



Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
MICHIGAN CONNECTION #4
December, 2025/January, 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Auxiliary VFW – Michigan

517-487-3715 (Office)

517-420-9342 (Department Treasurer)

517-485-6432 (FAX)

National Theme: From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free

Department Theme: We Don't Know them All, But We Owe Them All

MUST BE READ ON THE FLOOR

IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!!!

- **BEGINNING IMMEDIATELY, ALL DUES AND AUDITS MUST BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT TREASURER AT:**

Cathy Sasse, Treasurer
1117 Michigan Street
Midland, MI 48640

This is to ensure that dues will be entered in MALTA in a timely manner due to the upcoming holidays and end of year.

- **EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026, the Department Dues Per Capita will be \$10. Any dues received at the Department Office after December 31 must send in a total of \$20 for dues (\$10 for Department and \$10 for National).**
- **In an effort to better serve you, please be sure that if you have an email address, that it is recorded in MALTA.**
- **Reminder that the office staff DO NOT have weekend business hours (Friday-Sunday). Please refrain from calling them on the weekends. Their business hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.**
- **Department Office building will be closed December 24, 25 and 26; December 31, January 1 and January 2.**

Blue Star Service Dogs – Department President's Special Project

There has been some confusion or misinformation about the Department President's Special Project. If you donate, PLEASE send the check to the treasurer made payable to the VFW AUX of Michigan and enter Blue Star Service Dogs on the Memo line. Do not send or make it payable to Blue Star Service Dogs. Some people are mailing straight to the BSSD. Madam President would like to give a HUGE check to them at the end of the auxiliary year. If you already sent it straight to BSSD's please make sure you report it under VFS so that we can keep a tally of what was donated but won't be in the check when it is presented at the Department Convention. Thank you so much. Any questions just ask! For more information about this very special program, visit their website at: www.bluestarservicedogs.org.

This organization gave a presentation at our Fall Conference, and it was amazing! We passed the hat, and our members generously donated \$1,549. THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Debbie's Corner

It takes many hands to put on a conference, so my thanks to all those who worked so hard to ensure that our Fall Conference was such a huge success. Many stated that they had a great time and learned a lot, which was so good to hear, and it was great to see everyone.

Welcome to two of our newest Auxiliaries. Reed City #2964, in Reed City, was instituted on October 28; Fred Quandt #3901, in Algonac, was instituted on November 9. Looking forward to great things from these two auxiliaries!

The Department Bingo fund raiser, headed by Carrie Turner, was a huge success and thanks to all who supported this event. Proceeds are listed under the Report of the Treasurer.

Report of the Treasurer

The Department Bingo held at Fall Conference yielded a \$3,205 profit for Department. Thank you to all who attended and supported this fund raiser. The proceeds from the Hospital Star Raffle - \$1,960 with a value of \$2,930 in gift cards; the proceeds from the Camp Trotter raffle baskets - \$365, with a value of \$820 in donated goods.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS. Beginning January 1, 2026, there will be a new membership application and the only one that will be accepted (please destroy any not dated 1/1/2026). The payment method on the form Section H is to be completed by the person who is paying by credit card. National will notify the applicant by email with a link to enter their credit card number. Also going forward they can charge annual and life membership fees. Any questions MUST BE directed to the Department Treasurer. The new membership application will be loaded to the Department website by December 25.

March Madness 2026 Raffle

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: March Maina Raffle Tickets, \$10.00 per Ticket. We will draw a purchased ticket a day for 31 days in the month of March, for a total of \$10,000.00 in prizes. Each member who sells a WINNING ticket will receive a prize of \$40.00. To sell tickets or purchase a ticket contact: Edna Kiviniemi, 6468 Waubun Rd, Indian River, Michigan 49749, email maggieeli6507@hotmail.com or call 231-420-1410. We are doing well on getting these tickets sold but we still have a few 100 tickets left for someone to purchase or help us sell them. Proceeds from this fundraiser assists the Department in their efforts to assist our members and our auxiliaries. Please help us make this a successful fundraiser. GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!!!

Healthy Auxiliary Due Dates

4th Quarter Audits for October, November and December must be completed in January, approved by the Auxiliary, and submitted to the Department Office by February 28.

The third quarter reporting period ends December 31. Please be sure to get your reports in! Important reminder that every auxiliary must report at least once and must report doing something that benefits our veterans.

