

Disabled American Veterans



Chapter #18 Mailbag



D.A.V Chapter #18 402 N. Michigan Ave. Big Rapids, Michigan 49307 Volume XXXII NO 1 of 3

Welcome aboard Chapter 39 Members

As we have publicized and communicated in the previous months, we have merged with Chapter 39, Inland Lakes, Cadillac. There has been much discussion on merging and members of both chapters and members of the Department of Michigan have given their support. We are hoping this is a temporary change for Chapter 39 to regain its leadership and once again be a chapter on its own.

Rather than department or national closing the chapter we have gone through the merger process to allow for the chapter to eventually be reestablished as a separate and highly functional chapter. In the meantime we will do our best to support and assist veterans of the entire region.

The area of the chapter now has expanded to the largest geographical chapter in the state of Michigan. The physical boundaries of the chapter are the Kent County/Montcalm County line north to Grand Traverse County, from Isabella/Midland County line west to Oceana County. This area also includes Clare, Lake, and Newaygo Counties. Because of this we will have an increased number of members, delegates for the state convention, and numerous additional resources to provide assistance to veterans in our chapter.

Chapter 18 members. welcomes everyone of Chapter 39.

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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 Feb, March, April . Attend our meetings on the second

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

“Together we can make a difference”

Hello and welcome to twenty twenty six.

Last year had many ups and downs. Our Flag Day event had a problem with our scouts being at camp and their relief scouts had the starting time one hour late. Knowing the heart of our members as well as the Elk's, the show goes on.

We were out in force at the Mecosta County Fair last year. We had a drawing where we collected prizes from local sponsors: Gruntz, A&W and Qdoba's, and our Chapter Officers. The winner of the prize was Lyndsey Hendricks. Thanks to members who helped Chuck Rathbun, Terry Sisson, Don Tannis and Ryan Oshaughnessy. Thanks. We were raising money to pay membership for two local Purple Heart Soldiers. We made enough to pay for one. I was able to time it where he received the paid membership around the week of his wedding.

We tried something new this year to raise membership funds for Purple Heart Recipients. Our Chapter had a Corn Hole Tournament during the Labor Day festivities. We prepared and received prizes from hats, shirts back packs to discounts for service. From Gruntz, A&W, Fat Bellies, Lee's Auto Wash, Bare Furniture, Big Rapids Towing, DAV Officers, Horizon Bank, JR Collision, Johnston Auto, Big Rapids Tire, and a big thanks to Curries for donating prizes and participating in the event. The winners were Ryan Oshaughnessy and Ian Norris.

Our new sign that the Career Center cut out on the new plasma cutter. Then Magnum Powder Coating donated their time helping us out. A couple members dug like a grave basically to install post. Pat Currie then drove across town with a lift to hold as we bolted in place. We are very grateful to everyone involved. " Sometimes it takes a village."

I must inform our members as I was shocked to learn that our Jr. Vice Commander and former Chaplin. Dave Thorson passed away. Bonnie Thorson informed us that his service will take place June 6th at The New Millpond Rd. Cemetery. Come out as we give Dave a respectful salute.

We are hoping to have our Fair and Corn hole again in 2026 and we could use help from members not hard work but a lot of talking with veterans and those thanking veterans. We always need help on Flag Day as well, so come get involved.

Make an effort to attend a meeting when you're able, as we miss seeing our members and could always use your input.

Reginald Norris

Sr. Vice and Newsletter.

Dr. Julie Hanson, OD



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Commander's Corner

As we look forward to finally thawing out from the frigid winter weather that we've experienced these last few months, I look forward to an active and busy year for our chapter. During the past few months, we have unexpectedly lost long-time member David L. Thorson as he passed away. David's passing has caused us to replace him with Don Spurlock as our Junior Vice Commander once again. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for his willingness to once again accept the position. Our Chapter Chaplain has decided to step down due to having accepted a position with a company in Grand Haven. Pete Goetz has volunteered to assume the duties of Chapter Chaplain. Thank you, Pete, for your initiative and commitment to our members. Our treasurer position is in transition with Brandon Rybicki working with Dan to take over the position.

