Ray Carlson, 19 Longyear Drive, Negaunee, Michigan 49866-9601 with a registration form.

## Education

*Connie Kovacs, Chairman*

Our yearly reporting may be over, but the school year is not. This is the most critical time of the year for teachers. They are looking at the students' education more closely to ensure they are ready for the next chapter in their lives. Whether it's finishing the current school year to advance to the grade level, or maybe they are completing their senior year of high school, preparing for college, or moving into the workforce. The students also feel stressed during the last 8 to 12 weeks. So, I have a question: Have you asked a teacher lately how you can help?

Keep in mind these important dates. Purple Up Day is observed every year on April 15. The holiday was selected during the Month of the Military Child. It is an opportunity to honor military children from all military branches. Military children across the country play a significant role in their schools, youth organizations, and communities. You can learn more at [www.purpleupusa.org](http://www.purpleupusa.org).

Teacher Appreciation Week-May 5-9, 2025. Ideas-send cards to your local school's teachers. Donate resources to help teachers or disadvantaged children. You can see more ideas here: <https://nationaltoday.com/teacher-appreciation-day>.



THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN  
2025 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

**Admission by Registration Badge Only**  
*\*\*Schedule subject to change\*\**

**Thursday, July 10, 2025**

8:00 am – 5:00 pm	Registration and Credentials .....	Waters Edge Area
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Official Department Headquarters Office Legion .....	Arcade
12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Post/SAL Officer & Operations Training .....	Dream Makers Theater
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Children & Youth (Full Committee Called) .....	Grand Island II
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Perm. Time & Place/Resolutions Assignment .....	Whitefish Point
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Internal Affairs (Full Committee) .....	Grand Island I
7:00 pm	DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE .....	Dream Makers Theater
8:00 pm	TOWN HALL MEETING – All Department Officer Candidates to address Zones, Districts and	
Members immediately following the D.E.C. Meeting. This will replace candidates attending caucus meetings if desired		

**Friday, July 11, 2025**

8:00 am – 5:00 pm	Registration and Credentials .....	Waters Edge Area
8:30 am – 5:00 pm	Official Department Headquarters Office Legion .....	Arcade
<b><u>CONVENTION COMMITTEE MEETINGS</u></b>		
8:30 am – 10:00 am.	Finance. ....	Grand Island I
	Americanism .....	Dream Makers Theater
	VA& R with VA/VS and VE & E... ..	Whitefish Point
	Children and Youth .....	Grand Island II
10:00 am – 11:00 am.	Rules .....	Grand Island I
	Membership.....	Dream Makers Theater
	Reconnect .....	Whitefish Point
	Credentials.....	Grand Island II
10:00 am.	SAL BUDGET COMMITTEE.....	Upper Tahquamenon
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Legislative.....	Grand Island I
	National Security & Foreign Relations.....	Dream Makers Theater
	Constitution and By-Laws.....	Whitefish Point
	Media & Communications .....	Grand Island II
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm	DISTRICT CAUCUSES	
	1 <sup>st</sup> District.....	Sky Box
	2 <sup>nd</sup> District.....	Woodlands
	3 <sup>rd</sup> District.....	Dream Makers Theater
	4 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Mackinac Island
	5 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Grand Island II
	6 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Dream Makers Theater
	7 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Upper Tahquamenon
	8 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Whitefish Point
	9 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Sugar Island
	10 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Dream Makers Theater
	11 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Maple Island
	12 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Drummond Island
	16 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Grand Island I
	18 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Whitefish Point
	19 <sup>th</sup> District.....	Neebish Island
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	ZONE CAUCUSES	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Zone.....	Grand Island II
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Zone.....	Whitefish Point
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Zone .....	Dream Makers Theater
	4 <sup>th</sup> Zone .....	Upper Tahquamenon
	5 <sup>th</sup> Zone .....	Grand Island I
5:00 pm	OFFICIAL OPENING – JOINT CONVENTION SESSION.....	Dream Makers Theater



