



Photo by Kaitlyn Campbell

SHARING A MEAL – Veterans and community members alike were able to gather together and share a lunch during the Lake Huron Veterans Benefits Fair in East Tawas on May 28.

Veterans Benefits Fair held in East Tawas

Reprinted from the June 3, 2026 edition

by Kaitlyn Campbell

EAST TAWAS – The Iosco County Veterans Affairs Office hosted the annual Lake Huron Veterans Benefits Fair at the East Tawas Community Center on May 28.

The free event once again aimed to connect veterans and their families to the benefits they have earned.

Visitors – ranging from military veterans and their loved ones, to members of the community – met with representatives of several participating agencies, during which they were able to learn about a variety of resources for veterans, including those pertaining to education, employment, healthcare, housing and quality of life.

"Veterans are coming out to search for more resources and see what's available to them," said Iosco County Veterans Service Officer Ron Whitney. "This year, we're fortunate to have people from the Veterans

See Benefits, Page 4B

Organizations, programs continue to be available for Iosco County veterans

by Kaitlyn Campbell

TAWAS CITY – For several years, Iosco County has offered many ways for veterans to get together, whether that be during a coffee hour to discuss issues important to them and learn about the benefits available to them, or being a part of a veterans organization or program.

The most widely available resource is the Iosco County Veterans Affairs (VA) Office, located at 671 E. M-55 in Tawas City.

Iosco County Veterans Service Officer Ron Whitney has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to determining the benefits that are available to veterans, as well as being able to provide resources for those who may be struggling with issues related to food insecurity, housing and PTSD.

Whitney can also help veterans with the application process for the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund and the Soldier Relief Fund.

For more information, contact Whitney by calling 989-362-6571, sending an e-mail to rwhitney@ioscocounty.org or

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Still serving: From military service to community service, honoring veterans who continue to make a difference

by Gaylynn Brenoel

OSCODA – For many American military veterans, service to others did not end when they hung up their uniforms. Instead, the dedication, discipline, leadership and sense of duty developed during their years in the Armed Forces became the foundation for another chapter of service – this time, in the communities they call home.

They are our police officers, firefighters, teachers, school counselors, nonprofit leaders, volunteers and neighbors. Their missions may have changed, but their commitment to making a difference in the lives of others remains.

Here are their stories...

Mike Derosia of Oscoda, is one of those special people. He served in the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and served during the Vietnam War as a Demolition Specialist, from 1967-1970.

His contributions included serving on the ICorps Border and the IICorps Border as a Squad Leader, near the village of Sa-Huynh. Derosia's work included building trestle bridges over rivers, constructing bypasses around burned out bridges and resurfacing highway QL1, the main artery of the Vietnam Highway.

In a bittersweet memory, "I made a lot of friends and lost a few friends," Derosia shared. He was also exposed to Agent Orange during his service in Vietnam, which personally impacted him and his health.

According to Derosia, "Agent Orange also has a generational impact. The chemicals accumulate in your body and can lead to miscarriages, birth defects and disabilities in the children of veterans for up to three generations."

This concerns Derosia, because he has two sons who are also veterans. One served in the Navy on submarines, and the other served in the USACE in Korea.

Derosia began his military service at Fort Knox, Ky., followed by advance training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, before being deployed to Vietnam. He also served in the Inactive Army Reserves, after 1970.

Derosia moved to Oscoda in 1984 and worked in various occupations, which included being a direct care worker for people with physical and mental disabilities. He served as an inspector for ITT/Cooper Standard for 15 years, before retiring in 2008.

Now a member of the Oscoda Lions Club, Derosia is a volunteer for the organization with the motto of, "We Serve," which complements his philosophy of serving others.

See Service, Page 6A





Courtesy photos

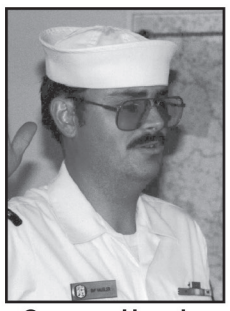
CURRENT MISSION – U.S. Air Force Veteran Brian Colorite is pictured at left, in early 2000, while stationed in Fairbanks, Alaska. Shown above, in 2026, he now serves as the Tawas Area Schools' Career Development Coordinator, helping students plan what comes next in their lives.



Photo by Gaylynn Brenoel

U.S. NAVY VETERAN – Pictured here in 2026, Anne Killingbeck holds two photos which were taken during her military service as an Electronics Technician 1st Class, calibrating electronic test equipment for submarines. Killingbeck currently serves as part of the Oscoda American Legion's Honor Guard and Color Guard.

Salute to our Veterans.....



