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ON THE COVER
THANK YOU VETERANS!

LOCATION:
SAGINAW VALLEY
NAVAL MUSEUM

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THUNDER ROADS®
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STATE OWNERS / PUBLISHERS
RJ & ALY
Po Box 1782, Midland, MI 48641-1782
RJ Cell: 989-948-4644
Email: RJ@ThunderRoadsMichigan.com
Email: Aly@ThunderRoadsMichigan.com

ADVERTISING SALES/DISTRIBUTION
Ben Weirauch / 989-332-1372
Ben@ThunderRoadsMichigan.com

Chloe Monville / 989-860-9640
Chloe@ThunderRoadsMichigan.com

Eric Kruer / 231-613-2819
Big-E@ThunderRoadsMichigan.com

Jen Dabrowski / 989-316-8079
Jen@ThunderRoadsMichigan.com

Samantha Talbot / 313-492-0563
Samantha@ThunderRoadsMichigan.com

LAYOUT & DESIGN
Meredith Hancock / Art Director / Thunder Publishing

WEBSITE DESIGN
RJ Calles

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS & PHOTOGRAPHERS
Hot Rod Beaton, Sharon K. Harvey “Red”,
RJ Calles, James Shibley,
Jon Aka Smoke, Merry Garrett Aka Rabbit,
Dean “Charlie Chaplain” Titus, Greg “Johnny” Denay
Eric Kruer Aka Big E

NATIONAL FOUNDERS
Toni McCoy Shearon & Brian Shearon
Thunder Publishing, LLC Offices: 615-792-0040
e-mail:thunderroadsfounder@gmail.com
www.thunderroadsmagazine.com

LETTER FROM THE OWNERS

Well, it looks like Mother Nature finally flipped the switch. Summer’s packed up and moved out, and fall is ready to submit to a Michigan winter. The nights are colder, the days are shorter, and many bike owners have found shelter for their steel horses. As much as we hate to admit it, it’s time to tuck away the summer toys and settle in for the long Michigan winter ahead.

RJ and I have already kicked off our “off-season projects”—though not exactly the fun kind. Somehow, we ended up knee-deep in some unexpected home renovations. You know how that goes: one little fix turns into five more, and before you know it, your weekends are booked until spring. Nothing glamorous, just the kind of “real life” projects that show up uninvited. But hey, it’ll keep us busy while the snow flies and maybe make the winter go by a little faster.

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, we’re trying to keep things in perspective. Even in the chaos of drywall dust and paint cans, there’s a lot to be grateful for—family, friends, and the incredible community that keeps this riding scene alive all year long. So, when the turkey’s carved and the pie’s gone, here’s hoping you can take a minute to kick back and count those blessings too.

On the bright side, we’ve got something big to look forward to. As you’ve probably seen on the cover, we’re already ramping up for our USS Edson event, coming your way in September 2026. That might sound like a long way off, but the planning is ready to set sale—and trust me, it’s going to be one hell of a weekend. Go ahead and circle the weekend of September 11th, 2026 on your calendar now. You’re not going to want to miss this one.

We’ll be sharing more details as things come together, but it’s already shaping up to be a great time—friends, bikes, camping, entertainment, and a whole lot of fun for our U.S. veterans and



first responders!

So, for now, it’s back to coffee, tools, and hoping winter takes it easy on us this year. Here’s to getting through the cold months quickly, finding a few things to be thankful for along the way, and dreaming of those first warm riding days again.

Happy Veterans Day to ALL U.S. veterans out there and Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

RJ & Aly

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER: SURROUNDED BY STRENGTH

BY CHAPLAIN CHARLIE

There's a story in the Old Testament that stops me in my tracks every time I read it. It's found in **2 Kings 6:15-17**, where the prophet Elisha and his servant wake up to find themselves surrounded by enemy forces. The servant panics — as most of us would — and cries out, "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" Elisha answers calmly, *"Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."*

Then he prays, "Lord, open his eyes so that he may see." And in that moment, the servant's eyes are opened — and he sees the hills full of horses and **chariots of fire** all around Elisha. God had already sent heavenly protection before the first arrow ever flew. That passage has been on my heart lately, especially as the world feels more uncertain than ever. Every time I see another news headline or hear about another tragedy, I think about that servant. I think about how easy it is to forget that as children of God, we're never standing alone on the battlefield.

The Hills Are Still Full

Now, I don't know about you, but I've been on a few roads where I could *feel* the enemy circling. Maybe you have too. Sometimes it's not soldiers — it's stress, sickness, temptation, depression, or doubt. It's the weight of the world pressing down, whispering that you're outnumbered and outmatched. But the same God who filled those hills with chariots of fire is still in command today. The same God who stood by Elisha stands by you and me. The same power that raised Christ from the dead lives **in us** — and that's what the Apostle John meant when he said, *"Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."* (1 John 4:4) Let that sink in for a moment. The same Spirit that calmed the storm, cast out demons, and rolled away the stone — that's the Spirit riding shotgun with you every single day.

The Ride Ahead Is Already Protected

I live near **Sanford, Michigan**, a small town with more heart than square mileage. If you've ever been through here, you know we've seen our share of trials. Between the flood that wiped us out and the slow rebuilding that followed, Sanford folks have learned what it means to keep the faith when the odds are stacked high. But you know what? God had already sent the help before the first dam broke. He sent neighbors with chainsaws, churches with food, riders with trucks and trailers, and volunteers from all over Michigan who showed up out of nowhere. It wasn't coincidence — it was providence. Just like those chariots of fire waiting on the hillside. Sometimes, when I ride out past the rebuilt bridges or roll through downtown and see the little shops open again, I think about how God rides ahead of us. He prepares the path even when we can't see what's around the bend. The asphalt might still have cracks, but the road is open.