5:00 pm

OFFICIAL OPENING – JOINT CONVENTION SESSION..... Dream Makers Theater

Advancement of Department Colors  
Department Commander – Dan Cooper  
Ray Carlson, Convention Chairman  
Greetings, City of Sault Ste. Marie  
Greetings, Austin Lowes, Chairman - Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians  
Greetings,  
Special Guest Speaker TBD

- Convention Credentials Committee Report
- Convention Rules Committee Report

Approval of Department Officers’ Reports, as printed in the Michigan Legionnaire  
Introduction of 2025-2026 SAL Detachment Officers  
Presentation of Distinguished Person Award by Past Department Commanders

CONVENTION SESSION STANDS IN RECESS UNTIL 9:00 AM SATURDAY, JULY 12, 2025

7:00 pm

Distinguished Person Dinner (PDC’s & invited guest).....???

7:00 pm

Joint Memorial Service Rehearsal.....Dream Makers Theater

• (District Commanders/Zone Commanders)

Saturday, July 12, 2025

8:00 am – 12:00

Registration ..... Waters Edge Area

8:30 am – 2:00 pm

Official Department Headquarters Office Legion ..... Arcade

9:00 am.

SAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING..... Upper Tahquamenon

9:00 am.

CONVENTION SESSION RECONVENES .....Dream Makers Theater

Constitution and By-Laws Committee Report

Michigan Veteran’s Homes

Michigan Veteran Trust Fund & MVAA Director

Membership Awards & Department Trophies

Convention Committee Reports

• Americanism (including Baseball, Education & Scholarship, Boys State, Law & Order and Scouting)

• Children & Youth

• Finance

• Legislative

• Media & Communications

• Membership

• National Security & Foreign Relations

• Post Development

• Reconnect

• Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (includes VA/VS and VE&E)

CONVENTION SESSION ADJOURNS UNTIL 10:00 am SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2025

3:00 pm.

American Legion Riders.....Whitefish Point

Wilwin Lodge Board Meeting ..... Grand Island I

Michigan American Legion Foundation Board Meeting .....Grand Island II

4:00 pm – 7:00 pm.

\*\*\* or as soon as the Convention is in recess \*\*\*

UP Party held at the Sault Ste Marie Post 3 (Shuttle Bus available 3:30pm – 7:30pm)

Sunday, July 13, 2025

7:30 am

Line Up for Memorial Service.....Dream Makers Theater

8:00 am

Joint Memorial Service .....Dream Makers Theater

8:30 am

Official Department Headquarters Office Legion ..... Arcade

10:00 am

CONVENTION SESSION RECONVENES .....Dream Makers Theater

Introduction of 2025-2026 Auxiliary Department President

Convention Committee Reports (continued) Any other Business or Reports

• Permanent Time and Place Committee Report on Conventions

12	MICHIGAN LEGIONNAIRE & AUXILIAIRE	Schedule Continued	April 2025   Michiganlegion.org
12:00 pm	NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF 2025-2026 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS		
	(or earlier if all other business is completed) .....		Dream Makers Theater
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Department Commander</li><li>• Department 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander</li><li>• Department 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander</li><li>• Department Finance Officer</li><li>• Department Sergeant-at-Arms</li><li>• Department Historian</li><li>• National Executive Committeeman</li><li>• Alternate Executive Committeeman</li><li>• Confirmation of Newly Elected Department Zone Commanders</li><li>• Confirmation of Newly Elected District Commanders and Alternate District Commanders</li><li>• Confirmation of Delegates and Alternates to 2025 National Convention</li><li>• Benediction</li><li>• Retirement of Colors</li></ul>		
NOTE: Immediately following the delegation meeting, the initial meeting of the 2024-2025 Department Executive Committee will convene seated in the Convention Hall.			
NOTE: Immediately following the initial meeting of the D.E.C., delegates and alternates to the 2025 National Convention will meet in front of the Convention Hall stage to elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary and transact such other business which may come before the delegation.			

# The Only Written

## Official Call to the Annual Department Convention

### American Legion, Department of Michigan

### July 10<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> 2025 Kewadin Casino & Resort Sault Ste Marie, Michigan

**Purpose:** To receive Department Officers’ annual reports, consider Department Constitution and By-Laws amendments, elect Department Officers and conduct any other business brought to the convention. Only the committees and chairpersons listed below are called to officially participate in the Convention.

