

Disabled American Veterans



Chapter #18 Mailbag



D.A.V Chapter #18 401 N. Michigan Ave. Big Rapids, Michigan 49307 Volume XXXI NO 3 of 3

Commander's Corner

I hope you are staying cool in this hot and humid weather. We have been out and about letting the community know we are here to assist veterans. Members spent the week at the fair greeting people and taunting the Army recruiters for having an empty location most of the time during the fair.

We also conducted the annual flag retirement, and the Elks conducted their flag ceremony. There was miscommunication with the scouts, so they were not present for the ceremony. I spoke with the leaders, so we don't have the same problem next year.

In May we were presented with a proposal to merge our chapter with Chapter 39 Inland Lakes from Cadillac. We published this proposal in the last newsletter, on our website, and Facebook page. In order to obtain input from the members we held a special meeting. At the July meeting we passed on the information from that meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to merge. With this our chapter will grow to approximately 650 members.

We have been planning and obtaining equipment to hold a cornhole tournament. The tournament will be held on Labor Day in conjunction Downtown Business Association Car Show. We are hoping the members of the auxiliary will hold a bake sale/yard sale during the event. The purpose of the event and sale is to raise funds for our service fund account. We utilize these funds to assist veterans with financial difficulties such as utility bills, vehicle repairs, or groceries. We also utilize these funds to provide fruit baskets to members who are recovering from medical conditions.

If you know of any veteran that is in need of assistance with a claim with the Veteran Administration, please direct them to us or our service officer. She is able to submit the appropriate forms as well as information about evidence and records to substantiate the claim.

Encourage them to also consider joining our chapter so we have more members available to assist veterans in need.

Commander

Chuck Rathbun

THE PRINTING OF THIS
NEWSLETTER IS
DONATED COMPLIMENTS
OF
**PREFERRED OFFICE
MACHINES**
215 N.MICHIGAN AVE
BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307
231-796-8080



PREFERRED *Office Machines*

Xerox® Multifunctional Machines • Copiers • Printers • Scanners • Faxes



John Milan, Agent/Owner

215 North Michigan Avenue
Downtown Big Rapids

www.PreferredOfficeMachines.com

Phone: (231) 796-8080
Fax: (231) 796-6299



MAX'S CONCRETE INC.

231-972-7558

REDI MIX - SEPTIC TANKS



MAX GOLTZ
15323 75TH AVE
MECOSTA, MI 49332

JR

Customs
and
Collision

Quality Without Compromise!

231-598-9444

19100 Northland Dr, Big Rapids

JRCustomsandCollision.com JRCC9444@Gmail.com

STATE STREET HARDWARE, INC.
Since 1951

Outdoor Power Equipment
Warranty, Sales, Service, & Repair
for most makes & models



Gravel

Full Locksmithing Services



Husqvarna

Ernie Osburn Trent Osburn

Phone: (231) 796-8122
statestreethardware.com

614 N State Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Edstrom's Neighborhood Garage

M - F 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Darin Edstrom Owner

Darin D Edstrom Master Mechanic

227 N. Chestnut Ave.

Reed City, MI

49677

Phone: 231-832-9283

Fax: 231-832-9282

E-mail: edstromsneighborhoodgarage@yahoo.com



Currie's Towing

620 E. Maple Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307

24 Hour Road Service
Light, Medium & Heavy Duty Towing
Radiator Sales & Service

Adam Currie

adam@curriestowing.com

www.curriestowing.com

231.796.5351

Est. 1948

EDITORIAL

We, the Newsletter staff, very Heartily encourage each of our readers to Patronize those business establishments which you see advertised throughout our newsletter. They have shown their support for disabled veterans in their community by choosing to place their ads with us. When you shop at any of these establishments, let them know you saw their ad in the DAV newsletter and that we appreciate their support for chapter # 18.

