



THE MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Keith Sousa, Chapter President

Welcome to all “Screaming Eagles” from the great state of Michigan. As we approach the holiday season, our thoughts are with those Soldiers who are in harms’ way, or are deployed world- wide to protect our nation’s interests. Being away during the holidays is always hard on Soldiers and their family members. We tend to take the holidays for granted as we spend time with our own family members and friends, so we always have to keep in mind those Soldiers who are on active duty, along with those Reserve and National Guard members who are deployed. If you know of any family members whose loved ones are deployed, or away for training during the holidays, let them know that we are thinking of them and will help them if they need it.

Our chapter continues to meet monthly during our “lunch bunch”, at the Alex J. Brunett activity center of the St. Aidens Church in Livonia, Michigan. After lunch, we normally have a guest speaker, who generally talks about the 101st, or a military topic. During the “lunch bunch” in November, our guest speaker was one of our WWII Veterans, Mr. Donald Straith (A Co/1-506th INF), who gave a very informative presentation on Nazi Execution camps, which were located in Poland during World War II. Many of our WWII Veterans who were at the luncheon stood up and told their own stories of what they witnessed of the concentration camps, as well as German POWs. Their perspectives were appreciated and well received by the rest of us in attendance.

The chapter made a \$101 donation to the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 528, which held a 50th Vietnam Commemorative celebration in September. Chapter president Keith Sousa, and First Vice President Dan Cutting represented the chapter. The celebration took place at VFW post 6695 in Plymouth, Michigan the focus of which was to honor those who fought in Vietnam, along with the family members who lost loved ones during that war. All of the Vietnam Veterans who were present received a pin, and were recognized for their service to our country. The celebration included a barbeque, along with a display of military vehicles, and a military color guard, and it was a great way to show appreciation for those Vietnam Veterans who participated in the event.

Our annual reunion was held in Frankenmuth (“Little Bavaria”), Michigan during the weekend of October 27th and 28th. The hospitality room was open on Friday night, with many members, spouses, and guests present. Saturday morning, the general membership meeting convened, with approximately nineteen members present. The membership voted to keep all of the current officers in place, which included: President – Keith Sousa; First Vice President – Dan Cutting;

Second Vice President – Jim Gawrich; Secretary/Treasurer – John Sosa; and Sergeant at Arms – Al Lopenski. The chapter also chose to provide 101st certificates to College and High School ROTC programs during the spring ceremonies, in order to promote our organization and to recognize outstanding cadets. The membership also voted to provide a wreath during Memorial Day ceremonies at the National Cemetery at Holly, Michigan. The wreath will not only represent the 101st, but all airborne units.

Those present elected to hold the 2018 reunion in Fenton, Michigan, during the month of July. Following the membership meeting, many members and their spouses toured the Michigan Military Museum in Frankenmuth. The museum features Michigan military veterans, along with astronauts from the state. The chapter then held a banquet at Da Vinci's restaurant, which included the POW/MIA recognition and a memorial service for those members who have passed away during the last year. Sadly, those members included; Donald R. Burgett (WWII), Guadalupe J. Flores (WWII), David Garcia (Vietnam), David B. Schiller (Post Vietnam), Christian T. Shalay (Vietnam), and Charles C. Wright (Vietnam). They will all be missed.

We look forward to another year of camaraderie with our members as we attend our "lunch bunches" and our annual reunion. We are also looking forward to attending the national chapter 'Snow Bird' reunion in Tampa, Florida, in February. Hopefully it will be warmer than it is here. Happy Holidays and best wishes to all during the upcoming year.