Faith in the Rearview

We bikers tend to like seeing what's ahead — that long stretch of open highway, that next destination on the map. But the truth is, a lot of life is ridden on blind curves. You don't see the deer until it's already in your lane. You don't see the gravel until you're leaning in. Faith, though — faith is trusting that even when the fog rolls in, the Lord already has His angels out there guarding your line. Psalm 91 says, *"He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways."* That's not just poetry — that's a promise. And it doesn't mean life's going to be smooth pavement all the way. I've ridden through rain so hard my boots filled with water, and I've hit

potholes that nearly rattled my fillings out. But through it all, I can look back and see that God never once left me stranded on the side of the road.

Greater Is He That's in You

You see, when you belong to God, you don't ride solo anymore. The world can throw its worst at you — sickness, heartbreak, betrayal, fear — but none of it can overpower the One who lives inside you. That's what the Apostle John meant when he wrote those words to early believers who were facing persecution, mockery, and death. He was reminding them — and us — that **the Spirit within us is greater than the spirit of this world**. So when the enemy rolls up looking mean, revving his engine, flashing his lights, you don't have to panic. You don't have to fight in your own strength. You just keep your hands steady, eyes up, and heart focused on the One who already won the battle.

The Thunder Roads® Connection

That's one of the reasons I love *Thunder Roads® Magazine*. It's not just about chrome and horsepower — it's about community. Every issue reminds us that bikers, for all our independence, are part of something bigger. We watch out for each other on the road, raise money for kids at Christmas, and show up when a brother or sister goes down. That's the same kind of brotherhood God calls us to — to stand together, lift each other up, and remind each other that we're surrounded by strength.

Open Eyes, Open Heart

So this month, as the leaves fall and the cold sets in, maybe take a quiet moment before you fire up the bike. Look around — not just with your eyes, but with your spirit. Maybe you'll see the hills differently this time. Maybe you'll realize that God's been sending His chariots ahead all along — in the friend who checks in, in the stranger who helps, in the peace that suddenly settles your heart when you didn't think it could. And when the road feels dark, remember this truth straight from Scripture: **"Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."** We're not outnumbered. We're surrounded.


Closing Thoughts

So ride strong, my friends. Hold your line. Keep the faith. The world will keep trying to surround us, but our God has already done it first — with angels, with grace, and with a love that never quits. And if you ever forget that, look to the hills. They're still full.



Until next time —
Ride safe, ride blessed and keep your eyes on the One who rides before you.

Chaplain Charlie
Chaplain Dean Titus (Charlie)
Sanford American Legion Riders #443



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ABATE UPDATE

2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

In September, at the 2025 Motorcycle Riders Foundation's (MRF) 41st Annual Meeting of the Minds Conference held in Shreveport, LA, a legislative strategy session was hosted by the MRF's Legislative Committee. The purpose of the session was to establish and prioritize the MRF's 2026 Federal Legislative Agenda.

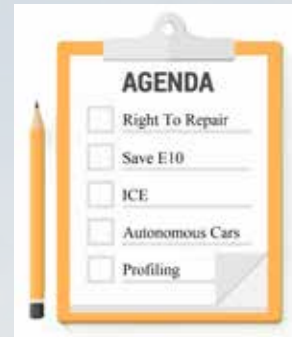
Legislative issues fall into one of three priority categories: high, medium and monitor. This list remains fluid and may be adapted depending on the issue or political environment.

Below is a brief description of just the top 12 issues on the MRF's 2026 agenda listed as "High Priority." The January 2026 issue of the American Biker Journal will have more details on each of these High Priority issues, as well as the full list of an additional 12 priorities that fall in the "Medium" or "Monitor" classification.

As a reminder, all MRF members receive a copy of the American Biker Journal with their membership.

If you're not a member of the MRF, click the button below to join in and support our work in Washington, D.C. toward freedom and safety for street motorcyclists.

The 2026 Motorcycle Riders Foundation Legislative Priorities List



HIGH PRIORITY OBJECTIVES:

- **Autonomous Vehicles:** Advocate and monitor any legislation or regulations related to motorcycles concerning connected and autonomous vehicles.
- **Crash Avoidance:** Continue to promote the theme of crash avoidance versus safer crashing, urging the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to focus on crash prevention and support rider education by providing funding and other resources.
- **Data Recording:** Pursue legislative language that any collected or available vehicle data is the property of the consumer and in which the consumer has the choice of whether to opt-in to having their personal data communicated to interested parties.
- **Definition of a Motorcycle:** Educate policymakers and advocate for change to the current definition that better reflects the current two and three-wheel motorcycle landscape.
- **Emission Regulations:** Engage the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) & Congress on any activity related to motorcycle emission regulations.
- **Helmet Laws/Equipment Mandates:** Oppose any mandatory federal helmet or personal protective equipment/apparel mandates.
- **Internal Combustion Engines:** Work to ensure the survival of internal combustion engines.
- **Profiling:** Sustain lobbying efforts for the passage of resolutions or legislation that promote awareness and the

prohibition of motorcyclist profiling.

- **Renewable Fuels:** Advocate for targeted changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS).

- **Right to Repair/Modify:** Protect and advocate for "Right to Repair" provisions that allow consumers the ability to repair and modify their motorcycles.