"Thanks from the Mailbag staff"

An official publication of Big Rapids Chapter #18

Disabled American Veterans, Big Rapids Michigan It is published at regular intervals throughout the year. The purpose of #18's MAIL BAG is to promulgate and disseminate throughout our membership, information from our national and state offices pertaining to the services and benefits which are available to all veterans and their families, as well as to keep them abreast of the many activities and programs of our own chapter #18's past, present, and future. Articles authored by our own members or their families are encouraged and will be accepted for consideration at:

#18's MAIL BAG c/o D.A.V CHAPTER #18

402 N. MICHIGAN AVE. BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307

Nominations, Election and

Installation of Chapter#18 Officers

will be conducted March, April and

May. Attend our meetings on the second

Thursday of each month learn how you can help other Disabled Veterans.

JACOB STRATZ

President



SALES & SERVICE

20960 19 Mile Rd.
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Phone: (231) 796-3717

Naturally Creative Home Services

730 Rose Ave., Big Rapids, MI 49307

*Free Estimates
Satisfaction Guaranteed*

Residential/Commercial Interior & Exterior Painting
Wallpaper/Border Installation/Removal
Minor Repairs - Restoration
Porch/Deck Power Washing/Cleaning & Painting/Staining

Call Steve Larie at 231-629-7556



2025 Mecosta Fair.

Above Left to right Commander Chuck Rathbun, Don Tanis, a helper Justin. And Terry Sisson and Reggie Norris took the picture. Not pictured Ryan Oshaughnessy

These members took donations and enjoyed the fair as much as we could. We helped remind the Army recruiter that the Marines, Air Force and Navy are also recruiting.

We met a lot of veterans that we never would have if not set up at the Fair. We would like to thank our friends from the Fair who are always there to help our chapter. Also a thanks to Browns Barber shop for a thoughtful gift.

Our next membership drive is Labor Day. The 1st of September at the Hall we are having a Cornhole tournament for singles and teams. We are looking for prizes if anyone has ideas. We would love to see members, family members and anyone who would help with our membership drive. Certainly those who play Cornhole.

I would also like to say congratulations to our Chapter Adjutant and Service officer for Graduating and receiving a Bachelor Degree. Jennelle Van Houten. We are all happy for you Jennelle.

Sr, Vice Cmdr.

Reggie Norris

Dr. Julie Hanson, OD



OPTOMETRIC CENTERS
www.famoptreedcity.com

142 West Upton Ave.
Reed City, MI 49677
231.832.3218

140 North Pine St.
Ewart, MI 49631
231.734-6218

Lee's

Auto Wash & Self Serve

14493 Northland Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307

OPEN 7 DAYS

Owner, Tony Lee (231) 796-5314



Daggett-Gilbert Funeral Home Inc.



Funeral Services - Cremation - Monuments
Pre-Arranged Funerals

Christine Daggett
Funeral Director

1-800-330-7064

www.daggettgilbertfuneralhome.com

Daggett-Gilbert Funeral Home Inc.

Daggett Funeral Home Inc.

13985 Northland Dr.

19238 South 30th Ave.

Big Rapids, MI 49307

Barryton, MI 49305

231-796-3611

989-382-5566

Fax: 231-796-7335

Fax: 989-382-9299

Routley's R.V.

Sales & Service • Parts & Pieces

231.823.2128

Owner
Gary Routley

Awning, Heater
& Refrigerator
Repair

Rubber Roofing

Insurance Work

Break Control

Wiring

6696 Northland Dr.
Stanwood, MI 49346



Finished & Unfinished

Tim Franck
(231) 592-1057

Email:
barefurniture@live.com
Website:
www.bare.br.com



20979 19 Mile Rd.
Big Rapids, MI 49307



JANA FARRIER
231-796-7253

624 N STATE ST
BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307

FINE WINE
DOMESTIC & MICRO BREWS
KEG BEER
PACKAGE LIQUOR

MICHIGAN
ADAS
CALIBRATIONS & GLASS
LLC

231.580.3183

MichiganADAS.com

MichiganADAS@gmail.com

Amber Morgan-Rehkopf • Operations Manager

GILBERT'S

CarpetsPlus®
COLORTILE
AMERICA'S FLOOR STORE

Window Treatments ☒
Counter Tops ☒
Vinyl Plank ☒
Carpet ☒
Wood ☒
Rugs ☒
Vinyl ☒
Tile ☒


