VA office helps Iosco County’s many veterans

by Jason Ogden

TAWAS CITY – Iosco County Veterans Affairs Officer Ron Whitney said more and more veterans have been utilizing the county’s office over the past few years than ever before.

Recently he said that the office is handling as many as 70 claims a month compared to a few years ago when the average was 10.

Whitney, who is a veteran himself having served in the U.S. Army, is extremely proud, passionate and accommodating to that population in the county and said he is not doing his job to make himself rich but to help those who served along with him in the various branches of the armed forces.

“As veteran myself it is important for me to have this office,” he said. “I spent 34 years with the Army and I want it to be ensured that they are getting things for the services they rendered to our country.”

Whitney said there are many things that his office helps with, for many different veterans – of all ages, sexes, branches of military, and other situations.

“It runs the gamut from PTSD claims or Agent Orange claims from Vietnam veterans,” he said. “Then you have widows claims and survivor benefits and things, then veteran burials and things like that.”

And there are plenty of veterans in the county to serve, Whitney said. Of the state’s 83 counties, Iosco County has the highest per capita population of veterans in the state, he said.

“We have 3,024 veterans who live in the county,” he said. “They are from all branches of service. I get Vietnam veterans, Gulf War veterans, and everything from 30-year-olds to 80-year-olds and older. In fact I recently had a man who was 93 years old come in for services.”

Whitney said those veterans bring a lot of funding into the county. He said during the fiscal year of 2020, the Veterans Administration spent $28.3 million on the veterans’ needs in Iosco County.

He said a lot of the population of veterans retirees in the area. Some had experiences working at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base, but many just like to live in northern Michigan.

“A lot of veterans are increasing rather than decreasing,” Whitney said. “Some of them have never even heard of Tawas or Hale, they come up here and see how nice the community is, what is has to offer, and they like the lifestyle.”

Whitney added that the office has been over two years in the making. The committee had originally planned installation of the fourth wall for Veterans Day 2019, however, they were 150 names short at the time. They then hoped to have the wall in place by Memorial Day 2020.

While there were installation ceremonies in previous years, this year’s installation was a quiet event due to COVID.

“The Park is not complete,” said Sandra Whitford, Iosco County Veterans Recognition Plaza committee member, whose husband Bill is a veteran. She added that future plans include adding a fifth smaller panel between the fourth and fifth wall.

Whitford said there will be space for an additional 200 names on the new panel. Any Veteran from Iosco County who served in a military branch and was honorably discharged, can be added to the new wall at no cost. Individuals who would like to add the name of a Veteran to the fifth wall can contact Whitford to do so.

According to Whitford, an additional $9,000 needs to be raised for the fifth wall and donations are welcome. To date, $70 brick pavers have been sold at a cost of $50 each.

See OFFICE, Page 2A

This Veterans Day, we honor and give thanks to all veterans who served and sacrificed to ensure our freedom.

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Oscoda’s VMP is new home for several military displays

by Ryan Herzog

A BLESSING – “Nimke” Joe Ireland of the Chippewa Nation of the Great Lakes unsmudges sacred tobacco for a memorial blessing everyone. He also handed out tobacco for people to pinch and say a prayer with.

Continued from Page 1

of $100 each to support purchase of the four existing walls and replacement of the service flags. Pavers can be purchased to honor any U.S. Military Veteran who was honorably discharged by completing a form obtained from Tawas City Hall or available on the Park’s website tawascity.org/places/veteranspark. Since 2014, Whittford and her husband have placed the bricks that make up the “Walk of Honor” throughout the park. Future plans also include adding landscape curbing around the bricks and permanent signage.

RECOGNITION – A view of the walls at the Tawas Veterans Recognition Plaza, which holds the names of Iosco County veterans.

Continued from Page 1

OFFICE

door activities like hunting, fishing and other recreations, are a big attractant for the veterans. “I think the population is also increasing because people are just starting to find out what is around here,” he said.

The Veterans Affairs office often partners with groups and organizations on projects. One is with the Oscoda Lions Club to build three wheelchair ramps for disable veterans in the area. The work on the ramps was done by volunteers with the club, and the materials were purchased with funding from the Soldier Relief Fund.