**Registration:** A registration fee of \$25 will be charged to all delegates, alternates and guests.

**Department Executive Committee Meeting:** Thursday, July 10th at 7:00 p.m.

**Opening Session:** Friday, July 11th at 5:00 p.m.

**Subsequent Convention Sessions:** Saturday, July 12th, 9:00 a.m. & Sunday, July 13th, 10:00 a.m.

**CALLED - Full Standing Committee’s:** Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. See the schedule for meetings.  
Permanent Time & Place / Resolutions Assignment, Children & Youth, Internal Affairs

**CALLED: ALL Standing Committee Chairmen** – Note this is for Chairman Only (Excludes Sub Committee Chairmen)

**Convention Committee Meetings:** Conducted on Friday, July 11th, from 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Convention Committees are comprised of one person per district. Each Delegation Chairman will name the members to serve on the Convention Committees and certify that list to the Department Adjutant.

**Americanism & Community Service (includes Education & Scholarship, Boys State, Law and Order, Junior Shooting and Scouting) – Children & Youth, Constitution & By-laws, Credentials, Veterans Employment & Education, Finance, Legislative, Membership, National Security & Foreign Relations, Post Development, Media & Communications, Reconnect, Rules, Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation and VAVS/VHVS**

**District Caucuses:** Friday, July 11th, 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Zone Caucuses:** Friday, July 11th, 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Joint Memorial Service:** Sunday, July 13th, 8:00 a.m.

**Elections & Adjournment:** Sunday July 13th, 10:00 a.m. (Noon at the latest) *The new 2025-2026 Department Executive Committee and the 2025 National Convention Delegates and Alternates will meet upon Convention adjournment.*





## The American Legion Department of Michigan July 10 – 13, 2025

### 2025 CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

Contact Ray Carlson with any questions at 906-273-0130 or  
[rcarlson9851@charter.net](mailto:rcarlson9851@charter.net)

Hotel Reservations are your responsibility and may be made  
with our hotel:

**Kewadin Casino**

**2186 Shunk Road**

**Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783**

- Limited Rooms will be available until June 8, 2025
- Only ONE room can be reserved per person, no multiple  
rooms reservations can be made
- 3 NIGHT MINIMUM

Call **1-906-632-0530** for room reservations and mention  
Reservation Code **434** for special room rates of:

- Regular Rooms (2 Queen or King) - \$95 +tax
- Jacuzzi Rooms (King Bed) - \$115 +tax

- Suites (King with Queen Sleeper sofa) - \$135  
+tax **No smoking is allowed. Additional \$10 per person per  
room over 2 people.**

These rates will apply from Tuesday, July 8 to Sunday, July 13,  
2025. Handicap rooms are available on first come basis.

Cancellations must be made at least 3 days prior to arrival  
date to avoid a charge for one night.

Registration fee is **\$25.00 per person**, make your check  
payable to:

**UP Assoc. Convention Corporation**

or simply to: **UPA Conv. Corp.**

Mail to: **Ray Carlson, 19 Longyear Drive, Negaunee, MI  
49866-9601**

The American Legion requires that each person attending must register with the host corporation and be issued an official badge to be  
allowed to attend any meeting, session or event.

<b>OVERFLOW HOTEL #1 DAYS INN</b> 3651 I-75 Business Spur 49783 906-635-5200 \$105 per night, June 9 <sup>th</sup> deadline Reservation Code: American Legion Free Continental breakfast	<b>OVERFLOW HOTEL #2 SUPER 8</b> 3525 I-75 Business Spur 49783 906-632-6000 \$105 single, \$115 Double per night June 18 <sup>th</sup> deadline Reservation Code: American Legion Free Continental breakfast
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**PRINT FULL NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE AND EMAIL ADDRESS: (Registration fee is \$25.00 per person)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: ☐ TAL ☐ AUX ☐ SAL ☐ ALR  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHERS ATTENDING THAT YOU ARE REGISTERING**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: ☐ TAL ☐ AUX ☐ SAL ☐ ALR  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: ☐ TAL ☐ AUX ☐ SAL ☐ ALR  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: ☐ TAL ☐ AUX ☐ SAL ☐ ALR  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: ☐ TAL ☐ AUX ☐ SAL ☐ ALR