Gregory Hausler
U.S. Navy



David Stein
U.S. Marine Corps



Merlyn Hobson
U.S. Army



Herbert Holmes
U.S. Army



Neil Mochty
U.S. Army



James Wojahn
U.S. Army



Robert Beeler
U.S. Air Force



Susan Wilke
U.S. Navy



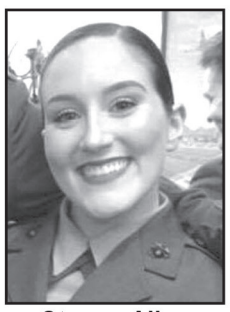
Keith Edmonds
U.S. Navy



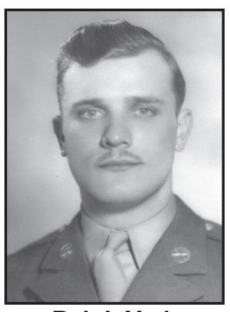
Zach Dieleman
U.S. Air Force



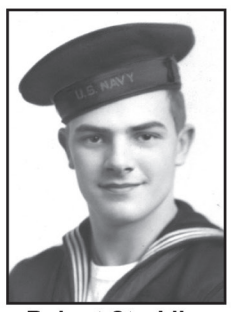
Dakota Thomas
U.S. Marine Corps



Stormy Allen
U.S. Marine Corps



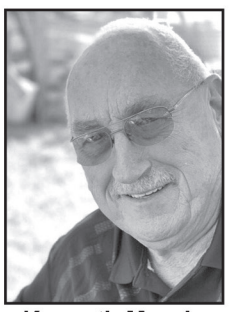
Ralph York
U.S. Army



Robert Strehlke
U.S. Navy



Michael London
U.S. Army



Kenneth Murphy
U.S. Navy



Kenneth Murphy II
U.S. Navy



David Schmidt
U.S. Navy



Ed Davis
U.S. Army



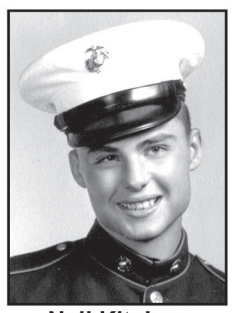
Tim Panches
U.S. Marine Corps



Ronald Klinger
U.S. Army



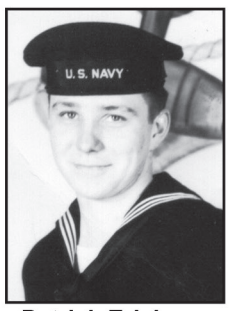
Charles Kitchen
U.S. Army



Neil Kitchen
U.S. Marines



Ben Kitchen
U.S. Air Force



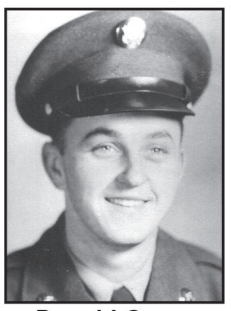
Patrick Erickson
U.S. Navy



Arther Erickson
U.S. Navy



Dale Evilsizer Jr.
U.S. Air Force



Donald Grove
U.S. Army



James Sloan
U.S. Air Force



John Gontarek
U.S. Army



William Whitford
U.S. Army



Gary Hazen
U.S. Marine Corps



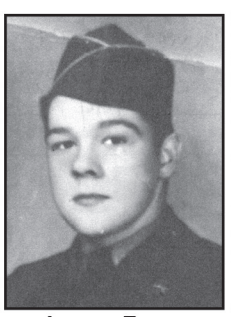
Paul Ouillet
U.S. Coast Guard



Aaron Anna
U.S. Air Force



David Day
U.S. Army



James Foran
U.S. Army



Eugene Hickman
U.S. Air Force



Jacob Grantner
U.S. Army



Walter Anderson
U.S. Air Force



Scott Serda
U.S Navy

Joseph Serda
U.S. Air Force

Randolph McKinney
U.S. Air Force

Bob Otwell
U.S. Air Force

Thomas King
U.S. Air Force

Paul King
U.S. Marine Corps

Robert Miller
U.S. Army

Jack Miller
U.S. Army

Joseph Widrosky
U.S. Army

Victor Johnson
U.S. Army

Ryan Hintz
U.S. Marine Corps

Toby Hunt
U.S. Marine Corps

John Smith
U.S. Air Force

Bruce Bennett
U.S. Army, Nat. Guard

Don Pelton
U.S. Army

Thomas Highstreet
U.S. Navy
U.S. Army

Stanley McVey
U.S. Air Force

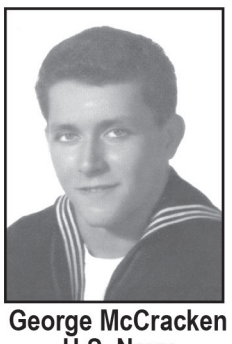
Salute to our Veterans.....



Thomas Stelloh
U.S. Air Force



Michael Pangborn
U.S. Navy



George McCracken
U.S. Navy



Billie Burgess
U.S. Air Force



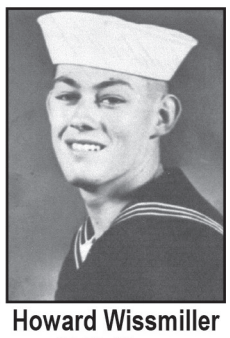
John Carroll Sr.
U.S. Air Force



John Callahan
U.S. Navy



LeRoy Berry
U.S. Army



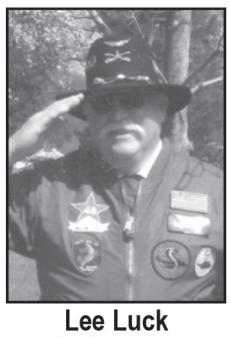
Howard Wissmiller
U.S. Navy



John Katterman
U.S. Army Air Corps



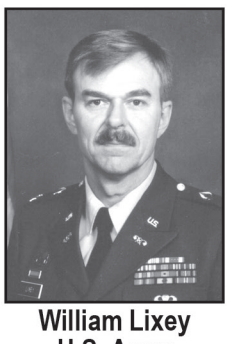
John Servinski
U.S. Air Force



Lee Luck
U.S. Army



Art Romzek
U.S. Air Force



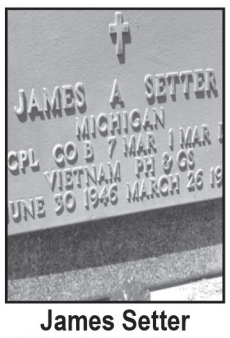
William Lixey
U.S. Army



Clifton Nichols
U.S. Marine Corps



David Ecker
U.S. Army



James Setter
U.S. Marine Corps



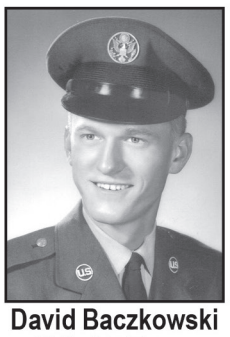
Fred Look
U.S. Army Air Corps



Dennis Frank
U.S. Army



James Frank
U.S. Army



David Baczkowski
U.S. Air Force



Ivan Earley
U.S. Navy



Earl Hester
U.S. Army Air Force



Don Hester
U.S. Army



Jake Montgomery
U.S. Army



Thomas Musolf
U.S. Army



Dennis Whitford
U.S. Army



Daniel Meier
U.S. Army



Joe Brock
U.S. Army



Paul Glass
U.S. Air Force



Gerald Agtergael
U.S. Army



Joshua Bitten
U.S. Army Nat. Guard



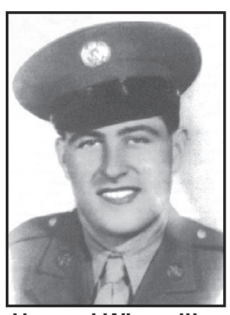
Merlin Look
U.S. Army



Brendan Poirier
U.S. Army



David Millard
U.S. Air Force



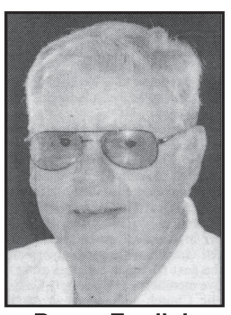
Howard Wissmiller
U.S. Army



Douglas Keisler
U.S. Marine Corps



James Burgess
U.S. Coast Guard



Bryon English
U.S. Navy



Stephen Rakowski
U.S. Navy



Justin Hollenbeck
U.S. Marines

George Lueckeman
U.S. Air Force

Charles Schweickert
U.S. Air Force

James Lixey
U.S. Army

William Davis
U.S. Air Force

Edward Schanbeck
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Army

Ben Schanbeck
U.S. Army

Casey Schanbeck
U.S. Marine Corps

David Sherman
U.S. Air Force

Marc Stiller
U.S. Air Force

Raymond Lenczewski
U.S. Army

Thomas Wilson
U.S. Army

David Simpson
U.S. Marine Corps

Gerald Moeller
U.S. Navy

Charles Quarters, Sr.
U.S. Army

Louis Bitten
U.S. Marine Corps

Jerry Foor
U.S. Army

Salute to our Veterans.....