Has every one of your Auxiliary elected officers paid their 2025 dues? All Auxiliary officers MUST have their dues paid and entered into MALTA by December 31, 2025, or they will be removed by National.

Mid-Winter Conference

January 28 – February 1, 2026, is our annual Mid-Winter Conference being held at the Kalamazoo Radisson. On our front page of the website is all the pertinent information. Looking forward to seeing you all there to support our VOD/PP students along with TOY. Please be sure to make your reservations early and get your banquet tickets.

The Department Officers wish you all a very happy, healthy, and safe Holiday Season.

By Order of:

Debbie Scheetz

Debbie Scheetz
Department President

Cindy Peto

Cindy Peto
Department Secretary



Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Americanism – December 2025/January 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Americanism - Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*

Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

It was so good seeing so many of you at the Fall Conference. Hope you found the School of Instruction informative and helpful. For those of you that could not attend, I have posted my PowerPoint presentation on the Facebook page. Thank you to those members who came and introduced themselves – I love meeting members and putting a face to the name. Don't forget to report attending the Department School of Instruction.

PRESENT PATRIOTIC APPRECIATION CITATIONS/CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION OR RESPECT FOR THE FLAG CITATIONS

I've only received a few reports about the Certificates and/or Citations that the Auxiliary has been passing out to local businesses and citizens. Remember, we want to spot and acknowledge Patriotism and Americanism in action. One of the best ways to do this is to recognize and reward the behavior. Let's reward those businesses, neighbors, and general public for their displays of the American flag or celebration of Patriotic Days and Observances.

Take a drive around your block, neighborhood, or local community. Take note of the businesses that are flying the American flag or have patriotic displays. Were there businesses in your communities that offered specials for veterans on Veterans' Day? Is there someone in your neighborhood or town or surrounding community that flies their flag, has patriotic displays in their neighborhood, or does something especially nice for local veterans? Make a list of these people and/or businesses and present them with a Certificate or Citation for supporting the ideals of Americanism and patriotism.

At the School of Instruction, I talked about the Random Acts of Patriotism cards that we used to give out to kids when we saw them doing something patriotic. Do the same thing for adults and businesses. Create your own RAP cards and pass them along when you see someone doing something patriotic. Another idea is to use those painted rocks. Paint the rocks red, white, and blue or with a flag and maybe a little saying like "thank you for your patriotism" and pass those out. Come up with your own ideas and implement them and then tell me about it.

PROMOTE/PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS TO PROVIDE FLAG EDUCATION

Flag education is something that we can do every day. Be creative. Start with the kids and work into the community. We talk a lot about education of kids in the school and community because if we instill in the children of today, they will carry this into the future. Make it fun! Go to the schools, daycare centers, church youth programs, and scouting events. Have projects or simple contests for them that will pique their interest and make learning flag etiquette and education fun and interesting. Some ideas include:

- Flag coloring contests for younger kids

- U.S. Flag code pamphlets about proper display of the flag
- Trivia games
- Use education tools on MALTA
- Include kids with helping to raise and lower the flag during events
- Crossword puzzles
- Have kids help with proper folding of the flags and detail what each fold means as they folding it.

For adults, you can do some of the same kinds of projects, but just on a more advanced scale. Put articles in local newspapers – especially just before parade times so people know the facts about parade etiquette regarding flags. Even our members can use some helpful reminders. As the Patriotic Instructor, each meeting you can give some information on flag displays.

GOLD STAR FAMILIES

Please send me your Gold Star Families whether they are from your Post and Auxiliary or just someone you know. I would like pictures of the veteran, their names, branch of service and where and when they died, please. Give the associated family members names. This is something I'm putting together for the MidWinter Conference, so I would appreciate having this by January 5th so I have time to compile it. My email address is legalblaze@aol.com. If you can't electronically send it, definitely get it to me earlier so I can get it scanned.

FROM OUR NATIONAL AMBASSADOR – DIANA RUSSEL-MILTON

Check out the blog on the MALTA website under Member Resources. Scroll down the left side to National Program Blogs. The Americanism Blogs are at the top on the right. There are some from the last few years. You can read all of them if you like – Americanism and Patriotism never go out of style but, for this year, look at those dated for 2025-26 Year.

REPORTING

Report everything even if you are not sure it fits. **The next reporting deadline is January 31, 2026.** If you did something in a prior period but forgot to report it, it's okay. Report it now. Use the date of entry as the project date and put date completed in the body of the report.