Enclosed Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ registrations



# Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Michigan

**TODD VANDAM****Detachment Commander 2024-2025**

Greetings Family,

The weather has turned the corner and the opportunity to get outside is here. If you are helping clean up the outside of your Post, planning a golf outing or other fundraisers, be sure to get involved and help anyway you can. Many hands make light work! Please stay focused on finishing any membership renewals and keep an eye out for new member opportunities. Always remain welcoming to anyone in your home Post, greet them with a smile and introduce yourself. You never know, you might end up with a new member, a new officer, a new helper, or a new best friend. At the very least, help our family grow! If our Veterans are "Veterans serving Veterans" we should always be "Proud possessors of a priceless heritage".

For God and Country,



## 2025 Convention Registration June 6th, 7th & 8th Okemos, MI

### Host Hotel

#### Best Western

2209 University Park Drive  
Okemos, MI 48864  
(517)349-8700

### Hotel Registration Open

#### Feb - May 24th

2 Queen Standard & King \$96.00

All rooms are equipped with 50 inch tv's,  
keurig coffee machines, microwaves,  
and a mini fridge.

Free Continental Breakfast.

### Other Options

#### Comfort Inn

2187 University Park Drive  
Okemos, MI 48864  
(517)347-6690

### Registration Contact Information - \$15 ea

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Post #: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME	DELEGATE	S	L	A	R	LUNCH
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO					<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
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ALL MEETING ATTENDEES MUST REGISTER

REGISTRATION \$15 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ LUNCH \$16 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_ C# \_\_\_\_\_

Saturdays lunch will be prepared by  
Squadron #34

at 40et8 Voiture 946

Quality Bratwursts & Burgers  
Mac n' Cheese, Beans and Cheesy Potatoes

Make checks payable to : Lansing Convention Corporation

Remit to:


Doreen Chapman  
2613 South Edger Rd  
Mason, MI 48854

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE**

**MAY 24, 2025**

**2025 SAL Membership: March 28<sup>th</sup> Goal = 28,189**  
**Current Total: 24,771-87.87%**





## 1<sup>ST</sup> ZONE

### Greg Price, Commander

Many squadrons hold events such as chili contests, karaoke, dinners, and breakfasts with other Legion Family members. Post members enjoy bringing their families and enjoy the camaraderie while supporting these fun get-togethers.

With the warmer weather getting closer, some posts may hold car shows. It is nice to see the smiles on someone's face when they look around at these classics and say, "I used to own one of those."


We want to encourage your squadrons' efforts to contact those members who have not yet renewed their membership for 2025. Our membership numbers are increasing with your help, and it would be nice if we could meet the 90% Target Date on April 9.

As we enter April, I would remind Squadrons that they should hold their 1st nominations of Officers. Their 2nd nominations and election of Officers should be at their May meeting.

The election for State officers will be held at our Detachment Convention on June 6th, 7th, and 8th at the Best Western Hotel & Okemos Event Center in Okemos.

Our State Oratorical contest was held on March 15 at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing. I had to turn this article in before that event happened. Still, we will know which contestant won, as they will represent Michigan at the National Oratorical contest held May 16-18 in Hillsdale, Michigan, at Hillsdale College.

Continue to Be The One that supports our Veterans and our communities.



## 5<sup>TH</sup> ZONE UPDATE

### Zack Pendell, Commander

From the Upper Peninsula 5th Zone, we are having a great year. One Squadron has raised \$16,000 to assist with honor flights; others have contributed to that sum, making it a great year to send veterans to Washington, DC.


We will have a 5th Zone meeting at Iron Mountain on the 12th of April. I hope to see as many 11th and 12 District Squadrons as possible attend to pass information and help assist with what we are planning for 2026. I would also like to invite State Commander Todd Van Dam to attend if his schedule allows it.