Tom Chrisman
U.S. Army


Gerry Kindell
U.S. Army


Joseph Achtabowski
U.S. Army
U.S. Air Force


Todd Kelly
U.S. Navy


Anthony Bethel
Spc. U.S. Army

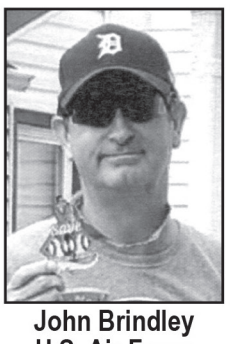

Kay Sherman
U.S. Navy


Joshua Troutt
U.S. Army


Jason Kelly
U.S. Navy


Roy Holmstrom
U.S. Army


Ronald McKenna
U.S. Army


John Brindley
U.S. Air Force


Jeffrey Kinney
U.S. Coast Guard


George Adams
U.S. Navy


James Biggar, Jr.
U.S. Air Force


David Mallak
U.S. Air Force


Ronald Johnson
U.S. Army


Dominic Raona
U.S. Army


Floyd Marsh
U.S. Navy


Harry Poland
U.S. Air Force

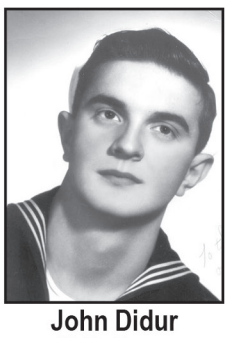


Alfred Ceci
U.S. Navy


James Broses
U.S. Air Force


John Broses, Jr.
U.S. Army


Wesley Durbin
U.S. Navy


John Didur
U.S. Navy

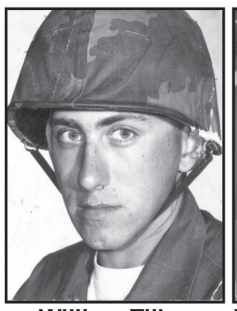

Trevor LaPointe
U.S. Air Force


Daryl Johnson
U.S. Navy Seabee

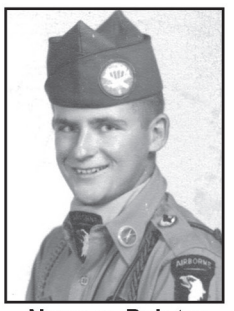

Mathew Johnson
U.S. Marine Corp

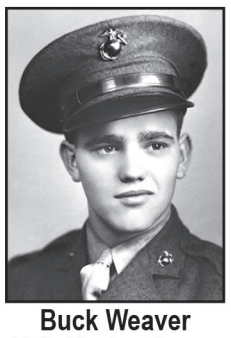

Joshua Johnson
U.S. Navy Seabee


Dean Pauloski
U.S. Air Force


William Tilley
U.S. Marine Corps

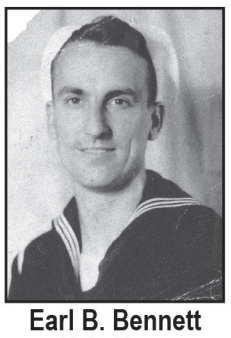

Thomas Broughton
U.S. Army


Norman Painter
U.S. Army


Buck Weaver
U.S. Marine Corps


Donald Cunningham
U.S. Army


Keith Bennett
U.S. Army


Earl B. Bennett
U.S. Navy


Earl D. Bennett
U.S. Army


Raymond Dorcey
U.S. Navy


Lynn Resseguie
U.S. Air Force


William Combs
U.S. Air Force

Hugo Wegner
U.S. Army

Areanna Robinson
Royal Navy

Dave Miner
U.S. Army

George Miner
U.S. Air Force

Robert Miner
U.S. Air Force

Richard Lear
U.S. Army

Ron Whitney
U.S. Army

Robert Cabble
U.S. Army

Kenyatta Demings
U.S. Air Force

Russell White
U.S. Army

Norm Klenow
U.S. Navy

David Schirmer
U.S. Army

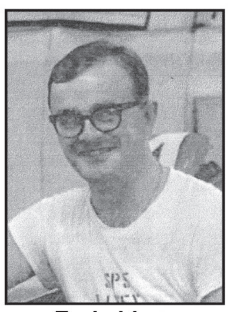
Susan Cronk
U.S. Army

Douglas Murphy
U.S. Army

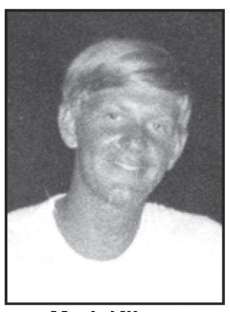
Frank Drogowski
U.S. Navy

Frank Kreitner
U.S. Army

Salute to our Veterans.....


Ernie Lixey
U.S. Army


Joseph Wrona
U.S. Navy


Mark Kilmer
U.S. Air Force

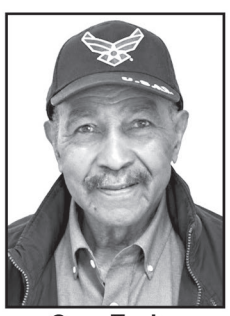

John Lutzke
U.S. Marine Corp


Jeremy Whitney
U.S. Marine Corp


Dale Whitney
U.S. Army
Mich. National Guard


William Ullman Sr.
U.S. Air Force


Thomas Wice
U.S. Army


Gray Taylor
U.S. Air Force


Marcy Laubon
U.S. Navy


Ralph Cleaver
U.S. Army


Walter Kasischke
U.S. Army


Terry Frank
U.S. Navy/U.S. Army


Kenneth Welsch
U.S. Air Force

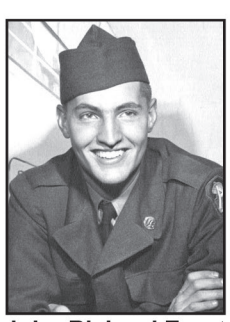

Charles Hill
U.S. Army


C.L. MacValleau
U.S. Navy


James Sanford
U.S. Air Force


Anthony Green
U.S. Army


Vinetta Paige
U.S. Air Force


John Richard Ernst
U.S. Army


Dennis Polishak
U.S. Air Force


William Galbrath
U.S. Air Force


Brian Howell
U.S. Marine Corp


Ken Pacholka
U.S. Air Force


Tom Krohn
U.S. Coast Guard


James E. Utash
U.S. Army


David A. Utash
U.S. Air Force


Ricky L. Utash
U.S. Army


Richard R. Rapp
U.S. Army


James P. Mayville
U.S. Air Force


Susan Thomas
U.S. Air Force


Elmer Erickson Jr.
U.S. Army


Kenneth F. DeLage
U.S. Army


Arthur H. DeLage
U.S. Army


Leonard W. Sarki
U.S. Navy


Maloy J. Norwood
U.S. Air Force


Karen J.
(Norwood) Zeiders
U.S. Army


Donald L. Zeiders
U.S. Army


Kenneth H. Shields
U.S. Navy


Larry Pickett
U.S. Army

James A. Abney
U.S. Air Force

Joseph M. Cano Sr.
U.S. Air Force

Phillip Pickett
U.S. Army

Buck Pickett
U.S. Army

Robert Dillon
U.S. Army

William F. Huber
U.S. Navy

John E. Rutledge
U.S. Army

Thomas Coulon
U.S. Army

Christina Coulon
U.S. Army

Jeffrey Rush
U.S. Air Force

Michael Shellenbarger
U.S. Navy

James Bacarella
U.S. Coast Guard

William Kidder
U.S. Navy

Dorothy Vassler
U.S. Navy

Jeff Piar
U.S. Army

No Photo

THANK YOU VETERANS

LOCAL NEWS





Courtesy photos

GIVING BACK – Now retired from teaching world history and government at Oscoda High School, Jeff Rush – shown here at left, in a recent photo – also enjoys coaching swim teams and volunteering on Veterans Day committees. He is pictured again, at right, upon joining the U.S. Air Force (USAF) in 1991. He continued to serve in the USAF through 1995, and was deployed to Saudi Arabia during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Throughout that period, he was stationed at both the Little Rock Air Force Base in Jacksonville, Ark. and the Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda Township.



