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Michigan Disabled Veteran

Third Edition

Volume 63 No. 2

[USPS 344-940]



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**2000' flag drapes over the
2014 convention session**



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Front Cover Photo Courtesy of Chris Morey of Chapter 14. All other photos by Steven Pruitt

State Commander's Message



James Dempsey

Dear Michigan DAV members, I am very pleased that you have shown support for my opportunity to serve you as commander for 2014-2015. Since leaving full-time status as your service officer representative at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center, I have been and will continue to be very active and engaged in representing the MI DAV. Our mission, from the very beginning, has been to lift up those who have sacrificed so much for their country and to empower them to lead healthy and successful lives after leaving the military.

Service to our nation at war, over the past several generations, has brought thousands of Michigan service members home looking for assistance with health care, employment,

vocational rehabilitation, and collectively the DAV Department of Michigan has been here to advocate for their entitled benefits. We do this by providing free professional assistance to all veterans and their families in obtaining benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as the Department of Michigan. We do this by advocating on behalf of veterans on Capitol Hill, as well as in Lansing, ensuring lawmakers hear their voices.

We as a state have much to be proud about this year, meeting membership goal, being represented well in our national DAV magazine, having one of the best records nationally for fully-developed claim submission, a well regarded Regional Office staffed by highly professional staff members, and serving as lead agent for the Michigan Veterans Coalition, are but a few of the recent accomplishments. Thanks go out as well to record attendance for Chapter Service Officer training at convention. These volunteers, our Auxiliary's numerous efforts and projects, and dedication to the mission by our Department Service Officers daily, are part of what exemplifies us as a premier Veterans Service Organization in Michigan.

Thanks to all of you who volunteer as an integral part of our mission to help our vet-

erans and their deserving families. I will ask each of you who are part of our membership to set a goal of asking any veteran you assist to become a member of this great organization. Those recruiting five or more for the 2014-2015 year will receive a special Commanders Award at next years State Convention in Sault Ste. Marie. DAV's lifeblood is its members, who are the veterans we serve, and those who support our mission. This support has made DAV what it is today. DAV is committed to its membership's overall success. This commitment has enabled DAV to become the leading voice for the nation's injured and ill veterans and their families, regardless of period served. This commitment is expressed in our mission statement and is carried forth in our actions. It is for these reasons that I ask you to always be prepared to ask for membership at any function you attend.

My primary goal is to leave this organization a stronger (membership, fiscal, services provided), and more professional VSO than it was under previous administrations. This will be accomplished only with your Respect, Advocacy, Honor, Support and Commitment.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in accomplishment of our Mission together. ■

Sr. Vice Commander's Message on Membership

Fellow comrades, first I wish to thank you for the opportunity to serve as the state senior vice commander.

As senior vice commander, membership is one of my charges this upcoming year. Membership is not only a number, it is the life-line of the DAV, Department of Michigan and your chapter. The upcoming quotas will be mailed to your chapters shortly along with this year's incentive program. Currently at the chapter level if you have the money there is matching money of \$20 available thru Department. But only if the application is sent to department then it will be forwarded to national. This will only be available for a short time so take advantage of it.

Membership is more than just a number;

it's what makes up your chapter. All Chapters from time to time struggle to get their members active. Here is a suggestion. Find out what your members want to be involved in that is in your area and means something to your membership. Example is if there is a fair or show in your area and you know it is well attended set up a booth and talk to veterans and their families. This is done as outreach not as a fund raiser. Have social time set aside at your meeting either before or after so your members develop a sense of belonging which helps them want to be involved.

As the Chairman of the women's Veterans committee I have one last request.

I would like to have all women veterans



Beth Gonzalez

provide me with a point of contact; I would prefer an email, so that when I receive information about upcoming women veterans events I will be able to inform you.

Bjulien59@yahoo.com ■

Estate Planning

For information on including the DAV Department of Michigan in your estate plans, please contact us at 1-888-448-2328 or return this form.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please complete and mail to:
**Disabled American Veterans
Department of Michigan
17779 E. 14 Mile Road
Fraser, MI 48026**

Fellow DAV: Members, Auxiliary & Junior Auxiliary

— by Robert M. Gaillard



I would like to begin our fall edition of the DAV Magazine, September 2014, by expressing my gratitude and humility as I have been honored by the DAV to have been selected to serve as State Executive Secretary for the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Michigan, as of June 2014.

I served in the United States Marine Corps from 1987 to 1992. I served with HMM-161 MAG 16, a CH-46 Squadron, operating out of MCAS Tustin Ca. Our squadron was the first to deploy to Saudi Arabi just days after Saddam Hussein took over Kuwait.

I was honorably discharged in August of 1992. Here I went on to study Exercise Science at California State University Long Beach.

Secondly, I went on to study Business and received a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Entrepreneurship from Central Michigan University. I graduated Cum Laude and currently have the honor of being on the Golden Key International Honors Society.

The DAV was persistent, dedicated, and seemed to never tire as they helped not only me, but our fellow comrades. This along with the Vision of the DAV is what drew me in.

Today because of all of you, I am proud to say that I am a part of the Disabled American Veterans. I look forward to serving the DAV.

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Robert M. Gaillard

State Executive Secretary,

Michigan Disabled American Veterans

USMC Corporal (Honorable Discharge)

1987-1992 ■

1st Jr. Vice Commander's Message



Thomas Dempster

What can you do for the DAV? On our National Legislative Grassroots Advocacy Campaign, the DAV and other Veterans Organizations lead the way with "Operation Keep the Promise" and "Putting Veterans Funding First Act" (H.R.813 & S.932)

Operation "Keep the Promise" intends to make advanced appropriations for all VA accounts, including its mandatory disability payments to Veterans, our highest legislative priority in this upcoming fiscal year.

Passage of "Putting Veterans Funding First Act" would enable the VA to plan for

key investments in information technology, claims processing, construction projects, computers and IT systems.

We do not need another Government shutdown, with critical services for Veterans that can be delayed, disrupted, and in some cases suspended; creating hardship on Veterans and needless worry for America's injured Veterans and their families.

You can help by joining DAV CAN (Commanders Action Network) go to www.dav.org and put in your DAV membership number and click on help DAV, then click on take action and submit. Also, see that your Congressional representative does the responsible thing by fully funding the VA with no political gimmicks and stop using Veterans as political pawns.

Do not forget to get your Veterans Identification card updated to the more secure Veteran Health Identification card. The new VA Acting Secretary Sloan Gibson has replaced Veteran Erick K. Shinseki and started with the imbalance between VA health care availability and Veterans demand. ■

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POLICY

To bond the disabled together as a unit. To acquaint the members of the DAV and the public with the problems of the disabled and what the Department of Michigan, Disabled American Veterans, is doing to assist in overcoming their handicaps. To keep alive the Fires of Freedom that American ideals shall not perish from the earth. To promote the welfare of the Disabled American Veterans of the State of Michigan and the Nation.

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Douglas Wells
Service Director

As we head into another election season, it is important for all of us to ensure we know where our elected officials stand on issues that impact veterans and their families. It is even more important for us to take advantage of any opportunity we have to educate them on these same issues.

Our nation's service men and women put everything on the line in defense of America's freedom. Our public and political leaders need to be kept informed of the challenges they face returning to normal life. DAV's legislative grassroots campaign makes sure they know what

they need to do.