HOLIDAYS & OBSERVANCES

December 1 – Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Birthday – CAP was established on December 1, 1941 to mobilize civilian aviation resources for national defense during WWII. CAP now conducts emergency services, disaster relief, and aerospace education. It is the Auxiliary to the Air Force.

December 7 – Pearl Harbor Day – On Sunday, December 7th, the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service initiated a surprise attack on the U.S. Naval Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor. The attack sank four battleships and damaged another four battleships along with seven other ships and over 300 aircrafts. A total of 2,403 military personnel and civilians were killed and 1,178 were injured. Air strikes were also made at Wheeler Field and Hickam Air Force Base. As a result of this attack, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared war on the Empire of Japan on December 8, 1941 saying that December 7th is a “date which will live in infamy”. In August 1994, President

Bill Clinton signed a joint resolution naming December 7th as Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day and was observed for the first time on December 7, 1994.

December 13 – U.S. National Guard Birthday – This year marks the 388th birthday of the National Guard. In 1636, the first militia regiments were established in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Bay Colony's General Court to better defend the colony. Descendants of this first militia are the 181st Infantry, 182nd Infantry, 101st Field Artillery, and 101st Engineer Battalion – making them the oldest units in the U.S. military.

December 13 – Wreaths Across America Day – This project began in 2007 to honor our fallen heroes by placing wreaths on the graves of our deceased veterans in some 5,200 locations across America. **Please remember this event is reported under Veterans & Family Support.**

December 15 – Bill of Rights Day – Celebrates the ratification of the First 10 Amendments to the Constitution on December 15, 1791.

December 25 - Christmas

January 1 – New Years Day

January 10 – Save the Eagles Day – Originated in 2015 in Ridgefield Park, New Jersey to protect a pair of nesting bald eagles. Purpose is to raise awareness of eagles, provide education and knowledge about hazards they face to their habitats, ecosystem, poaching and other hazards.

January 14 – Ratification Day – Recognizes the signing/ratification by the Confederation Congress of the Treaty of Paris at the Maryland State House in Annapolis, Maryland which officially ended the American Revolution. As part of the Treaty, Great Britain recognized the United States as a sovereign entity.

January 19 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – This federal holiday was signed into law by President Regan in 1983 and was first observed in 1986. It is celebrated on the third Monday in January. It commemorates the huge impact Martin Luther King, Jr had on the civil rights movement in the 1950s and his non-violent protests against segregation.

January 27 – Vietnam Peace Day – Commemorates the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1973 which ended American involvement in the Vietnam War.

Feel free to reach out to me any time if you need assistance or help with this or any program. If you have questions about reporting or what goes where. I love hearing from the membership and love helping.

Diana Ward, Americanism Chairman
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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Auxiliary Outreach– December 2025-January 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Auxiliary Outreach-Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*

Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

Hello everyone, let us make the 2025-2026 reporting year a successful year.

The holiday season is here, get ready to help other organizations in need. Prepare food baskets, ring bells for the Salvation Army, the ideas, and ways to help during the holiday season are endless.

We all know the holiday season is a busy time of year but it is also the best time to help and give to others and their organizations. The holiday season can be a difficult time of year mentally and physically for many. Continuing to volunteer with other programs keeps auxiliaries noticed and reminds us of the needs of others. Putting ourselves out in the community also piques interest about what we are as an auxiliary and what we stand for, which can lead to new memberships.

- Reach out to local groups and organizations to see how your Auxiliary can be of assistance.
- Be sure to discuss projects and vote at your Auxiliary meeting to accept your volunteer hours for that event. Events or projects that are reoccurring, like volunteering at a senior center monthly, would only need a vote at the beginning of the program year.

Otherwise, each new project will need a motion.

- At least one (1) Auxiliary member needs to work the event.
- Wear your Auxiliary attire (shirt, hat, name badge, lanyard, jacket, etc).
- Report details, remember only report what does not fit under another program.
- Be sure to share on social media and include #AuxiliaryOutreach in your post.

REMINDER: Auxiliary Outreach is for projects NOT AFFILIATED with the VFW or VFW Auxiliary Programs. In addition, volunteer work that is performed for the benefit of the Post or Auxiliary is NOT considered outreach service.

If you are unsure of whether your project will count toward the Auxiliary Outreach Program, contact me feel free to contact me with your questions.