Courtesy photo

VETERANS SUPPORTING VETERANS – Bill Bickel, a U.S. Air Force Veteran who served from 1985-1997, is seen here in his Color Guard uniform, in a recent photo. In addition to Desert Shield/Desert Storm, he also served in Operation Southern Watch, to help control the no-fly zone in the Middle East. Bickel now works with his wife, Donna, and other board members for Pay It Forward Oscoda, a nonprofit that awards scholarships and donates funds to support the Oscoda Veterans Park.

SERVICE

Continued from Page 1A

The Lions Club, per Derosia, helps collect old eyeglasses and hearing aids for refurbishment and donation to those who need them. The club also helps fund the training of service dogs.

Derosia is a board member of Pay It Forward Oscoda, as well, which is a nonprofit dedicated to providing youth scholarships.

Most recently, Derosia volunteered his time to help with a fundraiser for Huron Housing Hope, an Oscoda-based nonprofit with a mission to help the unhoused achieve long-term sustainability.

Derosia also serves at the food pantry operated by the Oscoda United Methodist Church, in addition to volunteering in the Loaves & Fishes program at the church, which operates from Thanksgiving through April each year.

Derosia delivers food through the program, to those in the community who are unable to leave home but who need nutritious meals.

Bill Bickel, also of Oscoda, served in the United States Air Force (USAF) from November 1985 until December 1997. During this time, from 1986-1993, he was stationed at the Wurtsmith Air Force Base.

Bickel was deployed to the Middle East and served in Desert Shield/Desert Storm from 1990-1991, serving in B-52 support and intelligence.

In 1993, Bickel – then stationed at the Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, N.Y. – was deployed to serve in Operation Southern Watch, to help control the no-fly zone in the Middle East.

From 1994-1997, Bickel was transferred to the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Greene County, Ohio, and worked as a security guard.

In 1997, he returned to Wurtsmith in Oscoda Township.

According to Bickel, the transition from military service to civilian life was challenging, but with the help of friends and family, he was able to optimize his military experience in the civilian and nonprofit worlds.

He credits his father-in-law, Don Fulton, for influencing him to stay involved and to give back to the community.

Now working for Kalitta Air in Oscoda as a jet engine mechanic and materials supervisor, Bickel also remains active in memory and honor of Fulton.

In 2020, Bickel and his wife, Donna, started the Don Fulton Invitational Bowling Scholarship Tournament. The event takes place at Vista Lanes & Lounge in Oscoda and, since its inception, the tournament has awarded 134 scholarships totaling more than $28,000.

In 2022, Bickel supported his wife's nonprofit, Pay It Forward Oscoda. Board members include D. Bickel, Cindy Fulton, Allison Ball, Kenneth Bickel and, as noted above, Derosia.

The organization hosts an annual car show to benefit the Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan, which is located in the township and commonly referred to as Oscoda Veterans Park.

Since its inception, the nonprofit has donated $10,000 to the park, with the help of local community members and businesses.

Pay It Forward also hosts a lunch with Santa event at American Legion Post No. 274 in Oscoda, in memory of Don Fulton.

This year's event is scheduled for 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 12, and is geared toward youth age 12 and younger.

A member of American Legion Post No. 274 and the 40 & 8, Bickel also serves as the nursing scholarship chairman for awarding up to five nursing scholarships, up to $10,000 per year, for students pursuing a registered nurse degree. Scholarship funds are raised through the Legion's Sunday night bingo events.

Another important function of Bickel's membership in Post

See Community, Page 8A





Courtesy photos

HOMETOWN PROUD – Following his graduation from Oscoda High School, Tony Ommani – seen here at left, in a photo from 1988; and again at right, in 2026 – enlisted in the United States Army and served in Desert Shield/Desert Storm. He remains committed to the district and has been a member of the Oscoda Area Schools Board of Education for the past 12 years, where currently serves as board president. Ommani is also a member of the East Tawas Business Association, and serves on the board of the Iosco County Community Foundation.







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★ ★ ★

LOCAL NEWS

COMMUNITY

Continued from Page 6A

No. 274, is his duties as part of the group's Color Guard, which participates in school events, parades and funerals.

Bickel also donates his time as Santa during the community's Christmas Parade; as well as at Desi's restaurant in Oscoda every Saturday following Thanksgiving, until Christmas, to gift each child a wrapped present from Santa.

Another local veteran who has channeled their efforts into community service, post-military, is Brian Colorite.

As the Career Development Coordinator for Tawas Area Schools, he works with students to help plan their futures in college, the military, the workforce or in the trades.

Colorite served in the USAF in the early 2000s, in civil engineering, and his work included operating heavy equipment. Having been stationed at Eielson Air Force Base in Fairbanks, he was also responsible for snow removal – which was an important job in Alaska.

According to Colorite, his military unit was part of the Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force, a USAF program which trained and prepared civil engineers for deployment and military operations, including emergency response and infrastructure repair.

One of Colorite's first memories was when he stepped off the plane on his arrival in Alaska and the temperature was -63 degrees. "Coming from Michigan, I thought I knew what a cold winter was until Alaska proved me wrong!" he quipped.

Colorite says he appreciates what he learned in the military and how it taught him about discipline, teamwork, leadership and the importance of working together toward a common goal. "Those things have stuck with me over the years and helped shape who I am today."

He shared that one of his favorite parts of being a career development coordinator is, "seeing students get excited about something they didn't even know was an option for them. Not every student is going to take the same path...I want them to know that there are opportunities out there for everyone."

Colorite says that he is proud of his time in the USAF, and is grateful that he gets to work with students to help them figure out what comes next for them.

Also placing a focus on local students and their futures, is Oscoda Area Schools (OAS) Board of Education President Tony Ommani – a fellow OAS alum, who has served on the school board for 12 years.

Upon his graduation from Oscoda High School (OHS), Ommani went on to serve in the U.S. Army until 1992.

He credits his desire to serve his country to a long family history of military service. Both of Ommani's grandfathers served in WWII, in the Army and Marine Corps. Ommani's father also served in the USAF, and two of his uncles served in the Army.

During Ommani's military service, he was a part of the Second Armored Division, for which he worked as a Materials Control and Accounting Specialist.

He was deployed to Saudi Arabia during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, attached to the 1st Marine Division. Stationed with the Forward Supply Unit, his unit performed all repairs for vehicles and equipment used in combat.

One particularly harrowing experience occurred in January 1991, when the Iraqi forces entered Saudi Arabia in the town of Khafji. The combat area was just three miles from Ommani's unit.

Following his military service, he was able to utilize his inventory control and accounting skills in grocery warehousing, until he relocated back to Oscoda in 1996.

Ommani's heart for service continued in service to the community. Along with being the school board president, he also currently serves on the board for the Iosco County Community Foundation, and is a member of the East Tawas Business Association.

Previously, Ommani was on the board of the Oscoda-AuSable Chamber of Commerce, the Tawas Kiwanis Club, American Youth Soccer Association and the Oscoda Township Economic Improvement Committee.