DAV's multi-aspect legislative campaign provides this education and support in the capitol and across the country. Take some time to visit www.dav.org to discover how DAV is working with lawmakers on your behalf.

Remember, DAV is a non-partisan organization. We are dedicated to one single purpose: ensuring that men and women who served in our military lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. However, we encourage everyone to communicate with lawmakers and let them know that you, too, are committed to fulfilling our promises to the men and women who risked it all to defend our quality of life. DAV's potential for success is greatly increased when we have your support.

The Commander's Action Network is a dedicated grassroots campaign that supplies members with solid, factual information on critical veterans' issues. The DAV CAN program helps DAV activists to keep elected representatives on notice that veterans' issues are important to their con-

stituents. DAV CAN provides a package of information that includes postcards, sample letters, suggested letters to newspaper editors, phone numbers and other materials. Anyone can join the Commander's Action Network, from DAV members to non-member veterans, their families and anyone else committed to fighting for veterans' rights.

Also, in our issue briefs, we identify and outline those issues that demand immediate action. By providing concrete solutions, we ensure that our representatives in government are free to do the will of veterans, their families and every civilian who supports our returning heroes. Issue briefs give you the information necessary to open a dialogue with your elected officials in an educated manner.

Both the Commander's Action Network and DAV's issue briefs can be found at www.dav.org under the "HELP DAV" tab and by clicking on "Advocate." It is only with your help that we will be successful in fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. ■

“Character is the result of what we have decided we can do to and with our personality.”

In the beginning God said I am! The deep power of water rushing over rocks creating canyons; wind so swift and strong sweeping across the surfaces of layered rock until dust and sand defy any hint of hills; sunlight and starlight; freezing and ever expanding space; mountains and magma exposing themselves to surface congestion; and organisms growing and changing until the environment itself is forced out again into new air suitable for reorganized life.

Even in the beginning, before we were God says I knew you. Decisive and stunning moments over time with all the variances put together came to rest in each of us. When our life insisted that we begin, we carried all the architecture unique in our universe and our world, and this architecture is what makes us a totally unique person. It shaped our face, covered our skin, decided the articulation of our legs and arms, inclined our stature, and organized what we were to see when you looked out to see the world for the first time. Getting accustomed to this self-experience, all of the inclinations started pulling together a personality.

Personality is our total uniqueness, our

ultimate separating us from all others. It is never pure and untested because we mold it and make it and stretch it and shape it as much as we can. Slowly but surely this personality becomes "character."

Character is the result of what we have decided we can do to and with our personality. Character learns to quit trying to be what is not really in us, and develop the property it owns. Character does not sell its property to others who might exploit and make it conform to their needs. Character forms from the application of personality to a worthy space in the whole portrait of humanity. Character is the coloration of elemental personality. Personality may be pleasant or pompous, lovely or lusty. Character shapes personality by adding purpose and perspective, and power. Personality simply appears, character enhances. Nature gives us the materials of personality. Character is the art of showing that creation itself through personality. Personality may be remembered for a generation or two. Character determines the direction of generations long after even memory fades. Creation itself gave us the fundamentals of personality. We give humanity the luster and life of character.

God bless each of you. God loves you and so do I. ■

— by Michael Knutson, LTC, US Army (Retired), State Chaplain

Convention Delegates Elect James R. Dempsey as 2014-15 State Commander

Elections held on Sunday, June 8, 2014 at closing session of the 89th Annual State Convention named James R. Dempsey as 2014-15 State Commander of the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Michigan.

James Dempsey (Chapter 13) was elected Commander at the weekend session held June 6-8 at the Kewadin Convention Center in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. James was a Department Service Officer at the Ann Arbor VAMC and recently retired in 2014.

Beth Gonzales of chapter 102 was elected Sr. Vice Commander, Thomas Dempster of chapter 114 was elected 1st. Jr. Vice Commander, and Steven Pruitt of chapter 2 was elected 2nd Jr. Vice Commander. Tim Bever of chapter 4 was elected Treasurer and Michael Knutson also of chapter 4 was elected State Chaplain.

Commander Dempsey appointed Rolly Lee of chapter 129 as Judge Advocate, John Lamphere of chapter 39 was appointed State Inspector, Roger Jansen of chapter 14 was appointed State Adjutant, Ron McNally of chapter 4 was appointed Chief of Staff, Annette Dennis was appointed LVAP Chairman.

— JAMES R. DEMPSEY continued on page 6

2014 State Convention Highlights

As we close out the 89th Annual State Convention, we must say thank you to the fantastic guest speakers that gave their time to attend and speak at the 2014 state convention at the Kewadin Convention Center in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

First of all, the Department of Michigan would like to thank Dana Bowman for attending and giving a truly inspirational speech during our Friday June 6, 2014 joint opening session. The morning began with Mr. Bowman parachuting into the Kewadin Convention Center parking lot with a 2,000 foot American Flag attached



Dana Bowman lands at Kewadin Convention Center.

to him during the descent. With "Proud to be an American" blaring on the ground, members and guests as well as persons living in the immediate area were able to see Mr. Bowman descend with the American Flag. The day was perfect and the skies were clear and everyone was able to see the plane overhead and watch as Dana glided down gently with the American Flag, it was a site to see and the members were just as impressed with his landing. Upon landing Dana greeted our members as our Depart-



Members under Dana Bowman's 2000 foot flag during convention session.

ment and National Service officers attended to the American flag that flew in with him.

Back in the Dream Makers Theater after the landing, Department and National Service officers accompanied Dana along with the 2,000 square foot flag back to the joint opening session where the flag was draped over the entire convention session. It was a site to behold. Dana's presentation gave us insight into the accident that took his friend's life and his legs from him in an instant. His story gave us a look into what he had to overcome to get back to jumping for the Golden Knights. There was also a video done by the men and women of our armed forces who were recovering at Walter Reed Hospital. The video was of their own making, showing the strength and determination of these men and women



L-R: Dana Bowman and Harold DeForest (129).

who overcame their disability and some who were healing from their wounds. It was a truly inspirational video to watch.

During Dana's presentation he talked about 2 coins that he carries with him during his descent and presents them to select members of the audience. Two lucky members of our organization were given the coins during the presentation. The first coin was presented to Harold DeForest of chapter 129. Harold is the VAVS chairman for the VAMC in Detroit and has been a member of the organization since 1987. Harold also had the privilege to meet Dana back in the 1990's when Dana parachuted at the DAV National Convention. At that time Dana presented him with an autographed picture that Harold has kept since that day. Harold's grandson attended his first DAV convention and was able to see his grandfather accept the coin with much pride and happiness.

DAVA Auxiliary past Commander Loraine Connelly was also presented with a coin by Dana. Loraine was the 2012-13 State Commander for the Auxiliary and is a member of Unit 114. Loraine has been a life member of unit 114 since 1997 and has been involved not only with the Department of Michigan Auxiliary but also involved with the DAV of Michigan as well. She has been a blessing to the Department as a volunteer for many years and has helped the staff with events, outings and convention. We owe her a Big Thanks for everything that she has done to make the events, outings and dinners a success for many years, along with her husband PDC Joe Connelly who has helped out Veterans and their families during both their terms as State of Michigan Commanders. We



Bonnie Hilberer – Motivational Speaker during convention.

would like to say Congratulations to both Harold and Loraine and thank you very much from all the Officers of the Department of Michigan for all you do to help out Veterans in Michigan.