Rachel Rhode
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picklefreak@outlook.com



Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary "Buddy"® Poppy/National Home— Dec 2025-Jan 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: "Buddy"® Poppy/VFW National Home-Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*

Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

Buddy Poppy

I want to thank everyone who Attended Fall Conference. So many of you shared Great ideas for using Buddy Poppies. I want to share some of these ideas for others to use during the holidays. At your Thanksgiving dinner use as table decorations and as you wrap your silverware put a poppy on them. If you do dinner baskets add a poppy and the story of the poppy. Christmas time add poppies to your Christmas tree. At your Christmas Bazaars set up a table with poppies on it along with the story of the poppy. Add a poppy to your Christmas bags for our Veterans hospitals. I cannot wait to hear all the ways you used your Poppies over the Holidays. Please report how many poppies you used. Be sure to wear a poppy or poppy pin often so people will ask about it, which provides you the opportunity to educate, promote and publicize.

Start thinking about your Buddy poppy display for Midwinter. The rules have not changed and can be found on the web-site along with entry forms. This year's theme is the Department theme - "We don't know them all, But we owe them all". Size requirements are 16x16x20. Remember you must have at least one Buddy Poppy in its original form. I cannot wait to see your entries.

VFW National Home

Looking for a long-lasting gift this holiday season, think about a brick or Life Membership to the National Home. This year we are trying to fill all the homes with Veterans and their families who are looking for a fresh start. We need your help in finding these Veterans families in need. Promote the Helpline you never know when you will be the one to change a life. We need to educate our local communities on this wonderful place in Eaton Rapids Michigan who for 100 years has been changing the lives of Veterans and their Families.

Have you sent in your Health and Happiness quotas of .10 or .25 cents a member. If not now is a good time to do that. Make sure you report it.

If you would like to do a special project for the National Home give them a call and they will find one that will fit you. Thank you for all your support for this special place.

I Hope everyone has a wonderful Thanksgiving and a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hope to see everyone at Mid-Winter.

Annabelle Furgason
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**Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
Extension & Revitalization/Chief of Staff
December 2025-January 2026**

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Extension & Revitalization-Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*

Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

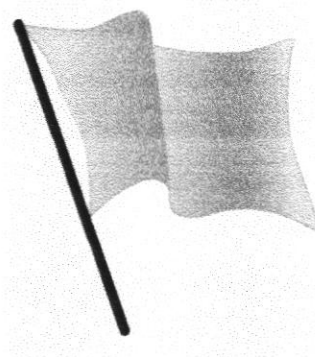
Welcome to the Department of Michigan VFW Auxiliary!! I am excited to announce and warmly welcome two new Auxiliaries to our state. The Auxiliary to Reed City VFW Post 2964 was established on October 28, 2025, with organizer Kathy Yost and new member Kimberly Storch leading the charge in getting things started. Additionally, the Auxiliary to Algonac VFW Post 3901 was instituted on November 9, 2025, with organizer Roberta Reid providing great support. We wish you all the best and look forward to witnessing the incredible contributions you will make for veterans and your local communities.



Mentoring: Our National Extension & Revitalization Ambassador, Karlene Beams, has a powerful theme this year: "You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf." Thinking about this, I realize that while Michigan doesn't have many surfing spots on the Great Lakes, the thrill of riding those waves is something you can experience in many ways—not just on the water. That same adrenaline rush can come from mentoring others

and sharing our organization's mission. So, take a moment to guide new members, help them find their footing, and let them feel that same exciting energy that comes from making a difference.

Performance Improvement Plans: There's a new approach for Auxiliaries that are having trouble. Instead of suspending them, the Department will now send a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) committee to meet with the officers and any members involved. Together, they'll work on identifying issues and building a Performance Improvement Plan. With support from the committee, the Auxiliary takes ownership of the plan and gets actively involved, rather than being sidelined. The committee will guide the process and gradually help the Auxiliary get back on track, attending meetings as needed and helping resolve problems before suspension even becomes an option.



New Auxiliaries: Michigan is doing great in starting new Auxiliaries this year as we already have four new ones, however, there is still much to do. There are many unaffiliated VFW posts in the great state of Michigan. Here is a list of the initial steps for creating an Auxiliary:

1. A VFW Post must have a 2/3 vote of the Post membership present to have an Auxiliary. Written communication of the proposed formation of an Auxiliary must be given to the entire membership of the Post at least 20 days prior to the meeting.
2. The Department President appoints the official organizer of that Auxiliary and at least two others who will assist in mentoring the new Auxiliary.
3. A minimum of 15 eligible applicants must be on the Charter application. Transfers are accepted at the closure of the institution and just prior to the installation of the newly-formed Auxiliary.