His family tradition of military service also continues, with his son, who served in the U.S. Navy for six years.

Ommani feels strongly about service to our country and the local communities. Working with the OAS Board of Education for 12 years, he is dedicated to being part of their mission and successes.

Ommani believes that when people find something that needs to be changed, instead of criticizing, they should become part of the solution.

Familiar with the OAS district, as well, is Jeff Rush, who recently retired from teaching world history and government at OHS. He also coached the boys and girls swim program for high school students, and was a volunteer in the swimming age group program.

Rush served in the USAF from 1991 until 1995. He was stationed at both the Little Rock Air Force Base and the Wurtsmith Air Force Base during his military service.

He was deployed to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, serving in logistics. His deployment began one day before Thanksgiving, in 1993. The things he missed most about being in the United States at that time were holidays with family and not being home for his wife's birthday.

After leaving military service, Rush attended Illinois State University, free of charge, due to the Illinois Veterans Scholarship Program. He earned a bachelor's degree in education, with a major in history education.

Giving back to the community and teaching students was very important to Rush, including teaching swimming.

He reminisced about the huge impact that was made in his life, through his own swimming program. He stated that swimming gives, "a sense of commitment. Hard work pays off." As a coach, he helps children find a role, a purpose and a way to belong.

Rush said it was true of the military, and it is an important life skill because, "other people rely on you in life."

Rush also serves on Veterans

See Support, Page 9A



Photo by Gaylynn Brenoel

SERVICE TO COUNTRY, COMMUNITY – Mike Derosia, pictured here in 2026, is a member of the Oscoda Lions Club and a board member of Pay It Forward Oscoda. Prior to his involvement in the local nonprofits, his military career included serving in the United States Army Corps of Engineers and working as a Demolition Specialist during the Vietnam War.



Courtesy photo

MIKE DEROSIA, 1967 – Pictured here, is Mike Derosia, a Vietnam Era Veteran who now dedicates his time to volunteering at food pantries and various nonprofits which assist those in his local community.



Photo by Gaylynn Brenoel

HALE AMERICAN LEGION COMMANDER AND VETERAN – Mike Adams, shown here in 2026, is a U.S. Navy Veteran who served on a team which helped to retrieve pieces of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*, following its explosion on Jan. 28, 1986. Currently the Commander of Hale American Legion Post No. 422, Adams is also part of the Legion's Honor Guard and Scholarship Committee, the latter of which raises money for local high school graduates who want to attend college or trade schools.



LOCAL NEWS

SUPPORT

Continued from Page 8A

Day committees, to continue honoring those who risked their lives or lost their lives in service to our country.

Anne Killingbeck – after earning an Associate of Arts Degree from Ohio Community College – went on to join the U.S. Navy, where she served from 1982-1993.

Upon graduating from the Navy's Calibration School and Electronics School, she was then stationed in Norfolk, Va., on the *USS L.Y. Spear* (AS-36), the lead ship of her class of submarine tenders in the U.S. Navy.

Killingbeck worked on submarines, performing calibration of electronic test equipment as an ET-1, Electronics Technician First Class, and a First-Class Petty Officer (E-6).

In 1996, Killingbeck moved to East Tawas, and then to Oscoda in 2010. During those years, she worked in daycare and with her husband's commercial and residential painting business, which painted hangars on the Wurtsmith Air Force Base.

For the past 10 years, Killingbeck has served on the American Legion Honor Guard and American Legion Color Guard. She also served on the 40 & 8 for one year.

Her Color Guard and Honor Guard duties include funerals, Veterans Day services, parades and high school graduations.

She is also a volunteer for the Oscoda United Methodist Church's annual Thanksgiving Dinner.

Killingbeck cares for her grandson, as well; and also her husband, who is currently on a kidney transplant list.

Another Navy standout who currently calls Iosco County home, is Hale American Legion Post No. 422 Commander Mike Adams.

He joined the U.S. Navy in 1983, after graduating high school.

Following his successful completion of boot camp and boiler technician school, he was assigned to the Charleston Naval Base in South Carolina aboard the *USS Dewey DDG44*, a guided missile destroyer.

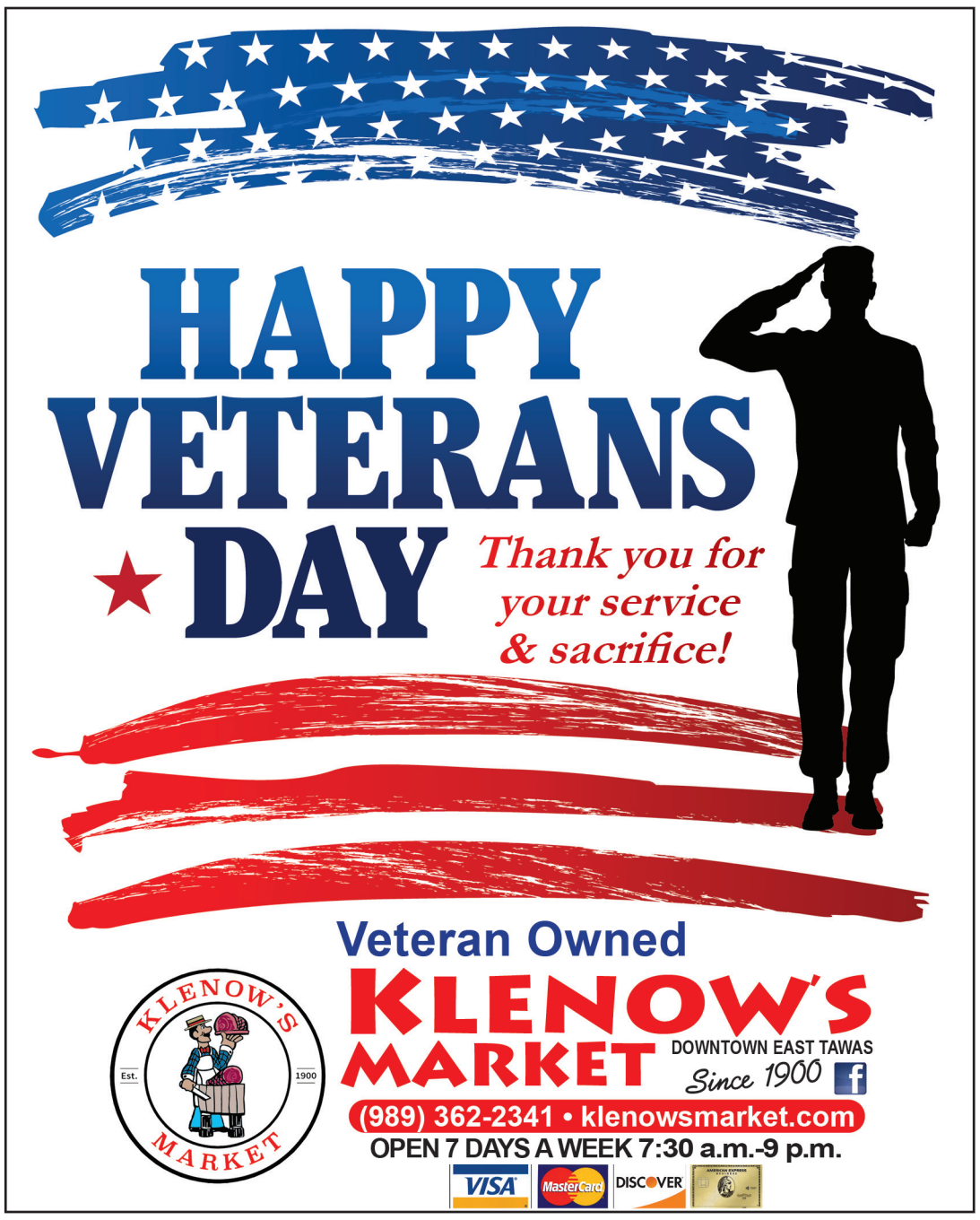
During his onboard duty, he visited various ports in the United States, the Caribbean, Cuba and the Mediterranean Sea.