Another guest speaker at this past convention was Bonnie Hilberer. Bonnie gave a very heartwarming presentation to our convention session, talking about her life



L-R: Phil Presnell and Stephanie Zarb from the Buddy to Buddy Program.

and the numerous obstacles that she has endured and how she overcame them. Bonnie has been very active with Toast masters, a public speaking organization, doing a job

— STATE CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS continued on page 7

2nd Jr. Vice Commander's Message



Steve Pruitt

First I would like to thank you, my comrades, for having confidence in me to fulfill the duties of Jr. Vice Commander for the 2014 / 2015 term. I promise you that I will do my very best to perform to your satisfaction and represent you all as expected.

Second, I would like to thank the Employers Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) staff for inviting me to take part in the 2014 Grand Haven

Coast Guard Festival "Boss Lift" today. We sat through a very informative presentation about what the ESGR does to support and assist our troops to ensure they are able to deploy when necessary



and help the employers understand the importance of supporting the troops as well. They also help our brothers and sisters transition back to civilian life upon completion of their tour of duty. They accomplish this in several ways, but most importantly by assisting them with seeking employment. They also recognize employers with awards. Currently Michigan is tied for 2nd place in the effectiveness of the Nationwide ESGR program. Attending today's events with me were several representatives from small business, Cities and Counties, as well as prominent large businesses and a couple of Law Firms. There were a total of 38 participants. After the presentation we were separated into two groups and toured the

and help the employers understand the importance of supporting the troops as well. They also help our brothers and sisters transition back to civilian life upon completion of their tour of duty. They accomplish this in several ways, but most importantly by assisting

Cutter Hollyhock, which performs duties as an Icebreaker and a Buoy Tender in the Great Lakes. We also were able to take a ride aboard one of the Rescue boats and were treated to a "SAR" (Search and Rescue) demonstration, involving a Helicopter crew, complete with a deployed rescue swimmer. The entire morning was quite interesting to say the least. It gave me a newfound respect for the mission of the U. S. Coast Guard. There were too many people involved in our tours and demos to name them all, but I would like to thank them all for a job well done and for their service to our Country.

And finally, just a friendly reminder to stay in touch with your representatives and remind them of the issues that are near and dear to the hearts of veterans all across the State of Michigan. ■



JAMES R. DEMPSEY continued from page 4

The 2014-15 State Executive Committee of newly elected and existing members for the State are:

- District 1 – Kwan Tillman of Chapter 119
- District 2 – Robert Polhamus of Chapter 8
- District 3 – Richard Straub of Chapter 2
- District 4 – John Lamphere of Chapter 39
- District 5 – Rodney Lattimer of Chapter 94
- District 6 – George LaBlonde III of Chapter 22

Auxiliary Officers elected at the 89th annual state convention were:

Gloria Boozer of unit 20 was elected State Commander, Tess Morey of unit 14 was elected as Sr. Vice Commander and Christine Alexander of unit 1 was elected as Jr. Vice Commander. Linda Walters will remain the State Adjutant and Carol Grey will remain as State Treasurer.

Prior to the conclusion of the convention sessions, the convention committee advised members that the 2016 State Convention



Newly elected 2014-15 department officers

would remain at the Kewadin Convention Center in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. A Big Thank you was given to the Kewadin for the fabulous job they have done over the years for the Department of Michigan, the staff and management team have strived to make each convention special and have adapted to the needs of the Department and our members, all while keeping the prices for our convention at a manageable amount. ■

that she loves. While she has written many articles, some of which have been published, she is now working on her first book.

Lastly we had Stephanie Zarb from the Buddy to Buddy program along with Phil Presnell and Dave Thomas as well. Dave is chapter Commander of chapter 102 which Stephanie is a member.

Stephanie once again gave a commanding presentation on the Buddy to Buddy program and thanked the DAV for putting information about the program in our magazine's last issue. Stephanie commented that they received some new calls asking for assistance because of the magazine article.

For more information on the Buddy to Buddy program, what it offers to Veterans, or if you are interested in volunteering, please see the article in this edition of the magazine on back cover.

The Department of Michigan and State Commander James Dempsey would like to once again thank the guest speakers who took the time to attend our 89th annual state convention.

We hope that more chapter members will be able to attend the 90th State Convention in 2015. This convention will also be at held at the Kewadin Convention Center in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan June 5, 6, and 7th, 2015. ■



L-R: State Commander Les Schneider presents 2014-15 Commander James Dempsey with the Commanders Gavel.



L-R: Lorraine Connelly (PSC) Joe Connelly (PDC) and Dana Bowman.



National Executive Director Barry Jesinoski at convention banquet after being presented with Department gift.



National 2nd Jr. Vice Commander Frances Costa at convention banquet after being presented with Department gift.

Commanders Hall of Fame

PDC John Lamphere presented the Commanders Hall of Fame award to PDC Dan Mulcahey during the 2014 State Convention. Dan was Department Commander 2008-2009 and has continued to be involved in the Disabled American Veterans Department of Michigan since being Department Commander.

He has filled the position of Administrative Board member for many years as well as State Judge Advocate during the 2013-14 year and has been an active member of chapter 66 as an Executive Committee member for many years.

Dan's always there for any member or veteran that needs assistance and any help that the Department needs in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Dan is always there to help out.

Congratulations Dan, we are all very proud to know you and to thank you for all your hard work and dedication to Michigan's Disabled American Veterans. ■

Award Presented to James Dempsey

Douglas Wells, National director at the Detroit Regional office, along with Commander Les Schneider, presented an award to James Dempsey at the State Convention banquet for all his hard work as a Department Service Officer for many years at the Ann Arbor VAMC. James retired from the DSO position in 2014. ■



L-R: PDC Les Schneider, James Dempsey, John Lamphere.



Commanders Hall of Fame Award, L-R: Dan Mulcahey and PDC John Lamphere.

Auxiliary Commander's Message



Gloria Boozer

Thank you for electing me as your State Commander for 2014-15. I will do my utmost in fulfilling this position to your satisfaction. My theme is "Create smiles by volunteering"

Smiles makes everyone feel good.

I have two goals to work for and will be needing your help in reaching them.

First there are 5,578 members in the Wolverine State at-large. These members have lost their membership rights. Let's see if we can't get these members to transfer into an existing unit or create a new unit. A letter was sent out to each unit explaining how a unit can get labels for the at-large members.

Several times it was mentioned that there is a great need for School of Instructions. After much discussion with some members, the idea of a traveling School of Instructions was the best way to reach as many members as possible since we don't have fall meetings anymore. I am willing to present a

School of Instructions whenever or wherever a unit requests to have one for its members or host one for several units in their area.

Please feel free to call about anything and I will try to help you find the answer to your problem or question or who can help you. Remember the only stupid question is the one never asked. One is always learning something new - changes in the Constitution and Bylaws or a new idea that worked for another unit. I have found the best place to learn about the changes is the National Fall Conference. Sometimes it is interesting to go through the Constitution and Bylaws book and read the shaded areas in it. Those shaded areas are the changes that were made that year of the book. ■

AdLibs

by Linda Walters
AUXILIARY ADJUTANT

The N-990 and the IRS. Many of us have been tiptoeing around or simply ignoring the N-990. Personally I have never done one. But they are important. If they are not done or not done correctly it can mean your unit can lose its non-profit status and its charter and your members will go into state at large. It takes a lot of time and money to get the non-profit status and the charter back. You must do the N-990 on the computer.