Over 40 Years Experience

14150 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307 ~ 231-796-2700

www.gilbertscarpetsplus.com   

Johnson's
Automotive

Serving You with Honesty and Integrity

JOHNSONSAUTOBR.COM 231-796-3700

JB JORDAN
BALKEMA
ELDER LAW CENTER

MEDICAID • ESTATE PLANNING • PROBATE

218 MAPLE ST. STE. A
BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307
231.796.4012 or 800.395.4347

1020 HASTINGS ST. STE. 105
TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49686
231.935.4646 or 800.395.4347



R. Todd Balkema
ATTORNEY AT LAW
tbalkema@jbelc.com

Fax 231.796.4494

www.MyElderLawPlanning.com

Commander Norris graciously requested a 'sign-off' occasioned by my retirement from professional practice as a clinical psychologist first with the US Navy and then with the Veterans Administration. This kindness allows me to have some good-byes that were missed in person for one reason or another.

I am filled with appreciation for the opportunity to get to know some incredible people from my years of being hosted by the Big Rapids DAV post, first while still working directly with the Northern Rural Expansion (NREX) clinic within the VA, and then my failed retirement that led to doing Community Care mental health contracting for the past 2 and ½ years.

At the risk of not acknowledging someone deserving of recognition, I want to say thank you to several veterans associated with the post. First, I am appreciative of a chance encounter with Teddy Zimmerman that led to becoming aware of the DAV post. I knew that the rest of the NREX team was trying to find a suitable location for the mobile clinic, but there were privacy concerns with my having meetings in the same area as the rest of the team. Teddy gave me the solution by facilitating a meeting with the then commander of the DAV post, Wayne Benson. I received permission to use space for meeting with vets at the post and thus began my office-away-from-the-office in Big Rapids. Richard StArnold put up with me until his health failed so abruptly. Then Commander Norris had to tolerate my intrusions, which he had done so graciously and consistently. I enjoyed many 'in between' chats with Reggie and Dan Hazen that made me appreciate the sense of community that the post fostered.

My strongest support came in the form of a Senior Chief, one who was well versed in running interference for navy officers. I am pleased to have maintained his proficiency in 'officer guidance' throughout his tenure at the post. I am sure that Mark Sermon did far more things to help facilitate getting mental health services for veterans than I will ever know. One of the blessings that I fully recognize is his connecting me with one Janelle Van Houten, yet another post officer who became my business partner during my Community Care time. Without Janelle, I could not have navigated the torturous process of being recognized by the VA as a Community Care provider.

The red tape was far too sticky for me to endure, and she gently guided me through the myriads of details that were, for me, beyond frustrating. Without her able assistance and support, the mental health services that we were able to offer at the DAV post simply would not have existed.

My work with military veterans, especially those who were in harm's way, has been a calling. So, I want to most respectfully thank the vets who talked with me, shared their stories, and trusted me with their painful experiences. I am honored by being allowed to walk a part of a path that precious few in this country can understand or appreciate. You have taught me that living with the traumas and the all-too-common moral injuries is a burden but also a gift. A gift in that you are more aware of what it means to be human, good and bad, than the vast majority of civilians will ever experience. You are special, even though you did not ask to be. I am proud of you and honored by your trust. Welcome home.

Doc Hamm

Mota

We received a letter from the Mecosta / Osceola area MOTA.

We are proud to offer a service called Veterans Rides to Wellness. Our service provides discounted transportation to and from medical appointments for Veterans.

They ask that we help spread the word about Rides to Wellness. To learn more about Veterans Rides to Wellness, please contact Mr. Jacob Jackson at 231-796-4896 x3.