Healthy Auxiliary Toolkit-This is a list of resources that you can find on MALTA to help keep your Auxiliary healthy. These are links that you can follow using Ctrl + Click.

- [Auxiliary Meeting Checklist for the Auxiliary President](#)
- [Healthy Auxiliary Checklist To-Dos & Deadlines](#)
- [Healthy Communication Phone-Text Tree.doc](#)
- [VFW Auxiliary Health Certificate](#)
- [VFW Auxiliary Meeting Challenges & Solutions](#)
- [VFW Auxiliary Member Questionnaire](#)
- [VFW Auxiliary Sample Meeting Agenda](#)



R U Healthy Checklist reminders for December:

- ✓ Dues to be 100% paid by 12/31
- ✓ Officers' dues must be paid by 12/31
- ✓ Dues submitted to National via MALTA or to Department
- ✓ Make Mid-Winter Conference hotel arrangements
- ✓ Report in all programs

R U Healthy Checklist reminders for January:

- ✓ Complete the October, November, December audit. Have it approved at your February meeting, and mail it to Department by February 28.
- ✓ Delinquent dues notices sent
- ✓ Report in all programs

If there is anything that I can assist you with, don't hesitate to contact me using the following information.

Marilyn J. Malick
 Department Chief of Staff/Extension & Revitalization Chairman
 15903 Venice Ave.
 Clinton Township, MI 48035
 586-536-6004
MJMalick@msn.com





Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Historian/Media Relations—December 2025-January 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Historian/Media Relations-Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*
Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

Auxiliaries have now been engaged in promoting the organization, past activities, fundraisers, and our programs out into their communities. I hope everyone is getting great results and responses on their endeavors. We work hard to involve the community and members, letting them know what we are all about and putting together many events that help our veterans. We can optimize our efforts by using tools available to us to improve those results.

Many of you know how to use Newsletters, Bulletin Boards, Flyers, and E-mail. Some of you know how to use Social Media sources such as Facebook and Instagram. A few of you know how to make reels and a handful are venturing into educating yourself and experimenting putting reels on social media. On the Historian/Media Relations-Michigan Facebook page you will see some of those reels. I look forward to seeing many, many more. There are many ways to make a post that is considered a reel such as Slideshows, snippets of videos, a recorded video of an event. National Historian & Media Relations Ambassador, Kristin DiGiacomo, has put out information to help us make reels and tools to help us navigate Meta, Facebook and Instagram. I have included this information on the Historian/Media Relations-Michigan Facebook page. It is also available on MALTA.

How to Create a Facebook Reel

Tips to improve Your Content

Managing Your Content on Facebook and Instagram

Using Meta Business.

Check out this information and the many reels posted on the Department Historian page.

The National Historian Program award and Department Historian Award are for making a reel highlighting the VFW Auxiliary in action. Let us get out there and start making those REELS.

THE CHALLENGE IS ON

Challenge for all Auxiliaries to make a reel by Mid-Winter Conference, end of January 2026. Let's see how many Michigan Reels we can get onto the #AuxiliariesinAction page.

Make Michigan Shine!

Post your reels on your Auxiliary Facebook page and post to Historian/Media Relations-Michigan Facebook page. Be sure to write in the "Write something" section explaining the reel, your Auxiliary name, number, and location. Also include #AuxiliariesinAction, that will tag it to the National VFW Auxiliaries in Action Facebook page. Every reel is unique and tells your story. There is no right or wrong way to make a reel, only the story you are trying to tell. Michigan is great, let's make sure National knows it!

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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Hospital – December 2025/January 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Hospital - Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*
Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

Welcome to the winter months, a time to sit in front of a fireplace (fake or real) and assemble treats for our veterans for the upcoming holidays other than Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanzaa.