When done properly you will get a screen that says it has been accepted by the IRS. You must print this for your records and send a copy to the Auxiliary State

and National. The July Auxiliary National newsletter has a very good article on this on page three (3). Please call me or Commander Gloria if you have questions or problems.

New Address As of August 23 the DAVA State Department and my new address will be: 462 Glenbrooke Ct. Apt. 16112, Waterford, MI 48327.

As I write this I'm filled with sadness at the loss of my dear friend, mentor, and second "mom", Tina Jansen. I will miss her friendship, advice and "Hi kid, What's up?" whenever I called, which was sometimes often. Miss you Mom! ■

Auxiliary Sr. Vice Commander
Teresita Morey
Mae Holmes Chairman

I would like to thank everyone for electing me the Auxiliary Sr. Vice Commander. As Mae Holmes chairman I would like to remind everyone that you have until April 1, 2014 to make quoria to be eligible for MAE HOIMES.

Keep on working to get more members and do not forget that Juniors are also included.

I look forward to serving as the Sr. Vice Commander, thank you very much. ■

Auxiliary 1st Jr. Vice Commander
Christina Alexander

I want to thank everyone for voting for me at the State Convention. I am currently the Unit Commander of Keane-Rankin Chapter 1 in Detroit.

I am looking forward to serving you to the best of my ability. If you are looking for an opportunity to make a difference in

the direction the DAV will be going in the future, WHY not begin by challenging yourself to become a member of the Auxiliary.

Let's not forget that our membership has been opened up to our extended family. As an incentive I would like to challenge each unit to see who can sign up the most new members by December 6, 2014, the winner will receive a gift of \$ 50.00. This is an opportunity to work as a team. I am looking for any suggestions that can help us work and grow together to help the families of our Veterans.

In working with the Juniors, we can also pay the first months membership to get them to join the Auxiliary. Also suggest the unit pay for a junior to attend our State or National Convention, or the Fall Conference, inform the Juniors about the qualifications for our scholarship program. Show our new member our new DAV Auxiliary webpage also.

Looking forward to a Great Year! ■



L-R: Flo Lopez escorts 2013-14 Auxiliary Commander Anna Lockwood at the State Convention banquet.

2014-15 Auxiliary State Officers

Commander – Gloria Boozer-Unit 20

Sr. Vice Commander – Teresita Morey of Unit 14

Jr. Vice Commander – Christina Alexander of Unit 1

Adjutant – Linda Walters of Unit 14

Treasurer – Carol Gray of Unit 11

Judge Advocate - Barb McComb of Unit 18

Chaplain – Sandy Mudgett of Unit 14

2014-15 National Michigan Auxiliary Members

10th Dist. NEC – Carol Lee of Unit 129

10th Dist. NEC Alternate - Teresita Morey of Unit 14

National Judge Advocate -- Carol Gray of Unit 11

National History Chairman – Donna Henshaw of Unit 22

Congratulations Ladies, Have a Great Year!!!



SNOWMOBILE RACE *Sault Ste Marie-Michigan*

International 500 Snowmobile Race, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

It's important for YOU to know there are people and organizations who hold a heartfelt appreciation for the sacrifices so selflessly given by our military men and women.

That being said, I wish to convey a message on behalf of the International 500 Snowmobile Race Board of Directors and all those associated within the professional ranks of professional snowmobile endurance racing.

It is our distinct pleasure and honor to include the D.A.V. as a valued participant within our professional racing event as the race "Official Starter". The International 500 Snowmobile Race is hosted at Michigan's oldest city, Sault Ste. Marie. Proclaimed by Governor Snyder as "Michigan's Premier Winter Sporting Event." Now, the I-500 has added a new, exciting and honorable segment to our International event. It includes people such as yourselves, D.A.V. who we are so proud to be associated with. Let me explain....

For 47 consecutive years, the I-500 Snowmobile race board of directors selects a dignitary to actually be on the track to drop the infamous "GREEN FLAG" which officially starts the race. This is an honor only a select few ever get to experience. NOW, we honor our D.A.V. by requesting a D.A.V. Member to be our guest of honor as the "Official Starter of the I-500."

The idea came from I-500 Board Director, Mark Juday. He approached the board of directors and asked if we thought having a D.A.V. start the race would be possible.

It was a unanimous decision that took only seconds to present and agree upon. Now, as directors for this world class event we hold that position open for a D.A.V. Member to occupy at each race.

The I-500 snowmobile race is the world's longest, fastest and toughest snowmobile endurance race. It's actually run on ice. Our staff puts down over a million and a half gals. of water by virtue of three large tanker trucks. The I-500 is hosted on the only mile oval ice track in North America. For 47 consecutive years, the I-500 has offered excitement in professional racing second to none. Equal to any other professional race, the I-500 hosts up to 38 qualified race teams. Race teams come from throughout the United States and

Chapter 52 Member Ron Kessler was the representative for the DAV, Department of Michigan at the 2014 Sault Ste. Marie Snowmobile Race I-500. Here is his story;

I would just like to take this time to thank the Department of Michigan for choosing me as a representative of the DAV Department of Michigan and the honor of being the official starter of the most world-wide known oval snowmobile race, the Sault Ste. Marie I-500.

Canada with representation of every manufacture in the snowmobile industry on hand as well.

Over the past several years, the I-500 has gained much deserved recognition within the arena of professional racing. The media coverage has grown with the likes of known network programs such as Speed Channel, The Weather Channel Network & Jim Cantorie, NASH Network's TRU-T.V.'s "Most Shocking" to name a few. In addition there are also T.V. production companies tied to the sporting industry such as "Sno-Trails" T.V. and movie production companies producing movie documentaries. In the words of Jim Cantorie of the Weather Channel, "This is simply amazing and exciting! Nothing less important then any other professional racing event." And... the I-500 had the distinct honor of throwing out the opening ceremonial pitch for the Detroit Tigers in April 2014.

With thousands of spectators attending each year, with the ability to view the race via web streaming and other modern media technology, it has become obvious to the I-500 Board of Directors, that we have a means to offer our debt of gratitude to those who put their lives on the line for our country and our freedom. Therefore, it is with much mutual respect and admiration for our men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces, that we honor the presence of ALL D.A.V. at our world class International professional racing event.

As stated in this article, Mark Juday introduced this outstanding idea of having a D.A.V. Member be the "Official Starter of the I-500." We couldn't be more happy and honored to be partnered with a D.A.V. as a valued representative for our professional racing event, thus being the I-500 "Official Starter."

To learn more about the I-500 or to follow the excitement of the race, visit us at www.i-500.com or visit us on Face Book and the I-500 Fan Page.

On behalf of the I-500 Board of Directors, we wish to THANK ALL OUR MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES.

Respectfully,

Ric R. Federau

International 500 Chairman & Official Spokesperson ■

The event is held the first Saturday of February every year. This race is held on a one mile oval track consisting of 500 laps, with racers coming from all over the United States to try and qualify for this great event, where they reach speeds out to 120 mph.