Any who use these services please inform our Chapter officers about your experience. This way we can inform others.

We would love to see our members the second Thursday each month 630 meeting.

BIG RAPIDS TIRE

Steve Brock
Owner



1300 N. State St. • Big Rapids, MI 49307 • 231 796-4839



Paris Auto
Service & Repair

18415 Northland Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307

parisautoserviceandrepair@outlook.com



1-231-796-7355



When protecting your Auto, Home,
Life, Business, Farm and more, the

**EXPERIENCE
MATTERS.**

Discounts offered to military and 1st responders.

Call Jefts Agency today!
(231) 796-7697 | cjefts@fbinsmi.com
826 N. State Street, Big Rapids



FARM BUREAU
INSURANCE



A Company



ALL AMERICAN FOOD

PO BOX 1135 304. N STATE ST,

BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307

(231)-796-6405

231-796-3403

Fullmer & Sons
Heating, Cooling and
Fireplaces

20928 - 18 Mile Rd Big Rapids, MI
49307



Joe Fullmer
Co-Owner

fullmerheating@msn.com

fullmerandsons.com

BIG RAPIDS TOWING, INC.

LIGHT & HEAVY DUTY TOWING

Lockouts • Jump Starts • Tire Changes • Road Service

(231) 796-2222

20833 18 Mile Road
Big Rapids, MI 49307

www.bigrapidstowing.com



B & I

Boyce & Irland, CPAs, PC

218 Maple Street

P.O. Box 1240

Big Rapids, MI 49307

Website: www.boyceandirlandcpa.com

Fax: (231) 592-1517

Ryan M. Irland, CPA

Phone: (231) 592-4677

rmicpa@boyceandirlandcpa.com

Cell: (231) 408-7513

* PUTTING DREAMS IN DRIVEWAYS SINCE 1999 *

Premier Auto Sales

Phone 231-796-7020

Peter Schebil
Sales

Fax 231-796-4054 | 14010 Northland Dr
www.premierautosalesinc.com | Big Rapids, MI 49307



YOST CLC
Loading Shoppe

202 N. CHESTNUT ST.
REED CITY, MI 49677

FFL DEALER
TRANSFERS

Bill 231-499-0519

yostclc15@gmail.com

GUNS

BUY AND SELL

NEW AND USED

Michael Oil & Propane

18655 Northland Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Gail
Bailey

President
gail@MichaelOilAndPropane.com

(231) 796-8681
www.MichaelOilAndPropane.com

The Fun Begins...

Now that we have been picked up by our regular DI's we actually start the training process. This means today is day one of the thirteen training period to complete Marine Corps boot camp. On this day we are instructed on how to make our rack (bed), the manner in which our belongings go into our footlocker, and how our towels, laundry bag, and washcloth are hung on the end of our rack.

We then we once again, "get on the road for chow." The entire platoon runs as fast as possible down the three flights of stairs to form up on the sidewalk in front of the barracks. One of the DI's walks out, looks us over and informs us that we were too slow to go back to the barracks and get online, "DO IT NOW MOVE!!" So, the entire platoon goes as quickly as possible back up the stairs and online in the squad bay. A different DI then yells for us to get on the road! We all once again descend the stairs as quickly as possible and form up in front of the barracks.

Apparently, we performed adequately so we marched to the chow hall. We go into the chow hall squad by squad until the entire platoon has entered. The meal is once again "high-quality" Marine Corps chow, nothing to write home about. The quality is not that great but the quantity of most of us is filling. The diet privates are given much less and only certain foods. While the double rations privates get a normal portion plus most of the diet privates' portion. During meals the recruits learn to eat as quickly as possible. We also learn not to talk or look around as at any moment a DI could walk up and tell you to get out. When this happens you immediately pick up your tray, silverware, and glasses and move quickly to the exit. ON the way to the exit, you hear recruits on "mess duty" yelling "knife, fork, spoons" and encourage you to move on in a quick manner. If you're lucky the DI doesn't follow you our and put you in the pit to PT in front of the other platoons coming to chow.