- **Surface Transportation Reauthorization (Highway Bill):** Advocate and pursue legislative efforts related to the next highway bill reauthorization (the current act is set to expire in 2026).

- **Vulnerable Roadway User Terminology:** Monitor and ensure that motorcycles and motorcyclists are a specific and unique category or classification.

Remember, a full list of all 24 items on the legislative agenda with further details will be included in your January issue of the American Biker Journal. Thank you for supporting the MRF. It's time to get to work!

*Information provided by MRF.ORG



Thanks again,
Merry S. Garrett
Proud lifetime member of ABATE
Board Member, State Events Chair, RC Region 6 (covering Gladwin, Midland, Bay City and Arenac counties)

ABATE OF MICHIGAN

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18+ PLACES TO VISIT IN MICHIGAN ON VETERANS DAY

BY JAMES ANDERSEN: AWESOMEMITTEN.COM

Veterans Day holds a special place in the hearts of many Michiganders. The annual November holiday, which honors veterans of the armed forces and those soldiers killed in action, pays tribute to thousands of Michiganders who served their country with honor.

Because of the high esteem with which veterans are held, dozens of cities and communities in the Mitten State have erected memorials to honor veterans of all conflicts, thereby offering many **places to visit in Michigan on Veterans Day**.

From sprawling memorials to museums to small, quiet tributes, there are plenty of spots to pay tribute to those who served in the armed forces and reflect on what the holiday really means.

Veterans Memorial Gardens

2074 N Aurelius Rd, Holt, MI 48842

The centerpiece of this park is the Veteran's Memorial. It represents every branch of the military and lists local veterans who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War.

Those who keep up the park have worked to beautify it, and that is evident in the many plantings and gardens around the park, including a butterfly garden. Other features of the park include an amphitheater and a cascading water fountain. Also, the park has a Purple Heart Memorial, which pays tribute to those who were wounded or killed in action. Additionally, the park has a POW/MIA Memorial, which honors those missing in action, as well as prisoners of war.



Fort Custer National Cemetery

15501 Dickman Rd, Augusta, MI 49012

Named for famed U.S. General George A. Custer, Fort Custer is one of two national cemeteries in Michigan. More than 30,000 veterans are interred there.

The cemetery features a wide variety of memorials — nearly three dozen, in fact — lined along a memorial pathway to honor the country's veterans.

The cemetery's main road features an Avenue of Flags — a row of more than 150 flag poles. There are also an additional 50 flags — one for each of the 50 states — arranged in a semicircle at the end of the road.

Muskegon Veteran's Memorial Park

401 N Causeway, Muskegon, MI 49445

Situated at the east end of Muskegon Lake, Veteran's Memorial Park in Muskegon, Michigan, is located on 28 acres and honors veterans with several memorials.

On the north end of the park, visitors will find a Vietnam memorial. A fountain occupies the south end of the park. As visitors travel the Causeway, they can see both pieces. Throughout the park, visitors can traverse along a walkway with a series of bronze plaques. These plaques have been purchased by those who wish to honor loved ones who have served.



Grand Rapids Veterans Memorial Park

101 E Fulton NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The park here includes pillars paying tribute to veterans who served in multiple conflicts.

Initially, five pillars were constructed to honor those who served in WWII and the Korean War. In 1975, Vietnam War veterans were honored with the addition of two more pillars.

The annual Veteran's Day parade in Grand Rapids begins on Division Street and continues south to eventually end at Veterans Memorial Park, where a Ceremony of Remembrance takes place.



Great Lakes National Cemetery

4200 Belford Rd, Holly, MI 48442

Established in 2005, this is one of the Mitten State's two national cemeteries, along with Fort Custer. Across 544 acres, the cemetery has more than 23,000 interments, including veteran and former football player Lynn Chandnois.

The cemetery has several features, including a memorial wall, a committal shelter, and a visitor center. The memorial wall is inscribed with the names of veterans whose remains were not recovered or identified.



Michigan Vietnam Memorial at Island Park

331 S Main St, Mt Pleasant, MI 48858

Believe it or not, this is Michigan's first Vietnam War memorial, and it pays tribute to Michiganders who served during that time. Visitors here can spend time looking at more than a dozen plaques that commemorate the 2,705 casualties suffered during the war. A tranquil river adds to the park's peacefulness, and there's a flag gallery, a footbridge, and an information booth too.



Withington Park

410 W Michigan Ave, Jackson, MI 49201

Located at the western end of downtown Jackson, this park hosts Jackson's Veterans Day ceremony each year. The park is named for Jackson native and former Civil War General William Withington.

Multiple monuments are in the park, honoring those who served. One of the most prominent statues is the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Statue, which was dedicated in July 1904.

While you're here, check out the other things to do during fall in Jackson, Michigan.

CONTINUED...



Unknown Soldier Sculpture at Little Flanders Field

Alpena, MI

On the shores of Lake Huron in Northeast Michigan, Alpena annually honors veterans with a Veteran's Day ceremony at Little Flanders Field.

There, visitors will find a sculpture that honors the unknown soldier, which was dedicated in 1987. The bronze statue depicts a soldier holding a rifle and wearing a helmet atop a stone pedestal with an inscription that reads, "Dedicated to the Unknown Soldier." A reflecting pool also surrounds the pedestal. Alpena's Veteran's Day ceremony at Little Flanders Field is well attended by residents and includes speeches, patriotic music, and the laying of wreaths to honor veterans.



Air Zoo

6151 Portage Rd, Portage, MI 49002

The Air Zoo is a popular attraction in Southwest Michigan, and on Veterans Day, it hosts exhibits and activities that help the community understand just how important that day is.