On Jan. 28, 1986, the Space Shuttle *Challenger* broke apart, killing all seven crew members. Adams was part of a team that assisted the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and NASA with locating and helping to retrieve the pieces of the *Challenger*. Adams still recalls the tremendous sadness experienced by all involved in the recovery effort.

Just one month later, in February 1986, Adams was severely injured in a car collision and spent several months in a Naval hospital learning to walk again. He had a severe spinal cord injury, broken bones and had screws placed in his ankle.

Released from military ser-

See Missions, Page 10A





LOCAL NEWS



Courtesy photo
MIKE ADAMS, 1983 – Following his graduation from high school, Mike Adams joined the U.S. Navy. Among his duties, he served aboard the *USS Dewey DDG44*, a guided missile destroyer.

MISSIONS

Continued from Page 9A

vice due to his injuries, he attended trade school for boiler and heating and cooling classes, using his Veteran Educational Program benefits.

In 1992, Adams began working for the USCG for the industrial support detachment, which he continued until his retirement in June 2012.

He credits his 25 years working for, and with, the military for making him who he is today.

Adams has been a member of the Hale American Legion since 2010. He has served, and still serves, on the Honor Guard, holding services for veterans at the Esmond Evergreen Cemetery in Hale, the South Branch Cemetery and the Logan Township Cemetery; as well as participating in Flag Day events, including flag retirement ceremonies.

Adams and Hale American Legion members also take part in the community's Fourth of July parades and Veterans Day ceremonies, and were involved in the 25th Anniversary of 9/11 Remembrance Day Football Game.

Adams stated that he and others from the American Legion are here for the veterans and the community. They perform wellness checks on veterans and hold a free Thanksgiving Day Dinner for the entire community. For those unable to attend, he and other members deliver food to their homes.

The Legion also puts on an annual Breakfast with Santa event, where every child receives a toy.

Adams, along with the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, raise money and donate to the organization's High School Scholarship Fund. Each year, they award a $1,000 and a $500 college scholarship, plus one $500 trade school scholarship.

Military service is important to Adams. His father, his hero, was a U.S. Marine Green Beret and Vietnam War Veteran.

Adams says he misses being in the military because it was his identity. "I look back on my life and know deep in my heart that I made a difference."



PROGRAMS

Continued from Page 1A

visiting his office. Additional information can also be found by going to *iosco.net/veterans-affairs/* or by following the Iosco County VA Office on Facebook at *www.facebook.com/IoscoVeteransAffairs*.

There are multiple opportunities for veterans in the county to meet with each other and have conversations about the topics that are of interest to them. Many of these are through coffee hours.

SunnySide Coffee, located in the historic Liberty Building at 402 W. Lake St. in Tawas City, meets every Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to noon for a Women Veterans Coffee Hour, in which women veterans can have the chance to connect with each other.

During this time, drop-ins are welcome and special coffee pricing is available.

The East Tawas American Legion Audie Johnson Post No. 211, located at 900 E. Lincoln St., hosts a coffee hour on the third Thursday of each month, from 9-11 a.m.

The coffee hour is open to all area veterans and their spouses, for fellowship and information on veteran benefits.

The Oscoda Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post No. 3735, located at 240 Chrysler Rd., also hosts their own coffee hour in the months of October through April.

The events take place on the third Wednesday of those months, from 9-11 a.m. Area veterans are welcome to attend to share time together, drink some coffee and learn about the benefits available to them.

The Wurtsmith Air Museum, located at 4071 E. Van Ettan St. in Oscoda, invites veterans for a monthly coffee hour during the months of May through September.

On the third Thursday of each of those months, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., veterans in Oscoda and other surrounding areas can stop by for a cup of coffee and a doughnut while enjoying conversations with other veterans.

Besides the coffee hours, there are other ways for veterans to either get together or take part in a veterans program.

VFW and American Legion halls throughout the county are also the host of such activities as, weekly bingo, euchre, bunko, darts and line dancing sessions. Fundraisers for various veterans organizations are often held at these facilities, as well.

Another opportunity available to those who have served, is the Monthly Veterans Meetup that takes place at To the Moon & Back, located at 119 S. State St. in Oscoda.

The meetup occurs every third Tuesday of each month, at 5 p.m. Sponsored by the Iosco County VA Office, the meetup acts as a safe space for veterans to gather, talk about veterans' issues and make personal connections.

Pegasus Springs, located at 4800 Old State Rd. in National City, also offers a variety of programs and events for veterans, starting with the Huron Heroes & Horses program.

This program serves as mental health therapy for veterans in a safe, private and peaceful environment with horses, a mental health specialist and an equine specialist.

Veterans in the VA medical system are not charged for the therapy services. Sessions are one hour each, and there are usually up to five return visits.

According to the center's website, veterans in the program tend to find their own path to healing with the aid of the horses and specialists.

Pegasus Springs also hosts Veteran Drop-In Group Therapy sessions. These take place on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m., and veterans do not have to be in the VA healthcare system to attend.

See Opportunities, Page 11A





LOCAL NEWS

OPPORTUNITIES

Continued from Page 10A

Alongside the therapy with horses, Pegasus Springs holds a free monthly veterans dinner on the fourth Thursday of each month, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The meal menu for the each month's dinner is announced on the Pegasus Springs Facebook page. Veterans can bring their spouse to the dinner, and an RSVP for it is preferred.

To learn more about the programs offered, and to RSVP for the monthly dinners, contact Pegasus Springs Founder/Executive Director Barb Clare, by calling 989-820-1787 or e-mailing pegasusspringstrc@gmail.com. Additional details can also be found on Facebook, at *www.facebook.com/huronheroesandhorses*.

Veterans that would like to get involved in the organizations throughout the county can reach out to the respective representatives of each, for more information. A list of the various organizations, as well as their phone numbers and Facebook pages, if applicable, is provided below.

- East Tawas American Legion Audie Johnson Post No. 211: 989-362-2976, *www.facebook.com/p/American-Legion-Audie-Johnson-211-100057699188163*.
- Oscoda VFW Post No. 3735: 989-739-3128, *www.facebook.com/groups/253409001351722*.
- Oscoda American Legion Post No. 274: 989-739-5121, *www.facebook.com/oscodapost274*.
- Tawas City VFW Post No. 5678: 989-362-5809, *www.facebook.com/vfw5678*.
- Hale American Legion Post No. 422: 989-728-5055, *www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61591671640197*.
- Hale VFW Post No. 7435: 989-728-3242.