The track is prepped by workers who spend a lot of hours in below zero weather spreading water on the track to freeze and form a minimum of 12 inches of ice for the race. The race begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends in the late afternoon or sometimes evening

— INTERNATIONAL 500 SNOWMOBILE RACE continued on page 12

Chapter Corner

CALHOUN COUNTY CHAPTER 7

Submitted by William Roush

Chapter 7 had a first place winner for the Department of Michigan "Say no to drugs" poster contest. Victoria Tack took first place in the 1st/2nd grade division and the Chapter 7 member William Rousch submitted the winning poster along with others that were collected by chapter 7. Victoria's poster will be displayed at the Battle Creek VA Medical center in the pharmacy, where it will be placed under glass for one year. Her name and school name appear along with the poster.



Chapter Corner Poster Winner: Victoria Tack

KEANE RANKIN, METROPOLITAN DETROIT CHAPTER 1

DAV Chapter 1 is in the process of updating their Constitution & Bylaws. There will be readings Wednesday October 29, 2014 and Wednesday November 5, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. at the chapter hall. There will be a third reading on Wednesday November 14, 2014 at 2:00 p.m., at this meeting there shall be a debate and vote on the changes, the meeting shall be chaired and presided by the committee. The meeting will take place at the chapter hall located at 13231 Puritan Detroit, Michigan 48227. Chapter phone number 313-272-1810.

A REED J. DEPARTO CHAPTER 125

Submitted by: Phil Sedlock

Chapter 125, former Master at Arms Jerry Borowski has made quite a reputation for himself as a Fraud Buster in and around New Hudson, Michigan. Last fall he was able to single handedly shut down a group operating out of the East Coast using a store as a collection point for "Helping Veterans". Recently he found a group operating out of Novi, Michigan which has been turned over to the Oakland County Sheriff's office. Jerry is one of those individuals who is always on the lookout for the unusual and when found is not afraid of confronting the wrong doers. He will probably be upset with me for bringing attention to him, but the man deserves kudos for his willingness to look out for and correct scams that are being perpetrated on the public at the expense of the Veteran!

LIVONIA CHAPTER 114

Submitted by Thomas Dempster

HAPPY 93rd BIRTHDAY RAY SUAREZ!!

Ray Suarez fought on Iwo Jima at the end of 1944 during WW II and has been a DAV member for 41 years Ray has been the Commander of Chapter 114, 7 times and also being a Service Officer without a computer, A very proud Veteran being National Aide De Camp at both Dept. & National levels and has been my Sr. Vice Cmdr. the last 5 terms. He's a great Mentor for me, with him being around for awhile, he effectively uses behavior modification to create motivation and achieves results. He told me to go my first State Convention as Sr. Vice Cmdr. at 114 which started me getting involved with the DAV. He taught me the do's and don'ts and the what and where's and who's who at the Department level. I'm very thankful to Ray for he helps me strive for the achievement of excellence and I thank him ever so much for doing so.



Ray Suarez



L-R: - Deputy Chairman of Grand Rapids Home Charles Beedon and Chapter 2 Auxiliary member John Olinger man a booth at the Grand Rapids Home Carnival.



PDC and Grand Rapids Home Chairman Rich Straub (Center right) chats with members of the Grand Valley Corvette Club.

TAPS

- Chapter 2** Hebert Mckay
- Chapter 4** Elmer C. Feinauer
- Chapter 6** Blair Gene
- Chapter 6** Wilford Buckot
- Chapter 11** Robert Bedgood
- Chapter 11** Georgea Carron
- Chapter 11** Sody P. Dominic
- Chapter 11** Donald G. Hazen
- Chapter 13** Dennis R. Beaudoin
- Chapter 13** Kevin G. Holek
- Chapter 13** Ernet E. Kelly
- Chapter 13** Larry E. McCallister
- Chapter 13** Donald Ratner
- Chapter 13** Craig Sinclair
- Chapter 14** Lloyd Van Raalte
- Unit 14 - Past Auxiliary Commander**
Tina Jansen
- Chapter 17** Maxwell W. Elsasser
- Chapter 17** Michael J. Hutter
- Chapter 17** Frank J. Traficanto
- Chapter 18** Dave Waldron
- Chapter 19** Armand Ferrari
- Chapter 20 / Dugout 363**
Arthur A. Campbell Sr
- Chapter 26** Peter Gorsehe
- Chapter 26** Lawrence J. Herminger
- Chapter 26** John Matthews
- Chapter 26** Lloyd Miller
- Chapter 33** Elizabeth Gleason (Auxiliary)
- Chapter 33** David Jones
- Chapter 33** John L. Marzec
- Chapter 33** Ervin B. Ososki
- Chapter 33** Jennie V. Vozar (Auxiliary)
- Chapter 39** Donald King
- Chapter 39** Frank Kollar
- Chapter 39** Freeland Merchant
- Chapter 39** Terry Moon
- Chapter 39** Gerald Toffey
- Chapter 39** Harry Nelson
- Chapter 68** Hebert Hine
- Chapter 69** Gary H. Martell
- Chapter 93** David O. Evans
- Chapter 102** Michael Gambotto
- Chapter 114** Frank W. Hutira
- Past Auxiliary Commander 1972-73**
Mary Ann Cole

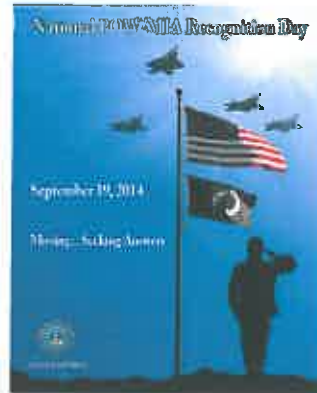
Entries for this column must be submitted to Department headquarters, in writing, no later than 45 days after the member's death. Send notice to: DAV, Attn: TAPS, 17779 East Fourteen Mile Road, Fraser, MI 48026. You may also send entries via e-mail to: michelle@davmichigan.com

POW/MIA

National POW/MIA day is September 19, 2014

The United States' National POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed across the nation on the third Friday of September each year. Many Americans take the time to remember those who were prisoners of war (POW) and those who are missing in action (MIA), as well as their families.

Many Americans across the United States pause to remember the sacrifices and service of those who were prisoners of war (POW), as well as those who are missing in action (MIA), and their families. All military installations fly the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag, which symbolizes the nation's remembrance of those who were imprisoned while serving in conflicts and those who remain missing.



The POW/MIA Flag is the only flag other than the United States of America flag that is allowed to fly at the Capitol Rotunda in Washington.

There will be a 24 hour vigil at Oakland Hills Memorial Cemetery beginning September 21, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. through 5:00 p.m. September 22, 2014.

Oakland Hills is located at 43300 W. 12 Mile Road, Novi, Michigan 48377.

Currently there are 41 Vietnam POW/MIA service members from Michigan that are still missing. One of those soldiers Doug Ferguson, a U.S. Air force Captain who was shot down over Laos on December 31, 1969, his remains were found last spring and he was buried in May 2013 in Tacoma Washington, his relatives are still in Michigan including his wife Sue Scott.

DAV Department of Michigan began the POW/MIA Committee with Commander Henry Rose during his term 1989-90 and I was appointed to serve on the committee that year.

DAV National Headquarters began their POW/MIA Committee during the 1991-92 years with National Commander Joseph Zengerle and I was appointed to serve on the National Committee that year.