They also held the first ever Veterans Appreciation Breakfast this year, with 75 veterans in attendance, and continued working with Pegasus Springs to start a program for veterans called “Hero Horizons.”

“Anchoring the same lines, we coordinated with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and the East Tawas American Legion Post 211 to start a ‘pop-up’ food give away,” he said. “This is a once-a-month event and will run through December at this time. This is supported through a stimulus program.”

Whitney said resources for veterans are available and donations to the office are always appreciated, whether it is goods, funding or volunteer work.

“If there is anything out there that can help our veterans, I am open to suggestions. We would like to see more assistance or volunteers,” he said.

“If they need transport they can call, but we also need volunteer drivers so if anyone is interested, call. I have a couple volunteers but I am always looking for more. Veterans need transport all over the state for appointments. Whitney said the public is welcome to call him at 362-6571 or email him at rwhitney@iosco-county.org.

COLOR GUARD – The color guard present the flag as event goers recite the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

TIGHT FIT – The M113-A1 was reported to carry up to 15 passengers and 2 crew members.

“I got a grant to purchased a vehicle here, from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency,” he said. “If they need transport they can call, but we also need volunteer drivers so if anyone is interested, call. I have a couple volunteers but I am always looking for more. Veterans need transport all over the state for appointments. Whitney said the public is welcome to call him at 362-6571 or email him at rwhitney@iosco-county.org.

“Along the same lines, we coordinated with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and the East Tawas American Legion Post 211 to start a ‘pop-up’ food give away,” he said. “This is a once-a-month event and will run through December at this time. This is supported through a stimulus program.”

Members of Oscoda’s VMP and the public attended the official unveiling of their static display of military equipment during an event held Saturday.

These metal vehicles were used every day in combat over various theaters of war. Many veterans from various wars showed up to take part in the event.

Many of them even rode in or operated these same types of vehicles during their service.

The ceremony kicked off with the color guard presenting the flag followed by the National Anthem. Then there was a blessing of the crowd by “Nimke” Joe Ireland and a patriotic performance by Danny Adberson. Members of the VMP spoke on the items on static display over the park.

Retired United States (US) Army Veteran Joe Brinn discussed the process of acquiring the equipment and shared his gratitude over having the opportunity to display these pieces of military equipment.

“We are doing this park is trying to make it something unique,” said Brinn. “With these static displays, it has turned the corner for us.

The four items on display are an M86 medium wrecker, an M118 8” Howitzer, and an M14 and M13 armored personnel carrier.

Weighing in at a whopping 26,000 lbs., the M13-A1 was a heavy-duty armored personnel carrier first utilized in 1964. It carried troops to and from the battlefield. Many veterans at the park, like Brinn were in these same metal models during their tour of duty.

The M14 is a smaller, lighter more maneuverable version of the M13-A1.

In honor of the unveling, the M13 was opened up for visitors to look inside. Most of it was intact and all hatches up top functioned well.

The wrecker is on loan from Fred Pickering, and is there through the spring.

The VMP are in the process of raising the money to buy a “deuce and a half,” also known as a two and-a-half ton six-by-six cargo truck. Except for the wrecker, the equipment came from a charity museum based in Crown Point, Ind.

The tracked vehicles were driven up by Ken Knick from 6 Logistics Trucking Company.

Static displays also included mock guns mounted on top to show where the drivers would shoot from.

Park volunteer organizer Bob Tasior said the Howitzer had to be cut in half to fit under overpasses on the road before it could be carried.

Tasior says its the organization’s dedication and professionalism that convinced the Department of Defense to grant them extra static display items beyond the normal limit. “They said they liked what we were doing down here, so they allowed us to have more than one,” he said.

Tasior said he hopes the displays will attract more visitors to the memorial. Tasior says plans to hold “Rockfest” at the VMP this upcoming year, and that the static display items are going to be part of the festivities for that event.

“People can walk through the memorial as they attend the event and be able to see these vehicles,” he said.