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Thanks, veterans, for your brave and selfless service to our nation. We salute you on Veterans Day.

KALITTA AIR



LOCAL NEWS



Photo by Gaylynn Brenoel

NEW MONUMENT UNVEILED AT VETERANS PARK – On Saturday, Sept. 19, a POW/MIA monument was unveiled in Oscoda, at the Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan. The $30,000 monument was a gift from Jane and Ralph Dady, to honor and remember all Prisoners of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) U.S. Service Members. The monument features uplifted imprisoned hands and The Empty Chair, the latter of which is inscribed with a solemn poem to honor the sacrifice and memory of POWs and MIAs – the more than 80,000 U.S. Service Members still missing, whose whereabouts are unknown.

WPAS hosts sixth annual Veterans Day Appreciation Ceremony, luncheon

Reprinted from the Nov. 19, 2025 edition

by Gaylynn Brenoel

WHITTEMORE – Students and staff from Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools (WPAS) welcomed guests to their sixth annual Veterans Day Appreciation Ceremony, which was held in the high school

See Ceremony, Page 5B



Courtesy photo

AMERICAN FLAGS WELCOME VETS TO WPAS – The entrance to the high school property of Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools was lined with American Flags on Nov. 7, to welcome military veterans to the district's sixth annual Veterans Day Appreciation Ceremony and Luncheon.

Veterans Memorial Park of NE Michigan unveils POW/MIA monument

Reprinted from the Sept. 30, 2026 edition

by Gaylynn Brenoel

OSCODA – More than 100 supporters gathered together at the Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan, located at 4000 N. Skeel Ave. in Oscoda, on the afternoon of Saturday, Sept. 19.

Those in attendance included veterans from across Michigan; Tawas City Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Commander Jerry Reckman, Senior Vice Commander Steve Carwile, Junior Vice Commander Dennis Browne, Quartermaster Greg Hausler and Member Dennis Frank; additional VFW and VFW Auxiliary members; the Tawas Area and Hale Area Honor Guards; Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAVA) Chapter 130 members; Veterans Service Officer Ron Whitney, of the Iosco County Veterans Services Office; State Representative Mike Hoadley; and local residents.

See Unveils, Page 6B



Photo by Gaylynn Brenoel

THE RIDERLESS HORSE – Pictured here, from left, are bagpiper Jim Lyon, horse Peyton and Marci Schriber, as they perform the Riderless Horse Procession at the veterans park in Oscoda on Sept. 19. The procession, held in honor and memory of POW and MIA U.S. Service Members, is a military tradition to symbolize that a soldier will never ride again.

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LOCAL NEWS



Photo by Kaitlyn Campbell

SUPPORTING VETERANS – The Bay Veterans Foundation, headquartered in Bay City, was among the more than 50 vendors to participate in the latest annual Lake Huron Veterans Benefits Fair. According to its website, the foundation helps veterans help themselves by providing a supportive environment where they can learn new skills, meet other veterans and engage in a fulfilling activity through workshops.

BENEFITS

Continued from Page 1A

Benefits Administration. They are the ones who raise claims, so we're able to help people look in to why their claims are denied.

"It shows that people are search of resources, to find out what they can get through VA benefits," he continued.

According to Whitney, this year's fair saw 53 vendors; the most that it has ever had.

Some of the agencies which took part in the 2026 event, included the Michigan Public Service Commission, Michigan Veterans Affairs, Iosco County Commission on Aging, Salvation Army, Michigan Veterans Employment Services, Michigan Department of Insurance Financial Services, Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Representatives of Senator Elissa Slotkin and State Representative Jack Bergman had their own booths, as well.

A lunch was also provided by the county veterans office. Community members and veterans alike were able to sit and talk with each other while enjoying a free meal.

Veterans that would like to learn more about the available benefits they may qualify for, can contact Whitney by calling 989-362-6571, sending an e-mail to rwhitney@ioscocounty.org or stopping into the Iosco County Veterans Affairs Office at 671 E. M-55 in Tawas City.



Photo by Kaitlyn Campbell

HEALTHCARE RESOURCES – One of the resources that event attendees could learn more about at the Veterans Benefits Fair, was healthcare. This included a booth of representatives with the Saginaw Healthcare System, who spoke with such guests as the couple seen here, at right, about what they do to support the needs of veterans and their families.

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LOCAL NEWS



Courtesy photo

FLAG FOLDING DEMONSTRATION – Alivia Sheehan, shown at left, and Brynn Wanks, demonstrate American Flag folding technique at the Whittemore-Prescott High School Veterans Day ceremony. Also participating in the flag folding as part of the Nov. 7 event, were fellow students Scarlett Smalley, Reese Lomason and Madison Zuchnik.



Courtesy photo

CARDINAL LEADERSHIP GROUP GREETS GUESTS – Pictured here in the two front rows, and wearing white shirts, are members of the Cardinal Leadership Group (CLG). They joined area veterans and other guests in a group photo on Nov. 7, during the Veterans Day Appreciation Ceremony and Luncheon that the CLG put on at Whittemore-Prescott High School.

CEREMONY

Continued from Page 2B

building on the morning of Friday, Nov. 7.

Cardinal Leadership Co-Advisor for WPAS, Allison Schulte, shared that following the singing of the National Anthem, the event featured a Flag Folding Ceremony which was demonstrated by several of the students.

The occasion also included readings of "Old Glory," a tribute to the flag of the United States of America; "In Flanders Fields," a war poem written during the First World War by John McCae; and "The American Hero," a poem by Roger Robicheau.

Schulte – who also provided each of the photos accompanying this article – stated that a luncheon was served at the conclusion of the event, as well, to honor local veterans.



Courtesy photo

COFFEE TIME – Isla Smith is seen here at right, serving coffee to event guest, Effie Hall, during the recent Veterans Day celebration and luncheon at Whittemore-Prescott High School.

Veterans Day
November 11

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LOCAL NEWS

UNVEILS

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The event featured the unveiling of a newly installed POW/MIA monument, to honor and remember all Prisoners of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) U.S. Service Members.

National Marine Corps League Auxiliary Resource Officer Jane Dady, who is also a Hale Honor Guard member and the past Department of Michigan VFW Auxiliary president; and her husband, Ralph Dady – who is the past District 11 VFW commander and Captain of the Honor Guard – donated $30,000 for the construction and installation of the new POW/MIA monument.

Chief of the Joint Commission Support Division of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, Darla Stencavage, was the keynote speaker. She addressed the assembly on the important work that she and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency are doing to locate the more than 80,000 American service members who are missing and unaccounted for from past U.S. conflicts.

Other speakers, included U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve Inspector-Instructor Major Rex Van Koevering, National President of the Marine Corps League Auxiliary Mary Brief and VFW Department of Michigan Auxiliary President Jason Manke.

In addition to the three-volley salute by the participating Honor Guards, and the playing of "Taps" by bugler Marlene Polishak of the Hale Area Honor Guard, the event featured beautiful military tribute songs played by bagpiper Jim Lyon.

A Riderless Horse Procession, led by Lyons, included horse Peyton being guided on foot by Marci Schriber. The "riderless horse" is a tradition which serves as a visual symbol that a soldier will never ride again.