Get your rooms reserved for the Legion State Convention in the Soo in July and our SAL State Convention in Okemos on the first whole weekend of June 6, 7, and 8.

I look forward to seeing my brothers in the U.P. again soon. I cannot tell you how proud of you that I am. Please remember to submit one member for the Son Of The Year Award. This is an annual event, and everyone is eligible unless you do not submit a name. **DOWNLOAD** the rules and forms from the SAL state website at [sons.michiganlegion.org](https://sons.michiganlegion.org). We all work hard to make sure someone is awarded every year. There is also a Young Son award available to those 17 and younger.

Awards for membership and other appreciation awards are coming from the Detachment. It will be my honor to deliver those well-deserved certificates. It is the last push to get your membership turned in, so let's all get those 100% awards. Let us be proud of what we do in the U.P., what we do for the Michigan Detachment, and what we do for our veterans.

Thank You again for what you are doing for veterans. Never forget what those Veterans fought for and continue to fight for today as Legionnaires.




**"I was approaching the end of my Air Force active duty career and needed to increase my education to open more opportunities in my next career. The diverse background of instructors and classmates added great value to the learning experience."**

— Patrick Austin, M.S. Organizational Leadership

**Our Commitment to Serving Veterans Includes:**

- » Textbooks Provided at No Cost
- » Complimentary Evaluation of Prior Education, Training and Certifications for Transfer Credit
- » Flexible Start Dates
- » Assistance with VA Benefits
- » Dedicated Veteran Support Staff

- » Department of Education's 8 Keys to Veterans' Success Institution
- » Math and Writing Assistance Available
- » Career Services Assistance Available
- » Exclusive Veteran Enrollment Options Available



**COLUMBIA  
SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY**

ColumbiaSouthern.edu/Veterans » 877.347.6050

Orange Beach, AL | Gainful employment information available.

Any reference to United States Department of Defense (DoD) personnel, products or services does not constitute or imply endorsement by the DoD. Paid ad. No federal endorsement of advertiser(s) intended.

# Veteran Service Office Locations

Patrick V. McNamara  
Federal Building  
477 Michigan Ave. Rm 1231  
Detroit, MI 48226  
Hours: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm  
Phone: 833.648.3826 ext. 1

AL Post #257  
7475 B Drive North  
Battlecreek, MI 49014  
Hours: Thursday 8am-4pm

AL Post 349  
1835 Co. Hwy EED.  
Little Lake, MI 49833  
Hours: 1st & 3rd TH 8am-4pm

AL Post 412  
5480 Clark Rd  
Bath, MI 48808  
Hours: 3rd Wed 8am-4pm

AL Post 301, 10584 N. Main St.  
Rapid River, MI 49878  
Hours: Wednesday 8am-4pm

AL Post 194  
455 Bay St.  
Petoskey, MI 49770  
Hours: Tuesday 8am-4pm

AL Post 491  
422 Woodworth St.  
Leslie, MI 49251  
Hours: 2nd Tue 6pm-10pm

AL Post 44, 700 W. Bluff St.  
Marquette, MI 49855  
Hours: M, Tu, F 8am-4pm

Delta County Veterans Office  
2840 College Ave, Ste 2,  
Escanaba, MI 49854  
Hours: Thursday 8a-4pm

AL Post 76 318, N. James St.  
Ludington, MI 49431  
Hours: 1st & 3rd Wed 8:30am-4:30pm

Shiawassee Co. OVA  
1042 N. Shiawassee St.  
Corunna, MI 48817  
Hours: Friday 8am-4pm

AL Post 248  
1240 W. Grand River  
Laingsburg, MI 48848  
Hours: 1st Wed 8am-4pm

AL Post 28  
700 S. Harbor Dr  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
Hours: Mon, Tues 9am-2pm

AL Post 305  
9548 Cherry Valley Ave SE, Caledonia, MI 49316  
Hours: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 8:30-4:30

VFW National Home  
Eaton Rapids, MI, 48827  
Hours: Monday 8am-4pm

Muskegon VA Clinic  
2734 E. Apple Ave,  
Muskegon, MI 49441  
Hours: Thursday 9am-2pm

