In The Veterans Service Office is happy to announce that we applied for American Rescue Plan dollars to bolster our existing County benefits. We were approved for $100,000 for food assistance, and $100,000 for housing and utilities assistance. The process is the same as our Extended Services benefits through the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Fund. Please be sure to have your DD214/Discharge Document/NGB22, proof of dependency (marriage license, birth certificate), and income information available to access these benefits.
Some of the veterans in our community may know Chief Petty Officer Lenn Boston as the Commander of VFW Post 827 where he has manned the helm of that veteran organization for the past 2 ½ years. However, other individuals may better know him from his involvement with ‘Parent to Parent USA’ which provides emotional and informational support for families of children who have special needs. Mr. Boston not only serves on the Board of Directors of P2P USA but also chairs their “Father Engagement” subcommittee which focuses on helping fathers of children with special needs become more involved.

Needless to say, Chief Petty Officer Lenn Boston has taken it upon himself to go the extra mile and make a positive, lasting impact in our community through his volunteer work and desire to serve others. As such, he is being honored by the Kalamazoo County Veteran Affairs Committee [KCVAC] and the Veterans Service Office [VSO] as our “Veteran of the Quarter” in August 2022. Michael Fry, the Chairman for the KCVAC, had the privilege to sit down with Chief Petty Officer Lenn Boston to discuss his military service, his passion for serving others, and his disdain for unsweetened iced tea.
Name: Lenn Boston
Spouse: Latrieva Boston
Children: Kenyana (32), Ashante (29), Maleek (27), Chloe (12).
Grandchildren: DJ (6), Aries (1).
Place of Employment: Retired Realtor – Cressy & Everett Real Estate
Military Branch: United States Navy
Years of Service: 1989-2009
Rank: Chief Petty Officer
Military Occupational Specialty: Sonar Technician
Duty Stations: San Diego, CA; Charleston, SC; Mayport, FL; Bahrain; and Norfolk, VA
Notable Assignments: USS Nicholson; USS Carney; Fleet Training Center; and USS Laboon

What were some of the reasons you joined the military?

Chief Petty Officer Boston graduated high school and set out to pursue a career as an electrical engineer. However, once he ran out of money he decided not to return to trade school. Turning to the military seemed to be a logical alternative for the younger Lenn Boston. After all, his uncle served in the military as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 and he had a strong desire to travel and see the world. From there, it didn’t take long for him to find himself inside a Navy recruiting office. The rest was history.

What are some of the things you remember most about your time in the service?

He grew up in Chicago which fittingly earned him the title “Chi-Town” from his fellow servicemembers. However, as time went on the nicknames and sarcastic jokes grew into long lasting friendships. Boston recalls travelling all over the East coast during his time in the service – spending one weekend with a sailor and their respective family who graciously opened their home to a group of young, rambunctious sailors – while spending the next weekend at a college campus and enjoying the festivities surrounding a homecoming game.
How do you think your time in the military affected you?

Chief Petty Officer Boston is adamant that serving in the military dramatically affected his life. The Navy taught him that learning how to be a professional is important – a lesson that the younger Lenn Boston still needed to learn near the beginning of his military career. Boston excelled in his duties as a Sonar Technician and his confidence in the workplace was often perceived as arrogance – rightfully so. His peers continued to view him as a “hothead” until the Navy instilled in him the discipline, bearing, and temperament that he carries with him to this day. The Navy provided him with the structure and sense of belonging that he needed at the time in order to mature into a more professional version of himself.

What are some of the things that you miss the most about being in the service?

He misses the conversations and relationships – something that can be easily taken for granted while in the service. He learned new things about people on a regular basis. He also misses travelling and having the opportunity to serve as an ambassador during his deployments around the world. The “Adopt A Sailor” program in Europe and elsewhere abroad afforded him with the opportunity to experience different cultures and represent his country in households that had little to no interaction with an American up until that point. Those are some of the experiences that he’ll miss the most from his time in the Navy.

Is there anything you wish civilians understood about military service?

He wants civilians to understand that mental health isn’t being properly addressed in our society – especially when it comes to our veterans as they leave the service. He argues that veterans can’t solely depend on their local VA Medical Center to receive proper healthcare when it comes to their mental well-being. Chief Petty Officer Boston stresses that there needs to be more resources available to veterans in our communities. He also emphasizes that our veteran organizations need to get more involved when it comes to this topic. For instance, as the Commander of VFW Post 827, his organization recently hosted a “Veteran Mental Health Standdown” in June 2022 in an effort to destigmatize mental health and help connect veterans and their families with different resources around Kalamazoo.

Please welcome us in congratulating Chief Petty Officer Lenn Boston as our Veteran of the Quarter! Thank you for your service to our nation.