PDC Joseph Connelly ~ POW/MIA Advisor for the Department of Michigan


DAV Department of Michigan Contribution Card

All donations are tax deductible.

Enclosed please find my contribution of \$ _____

Please use this contribution for:

- Membership Program VA Hospital Program
- Hospital Transportation Program
- Service to Veterans Use my contribution as needed

 Visa and MasterCard also accepted, Please call 1-888-448-2328 to make a donation with your credit card.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please complete and mail to:
Disabled American Veterans, Department of Michigan
 17779 E. 14 Mile Road Fraser, MI 48026



depending on the amount of accidents and track repair that may be necessary.

The race committee treated me like Royalty, I sat in the V.I.P lounge during the race and was treated to all the food and drink I wanted, and before the race began I was taken to the pit area to meet and talk to all the different drivers and take a look at their amazing race sleds, they all made me feel at home.

To me, just being able to start the race was a real rush, being that close to the track as 43 fast and I mean Fast moving sleds raced past us. In March, I was invited to a dinner they race organizers put

on for the volunteers who help with the numerous jobs that need to be done to prepare the track during the race.

I was presented with a 10x12 framed picture of myself signed by the members of the race committee and was given the green flag that I used to start the race.

Again I would like to thank the DAV Department of Michigan for the honor of representing all members and Veterans.

Sincerely, Ron Keesler ■



L-R: Ron Keesler "Ready, Set, GO!"



L-R: Team 02 Blue member James Hicks of Cedarville and DAV member Ron Keesler.

Department of Michigan Service Officers

Ann Arbor VAMC
2215 Fuller Road
Room B157A

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105
Phone: 734-845-3839
Scott Redman

Battle Creek VAMC
5500 Armstrong Road
Building 2, Room 077
Battle Creek, Michigan 49037
Phone: 269-223-5106
Kristen Harper

Detroit VAMC
4646 John R St., Room A1013
Detroit, Michigan 48201
Phone: 313-576-3508

Toni Moses

Grand Rapids
VA Outpatient Clinic
3019 Coit NE, Room 1115
Grand Rapids, Michigan
49505

Phone: 616-365-7576
Annette Dennis

Grayling
Crawford County Building
200 W. Michigan Avenue
Grayling, Michigan 49738
Phone: 989-344-3861
Terry Fillmore

Iron Mountain VAMC
325 East H Street
Iron Mountain, Michigan
49801

Phone: 906-779-3194
Joe Marczak

Saginaw VAMC
1500 Weiss Street
Saginaw, Michigan 48602
Phone: 989-497-2500 Ext. 13382

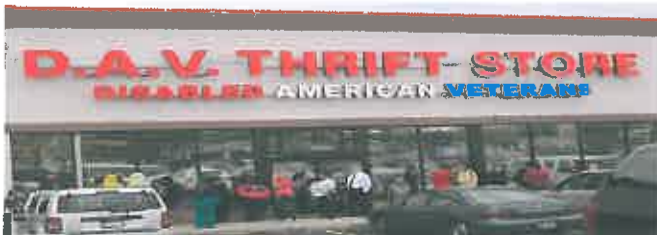
Ron McNally
Transportation Chairman
and DSO David Downer
Detroit

National Service Officers
Patrick V. McNamara
Federal Bldg.
477 Michigan Avenue,
Rm. 1200

Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: 313-964-6595
Fax: 313-964-6576

Director: Douglas K. Wells
Asst. Director: Kwan Tillman
NSO Rick Barenbrugge
NSO Todd Peddle
NSO Albert Hughes
NSO Jason Zielke
NSO Robert McClellan
NSO Nicholas Koulchar

Department of Michigan Thrift Store Locations



NEW DAV Thrift Store NOW OPEN

8050 E. Middlebelt Road
Westland, Michigan 48185
Store Phone: 734-513-6020

New Store Address:
36660 Gratiot Avenue
Clinton Township, Michigan 48038
Store Phone: 586-790-4143

DONATION PICK-UP LINE: 1-866-520-5328

2013-14 AMERICANISM WINNING ESSAY

“What does the red, white and blue represent on the American Flag”



1st Place Winner – Quinn Lewis from Dunlap Elementary \Battle Creek, Michigan Chapter 7 Americanism Chairman William Roush



Chapter 7 Americanism Co-chairman DAV Carl Baker along with 1st place State winner Quinn Lewis of Dunlop elementary in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Honorable Mentions to the other winners of the Americanism Essay Contest:

- 2nd Place Winner – Dallas Wilson of Anderson Elementary Chapter 102 Americanism Chairman Jerry Stubleski
- 3rd Place Winner – Sarah Murringer of Tawas Middle School Chapter 130 Americanism Chairman Robert Champine
- 4th Place Winner – Jayden Quarters of Tawas Middle School Chapter 130 Americanism Chairman Robert Champine



L-R: Principal Douglas B. Mentzer of Anderson Elementary, 2nd place state winner Dallas Wilson, Chapter 102 Americanism Chairman Gerald Stubleski.

Winning Essay

What Red, White, and Blue mean to me – By Quinn Lewis

Red, white and blue are the colors of the flag of the United States of America. But what do they mean?

To Me, the color RED stand for the blood that was shed by the courageous men and women. The men and women risked their lives in the Revolutionary war and other wars to preserve our Freedom.

To me, I think the WHITE represents the birth of the United States of American. On July 4, 1776 our Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence was a statement declaring our freedom and the birth of the States of America. The birth of the U.S.A. started off as the thirteen colonies and eventually grew into the fifty (50) states.

The last color is BLUE. Blue stands for water, because the pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to seek Religious freedom and they settled on a brand new land, also, the water represents the millions of immigrants who sailed across the seas to make America their new home.

These three colors can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people, but this is what the colors of the greatest country mean to me.



L-R: State Americanism Chairman Robert Champine, 4th place winner Jayden Quarters, 3rd place winner Sarah Murringer, both of Tawas Middle School.

As the 1st place winner of the Department of Michigan Americanism essay contest Quinn Lewis was awarded a check for \$ 500.00, and Dunlop Elementary was also presented with a check for \$ 500.00, accepted by Principal Trevor Deveaux.

CONGRATULATIONS QUINN!!!! ON WINNING THE DAV DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST!



L-R: Pricipal Trevor Deveaux Dunlop Elementary in Battle Creek, Chapter 7 Americanism Co Chairman Carl Baker.



2014 State Convention Award Winners

HARCOURT TROPHY - Winner: Livonia Chapter 114



L-R: Commander Les Schneider and Richard Thomas of Chapter 114.

For signing up 10 or more new members

- Carol Gernand (Chapter 12) 10 New Members
- Marlin Zielman (Chapter 102) 10 New Members
- Robert Barton (Chapter 6) 13 New Members

TOP STATE MEMBERSHIP RECRUITER

Thomas Dempster (Chapter 114) 25 New Members

TOP DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER RECRUITER:

Ron McNally - DSO Saginaw VAMC 33 New Members

AUST TROPHY - Buck Crosby Chapter 6



L-R: Commander Les Schneider and Robert Barton of Chapter 6.

L-R: Commander Les Schneider and Ron McNally (DSO at Saginaw VAMC).