The park is located at 4000 N. Skelö Ave., Oscoda. For more information, contact Rosemary Nentwig at 820-9747 or Brinn at 906-2153.
WAM Fly-In, Pancake Breakfast a success

The Oscoda Rotary Club and the Wurtsmith Air Museum hosted a successful Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, August 20, at the Oscoda County Airport. Participants enjoyed a breakfast that included blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes, which were prepared by the Club Member Mary Reitler. Additional contributions were made by the Oscoda High School Interact Club, which helped serve the visitors.

The breakfast was held in conjunction with the WAM Fly-In, which featured various planes from different locations, including Grand Rapids, Flint, Saginaw, and planes from the upper peninsula. The event also included a smoke trial over the crowd, putting on a show by adding blueberry and chocolate chips to the pancakes, as well as a smoke trial by adding blueberries – wow! The pancakes were topped with blueberries and chocolate chips, alongside Club Member Mary Reitler serving them up.

In addition to the breakfast, the event also included a raffle, which raised funds for the museum and the Rotary Club. Reitler mentioned that every dollar raised is important, as it helps support the museum and local Rotary initiatives.

The event was a joint effort between the Wurtsmith Air Museum and the Rotary Club, with both organizations contributing to the success of the event. The museum also thanked our veterans and their families for their service!

GUEST EDITORIAL: The continuing legacy of American Veterans in the workplace

We salute our veterans for their service, dedication, and the contributions they have made to the nation. As we honor those who served, we must also acknowledge the valuable skills and experiences they bring to the workplace.

Veterans, Section A, Wednesday, November 10, 2021 - 3

Editor’s note: This guest column was written by Scott Allen, the regional director for public affairs and media relations for the U.S. Department of Labor.

As our country emerges from the longest war in its history, the 4.5 million veterans who served during this period are poised to lead our workforce – and the U.S. economy – into the next decades. This group of talented Americans, known as the post-9/11 veterans, have channeled their talent, skills, and leadership into post-military success, achieving higher labor participation rates and over 50% higher earnings than their non-veteran peers, according to the Census Bureau.

Post-9/11 veterans have proved themselves to be extremely productive, often earning promotions at an accelerated rate in their chosen career fields and recognized by industry leaders as valuable teammates. This newest generation of dedicated Americans is a formidable group. They are the youngest, most diverse and largest group of veterans in the labor force. Like the legions of veterans who served in the past, they have carried on a legacy of duty, valor and compassion. Our post-9/11 veterans have fought bravely in defense of our values, but they have also demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, pivoting to support missions ranging from humanitarian assistance to local economic development. Needless to say, they performed admirably.

While in uniform, veterans benefitted not just from world-class technical training, but also from extraordinary opportunities to develop soft skills such as teamwork, resourcefulness and initiative, traits that employers consistently rank as among the most desirable. Hiring veterans is not just the right thing to do – it is a smart business decision.

As a post-9/11 veteran and former senior Defense Department official, I have seen firsthand the sacrifices borne by service members, veterans and their families. Many carry with them the wounds of combat – visible and invisible – and grieve the irreplaceable loss of their teammates. We have made great progress towards ensuring that all who need care get it, acknowledging that much work remains to be done. And while support for our wounded, ill and injured veterans remains steadfast, we should simultaneously promote career opportunities and a workplace environment that allows all veterans to thrive. They are a vital component of our labor force and will continue to play a critical role driving innovation and efficiency.

As in every war throughout our history, a generation of Americans stepped forward to answer this most recent call to serve. Now, as our nation moves forward, we must ensure that our post-9/11 veterans stand ready to “build back better” through meaningful careers. On this Veterans Day, we celebrate all veterans, not just for their service while in uniform, but also for their ongoing participation rates and over 30% higher earnings than their non-veteran peers, according to the Census Bureau.

The post-9/11 veterans have channeled their talent, skills, and leadership into post-military success, achieving higher labor participation rates and over 50% higher earnings than their non-veteran peers, according to the Census Bureau. This newest generation of dedicated Americans is a formidable group. They are the youngest, most diverse and largest group of veterans in the labor force.