Semper Fortis. Always Courageous.
VSO Highlight:
Annual Veterans Stand Down

The Kalamazoo County Veterans Service Office is thrilled to once again be hosting the 2022 Kalamazoo Veterans Stand Down. We are so grateful to be back to in a in-person model this year! No registration is required, and bussing will once again be provided free of charge for veterans to attend the event. Please be sure to have your VA Healthcare ID, DD214, or your State ID/Driver’s License with the veterans indicator in order to utilize the free bussing on the day of the event. We look forward to seeing our veterans on September 30.
This Month in Military History

September 2, 1945 - President Harry Truman declared V-J Day (Victory over Japan Day) commemorating the formal Japanese surrender to the Allies aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

September 2, 1962 - Soviet Russia agreed to send arms to Cuba, leading to the October Missile Crisis after the shipments were discovered by the U.S.

September 4, 1886 - The last major U.S.-Indian war came to an end as Geronimo was captured. He died of natural causes in 1909 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

September 17, 1862 - The bloodiest day in U.S. military history occurred as General Robert E. Lee and the Confederate armies were stopped at Antietam in Maryland by General George B. McClellan and numerically superior Union forces. By nightfall 26,000 men were dead, wounded, or missing.

September 18, 1947 - The U.S. Air Force was established as a separate military service.

September 22, 1776 - During the American Revolution, Nathan Hale was executed without a trial after he was caught spying on British troops on Long Island, his last words, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

September 24, 1957 - President Dwight Eisenhower ordered the National Guard to enforce racial integration of schools in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Meet Our Staff: Lauren King

Hello! My name is Lauren King, and I am so honored to be the Supervisor of the Kalamazoo County Veterans Service Office! I grew up in Portage and Plainwell and graduated from WMU with a Bachelor of Science degree in 2010, followed by three months with AmeriCorps. In 2012 I started working for the County in the Parks Department and transitioned to the VSO in March of 2016 as the Administrative Assistant. The office saw a bit of turnover through 2017, and I told myself that our veterans deserved better- so I applied to become a Veterans Service Officer (I got the job!). In 2018 the opportunity to become the Supervisor became available, and I didn't hesitate. I knew this office was where I wanted to be and serving our veterans has quickly become my passion. When I'm not working, I spend most of my time with my almost 12-year-old son, Logan. We spend our time traveling, reading, gardening, skiing, and "lake life." In addition, I am the adopted mom of Muse, a Persian/Siamese mix, and Kaiari, a Shar Pei/Golden/German Shepherd mix, who is on the path to becoming a therapy dog. Oh, and 13 chickens! Thanks for letting me be here to serve you; it is truly a pleasure.
Test Your Knowledge: Military Trivia

1. Why is Veterans Day observed on November 11?
   a. That is the date on which World War I ended  
   b. That is the date World War II ended  
   c. That is the date the Civil War ended  
   d. That is the date the Gulf War ended

2. What was the original name of Veterans Day?
   a. Patriots Day  
   b. Armistice Day  
   c. Victory Day  
   d. Military Day

3. Who was the President who signed the 1954 bill proclaiming November 11 Veterans Day?
   a. President Reagan  
   b. President Eisenhower  
   c. President Lincoln  
   d. President Clinton

4. Approximately how many living Veterans are there?
   a. 15 million  
   b. 25 million  
   c. 9 million  
   d. 18 million

5. How many Veterans are woman?
   a. 2 million  
   b. 4 million  
   c. 3 million  
   d. 7 million

Trivia Answers:
1) a, 2) b, 3) b, 4) d, 5) c
UPCOMING EVENTS:

Seeking Nominations for the 2022 Kalamazoo County Veteran of the Year Award

Now through October 7th, 2022, the Kalamazoo Veterans Events Committee will welcome nominations for the 2022 Kalamazoo Veteran of the Year Award.

Follow the QR Code for the nomination form!

Kalamazoo County Homeless Veterans

KALAMAZOO COUNTY LZ
STAND DOWN 2022

Services Available:
- Michigan Works
- Footprints of Michigan
- Housing Resources, Inc.
- Salvation Army
- Integrated Services of Kalamazoo
- KVCC Dental and Nursing
- Medical Screenings
- Health Care for Homeless Veterans
- VA Substance Use Services
- My HealthVet
- VA Nutrition Services
- Free Haircuts by Hair N Company
- HVSEP Employment Assistance
- Military 2VA Program
- Loaves and Fishes
- HCS Vaccine and Health Screening

Friday, September 30, 2022
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Salvation Army Center
1700 South Burdick Street, Kalamazoo

You MUST bring a government issued picture ID. Also encouraged to bring DD214, VA ID, or Military ID. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m.
Bussing provided free of charge to Veterans with ID by Kalamazoo Metro.

For additional information please call (269) 373-5361