AL Post 297  
3590 Conklin St,  
Ravenna, MI 49451  
Hours: Wednesday 9am-2pm

Ann Arbor VAMC  
2215 Fuller Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
Hours: M-F 7am-3pm

Charlevoix County OVA  
301 State Street  
Charlevoix, MI 49720  
Hours: 2nd & 4th Wed 8:30am-4:30pm

County Office, 400 River St.  
Manistee, MI 49660  
Hours: 2<sup>nd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs 8:30-4:30

Department Headquarters  
212 N. Verlinden  
Lansing, MI 48915  
Hours: Daily 8am-4:30pm

Jackson County OVA  
1715 Lansing Ave. Rm 252  
Jackson, MI 49202  
Hours: T,2&4W,F 8am-4pm

Kalkaska County OVA  
890 Isl. Lake Rd. NW, Rm 8  
Kalkaska, MI 49646  
Hours: 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs 8:30-4:30

Mackinac County OVA  
100 S. Marley St.  
St. Ignace, MI 49781  
Hours: Tue & Fri 8am-4pm

Mecosta County Office  
14330 Northland Dr.  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
Hours: Fri 8:30am-4:30pm

Michigan Works Bldg 401  
North Lake St.,  
Suite 700  
Cadillac, MI 49601  
Hours: Mon 8:30am-4:30pm

Otsego County OVA  
225 W. Main St, Rm 104  
Gaylord, MI 49735  
Hours: Wed, Thur 8am-4pm

Presque Isle County Veterans  
151 E. Huron, 3rd flr.  
Rogers City, MI 49779  
Hours: W 9am-4pm

Saginaw VAMC, 1500 Weiss st  
Saginaw, MI 48602  
Hours: M,T, W- 9am-4pm

Schoolcraft County OVA  
300 Walnut St. #206B  
Manistique, MI 49854  
Hours: Tue & Wed 8am-4pm

Sault Ste. Marie CBOC  
509 Osborn Blvd,  
Ste 306  
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783  
Hours: Monday 8-4

Wyoming CBOC  
5838 Metro Way SW  
Wyoming, MI 49519  
Hours: Thur 8-4

Downriver Community Conference Building  
15100 Northline Road  
Southgate, MI 48195  
Hours: T, W, Th 8am-4pm

West MI Vet Assistance Program  
620 Century Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Hours: 1st & 3rd Fri 8am-4pm



## Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

### Gary Easterling Director

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

Gary Easterling, Director  
Cell (313) 549-8557  
[geasterling@michiganlegion.org](mailto:geasterling@michiganlegion.org)

Tripp Cantwell, Assistant Director  
Office Phone (313) 964-6640  
Fax (313) 964-5697

**Call for a Service officer in your area:**  
**833.648.3826 Option 1**  
e-mail - [al.vbadet@va.gov](mailto:al.vbadet@va.gov)  
[like us on Facebook @MichiganVAR](#)

**Service Officers**  
Shay Grady  
Daryl Kinder  
Joshua Clark  
Stephanie Fisher  
Thomas Kaiser  
Stephen Earle  
Rebecca Lewis  
Rick Wiles  
Angella Barkel  
Patty Breas  
Phillip Babcock  
Tommy Simpkins  
Stacy Thill  
Kieshan Counts  
Courtney Thurber  
Lisa Misenko

Check out all your benifits at  
[www.mivabenefits.org](http://www.mivabenefits.org)

VFW Post 5670, 54 N. Mitchell Rd, Gwinn, MI 49841  
Hours: 2nd & 3rd Thurs 8-4

Radcliff Center, 1751 Radcliff St, Garden City, MI 48135  
Hours: Monday 8am-4pm

## DON'T FACE THE VA ALONE!

Find an American Legion Veteran Service Officer near you. Use an Accredited Veteran Service Officer. Here are where American Legion Department Service Officers are. If one is not near you call 833.648.3826 Option 1 and they will guide you to an accredited veteran service officer who will help you.