On Veterans Day, veterans and their families are admitted to the Air Zoo free of charge. In past years, the museum has included a free breakfast for veterans, which provides a space for them and their guests to mingle and enjoy the Air Zoo.



Washtenaw County Vietnam Veterans Memorial

1944 Veterans Mem Dr, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

As the only Vietnam War memorial in Washtenaw County, this monument holds a special significance for local veterans.

The triangle-shaped, black granite memorial is designed to look almost exactly like the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. It's five-sided, and each side represents a different branch of the military.

The names of those who died in action are listed by community, and three flags at the memorial are meant to represent three soldiers from Washtenaw County who are listed as missing in action.

Greater Plainwell Veterans Memorial

201-277 N Sherwood Ave, Plainwell, MI 49080

This memorial was dedicated on Veterans Day in 2009. The memorial offers visitors a place to quietly reflect, and the soft sounds of the Kalamazoo River add to the tranquility. Today, the GPVM stands as a fitting tribute to those who served and their families.



Traverse City Veterans Memorial Park

902-998 W Eleventh St, Traverse City, MI 49684

Dedicated in September 2011, the park features a large granite monument, which is inscribed with the names of veterans from the Grand Traverse area who have served in the military.

In 2017, Traverse City became the first city in Michigan to erect a Gold Star Mother Statue, and it was added to the park. The statue honors mothers whose children died in defense of the United States and depicts a mother sitting on a bench holding a folded American flag.



Michigan Vietnam Veterans Memorial

East of Hall of Justice, bet. Allegan & Ottawa Sts., W Ottawa St, Lansing, MI 48915

In Lansing, this memorial — designed by New York architect Alan Gordon — features a suspended, arc-shaped steel wall, measuring 110 feet high by 120 feet long that honors the 2,654 Michigan residents who lost their lives in the Vietnam War.

The casualties on the wall are listed on plaques in alphabetical order by county. On the north side of the wall is a timeline of events from the Vietnam War, spanning from 1959-1975. On the east side of the wall is a plaque that describes the memorial's purpose.

Opposite the wall is a bench with metal plates, meant to represent casualties from the United States and its territories.



The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial

31100 Woodward Ave, Royal Oak, MI 48073

This project is the brainchild of architect Michael J. Gordon, and construction for this impressive memorial began in 2022 with the first phase of construction.

Phase one of the project includes the installation of flag poles to honor service members from all branches, the installation of more than 1,000 paver bricks for a Walk of Honor, the installation of the first statue, and pouring footings for future statues.

The long-term goal for the memorial is to build a Wall of Stars honoring more than 15,000 Michigan lives lost during WWII. The two-sided wall will measure 50 feet long and 10 feet high. Also, the memorial features a map of Michigan that honors Michigan's contributions to World War II, including Detroit's contributions as "The Arsenal of Democracy."

War Memorials in Wyandotte

Van Alstyne St, Wyandotte, MI 48192

Located in along the Detroit River, there are memorials honoring veterans of the Vietnam War, WWI, and WWII, as well as a Purple Heart memorial. The Purple Heart monument was one of the first of its kind dedicated in the United States in 1943.



In addition, the park includes a Freedom Tree, which is dedicated to PFC—Gregory Rea Benton and all prisoners of war and those missing in action.

CONTINUED ...



Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial

1200 N Telegraph Rd, Pontiac, MI 48341

This memorial honors firefighters and police officers from Michigan who lost their lives in the line of duty. It is the only memorial in Michigan to do this.

A bronze statue depicting a kneeling firefighter and a kneeling police officer was unveiled in 2022, and a granite wall etched with the names of the fallen was added in 2005.

The wall has more than 800 names on it, with the earliest dating back to 1864. Landscaping, brick pavers, and in-ground lighting were added in 2009 along with signage in 2010, creating a space for tribute and reflection.

Michigan's Military Heritage Museum

311 N Wisner St, Jackson, MI 49202

President Abraham Lincoln once exclaimed, "Thank God for Michigan," when the Mitten State's troops reported for duty during the Civil War. The museum's mission is to preserve stories like that and so many others, as well as honor the thousands of Michiganders who have served their country.

Michigan has played a role in many U.S. conflicts, and the museum tells the stories of the everyday soldiers who served through artifact displays, pictures, oral and written histories, and so much more.



Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan

4400 N Skeel Ave, Oscoda, MI 48750

This park is located on about 6 acres and consists of a Pentagon Service Monument, a visitors center, and a Circle of Flags. Also, the park includes a Purple Heart Memorial and a Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Pentagon Service Monument simulates the Pentagon in Washington and is made up of 10 wall sections shaped to form five walls. On the inside, the wall sections are adorned with memorial blocks that display the service information of veterans.

The walls are lit at night by LED lights shining on each wall, and the outside wall sections will someday feature laser-engraved murals depicting different service branches and equipment.