FRISKE TROPHY - Straits Chapter 93

MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE AWARDS

For signing up 3-9 new members



(3-9 new members)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Frank Shepherd (Chapter 7) | 3 new members |
| Phil Sedlock (Chapter 125) | 3 new members |
| Gary Nosis (Chapter 83) | 3 new members |
| Dennis Kozikowski (Chapter 25) | 3 new members |
| Ronald Erickson (Chapter 69) | 3 new members |
| Shawn Wilson (Chapter 102) | 4 new members |
| Rebecca Mott (Chapter 61) | 4 new members |
| Terrice Alexander (Chapter 1) | 4 new members |
| Jo Linda White (Chapter 20) | 5 new members |
| Thomas Siemoneit (Chapter 12) | 5 new members |
| Walter Hayes (Chapter 1) | 5 new members |
| Albert Linden (Chapter 116) | 6 new members |
| Robert Robinson (Chapter 3) | 8 new members |

TOP NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER RECRUITER:

Kwan Tillman - NSO Assistant Director Detroit Regional Office 156 New Members

L-R: Commander Les Schneider and Kwan Tillman (NSO Assistant Director Detroit).



DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP AWARDS:

- District 1: St. Clair Shores Chapter 119
- District 2: Jack Johnson Chapter 88
- District 3: Wood - Tazelaar Chapter 11
- District 4: Big Rapids Chapter 18
- District 5: Ogemaw Hills Chapter 73
- District 6: Northland Chapter 66

JAMES R. FRIESMA PUBLIC RELATIONS AWARD

Presented To Calhoun County Chapter 7

CHAPTER AMERICANISM AWARD

Presented To Robert H. Cox Chapter 129

NEWSLETTER

Award Presented To Big Rapids Chapter 18

OUTSTANDING CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

Presented To Karl H. Brown Chapter 102



L-R: Commander Les Schneider and Beth Gonzales of Chapter 102.



Membership Awards 2 - (10+ new members)

Artist and DAV Team For ArtPrize® 2014

Artist Roger Carlson is a West Michigan native who has always loved walking sticks. He also has a deep and abiding love for his country and those who risk their lives in its service.

This year, he is teaming with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) to present an exhibit for ArtPrize® 2014. Entitled The Walking Art Project, it is multi-piece entry comprised of 25 walking sticks and canes, each of which is both functional and a work of art.

Created as a tribute to the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces who were disabled in the course of their service. It represents the journey back to wholeness both physically and spiritually. It is a partnership between the artist and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), a nationally recognized organization which advocates for disabled veterans.

"Since the first ArtPrize® in 2009," Carlson explains, "I've wanted to create an entry that has something to do with walking sticks. I've also wanted to make walking sticks for veterans of our Armed Forces. One day the two thoughts collided, and The Walking Art Project was born."

ArtPrize® is a radically open, independently organized international art competition and a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

For 19 days, three square miles of downtown Grand Rapids,

Michigan, become an open playing field where anyone can find a voice in the conversation about what is art and why it matters. Art from around the world pops up in every inch of downtown, and it's all free and open to the public.

The Walking Art Project will be available for public viewing at the Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital, 100 Michigan Ave, Grand Rapids, Michigan from September 24 - October 12, 2014 during the following hours:

Mon-Thurs 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Fri & Sat 12:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Sunday 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm

At the end of ArtPrize the individual pieces will be given to the DAV who will distribute them to disabled vets. In addition, visitors to the exhibit will have the opportunity to pledge a monetary donation to the DAV. A pledge of \$100 or more will give the pledgee the right to sponsor a walking stick of their choice to be given in their name. Pledges of less than \$100 will also gratefully accepted.

All of the sponsored walking sticks and 100% of the pledged donations will go



ARTPRIZE® 2014

When:

September 24 - October 12, 2014

Where:

Spectrum Health Butterworth Lobby

Vote Code: 56220

The Walking Art Project is multi-piece exhibit comprised of 25 walking sticks and canes, each of which is both functional and a work of art.

At the conclusion of ArtPrize the individual pieces will be given to the Disabled American Veterans who will distribute them to their membership.

www.TheWalkingArtProject.com



directly to the DAV.

More information on ArtPrize is available by visiting their website: ArtPrize.org ■

"Wow, you really drew that?"

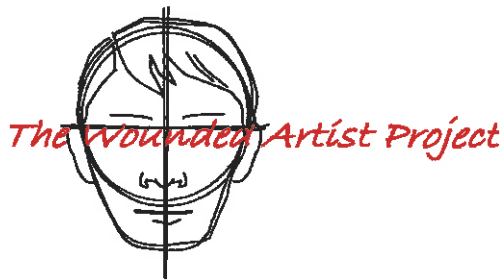
In the Beginning

Art is known to be good therapy to deal with trauma. That was one of the reasons Ray Bakerjian started The Wounded Artist Project, a Michigan 501(c)(3) in 2009. The other, and more important in his mind, was to help the wounded recovering in military medical facilities develop art skills that might lead to a college major or career path if they were going to be medically discharged from the service.

Ray is an Army vet from the Vietnam era and wanted to give something back. First, he volunteered as an artist for an hour a month at the John Dingell VA hospital near his home, and was encouraged by the work done by his veteran students there who were just drawing using simple circle, squares and lines. He eventually he got the idea to start a nonprofit to send free art kits to the wounded.

Doing a lot of perspective drawing may make a warrior want to be an architect or urban planner. Drawing the human body and looking at their charts and talking with their doctors and nurses may make them want to become a nurse. Drawing cars and other mechanical stuff may make them want to be a product designer or engineer. He does note to the kit users that the kit alone won't make them an architect, nurse or car designer, it's just the first step in their journey to become one.

The art kits include an off-the-shelf, art instruction book for beginners, a compilation book of easy-to-draw subjects (cats, dogs, buildings, athletes, cars, etc.) from a series of childrens' books, a sketchpad and an excellent pencil set donated free by the US company, General



Pencil. He knew that the books had to be simple enough so a young, inexperienced wounded warrior sitting in a hospital bed wouldn't get discouraged from the start and just pitch everything. Even with the very basic subjects included in the kits, he knew that the wounded would hear the same encouraging words he remembers getting as a young artist: "Wow, you really drew that?"

He also created a series of introductory, how-to-draw videos on YouTube with the help of a videographer friend from his son's Scout troop, Paul Garland. Other videos done with a small, pocket-sized video camera followed. He interviewed architects and scientific illustrators (one of whom had adopted a bat so she could study and draw it) who got into their careers because they loved to draw, and these were followed with interviews of advocates for veterans' affairs. There are also drawing demos by other artists on the channel.

Future Plans

With the winding down of combat operations in 2014 and the reduction in the numbers of wounded in hospitals, Bakerjian wanted to stay relevant for the VA systems so he contacted the PTSD staff at the Dingell in February to get their thoughts about expanding their mission to now include this community. During their meeting one of the staff attendees suggested that he look at serving all inpatient vets in the VA's 150 medical facilities.

He commented that he thought that there was another nonprofit doing this already. No, he was told. That organization was dismissed by the VA in 2012 and the medical facilities had not been

— THE WOUNDED ARTIST PROJECT continued on page 16

receiving supplies on-site for over a year and a half. So he called the VA Voluntary Services office in Washington, DC, to volunteer.