I would also like to officially welcome all those comrades from Chapter 39 Inland Lakes now that we are officially merged. I hope to see as many as possible at our meetings in the future, especially March, April, and May, when we hold nominations and election of officers.

As we prepare to hit the ground, once all the snow has melted, to support and assist veterans in our area. I will be attending Service Officer training and certification in June as well as the state convention. I have considered for a while to become a Service Officer and now that our current Service Officer needs to take a hiatus, I feel this is the perfect time for me to step up and my professional experience and personal abilities to use in order to assist veterans with their claims and benefits from the Veterans Administration.

I hope everyone has had the opportunity to visit our website, which has been very successful and increased in usage by members of the community. The URL for the website is <https://www.dav18mi.org>, please take a look, bookmark it and use it to keep up with our chapter and its members. We are also active on Facebook. Our page can be found as Disabled American Veterans Chapter 18, like us and follow. There is a list of events, updates on changes, and additional information on the chapter, our newsletter sponsors, and other organizations that support our chapter and veterans.

Chuck Rathbun

Hello my friend from chapter 39 and chapters 18. It is so good to have a chance to talk to all of you via this newsletter. There are a lot of exciting changes to Chapter 18, the first one being that Chapter 18 absorbed Chapter 39.

We think that we can make more of an impact here in Northern Michigan. We are focused on growing our membership in the service of our veterans that need services, care, transportation, and basic compassionate camaraderie.

DAV has established ways to help, but we are always looking for new ways to and capture and promote new memberships. What a chance we now have to make even a greater impact throughout mid and Northern Lower Michigan.-Tony Rubio.

March Meeting the meeting night was switched from the normal Thursdays 630. Now Second Tuesday of the month at 6pm

Schedule of events through July 2026

- April—— 9 & 23 Peer Support group 1pm.
14 Chapter Meeting Night 6pm.
- May—— 14 & 28th Group 1pm.
12 Chapter Meeting Night 6PM.
25 Memorial Day Parade Wreath at bridge.
- June—— 1 to 4 Service officer Tng. State Convention.
6 Service for Dave Thorson. New Mill Pond.
9 Chapter Meeting Night 6pm .
11 & 25 Peer support Group 1pm .
14 Flag Day Ceremony Disposal .
- July—— 9 & 23 Peer support group at Hall 1pm.
14 Meeting Night 6pm.

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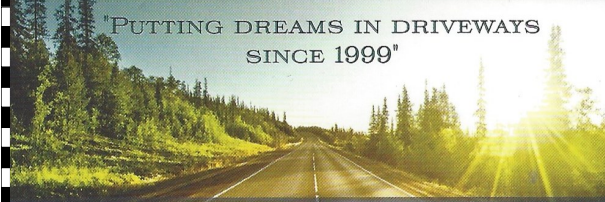
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Chapter News

This being the first newsletter of the year there are several items of importance to share with everyone. As you all should be aware, the chapter has been in the process of merging with Inland Lakes Chapter #39. On February 19 the National Executive Committee approved the merger.

All records have been adjusted to reflect this merger. Part of the merger, all property, money, and effects are transferred to Big Rapids Chapter #18. The title of our chapter has also been officially changed to Big Rapids Chapter #18. Commander Rathbun and Adjutant VanHouten have received copies of the documentation from DAV National informing them of this change.

Our Service Officer is unavailable to focus on her family and the many other obligations she has. To assist her as well as facilitate the needs of veterans in our community we are compiling a list of resources to help veterans with claims and other VA services and benefits.

To ensure that we have at least one certified Service Officer available to help members of our community. Commander Rathbun will be attending training in the first week of June. He has considered obtaining the certification to enhance his ability to help the veterans of our area. In the meantime, if you or a veteran you know needs help, call the chapter at (231) 796-4772 or email us at dav18mi@gmail.com.

This as well as other news and information can be found on our website [HTTPS://www.dav18mi.org](https://www.dav18mi.org). Also like and follow us on Facebook - Disabled American Veterans Chapter 18.