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We thank our veterans and their families for their service!
Vet Suicide Awareness Walk to become an annual event

by Jenny Haglund

HALE – Hale American Legion Auxiliary Unit 422 members hosted their first Veteran Suicide Awareness Walk on Sept. 18, while raising money to assist with the immediate needs of military veterans in crisis. Auxiliary President Debbie Rogers, who was instrumental in organizing the event, shared that the plan is to make this an annual activity.

In addition to the help provided by coordinators/volunteers, along with the support from a number of sponsors, the inaugural walk brought in about 35 participants.

Departing from the Legion building, they were escorted along the route by Plainfield Township Fire Department personnel, who had vehicles positioned in the front of the line and the back. The group made their way across the property, with the support from a number of volunteers, providing the elderly with a lifestyle that values their contributions.

Those who wanted to complete the full 5K walked four laps, which accounted for one mile of the overall jaunt, but participants could circle the track as few or as many times as they chose. The Legion representatives also brought along a sign asking anyone who couldn’t do the walking portion but still wanted to contribute to the cause. From here, attendees then followed the same path to return to the Legion building.

On the walk back, they passed the 22 white crosses which were stationed near the pavilion at the intersection of M-65 in downtown Hale. The image served as a visual reminder – that there are 22 veterans who commit suicide every single day. But those involved in such events as the awareness walk, are trying to do their part to help decrease these statistics. When participants signed up, they were given a T-shirt to wear which not only observed the event, but also promoted the Veterans Crisis Line. Veterans seeking help are encouraged to call 1-800-273-8255, and press 1.

The $55 registration fee, alone, brought in more than $500, based on the head count. Although, many of the attendees took their support a step further. For example, some people who had change coming back to them after purchasing the shirts wanted the extra to go toward the fundraiser, and not back in their pockets.

Others, such as local resident and American Legion bar manager, Tawana Lee, collected additional money ahead of the walk, which they donated along with their registration fee. Rogers noted that Renee Smith also contributed an extra $200, while Grand Blanc resident Autumn Kovacs, who was visiting her grandmother on Long Island, raised $500 to give the goal of the event an extra boost.

This goal, Rogers says, involves earmarking the monies for mental health. As recently reported, she explained that the Legion may stipulate how it wants these funds spent, and that they have been in contact with the Saginaw County Veterans Affairs Organization. If somebody requires help, the desire is for that person to be able to go to the near large array of sandwiches, cookies and other refreshments which were waiting for the walkers at the Legion, upon their return.

It even felt as though Mother Nature also wanted to do her part, as the attendess of all ages – consisting of veterans and civilians alike – were graced with sunshine and temperatures which were nothing short of perfect. A massive American Flag, which was flown over Iraq, adorned the portion of the Legion building where event goers gathered to register, and then convened again following the walk. Among the chatter in the crowd, people were already commenting that they want to join the 2022 event, and that they hope the Veterans Suicide Awareness Walk continues to expand in future years.

To related to this, a bigger display of crosses will also be part of the subsequent walks. Prior to next year’s event, 22 will be put up on the Legion property every day, for 30 days in a row. The end result, a heart-wrenching sea of 660 white crosses, will symbolize the veterans lost to suicide each month.

Although a specific date has yet to be determined, Rogers says the idea is to again host the walk, some time close to POW/MIA Recognition Day which, this year, was on Sept. 17. The Veterans Crisis Line is one of many resources available to those who are struggling, and Rogers notes that there is also a veteran’s relief fund through the American Legion in Hale. Any veteran in need may contact the post, at 728-5055, and the service officer will get back to that individual.

Those from the Legion want people to feel comfortable reaching out, so it’s important to keep in mind that everything is completely confidential, Rogers adds. She also expressed her gratitude to the entire Hale community, for their support of the inaugural Veteran Suicide Awareness Walk.

Through this and other occasions, the Legion and Auxiliary members are trying to grow their presence within the area, as well, and Rogers says they would love to have people come check them out. She explained that any veteran is eligible to join the organization, with the proper DD214 forms. Furthermore, several types of veteran relatives are eligible to either become auxiliary members or to join the Sons of the American Legion. Contact representatives at the phone number above for more details, or stop into the Hale American Legion post at 429 W. Main St.