National Llama Day – Dec 9

Chocolate Covered Anything Day – Dec 16

Wright Brothers Day – Dec 19

Bacon Day – Dec 30

Trivia Day – Jan 4

National Popcorn Day – Jan 19

National Hugging Day – Jan 21

Opposite Day – Jan 25

VA MEDICAL FOSTER HOME PROGRAM. Do you know someone who may be interested in becoming a caregiver? The VA has a program where caregivers provide a safe & family-like home setting, supervised care, private and semi-private rooms, three meals a day and snacks, personal care, and medication management. When living at home becomes difficult, some people prefer to remain in a home-like setting rather than move to a nursing home. In moments like these, the VA Medical Foster Home (MFH) is there to help. Payment for care will be made by the Veteran to the caregiver, and the cost of the care will be based on the Veteran's care and financial resources. Caregivers must have prior caregiving experience (formal or informal) and have compassion and motivation to provide 24/7 to Veterans placed in their home. To ensure safety and quality of care, there are multiple steps and training requirements to become a VA MFH caregiver. Interested people can contact their local VA social worker(s).

WOMEN VETERANS' HEALTH CARE. One of the 2025-2026 Hospital Guideline/Achievements is "Total Number of Hours promoting Women Veterans Health Care Programs" Let's work on this important achievement in 2026. The VA offers women veterans proactive and personalized health care – empowering them to achieve the best level of health and well-being. Women Veteran Program Managers are available at each VA Medical Center nationwide to assist women veterans and coordinate services. Women veterans are assigned to a designated Women's Health Primary Care Provider who can provide general primary care and is specially trained or experienced in women's care.

REMINDER: If a veteran must be hospitalized at a non-VA facility, contact the VA immediately so the bill will be paid. Also, if a veteran must be hospitalized away from home, contact the nearest VFW or VFW Auxiliary as they may be able to assist locally.

We are all aware of Breast Cancer in women. I'd like to share some statistics about breast cancer in men. The average age of men newly diagnosed with breast cancer. This is older than the average age for women. My girls' dad was diagnosed at age 45. The estimated number of men in the U.S. who will die of breast cancer is 1,000 each year and the number is growing. Because of the size of men's breast it is easier to find small masses. So, let's encourage the men in our lives to be aware of male breast cancer.

Our veterans have *sacrificed* to keep our country – and everything it represents – safe. We honor and serve those men and women by fulfilling President Lincoln's promise "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Legislative – December 2025-January 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Legislative-Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*

Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

I want to start by saying a heartfelt THANK YOU to all who attended the Fall Conference in Mt. Pleasant. I hope you gleaned some good information to help with completing your Legislative Program this year.

I do want to reiterate what our National Rep, Sandra Uzell, said, "Yes we are great at signing people up for VFW Action Corp Weekly, but we need to also have them click the links in the email so they can see who is engaging." This is important to encourage engagement. If they have not clicked on the link after a few they will be removed from the mailing list and will have to sign up again.

Let us focus on sending out Thank You cards to legislators that we have made contact in person with, a Christmas/holiday card would be a wonderful thought to add a bit of pizzazz.

If you missed Fall Conference all hope is not, we still have Mid-Winter in Kalamazoo.

Let us also percolate ideas for our Department and National award:

NATIONAL AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event to create thank-you notes and cards to veterans that include links to VFW Action Corps Weekly and/or the VFW Priority Goals.

- Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the most outstanding activity and or event to create thank-you notes and cards to veterans that include links to VFW Action Corps. Weekly and/or the VFW Priority Goals.

Lastly lets us get those #AuxLegislative uses up. Remember we can go back to old posts and comment the hashtag #Auxlegislative then it will be available to see under that tag.

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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Membership –December 2025 - January 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Membership- Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*
Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

From sea to shining sea...let the Michigan VFW Dept Auxiliary be the lighthouse in the safe harbor. A safe harbor for our veterans and their families to go to when needing help, asking questions, or just wanting to come and talk.

Each one of us joined because of our own, personal "Why". While the reason **you** joined is likely different from others, but at the core of your "why" likely is that all of us wanted to honor our Veterans. There are numerous ways in which we support our Veterans. **We** write letters to our congressmen, **we** visit them in the VA Hospitals, **we** march in parades, **we** celebrate patriotic holidays; just to name a few.

But, let's take a moment and reflect. **Who** would do all that work for our Veterans if our organization, the VFW Auxiliary, wasn't around to do all these things?

Let me lay out some eye-opening statistics for the VFW Auxiliary. This information comes from Mr. Michael Maruszak, the Membership National Ambassador:

- There are 3,279 VFW Auxiliaries. As an FYI, there are 41 Auxiliaries in that number have yet to be officially removed from the total.
- 310 Auxiliaries are at 100% membership.
- 2,040 Auxiliaries have between 70% to 90% membership.
- 647 Auxiliaries have between 50% to 60% membership.
- 241 Auxiliaries have between 10% to 40% membership.
- Eight, **8** Auxiliaries are in **single digits** with membership!