After chow we take the "scenic route" back, so we are able to practice drill (Marching). We march around MCRD San Diego down various side streets and on the parade deck. Stopping occasionally so the DI can explain different steps and movements. We continued this for an hour or so before returning to the barracks. Once at the barracks we are given the command "parade rest." You then stand shoulder width apart, with your left had over your right at belt height behind your back.

The DIs walk down the racks checking and correcting recruits positioning and hand placement. They also ensure that you keep your fingers tight together and your thumb in line with your palm. If you fail to do so they may grasp the digit, making you wish he'd either tear it off or let go as quickly as possible.

The platoon is then given the following instructions by the drill instructor. When I say, "Ready", you will yell "Platoon 2032, the biggest, baddest, best in the corps, the more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war, Oooooorah!" then I will say, "Dismissed." You will go to the squad bay and get online as quickly as possible. He then proceeds to have us execute the command, but it takes several attempts for us to obtain a volume he approves of before sending us in.

Once we get to the barracks we are taught how to shine our belt buckles, fold our socks, underwear, and boxer shorts. The platoon then is given free time. During this time one half of the platoon is directed and instructed on how to properly shower, shave, and brush your teeth. The other half of the platoon is allowed to organize their footlocker, write a letter home, or study the Guidebook for Marines. Then the groups switch so that the other half showers, and so forth while everyone else enjoys their free time. Everyone is given a little bit of more free time until the DI conducts a hygiene inspection on each recruit.

For hygiene inspections, two footlockers are set next to one another. Recruits form a line behind each footlocker and when directed step up on the footlocker. Before the process starts, the DI instructs all the recruits to twist their boxers to the side slightly. Failure to do so will result in a guided run around the squad bay. Each recruit steps up on a footlocker, the DI checks his feet, legs, and overall cleanliness. They are then told to turn around and once they are completed, they are told to leave. When they step down, they have to step with their left foot first. Failure to do so will result in the DI going ballistic on the recruit.

Chuck Rathbun

R&R METAL INC.

Buyers of scrap metal.

Jordan Lodholtz

Phone: 231-832-0330



4921 Mackinaw Trl. Reed City MI 49677

CHIPPEWA STONE & GRAVEL, INC.
15240 110Th Ave
Rodney, MI 49342
(231)867-5757

Road Gravel
Stone
Sand

QUALITY PRODUCT PROMPT SERVICE



TYLER SCHUBERG, CIC

Home Auto Life Business

107 N. Michigan Ave.
Big Rapids, MI 49307
tyler@schubergagency.com
www.schubergagency.com

Office: (231) 796-5881
24 Hour: (231) 287-0287
FAX: (231) 796-5022

Agency Owner
Certified Insurance Counselor



LAWN CARE
and
SNOWPLOWING LLC

P.O. Box 222
Paris, MI 49338

231-796-4956
Toll Free: 800-514-5220
Fax: 231-796-9855

RIVERSBEND
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

231-796-3507

745 Water Tower Rd.
Big Rapids
www.riversbendah.com



2025 XXXI issue 3 of 3

Disabled American Veteran
Big Rapids Chapter #18
402 N. Michigan Ave,
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

2025-2026 Chapter #18 Officers & Chairperson

Commander / PR	Chuck Rathbun , PCC	(231) 796 –4772
Adjutant / Service Officer	Jenelle Vanhouten	
Senior Vice Commander/Newsletter	Reginald Norris ,PCC	
Junior Vice Commander	Dave Thorson	
Treasurer & Americanism	Dan Hazen	
Chaplain & Legislative Chairperson	Ryan OShaughnessy	

2025-2026 Unit #18 Auxiliary Officers and Chairperson

Commander, Membership	Alita Fullmer
Senior Vice Cmdr.	
Junior Vice Cmdr./ Chaplain	
Adjutant, Treasurer	Barbra Mc Comb

“Building better lives for American Veterans and their families”