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In times of conflict and in times of peace, the men and women of America’s Armed Forces have dedicated themselves to protecting our freedom, our ideals, our security and our way of life for generations. On Veterans Day and every day, we salute America’s veterans and military for their courage, their sacrifice and their service to this great country.

Thank You & Happy Veterans Day!

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Bomber named ‘Rosie’s Reply’ to honor Rosie the Riveter

Originally printed April 14, 2021
by Jason Ogden
OSCODA — Yankee Air Museum announced recently that it is christening its B-25 Bomber “Rosie’s Reply” in its continuing mission to inspire America through honoring the accomplishments of the women collective- ly known as Rosie the Riveter.

“In this image we captured the plucky confidence with which these incredible women handled the monumental task of simulating riding kids, holding down the home front, overcoming adversity and, oh yes, helping save the world all at the same time,” said Walsh. Walsh hopes the B-25 will inspire people to learn more about the women of the Greatest Generation and that a little bit of Rosie’s moxie rubs off on them.

“It is an extremely accurate reproduction of this B-25D’s livery in the 57th Bomb Wing, 349th Bomb Group, 498th Bomb Squadron,” says Dan Desko, President of the B-25 History Project. “Yankee Air Museum has done a marvelous thing with its aircraft. In one fell swoop, this plane honors the 498th Bomb Squadron, the home from workers and Kansas City, where this plane was built. This is living history.”

Yankee Air Museum collaborated with The B-25 History Project and the Fairfax Industrial Association in Kansas City to connect with Original Rosies who actually worked on these aircraft at the North American Aviation plant. When asked what she thought about the aircraft being named in honor of the women of her generation, Marion L. White’s reply was “We did it then, and we can still do it!”

“Rosie’s Reply” in its continuing mission to inspire America through honoring the accomplishments of the women collectively known as Rosie the Riveter.

— Veterans, Section A, Wednesday, November 10, 2021

Winter flying at Camp Skeel

Before it was Wurtsmith, Camp Skeel fliers used the ice as a runway

Originally printed March 31, 2021
by Jason Ogden
OSCODA — Before it was known as the Wurtsmith Air Force Base, the military facility had a variety of different names, depending on the year.

In this ongoing historical feature, highlighting snapshots of the future, we will talk about the past. We will feature some of the women who worked on things at the location and how that will work out, is still in the organizational phases by the Museum, she said, and will be announced closer to the opening of the museum.

Shuler said during the year-long closure, curators and organizers have had the opportunity to work on things at the location and get things ready for the opening.

Leading up to the museum’s opening, we will feature some of the information and exhibits that one can view at the museum. More information about the museum can be found by visiting wurtsmithairmuseum.net.

Loud-Reames Field was renamed Camp Skeel in 1924 after World War I Pilot Capt. Burr B. Skeel. One of the former bases today, Skeel Road, bears his name.

The base would retain the Camp Skeel name from 1924 to 1942 and house the 100th Base Headquarters 1st Pursuit Group.

Major Carl Spatz was responsible for bringing aviation to Oscoda and he was commander of the group that flew Curtis P-1 and PW-8 Pursuit biplanes.

Winter flying at Camp Skeel was one of the primary exercises and the aircraft, equipped with landing skis, would use the frozen surface of nearby Van Etten Lake as a runway.

In addition there were bomber bi-planes at Skeel, including the Martin Twin Engine bombers. In November of 1927, Skeel got a very famous visitor when Charles Lindberg came to direct Air Corps crews on bombing techniques in Oscoda.

Earlier that year Lindburg was relatively unknown and was an Air Mail pilot for the U.S. Postal Service. He would garner worldwide fame after he made his non-stop flight from New York to Paris in the Spirit of St. Louis, and was the first person to ever make the transatlantic flight.

“Rosie’s Reply” — A film crew sets up a shot to announce the naming of the Mitchell B-25 that was recently repainted over the winter by Kalitta Air painting crews in Oscoda for the Yankee Air Museum.