The monument dedication also featured DAVA Michigan Adjuvant Regina Fortner, who hosted the Missing Man Table Ceremony with members of the DAVA Auxiliary Chapter 130. The ceremony is a solemn military tradition that honors the fallen, as well as MIA and POW service members.

"The Veterans Memorial Park of Northeastern Michigan extends its heartfelt appreciation to the Dady Family for their generous gift of this POW/MIA monument," said Rose Mary Nentwig, the park's founder and chair.

"This monument will stand as a lasting tribute to the brave Americans who endured captivity, to those who remain missing and to the families who have carried the burden of uncertainty and loss," she continued. "Because of the Dady Family's generosity, generations of visitors will be reminded of our solemn duty to honor their sacrifice, preserve their memory and ensure they are never forgotten."

Nentwig and J. Dady acknowledged all who attended and also expressed their gratitude for the sponsors who contributed to the occasion, including the Oscoda Area Convention & Visitors Bureau; Kalitta Air; Wurtsmith Air Museum; John and Peggy Gilbert of Gilbert's Drug Store; Nikki and Matt Tregear of MNT Contracting; Jeremy and Kayla Ring; and John Bolen and Cindy Martin of Tawas Bay Etchworks.



Photo by Gaylynn Brenoel

HIGH-LEVEL LEADERS SPEAK AT CEREMONY – Chief of the Joint Commission Support Division of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, Darla Stencavage, is pictured here at left, alongside Marine Corps Forces Reserve Inspector-Instructor Major Rex Van Koevering. While addressing attendees at the Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan, they each spoke on the efforts being made to locate and return the more than 80,000 U.S. Military Service Members who are still Missing in Action or deemed as Prisoners of War, from all U.S. Military conflicts.



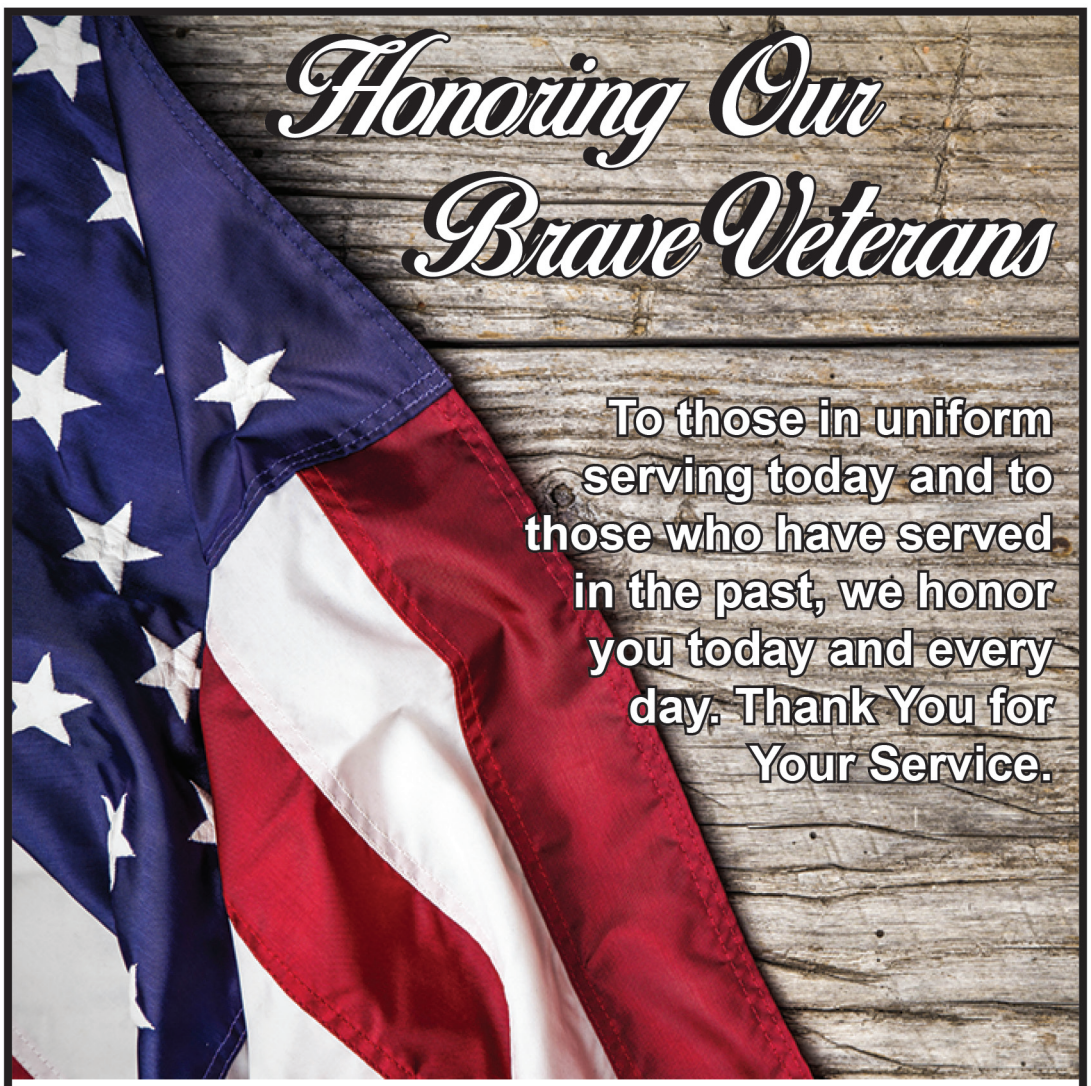
Photo by Gaylynn Brenoel

HONORING ALL U.S. MILITARY BRANCHES – During the recent unveiling of the POW/MIA monument at the Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan, a Missing Man Table was also displayed – with U.S. Military service hats of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines – to honor and remember the service members who are Prisoners of War or Missing in Action.



Photo by Gaylynn Brenoel

POW/MIA MEMORIAL UNVEILED – Shown here, from left, are National Marine Corps League Auxiliary Resource Officer Jane Dady and Captain of the Honor Guard Ralph Dady, who donated $30,000 for the construction and installation of the memorial at the Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan. The unveiling ceremony took place on Saturday, Sept. 19.



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LOCAL NEWS





Courtesy photos

HALE LEGION HOSTS HOLIDAY MEAL – American Legion Post 422 of Hale and its auxiliary reported a full house on Nov. 27, 2025, during their free Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Auxiliary Chaplain Marlene Polishak shared that they went through 17 turkeys and about 30 boxes of dressing, while serving approximately 100 people at the latest annual event. Attendees were invited to either dine in with other guests or take a meal to go, with the organization also offering deliveries to disabled veterans and senior shut-ins.



Legion hosts POW service



Courtesy photo

Members of American Legion Post 422 in Hale held a solemn Prisoners of War (POW) Service on Sept. 19. Representative Marlene Polishak shared that the service included Post 422 Commander Mike Adams and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7435 Commander Ed Nesbitt standing attention, while guarding the sacred POW table, as American Legion First Vice Commander Julie Streeter recited the meaning of the table and how we should never forget the many sacrifices our veterans have made. Polishak later played "Taps" on the bugle, as well, at the end of the service. Pictured here during the tribute, from left, are Nesbitt, Streeter and Adams.







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