## District Meetings

### First District

Times and Location TBD

### Second District

Meetings start at 11 am with the SAL followed by Riders at Noon with a Lunch VSO training at 1 pm and Legion at 2 pm

April 26th, 2025 \*4:00 pm

Morenci Post #368

May 18th, 2025

Jackson #Post 29

### Third District

Lunch is at 12pm, and Business at 1:00 pm.

May 4th, 2025

Joseph B. Westnedge, Post 36  
1920 E Kilgore Rd  
Portage

### Fourth District

Service officers training at 11:00 am meal at 12:30 pm  
Meetings at 1:30 pm.

April 27th, 2025

Dorr 127  
4310 18th St.

### Fifth District

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

LOCATION TBD

### Sixth District

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

May 18, 2025

Buck-Reasoner Post 238  
1785 Cedar Street  
Holt, Michigan 48842  
Phone 517-699-2235

### Seventh District

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

May 18th, 2025

Lapeer post #16  
1701 W. Genesee  
Lapeer, MI 48446

### Eighth District

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

May 18th, 2025 \*Convention

Meeting\*

Portland, Post #129

1324 w. Bridge St.  
Phone: (517) 647-4980

### Ninth District

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

May 3rd, 2025

Copemish Post 531

### Tenth District

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

May 3rd, 2025

Bay City Post 18

### Eleventh District

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

**TBD**

### Twelfth District

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

April 12th, 2025

Iron Mountain

### Sixteenth District

All meetings start at 7:30 pm

May 13th, 2025 \*\*

Lincoln Park Post 67  
Phone: 313-388-2088

May 18th, 2025\*

Trenton Post 426

June 10th, 2025 \*\*

Garden City 396  
Phone: 313-381-2245

\* Service Officer School at 6:30 pm

\*\*Memorial Service & Elections

### Eighteenth District

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

May 18th, 2025

Rochester Post 172  
234 Walnut Blvd  
Rochester, MI 48307 Phone:  
248-651-2247

### Nineteenth District

Meetings will be held at the  
Gaylord Bowling Center, 1200  
Gornick Ave, Gaylord, MI  
49735

Training at 10:00 am, Social Meet and Greet at 11:00 am, lunch served at noon. The both the Legion and Auxiliary will start at 1:00 pm

May 17th, 2025

## Legislative Update

**Tim Poxson**  
**Legislative Chariman**



As I write this article it appears that spring may have sprung. But to be sure it is just an effort to keep us on our toes with the changing weather in Michigan. However, with changes comes the new legislative session 2025 - 2026, so we have been working hard to get bills from the last legislative session (2023 - 2024) reintroduced that had not made it out of the old session. In all, we are successful with most of the bills. However, we are working on finding new sponsors for a few because the original sponsor was not reelected. We hope to get them all moving forward soon.

On another front, we are working with an outside contractor and our Media Coordinator to have a new part of the Department's website up and running within weeks. This will be under 2025 - 2026 Legislative Priorities. We will soon have directions on how you can quickly contact your own State Senator or Representative to support the Department's Legislative Priorities. With just a small amount of information, you will be able to send an email for each priority or get the email address of the lawmakers and submit your own email. The system will maintain your information, making it easy to contact your senator or representative in the future.

It is planned that you will be able to send follow-ups on bills that fall into a priority for the Department, showing your ongoing support. This will be open to all Department family members. With the support of the American Legion Family, we will see more of our Legislative requests become law. More information will be coming as we get the system up and running.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Summer Convention! Respectfully Tim Poxson, Legislative Chair of the American Legion Department of Michigan.

## The 4<sup>th</sup> District

**Rodney Tolbert, Commander**



I would like to thank our 4th district 100% posts 266 Wayland, 344 Galien, and 220 Lawton great job. We have quite a few posts at 90% or better. Keep up the good work. The Fabulous 4th has come on strong as of late. We still have some posts who have not paid their district dues. Please pay asap. Unfortunately, we lost 353 Eau Claire as we had to close them down; we encouraged their membership to transfer to other posts.