Hearing these statistics was like a slap in the face to me. Scary, concerning, alarming. These statistics simply underscore the need for **us**, the members of the VFW Auxiliary, to band together as a unified team so we can grow our organization. I think we would all agree that we want the VFW Auxiliary to be here well into the next century.

Not only is attracting new members into the organization critical, we also need to focus on **retaining** the members we already have. You worked hard on recruiting them, now we can't let them simply walk out the door. Like the Fresnel lens in the lighthouse focuses the light so it can be seen for **miles** away, we need to focus and actively work to keep our members in the fold.



Show your hard-working members how you appreciate them:

1. Maybe spotlight a member on social media.
2. Send hand written thank you notes via mail.
3. Thank them publicly...at your meetings.
4. Small gift...showing gratitude goes a long way.
5. Bring in cake or cupcakes to celebrate events...birthdays, anniversaries, promotion at work...etc.

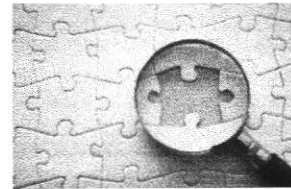


Above all, **listen** to your members. If you practice basic “active listening” skills (like paying attention, asking questions, paraphrasing, and so on), it shows the members that you care enough to honestly listen. Of course, we all need to be mindful of the words that we choose to use. Remember that there’s “nonverbal communication” happening when you communicate and that is far more than “words”, however. Did you realize that about 95% of the

message you deliver in communication comes from your tone **and** from your body language?!

Make sure your members have a clear sense of the long-range goals of your Auxiliary. Keep them updated on the progress and always ask for their feedback. After all, it’s **their** Auxiliary too, not just the Presidents or Line Officers. Let them “take the wheel” with new ideas. Encourage the new members to step up and give their opinions.

A great team is like a puzzle where every piece is important. All of us are a team, we are all just a piece of a puzzle that makes all of us important. Our Auxiliary needs all the pieces to work together to recruit and retain members for this organization if we want to be here another hundred years for our Veterans.



Please continue to keep working on converting those Annual members to Life members. Many have been converted so far, which makes the treasurer’s job a lot easier by not sending dues notices. Remember...the per diem will be going up to \$10 beginning January 1st for Department. National already raised theirs.



Hard to believe we’re already racing toward 2026! To each one of you, I wish you a very, **very** Merry Christmas and a joyous 2026! I hope you have a holiday season spent with family, friends, and, of course **presents**! Lots and lots of presents.

God Bless you, our Veterans and the United States of America.

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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Scholarships – December 2025-January 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Scholarships-Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*

Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*



Happy holidays. It is hard to believe it is almost Christmas. This calendar year has flown by.



I hope every Auxiliary submitted a Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entry to your District Chairman. This is a great way for students to earn money. District chairmen have to complete their judging before December 10. Department Director Mike Martin needs to have the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entries by December 10. We want to have the Department judging completed before Christmas.

The VFW Auxiliary is pleased to present a National Scholarship to assist VFW Auxiliary members and their families who wish to further their education by pursuing a college degree or a career direction at a vocational/technical school. Each year, one (1) recipient will be selected from each of the four (4) VFW Auxiliary Conferences and will be awarded a \$1,250 scholarship to be used within the academic year following completion of the contest. The scholarship will be paid directly to the American college/university or vocational/technical school of the awardee's choice upon the completion of the scholarship activation requirements. Eligibility: • VFW Auxiliary member for at least one full year by the application submission deadline of February 15. • The spouse, son and/or daughter of a VFW Auxiliary member that has been a member at least one full year by the application submission deadline of February 15. • Applicants must be 21 years of age or older by the application submission deadline of February 15. • Previous National Continuing Education Scholarship winners are not eligible. The National President's special project this year is the Continuing Education Scholarship. Your Auxiliary can send checks to National headquarters earmarked National President's special project or make donations through Malta.

Please use the suggested donation form and donate to the Scholarship program. The form is on department website vfwauxmi.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?nid=1. You can also find the Continuing Education Scholarship application on the website.



Mid-Winter Conference is January 29-February 1. Don't forget to get your banquet tickets to honor all the district winners. District chairmen make sure you order the tickets for your students and parents. The deadline for the reduced price is January 16. After January 16, tickets go up to \$60 a person.