More Spots to Visit on Veterans Day

- **Washtenong Memorial Park** — 3771 Whitmore Lake Rd in Ann Arbor
- **Michigan War Veterans Memorial** — Woodward Ave and W State Fair, Detroit
- **Michigan Soldiers and Sailors Monument** — Campus Martius Park, Detroit
- **The War Memorial** — 32 Lake Shore Dr, Grosse Pointe Farms
- **Michigan War Dog Memorial** — 25805 Milford Rd, South Lyon
- **Veterans Memorial Garden of Westland** — 6123 Central City Pkwy, Westland
- **Denny Craycraft Veterans Freedom Park** — 100 Depot St, Belding
- **Rose Park Veterans Memorial** — 645 E Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo

- **Michigan State Firemen's Memorial** — 1337 Robinson Lake Rd, Roscommon
- **Freedom Park** — 305 W Elizabeth St, Fenton
- **Michigan Heroes Museum** — 1250 Weiss St, Frankenmuth
- **Midland Veterans Memorial** — 201-223 W Main St, Midland
- **Civil War Memorial** — 436 E Maumee St, Adrian

Plan Your Visit to a Michigan Veterans Memorial Today

With so many places to visit in Michigan on Veterans Day, you don't have to travel far to honor a family member, a friend, or an acquaintance every November. Even if you don't have a direct connection to a veteran, you can still travel to a veteran's park to pay your respects.

These memorials in so many Michigan cities have been carefully planned and expertly crafted to stand out in their respective locations, but they're also meant to be heartfelt tributes to every single soldier who served the United States.

As Veterans Day draws closer, make plans to visit a Michigan Veterans memorial. It's a great way to pay tribute and a good way to remember those who served to protect the freedoms we hold so dear.

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WRITTEN BY ROB NORTON, AKA
“BIG YETI” HOST OF RIDE WITH PURPOSE

When we talk about suicide among veterans, there is no sugarcoating it. One life lost is one too many. Every single number on those charts and reports represents a person who wore the uniform, carried the weight of service, and deserved to live a full life beyond it.

But lately, the numbers are shifting. The VA’s latest data shows that the average daily suicide rate among veterans has declined. It is not the finish line, but it is a crack of light in a fight that has felt too dark for too long.

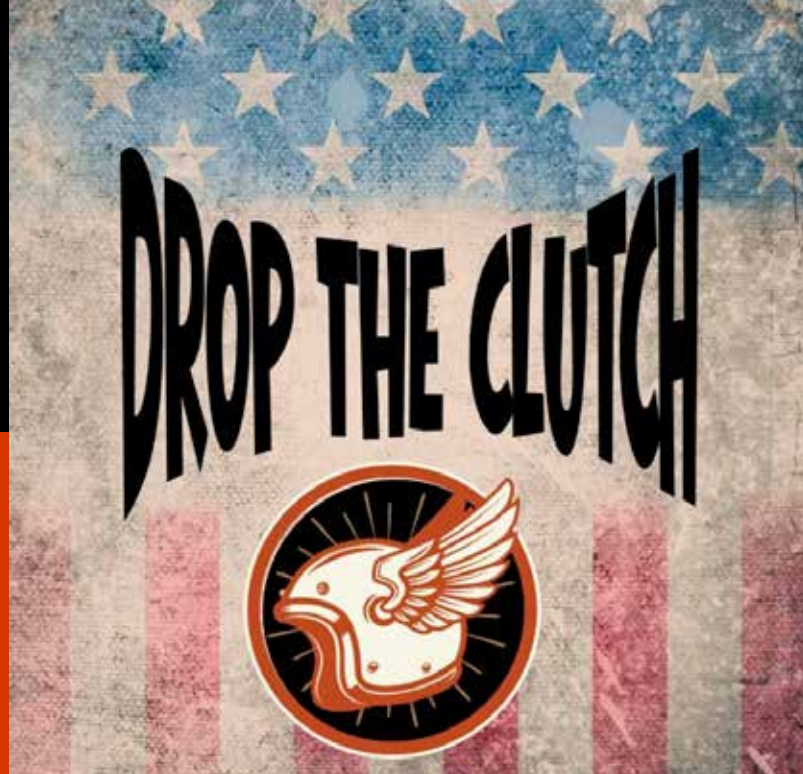
So, what does this decline mean?

- Awareness is turning into action. More people are talking about mental health. Veterans are finding the courage to speak up, and their brothers and sisters are learning to listen without judgment.

- Resources are reaching the right hands. Programs like the Veterans Crisis Line, peer support networks, and community-based initiatives are connecting vets with real help when they need it most.

- Community matters. Whether it is a motorcycle club, a veteran support group, or a neighbor who gives a damn, having someone who notices when you are not okay makes a difference.

The Drop the Clutch, Lose the F*cks campaign is about that same raw honesty. Life is short, and pretending does not save lives. What saves lives is showing up, being real, and standing in the gap when a brother or sister feels like falling.



The decline in numbers is good news, but it is not a reason to ease up. It is fuel to keep going. Every day we keep talking, riding, connecting, and refusing to let silence win.

Because one is still too many.

Dropping the Clutch on Darkness: How Veterans Rebuilt Their Lives

When we say “drop the clutch, lose the f*cks,” we mean stop spinning in place, slam it into gear, and go. For too many veterans, that moment of forward motion begins when they grab help, not when they try to muscle through alone. These are stories of stepping into that motion and of real numbers backing up the change.

The Shadow Before the Shift

Combat, deployment, the pressure of war — those experiences leave more than memories. They leave scars you carry every day. The stats don’t sugarcoat that.

- About one in five veterans faces mental health issues such as PTSD, major depression, or anxiety.

- Among veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan, up to 30 percent may return home with a mental health issue placing them at higher risk for depression or suicide.

- VA data shows in a single year more than 1.7 million veterans sought care through specialty mental health programs.

These are real people. Brothers, sisters, neighbors — people who once believed their light had gone out.

When the Clutch Drops: Reaching for Help

Turning the engine over begins when someone picks up a phone, sets a therapy appointment, or walks into a meeting. And the system does respond when that step is taken.