Above pictures top is Chuck Rathbun awarding our Labor Day Team Corn hole winners Ryan and Ian the prizes collected and trophies. The middle picture is Chuck Rathbun with the two finalists of the singles which was close as the young Orin actually was over in score, went back and the game was so close but Jim won the prizes.

The bottom picture is Memorial day Reggie Norris handing out programs. Speaking with our Auxiliary members Commander Alita Fullmer and Barb McComb with their back to you, They will drop the wreath for the Soldier's and Sailors lost at sea. Memorial Day, Flag day, Labor day and Veterans day we are involved doing what we can. We meet with many Veterans that and their families at these events. Sometimes we can help direct or our service officer can help a veteran with paperwork. Come out as we are hoping to have nice prizes and plaques for our winners.

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Thirteen Weeks Begin...

In most jobs you have time to acclimate to the environment and adjust to the new surroundings, that is not the case for Marine Corps Recruit Training, AKA boot camp. Each day starts with one of four DI's screaming and hollering as well as possibly beating on metal trash can (GI can) or tossing either the length of the quarter deck to wake recruits and motivate them to get online as quickly as physically possible.

I guess I should clarify some parts of that for those not familiar with Naval terminology. The quarter deck is the area of the squad bay between the foot lockers of the recruits; on a naval vessel it is the area that is used to board the ship. You never, ever cross the quarter deck, if you do you will surely wish you hadn't as either the duty DI or several of them will immediately and very typically at least one recruit makes that mistake when they first arrive providing a learning opportunity for the other recruits to not repeat the mistake. I was never afforded the opportunity since my rack was at the front of the quarter deck nearest to the DI hut. When instructed to "get online," recruits stand next to their footlockers facing the quarter deck at the position of attention.

Once all the recruits are online one half of the platoon is instructed to make a head call (head is the Naval/Marine Corps term for bathroom) while the other half get dressed in the uniform of the day. Almost every day of recruit training the uniform of the day is camouflaged utilities, and or PT gear for Physical Training. The DI will count down when the recruits make a head call to be completed. Once again, it is in the recruit's best interest to have finished and returned online as quickly as possible to avoid being addressed and most likely sent to the classroom to begin being PT' ed.

When a recruit is PT' ed, they do side straddle hops (jumping jacks), push-ups, mountain climbers, or bends and thrust. Mountain climbers are done by placing both hands on the floor and simulating climbing a mountain with your legs. Bends and thrusts are performed by standing at attention, bending down and placing your hands on the floor, kicking your legs out so you are in a push up position, and returning to the position of attention as quickly as possible.

Any one of these exercises will be performed until instructed to change exercises or as most of the DI's will kindly inform the recruit, "until I'm tired." If this activity occurs outdoors then the recruit or in some occasions the entire platoon goes to the "pit", (a sandy area specifically made for this purpose or any other dirt location chosen by the DI). When outdoors, digging like a dog may also be included in the mix of exercises administered. Most platoons make several group ventures to the pit during their first phase of recruit training, about the first five weeks of boot camp. Whenever a recruit is being PT'ed it is not advisable to slow down, act tired, or ask how much longer. Any of these mistakes will result in an extended period of disciplinary PT or some other form of physical corrective measure.

In addition to these daily activities there are three times for chow, sessions of close order drill, and classes. Close order drill is learning to march, moving as an organized unit, and the manual of arms. This is practiced daily as it is part of the evaluations for both the platoon and the senior Drill Instructor in the final phase of recruit training. Classes are attended by recruits to learn Marine Corps and military history, courtesies, and conduct. Other subjects such as first aid, rifle maintenance, and the Uniform Code of Military Justice are taught in preparation for the practical examination in third phase also. These evaluations as well as a Physical Fitness Test (PFT) and final inspection are the last items of recruit training. In more current time recruits also complete the Crucible to earn the title of U.S. Marine.

To be continued...

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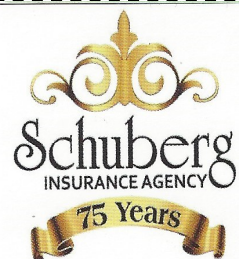
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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