The 3rd quarter reporting ends January. Auxiliaries are doing a great job getting the word out about Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen using social media, email, passing out flyers and setting up booths at events.

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Hope you have a great new year.

DeeAnn Miller
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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Veterans & Family Support – December 2025-January 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Veterans and Family Support-Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*

Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All*

During our training at Fall Conference, I presented a challenge to all Auxiliaries across the State of Michigan: **locate homeless Veterans in your area and adopt them for the holidays.**

The holiday season is a time of giving, reflection, and community—and a powerful opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Veterans experiencing homelessness.

How You Can Help:

- Assemble **blowing bags** filled with essentials such as socks, hats, gloves, toothbrushes/paste, soap, and other personal care items. These small gestures offer warmth, dignity, and hope—demonstrating that our Veterans are not forgotten.
- Host a **blanket drive** to provide warmth during the coldest time of year. A warm blanket not only protects against harsh weather, but also reminds our Veterans that they are seen, valued, and appreciated.
- If you are in a highly populated area, **open your doors** on especially cold days. Create a simple warming station offering soups, coffee, hot cocoa, and blankets. Partner with your community for donations and support—many hands make light work.

Start a New Tradition:

As a new year approaches, consider launching at **least one new event** that connects your post home with your community. The more frequently we welcome others into our space, the more likely we are to connect with a Veteran or family of a Veteran in need.

Upcoming Patriotic Holidays & Recognition Days (December / January)

Please consider hosting an event, reaching out, or taking a moment to honor these important dates:

- **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day** – December 7
- **Bill of Rights Day** – December 15
- **Anniversary of the U.S. & Allied Victory at the Battle of the Bulge** – January 25

Let's work together to ensure that **no Veteran faces the winter season alone**. Your compassion and action can change lives.

April Lowery
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Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Youth/Camp Trotter Bulletin – Dec 2025-Jan 2026

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Youth Activities/Camp Trotter - Michigan

National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*
Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Own Them All*

Youth:

The holidays are always a time to remember those in need. Think about how our Youth can help serve our communities. My local soup kitchens get a lot of volunteers during the holidays, but after the Season of Giving becomes the New Year, these organizations become desperate for help. Enlist a Scout Troop or other Youth Group to help serve those less fortunate.



So many Auxiliaries have participated in the Patriotism through Literacy Program! Some have donated books and others have donated funds along with the suggested book list. Some Auxiliaries have combined programs, utilizing the book list for their Reading Buddy Programs. Keep up the great work!

Continue to promote the Illustrating America Art Contest. Young artists are everywhere – Homeschool groups, church youth groups, in our neighborhoods, and in our own families.

Not only can you combine different achievements for the Youth/Camp Trotter Program, but you can combine activities across programs. Our National Youth Activities Ambassador encourages us to look for ways Youth can be incorporated in other programs. For example, teach youth how to fold a flag or the meaning of the missing man table and report it under Americanism, too. Have the kids make cards and crafts for those hospitalized or in nursing homes and report it under Hospital. My favorite suggestion is to Host a Buddy Poppy Prince/Princess contest that teaches our youth the history of the Buddy Poppy.



Remember, to keep building those relationships with the families and grow your membership! Also, remember that you should have parental consent for all activities.

Reporting:

Keep reporting! While I want to know all you do, focus on the Achievements and Department Award categories. I enjoy reading each and every report that is submitted! You are amazing! Please remember to include the number of Youth Groups or individual Youth on your report. When in doubt, report it anyway. If you have any questions please call or email me!

Camp Trotter Table Fundraiser:

Districts 8, 9, 10, & 11 should be putting together their baskets for the Mid-Winter Conference. Districts are welcome to donate multiple baskets, and Auxiliaries may donate their own baskets, as well. Due to Charitable Gaming Commission Licensing, we can only sell tickets on the day we draw. Please get your baskets to the Auxiliary Camp Trotter table on Friday morning as our drawing will be held Friday near the end of the day.

Fall Conference – Districts 4, 5, 6, 7
Mid-Winter – Districts 8, 9, 10, 11
Conventions – Districts 12, 13, 14, 15



This Photo by Unknown Author is



Maintenance at Camp Trotter is ongoing. New mattresses have been purchased for all the cabins. Please continue your much needed support of our camp!

And, as always, please reach out if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or just want to say hi. Also, please note that I have a new address.

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