- Veterans completing evidence-based trauma therapies (like Prolonged Exposure or Cognitive Processing Therapy) almost universally continue with mental health care: 98.4 percent attend at least one appointment in the year after therapy.

- In that same group, many attend 27 or more appointments in that year alone showing that recovery is ongoing, not a one-and-done switch.

- In substance use treatment settings, residential care for veterans is associated with a 66 percent reduction in all-cause mortality risk compared to no treatment.

These numbers tell us this: reaching out doesn’t just feel like hope. It is hope. And it works.

Success Looks Different for Every Warrior

Recovery is not a straight highway. Success is varied, personal, messy, sometimes backward before it goes forward. But over and over we see patterns:

- The Recovery Village outlines four pillars veterans often rebuild in recovery: health, home, community, and purpose.

- Veterans speak about reclaiming identity not as someone broken but as someone who fought through — turning trauma into strength and using their story to guide others.

- Peer support — connecting with someone else who’s been down that road makes the journey less lonely.

- Relapse is not failure. Stumbles are part of the path. Growth often comes in what you do after you fall down.

Stories We Ride With Riding Out the Night

One veteran hit rock bottom after discharge. The nightmares, alcohol, and isolation built a wall around him. But one night he locked the door, got up, and called the Veterans Crisis Line. That call didn’t magically erase the pain. But it connected him to others who had been there and a



network of care he could latch onto. Years later he mentors other vets in crisis, the same line now his lifeline to give.

From Shadows to Ceremony

Another veteran walked into a therapy group convinced there was no point. He thought nobody could understand, and he would never heal. But week by week he opened up. The group became a tribe. He became a speaker. He now leads ceremonies at veteran events, telling newcomers: “You don’t have to stay here.”

The Ride That Healed

A group of vets organized a multi-state motorcycle ride. They carried stories, flags, and memories.

Some were recently sober, some just starting, some years into therapy. By the time they crossed state lines, the road had done something to their minds. The wind shook loose shame. The miles stitched camaraderie. The ride was not a cure but a ritual one they call rebirth.

Why This Matters

Because stigma steals lives. Because silence hides pain until it’s too late. Because when one veteran decides to reach for help, that’s not weakness that’s a full throttle decision to live.

Numbers tell us help is used, effective, lifesaving. Stories tell us it is possible from darkness to motion, from atrophied hope to feral purpose.

Here’s what to remember if the clutch feels stuck:

- Asking for help is not surrender. It’s an aggressive move forward.

- Recovery is rarely linear. The climb curves.

- Connection is part of the fuel. You are never doing this alone.

- Your story is not over.

Drop the Clutch. Lose the F*cks. Ride toward light.

If you or someone you know is struggling, do not wait. Call the Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 988 then pressing 1, or visit **988lifeline.org**. You are not alone, and you never will be.



YEAH, OR MEH?

Scorpion Cool Hand II Gloves

The Scorpion Cool Hand 2 Gloves are ventilated gloves with padded knuckles - light weight and functional for warm weather jaunts.

Features:

- Durable, leather palm with Nash overlay panels
- Ventilated, nylon mesh top maximizes airflow
- Pre-curved palm and fingers for grip comfort
- Molded, padded knuckle protector
- Lycra inner finger panels offer flexibility and comfort
- Rib-stretch finger expansion panels for flexibility
- TPR molded wrist closure provides a secure fit
- **NightViz** reflective piping for added nighttime visibility
- Color matched palm stitching accents

I'll be the first to admit — I may not always wear my helmet, but I always wear gloves when I ride. A good pair can make all the difference, especially when the temperature climbs. For the past year, I've been wearing the Scorpion EXO Cool Hand II Gloves, and overall, they've proven to be a decent choice for hot-weather riding.

These gloves breathe well, keeping your hands cool even when the pavement's cooking. After a full season of riding,



they're still in good shape — no holes or major wear — and they work great with touch screens, which is a nice bonus when you need to check your GPS or change a song on the go.



Now for the downsides. The Velcro closure design could definitely use some improvement. The placement causes the hook side to catch on the mesh material, leading

to fraying. It hasn't worn through yet, but it's only a matter of time. The Velcro also seems to attract anything soft — like Harley-Davidson sweats — so be careful when giving your favorite passenger a leg rub unless you want to take a little extra fabric along for the ride.

In short, the Scorpion EXO Cool Hand II Gloves do the job and keep you cool, but the closure design holds them back from being a top pick.

Verdict: ★★☆☆☆ (3 out of 5 stars) – Cool and comfortable, but that Velcro design needs work.

Final Take: Meh — good for hot weather, but the Velcro is a buzzkill.



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NOVEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1 HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY IRON HORSE BAR & GRILL
2 DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS	3	4	5	6	7	8 VETERANS DAY EVENT HOLESNOT HARLEY-DAVIDSON
9 LIMA, OHIO SWAP MEET	10	11 THANK YOU VETERANS	12	13	14	15 PRE-BLACK FRIDAY EVENT HOLESNOT HARLEY-DAVIDSON
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 THANKSGIVING EVENT HOLESNOT HARLEY-DAVIDSON
23	24	25	26 THANKSGIVING EVE BEETER'S BREW PUB THANKSGIVING BASH IRON HORSE BAR & GRILL THANKSGIVING EVE ROCK&ROLL BASH SCOOTER'S BAR & GRILL	27 THUNDER ROADS MICHIGAN Happy Thanksgiving	28 BLACK FRIDAY GILDER'S HARLEY-DAVIDSON BLACK FRIDAY HOLESNOT HARLEY-DAVIDSON	29 ORANGE SATURDAY GILDER'S HARLEY-DAVIDSON
30	1	2	3	4	5	6