The aircraft was named “Rosie’s Reply” in honor of Rosie the Riveter.

NEW PAINT — Angel Estrada of Kalitta Air stands in front of the completed Rosie’s Reply B-25 bomber that he and his crew worked to repaint over the winter for the Yankee Air Museum in Ypsilanti.

“Rosie’s Reply” — A film crew sets up a shot to announce the naming of the Mitchell B-25 that was recently repainted over the winter by Kalitta Air painting crews in Oscoda for the Yankee Air Museum.

The aircraft was named “Rosie’s Reply” in honor of Rosie the Riveter.

By the 1920s, part of Camp Skeel’s fleet.
HAS students, staff show unwavering commitment to veterans

Day and, of course, Veterans Day. “It’s a little art project, a little something, and we try to make it as special as we possibly can,” Polishak says. (Photo by Jenny Haglund)

Polishak joined Bowman during the interview for this story on Feb. 9. She also shared that, pre-pandemic, she would take photos when she was allowed to go into the nursing homes and hand-deliver the cards. When she returned to HAS, she would bring the photos back for the children to see the reactions of the veterans – many of whom are left with tears in their eyes, as they received their gifts. “They’re so happy that a little kid would do this for them.”

Not every grade level participates in making the cards every single time, as their schedules vary. One holiday it may be second through fourth grade students who take part, and the next time around it may differ a age or two. Since the pandemic, currently being 48 veterans in the various assisted living facilities, the students ensure that each person receives at least one card.

Aside from the cards, anyone who has attended a Veterans Day ceremony in Hale has also likely witnessed the work of HAS students and staff.

Not only is a full assembly hosted at the school each year, but teacher Shane Billingsley, who oversees the music program at HAS, also travels with the band and and gets them out in the community.

Polishak said that she calls Bowman is a great, caring, patriotic citizen. He has supported our veterans in the area any way that he can.” Polishak praised. “He has the school children make cards for our veterans in rest homes and assisted living facilities for every holiday. Polishak said that Bowman also supported veteran groups with which she is involved – the American Legion Post, Hale Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 502, and Tawas FW Auxiliary Post.

Since he was hired as the principal of HAS, nine years ago, Michael Bowman has also contributed to the school project and other veteran-related activities.

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Words can’t say just how much we appreciate and respect our country’s veterans for their service. As we celebrate Veterans Day, we would like to take a moment to express our deepest thanks to the brave men and women who have served and continue to serve in our military. We recognize their courage, hard work and dedication to our nation’s values, way of life and security, and we are humbled by their sacrifice. Today and every day, we proudly salute America’s veterans.

SALUTING OUR VETERANS

Justin Hollenbeck
U.S. Marines

Brendan Poirier
U.S. Army
HATS OFF TO OUR VETERANS

They’ve served our country with courage and honor. They’ve left behind loved ones to risk their lives in protecting their country. They’ve defended our freedoms and ideals. They make us proud to be Americans.

Thanks, veterans, for your brave and selfless service to our nation. We salute you on Veterans Day.
Salute to our local Veterans & family members

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Veterans treated to food and fellowship at Rushman Hall

by Jenny Haglund

EAST TAWAS – As a show of appreciation for their service, all military veterans and their family members/significant others were invited to a free breakfast this past Saturday, at Rushman Hall in East Tawas.

The gathering was hosted by the Knights of Columbus Council 2709 and the Iosco County Veterans Affairs Office, in association with the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. Along with a fully stocked breakfast buffet and an opportunity to mingle with fellow veterans, attendees enjoyed live music by flautist Mary Henry, who is also a member of Fusion Trio.

Iosco County Veterans Service Officer Ron Whitney reported a solid turnout and, less than one hour into the event – which ran from 9 a.m. to noon – there were already nearly 60 people who had made their way through the doors.

In addition to members of the Tawas Area Honor Guard, Whitney said that veterans organizations from Oscoda and elsewhere also showed up, so it was good to see that there was participation from those in several different communities.