We have a major event coming to the 4th district recognizing Vietnam-era Veterans and surviving spouses on Saturday, March 29th at 10:00 am across from 521 Lake Boulevard St. Joseph Michigan at the Vietnam War Memorial Monument on the bluff parking near the monument or across the street in public parking dress for the weather it is on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. Please attend.

Critical update: we are moving the time of the May district meeting to APRIL 27th at post 127 Dorr. Please attend, as we will be having a Memorial service for the ones who passed away this past year in the 4th District. Please send the names of your deceased to the district if you haven't, Sons, and auxiliary chaplain. If any post needs help with anything, please reach out to me. Stay strong, Fabulous 4th.



Around the State...

McDonald-Osmer Post 451 Honors Eagle Scouts



L-R: Paul Ryan, Tyler Smith and Larry Rose



L-R: Larry Rose, Jacob Sanford, Dylan Choura, Zachary Ruffer and John Friedli

**Post 21 Shows Its Appreciation**  
Reino Auxiliary Unit 21 Member Marcia Gallup received a Certificate of Appreciation after procured a grant from Superior Health Foundation for an AED unit for the Post.



L-R: Post 21 Commander Richard Weatherholt, Auxiliary Unit 21 Member Marcia Gallup & Senior Vice Commander Robert Gallup

American Legion member Frank Thompson from Kalamazoo received Army Military honors, supported by Post 49 members including AL Post 49 member Dan Thompson.



Clare/Farwell American Legion Post 558 recognized as the Best Community Organization in Clare County



**Flags in the Classroom**  
The 18th District SAL is committed to putting a flag in every classroom in Oakland County Michigan



L-R: Dan Tyack PDC, Mike Fitzgerald 3rd Zone Commander, and Pat Donahue Squadron 63

**Post 49 hosts “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans”**



Vicki Olson, Chaplain ALA unit 49, South Haven, presents a patriotic handmade quilt to Post 49 member and Vietnam Veteran Dave Woody

**Celebrating 50 Years**  
Korean veteran Edward Nowaczyk received his 50 years membership certificate from National American Legion



L-R: 50 year member Edward Nowaczyk and Post Adjutant Gary Dietrich





# Michigan Chaplain Workshop

*Hosted by the 5<sup>th</sup> District*

**When:** Saturday April 26, 2025

**Time:** 9:00am – 2:00pm  
Coffee & Donuts will be provided  
Box Lunch will be offered for \$5.00

**Where:** Army National Guard Grand Ledge  
10600 West Eaton Hwy  
Grand Ledge, MI 48837

**YOU MUST RSVP to Deb Weatherbee by April 19, 2025,  
for reservation and lunch confirmation.**

**email - [deb560@hotmail.com](mailto:deb560@hotmail.com)**

**Phone - 616-723-2398**

 **AMERICAN  
LEGION**  
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

**WILWIN LODGE**  
At Cygnet Cove

**Spring Clean Up April 26-27  
All Volunteers Welcome**

**For more information 231-757-0140  
3383 E Hawley Rd, Custer MI 49405  
[www.wilwinlodge.com](http://www.wilwinlodge.com)**





# STEP BACK IN TIME

FREE SPRING OUTING EVENT

FOR BSA & GSUSA SCOUT TROOPS

TENT Camping only

Free Camping  
Sites  
Provided



Vaulted Toilets  
Water Available  
Quiet Generators ok  
**NO PETS ALLOWED**

Your troop provides all your own camping gear and food!  
Camping and activities are FREE

## May 16-18, 2025

Old time skills, activities, prizes and more...

Flint Knapping ~ Blacksmithing ~ Teas & Salves  
Fur Trapping ~ Quilting ~ Trade Blanket  
Obstacle Course ~ Tomahawk Toss ~ Sling Shots

Register at [www.wilwinlodge.com/scouting](http://www.wilwinlodge.com/scouting)

Registration closes May 10th

OR WHEN

The 1st 100 Scouts are registered

Wilwin Lodge at Cygnet Cove

3383 E. Hawley Rd, Custer MI

231-757-0140 231-742-6614

[Wilwinscoutmaster1193@gmail.com](mailto:Wilwinscoutmaster1193@gmail.com)