RANDY MEYER LAMBERTVILLE, MI

I've owned quite a few different motorcycles since I first learned to ride on two wheels... believe it or not... at the Boys and Girls Club when I was younger and lived in California. It was on minibikes, but I don't think that they even offer that anymore. When I was older, I purchased my very first bike which was a Honda CB200 that I bought brand new and then I had a Honda 750 that I built myself that was 10 and a half feet from axle to axle. From there I owned some Triumphs, a Yamaha 650, and then I got my Panhead. It has been all Harley's since then. I'm partial to Harley's unfortunately. At one time my wife Melinda road her own too. I've been a member of H.O.G. since it started in 1983 and I've been a Legion Rider for about 5 years out of the American Legion Post #514 in Ida, MI.

I bought my first brand new Harley in California at San Diego Harley-Davidson. That day, I reenlisted on the showroom floor with the United States Navy in 1981 and used my re-enlistment bonus to purchase the Superglide you see in the black and white photo with me in



uniform! I rode that bike all the way from San Diego back to Michigan to my mom and dad's house three times. I rode it to Grand Junction in Colorado where I tore the head off of it to fix a valve right there in the parking lot of the Harley-Davidson dealer to get back on the road. I had that bike for 8 years. I served for twelve years.

I've ridden in all 50 of the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and have met some incredible people. My favorite bike to ride would have been my '50 Panhead. I really enjoyed it, but it wasn't really a bike to go coast-to-coast on. It was a tank shift, foot clutch, all original 6-volt bike. Man, that thing was a lot of fun to ride. It was red paint with white leather.



Back in California I started out as an area Rep for Modified Motorcycle Association that was started by Ron Roloff and Dollye Roloff and then I became a state rep for them before moving back here to Michigan. It was a lot of fun. I got to meet a lot of interesting people. It's a large MRO kinda like ABATE and it's been around a long time.

My current bike is 2009 Road King which I also bought brand new on Black Friday. I started with a Stage I tune on it, the Progressive suspension on the front and rear, and added the fairing and paint. I knew exactly what I wanted the paint to look like and the guy that did it matched exactly what I had in mind. He is still around but I don't think he is painting any longer. It's been a good runner, and I've got almost one hundred thousand miles on it now.

One of the most memorable rides I've taken in the past was to Sturgis City Park back in the early 80's. It was the last year that it was open to camping before they came in and shut it all down. The good ole days. The next year is when

the larger campgrounds that people now know of started opening up, like the Buffalo Chip. The last time I went to Sturgis was in 2005 and I don't plan to go back unless it's just to ride. Sturgis is just too commercialized and it's not what it used to be. A lot of memories.

One of the places that I would like to attend is Bikes Blues & BBQ down in Arkansas. I haven't been there before and I'm thinking about making it out there in 2026. It looks more like a small town.

I'd also like to make it back out to the Grand Tetons and Glacier again. If you have never been to either of them, you owe it to yourself to go. Keep an eye on Glacier when traveling on the Going-to-the-Sun Rd when it's open. If you plan to go, make it in July because in late August and September you'll get snowed in there and you aint going to get there. You aint going to make it. There is a very small window that Going-to-the-Sun Highway is open, but it is beautiful!



Veterans Gear Down for the Season

As fall settles in and the days grow shorter, a familiar sound still lingers on backroads and scenic routes across the country—the steady, rumbling thunder of motorcycles making their final seasonal rides. For many veterans, these last few outings before winter are more than just a way to enjoy the open road—they’re a time-honored ritual, full of reflection, respect, and preparation.

Veteran riders often speak of the road as a kind of therapy—an open highway that offers peace, clarity, and camaraderie. Whether riding solo or as part of a tight-knit group, the connection between man, machine, and memory runs deep.

By late October, many veteran motorcycle clubs and informal riding groups gather for end-of-season rides. These rides often pass by war memorials, historic landmarks, or meaningful places that evoke the shared experiences of service and sacrifice. There’s an unspoken understanding among the riders—each mile traveled is both a tribute and a release.

Once the engines quiet and the road fades behind them, a different ritual begins: preparing the bikes for winter storage.

Garages and sheds transform into workspaces as riders begin the careful process of winterizing their motorcycles. Fuel is stabilized. Batteries are disconnected and placed on trickle chargers. Chains are oiled, tires checked, and every surface cleaned and covered. The chrome that once gleamed in the sunlight is now wrapped in care and protection, waiting patiently for spring’s return.

For many, this process isn’t just mechanical—it’s personal. These bikes represent more than transportation. They symbolize freedom, resilience, and the bonds forged in service. Caring for them is an extension of the pride veterans carry long after their time in uniform.

As the final cover is pulled over a well-kept machine and the garage door closes for the season, there’s a sense of completion—and anticipation. Winter may bring a pause, but it never ends the

journey. When the thaw arrives and the engines roar to life once more, these veterans will return to the road, carrying with them the stories of the past and the promise of another ride ahead.

Winter Storage Checklist for Veterans and Riders Alike:

- **Stabilize Fuel:** Add fuel stabilizer and run the engine briefly to circulate it.
- **Charge the Battery:** Use a smart charger to maintain battery life.
- **Clean and Dry:** Wash the bike thoroughly to prevent rust and corrosion.
- **Cover Properly:** Use a breathable, high-quality cover to protect from dust and moisture.
- **Tire Care:** Inflate to proper PSI and, if possible, elevate the tires or move the bike occasionally.