In discussing how this might be done, he asked his contact in DC if the VA could send a survey to all of the VAMCs to get an idea of what might be needed and in what quantities. He gave the VA a list of two dozen items, which included art supplies, leather craft and model kits, etc. He learned that 95 of the 150 VAMCs replied to the survey. This was accompanied by a note from his contact that the Voluntary Services managers were excited that their supplies would be coming in again.

During these conversations he found out that many times a VA doctor will actually prescribe a model kit or other activity as part of a patient's rehab.

Bakerjian's plan will be to have suppliers ship needed supplies directly from their own businesses so he doesn't have to create a large-scale warehousing operation. For those suppliers that can't ship for them, he knows he will have to have a small warehouse and

would like to hire several unemployed, combat-wounded veterans to staff it. He has even attended a local veterans court thinking, "if a vet has had trouble with the law, we can talk about that, too."

Bakerjian is willing to accept in-kind gifts from companies for supplies that can be used by the VAMCs. He would like to have car companies step up to buy model car kits for The Wounded Artist Project and can see having his shipping staff put stickers on them to the effect of, "This Camaro Was Bought For You By GM." He would like defense companies to help secure model aircraft, tanks and ships as well.

He plans to find a grant writer to secure funds from foundations (he contacted 500 foundations in March to see what kind of response he would get) and to work (cautiously) with fundraising companies. He is planning several campaigns with social media, the first with Kickstarter. He recently published a how-to tutorial for drawing US troops returning fire. He calls it, "In Contact" and can be found at bit.ly/WKows1.

He can be contacted at ray@thewoundedartistproject.org. ■

FREEDOM CENTER

Serving Those Who Serve Us.

The Detroit Metro Airport Freedom Center was dedicated on November 11, 2011, there was no such facility in the airport, since the airport is a major international airport with daily flights from Europe and Asia connecting to all over North America, it was long overdue.

Starting with an empty room and hundreds of ideas, the Freedom Center volunteers have created a world class facility with a home-like atmosphere that boasts several complimentary amenities for our guests, they include hot and cold beverages, food items, Wi-Fi access, a children's area and overnight accommodations.

From the time the Freedom Center Care team is notified that there is a request of assistance in regards to the family or military escort of a fallen hero, our team members are there to ensure that their travel, and their experience with us is as smooth and pleasant as possible. We monitor incoming and connecting flights, re route and re schedule as necessary, help with check-in and provide assistance through check points. When a Fallen Hero returns home for the final time, the Care Team works with the casualty officer, Wayne County Airport Authorities, the airlines and others involved to ensure that the family is present for the Dignified transfer.

It is an honor for the Care Team to provide assistance to our Wounded Warriors and Disabled Veterans, the Care Team members have experience working with individuals with varying injuries and disabilities including amputees, loss of eyesight and hearing, wheelchair bound, PTSD and anxiety.

Team members can also provide information on airline and airport procedures that may permit family members to surprise their loved ones at the arrival gate when they first walk off the plane. Our team members enjoy welcoming military personnel home and assisting in the coordination of surprise reunions. If you would like to plan a surprise homecoming, please contact the Care Team at 734-494-0294.

Freedom Center at Detroit Metro Airport

Even more important than the wide range of amenities, are the volunteers, volunteers help checking flight information, assist with children so the parents can rest, preparing food, providing transportation outside the airport, or giving extra attention to a "boot camp baby" who is away from home for the first time and missing their family, the Freedom Center volunteers are there for our Military personnel.

The volunteers are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are always looking for volunteers who may have a few hours a week to assist our traveling military personal, you can call 734-247-2761 or visit the website at www.mifreedomcenter.org for an application and additional information.

The center is always in need of donations, if you or your chapter are interested in helping out, they are in need of the following items from their

"Wish List";

Beverages: Keurig k-cups, Bottled water, Non-carbonated beverages, juices, pop

Food Items: Frozen dinners (hot pockets) Microwave mini meals, yogurt, string cheese

Snack Items: Peanut packs, animal cracker packs, fruit roll ups & fruit snacks, individual bags of crackers and chips, Fresh fruit, individual peanut butter and apple sauce.

Paper Goods: Paper towels, plastic silverware, Styrofoam cups, Clorox and/or Lysol wipes. Note pads.

Toiletries: Chapstick, toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, shaving cream, deodorant, hand sanitizer

Other items: sugar packets, cream for coffee, sweetener packets, drink mix packets for bottled water.

The Freedom Center is located at Gate A43 in the McNamara Terminal.

For more information on the Freedom Center, visit their website at www.mifreedomcenter.org ■



**District 1
Chapters**

**District 2
Chapters**

**District 3
Chapters**

**District 4
Chapters**

**District 5
Chapters**

**District 6
Chapters**

 **Veterans Homes
& VAMC's**

**Michigan Disabled Veterans
17779 East 14 Mile Road
Fraser, MI 48026**



**BUDDY
★ TO ★
BUDDY
Volunteer Veteran Program**

Behind the Buddy-to-Buddy Volunteer Veteran Program is a simple concept: Military Service is unlike any other human experience. No one knows more about the issues facing a service member – in combat or on the home front – than a fellow service member.

The mission of the program is to use trained volunteer veterans to help post-9/11 military service members and veterans overcome the stigma around asking for help and link those who are facing challenges throughout the deployment cycle with appropriate resources that will optimize their quality of life.

Volunteer veterans are recruited to the program from a variety of veteran service organizations and the community, and these trained volunteers are assigned to armories across Michigan. They provide assistance to service members who have concerns on a wide range of issues including finances, employment, benefits, mental health and substance abuse, relationships and education.

“The effectiveness of the Buddy-to-Buddy Volunteer Veteran Program continues to amaze me,” says Stephanie Zarb, program coordinator. “As a veteran myself, I know that making the transition to civilian life is a difficult process. In many ways, making that transition is much like waking up in a foreign country where you don’t fully understand the language, customs and culture. Without help, it can be difficult to figure out how to move forward.”

Since it was founded in 2009, the program has experienced significant growth. With more than 100 trained active volunteers working in 40 of Michigan’s 42 Army

**Buddy-to-Buddy Veteran Volunteer Program
celebrates five years
of providing support and resources**

*Developed in partnership with the
Michigan Army National Guard,
the peer-to-peer program
is continuing to address the unique challenges
facing citizen soldiers.*

National Guard armories, the program has assisted more than 2,000 Michigan veterans and service members in the last 5 years.

“The veteran-to-veteran relationship enables us to build trust more quickly and connect with returning service members and veterans,” says Zarb. “Five years of experience has taught us how to access a wide range of resources on behalf of our troops and successfully navigate complex systems. Our model of outreach and linkage to resources has been really successful and I’m very proud to be a part of expanding this program. I cannot wait to see what we will accomplish in future years. I know we will continue to serve and support our service members and veterans because we remain focused on our mission. Even though the wars are winding down, there is still a great need out there.”

Help is just a phone call away: To be connected with a Volunteer Veteran, or to make a referral for someone else, call 1-888-82-BUDDY (822-8339). Visit buddytobuddy.org/get-help for more details.

How to get involved: Volunteers are not expected to know every resource, or have all the answers. The Program staff will always be available to support and guide Volunteer Veterans as they assist their fellow service members. Contact buddytobuddyVVP@umich.edu if you would like more information or have any questions about the application process. To apply online, please click here.

To learn more about the Buddy-to-Buddy Veteran Volunteer Program, visit buddytobuddy.org.