One notable group of event goers included Whitney and his brothers, Dale, Dennis, Ed and Ray Whitney, all five of whom served in the military. Further, Ron, Ed and Dennis each retired from the service, after years of dedication to our country.

As part of the Veterans Breakfast, a table full of fun freebies was also available, and it was lined with such items as T-shirts, key chains, bracelets, coozies and pens. There were plenty of resources on hand, as well, including brochures about the Iosco County Department of Veterans Affairs, the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency and the Northern Michigan Veterans Coalition.

Some of the items were also printed with the Veterans Crisis Line number (1-800-273-8255, press 1), as a reminder for those in need that there are people who can help. Additionally, confidential crisis chats are available at veteranscriseline.net, or by texting 838255.

The free breakfast and other items offered at the hall this past Saturday were made possible through a grant Whitney applied for, via the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. He also credited those from the Knights of Columbus, saying that the organization has been very supportive of the veterans and this event.

Whitney shared that the involved groups held their first Veterans Breakfast in 2019. It did not go on last year, due to the coronavirus, but they were happy to be able to return in 2021 to host the second annual occasion. In order to accommodate all who wished to attend, guests could even reach out to Whitney if they needed transportation to and from the venue.

For more details on the Iosco County Veterans Affairs Office, call 362-6571, send an e-mail to rwhitney@ioscocounty.org, stop into their building at 420 W. Lake St. in Tawas City or visit their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/IoscoVeteransAffairs/.

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Iosco County veterans among recipients of food assistance grant

Reprinted from the Jan. 1, 2021 edition

by Jenny Haglund

TAWAS CITY – Six military veterans from Iosco County were included in a grant opportunity, for which they each received $100 to purchase groceries from Tawas City Walmart.

This was part of a larger outreach effort, after the Northern Michigan Veterans Coalition (NMVC) received the Bob Woodruff Foundation’s Food Assistance Grant, through the Craig Newmark Philanthropies.

Iosco County Veterans Services Officer (VSO) Ron Whitney, who is also the Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency Buddy to Buddy Coordinator for Northeast Michigan and Jr. Vice Commander of VFW Post 1518 in Gaylord, submitted his list for those in Iosco County, and the program ended up benefitting six local veterans.

In accordance with NMVC assistance guidelines, the nomination forms detailed several requirements which had to be met in order to be considered, including that the participant must be:
• A veteran with an Honorable Discharge.
• Have at least 180 days of federal service.
• Peace time or war time service.
• A veteran deemed in need by the veterans services office, through the VSO’s previous interactions and financial assessment.

For their courage, hard work and dedication to their country, we salute the men and women of our Armed Forces past and present. It is because of their sacrifice that America remains the land of the free, and we thank them for protecting our citizens and our country.

Wishing all of our veterans and soldiers a very happy Veterans Day.

Iosco County veterans among recipients of food assistance grant

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Wishing all of our veterans and soldiers a very happy Veterans Day.

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Salute to our local Veterans & family members

Today, more than 2,000 high school students annually participate in The American Legion's National High School Oratorical Program: "A Patriotism Essay," which offers students a platform to discuss patriotism and its relevance in modern society. The program celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2022, having presented the annual competition since 1932.

The American Legion provides free, professional assistance — for any veteran — in filing and pursuing benefits claims before the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Legion Baseball was formed in 1923 during an American Legion South Dakota Department state convention. By 1926, Legion Baseball posts in 15 states developed. Today, the program registers more than 5,400 teams in all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico.

Approximately 28,000 young men annually participate in Boys State, a Legion program dedicated to promoting leadership. Boys State alumni include former President Bill Clinton, news commentator Tom Brokaw, professional basketball player Michael Jordan, astronaut Neil Armstrong and many more.

Since 1938, The American Legion National High School Oratorical Program: "A Constitutional Speech Contest," has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship. Many politicians and news anchors have been participants, including CNN anchor Lou Dobbs.

Since 1919, American Legion posts have sponsored more than 2,500 Scouting units across the country. And annually, The American Legion honors an Eagle Scout of the Year with a $10,000 scholarship.
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