Sharon K Harvey,
USAF (Retired)

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HOT RODS TOPICS

November...I want to thank everyone who attended our 5th Annual Car & Bike Show! It was a total success! The hard work and efforts put forth by the members of our foundation is what made the event so great. Everyone pitched in and did their part. God bless all of you! The Sponsor support was amazing. The Vendor displays were entertaining - especially W4 Country, Germain Toyota and The Motorcycle Lawyer: Jason Waechter. The 9/11 Tribute highlighted Gary Bourdeau and the Color Guard, Ryan Goodemoot singing God Bless America as well as recognizing the Police and Fire Department for their continued support to the communities they serve. And the friendship and camaraderie shared by all just made it a fantastic day. We truly cannot thank everyone enough.

The last month has kept George and Barb as well as many other members busy attending different community events and helping to spread the word about motorcycle awareness and suicide prevention. Thank you to everyone who showed up to help. We are very grateful.

We have many new adventures coming up as we celebrate fall: A hayride, Trunk-or-Treat at Germain Toyota, Downtown Milan Trick-or-Treat and a presentation at the Milan Senior

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Life is full of many challenges and recently I've faced one of my own as I was diagnosed with cancer. To all of you who are out there battling demons, cancer, or other concerns, may you keep up the good fight and never ever give up. "You are NOT alone". Please reach out if you need help. Remember the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 988.

Stay safe,

HOT ROD BEATON

President / Hot Rods Motorcycle Awareness and Suicide Prevention Foundation

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JOKER'S WILD

Don't ya' just think it's whacked how in scary movies, the person yells out "Hello?" As if the killer is going to be like, "Oh hey, I'm here in the kitchen, wanna split a sandwich?"

Anyone want to meet up and just scream? We could get food after.

I don't know who needs to hear this, but it's SO okay to love your cat or dog more than most people. Never apologize for that.

I totally believe in annoyed at first sight.

Wanted: Someone to brush their teeth with me because 9 out of 10 Dentists say brushing alone won't help tooth decay. No weirdos please.

Attention Teenagers - Tired of being harassed by your stupid parents? Act Now! Move out. Get A Job. Pay your bills, but act now, while you still know everything!

Life Hack: Keep a 30 year old fridge in your garage so you will still have a working fridge when the one you bought 2 years ago stops working this year.

An old lady was having her portrait painted. She asked the Artist to paint her with a diamond necklace, long diamond earrings, emerald bracelets, a ruby brooch, and a gold Rolex with at least \$150k.

The confused Artist said, "But you aren't wearing any of those things."

The old lady replied: "I know, but if i die before my husband, I'm sure he'll marry someone 3 times younger than him, and I want his new wife to go batchit crazy searching for my jewelry."

A lil' boy about 9 y.o. asked his father, "Dad, what is between Mom's legs?" The father sighed and replied, "The door to Heaven!" The boy then asked, "Then what is between yours?" The Dad smiled and replied, "The key to the Heavenly Door!" The boy looked concerned and said, "I think you should change the lock because our neighbor has a spare key."

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS' WISHING YOU A GRATEFUL & SHARING THANKSGIVING.

Joker's Wild composed by: Toni McCoy Shearon | thunderroadsfounder@gmail.com

The best part of waking up When you've had 4 bowls for breakfast and only 1 was cereal.

I might be laid back, but I can lean forward really quick.

Don't mess with anyone under 5'5", we have had to hop up on counters our entire life to get stuff, don't think we won't hesitate to hop on you like a spider monkey.

I love when Vets knock before they come into the room, like yes, my dog is naked but she also just arrived at your clinic that way.

Sometimes I truly envy people who get mad but stay classy. Once I lose my chit it's like open mic at the trap house.

If this don't take you back ----- Long Haired Freaky People Need Not Apply ----- then you're too young to be cool.

You call if "coffee", I call it the elixir that keeps me from being on America's 10 most wanted list.

Me, yet again in HR office, "Does this new rule apply to me?" HR: "Yes, the majority of our rules are because of you, so yes."

My ancestors navigated the ocean using the moon and stars & I'm over here missing exits with a GPS.

Friend: Aww, he's so dang cute!
Me: Thanks, he's a rescue
Boyfriend: Stop telling people that!

I wonder if the people paying \$500. for a colon cleanse even know about Taco Bell's \$4.99 deal?

A woman and her hubby are standing back to back and each is holding a sign and both Very excited, hers' reads: You're Going To Be A Daddy! His reads: Heard You Telling Your Sister On The PhoneI Had A Vesectomy 3 Years Ago!

You do know that I would go to hell and back for you. Me: You don't have to come back.



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NOVEMBER 2025

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Akron, MI
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November 8

- Veterans Day Event
Holeshot Harley-Davidson
4741 E. Pickard St.
Mt. Pleasant, MI
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November 9

- Lima, Ohio Swap Meet
Allen County Fairgrounds
I-75 Exit 125 [St. Rt. 309] East 2
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Lima, Ohio
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November 15

- Pre-Black Friday Event
Holeshot Harley-Davidson
4741 E. Pickard St.
Mt. Pleasant, MI
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November 22

- Thanksgiving Event
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November 26

- Thanksgiving Eve -
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- Thanksgiving Eve Rock&Roll Bash
Scooter's Bar & Grill
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November 28

- Black Friday
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2723 S. M-76
West Branch, MI
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-Black Friday
Holeshot Harley-Davidson
4741 E. Pickard St.
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November

- Orange Saturday
Gildner's Harley-Davidson
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