



# VFW to Salute America's Military Heroes at MIS

## VFW 200 provides national platform to raise awareness and funds for veterans' issues

Aug 10, 2012

**BROOKLYN, Mich.** — As America's oldest and largest major combat veterans' organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is proud to announce their line-up of military support programs and activities for the VFW 200 NASCAR race weekend at Michigan International Speedway (MIS), August 16-19.

This year marks the fourth year of the MIS-VFW partnership, including three years as the title sponsor of the VFW 200 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race. The sponsorship at MIS allows the VFW a national platform to recognize and salute veterans as well as raise awareness about the urgent needs of U.S. military personnel and their families.

"It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to once again partner with MIS in this most important event," said VFW National Commander John E. Hamilton. "Not only is the intent of the event to bolster the morale of our troops, but at a time when demand to meet the urgent needs of U.S. military service personnel and their families becomes more difficult, it allows us to get the word out about our various programs and services. These include free communication options for troops overseas so they can call home on a regular basis and financial assistance to their families for rent, mortgage, utilities, vehicle repair, food and medicine."

"We are happy with our partnership with the VFW and are excited to help them salute the veterans on a national platform," MIS President Roger Curtis said. "We thank all the men and women who have served in the military and it is great to be associated with an organization that carries the same commitment. The VFW 200 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race will be a great event and we cannot wait to welcome all the military and

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their families.”

In addition to the VFW 200 race, the VFW and the VFW Foundation have several programs and activities planned at MIS to raise awareness and funds to meet the needs of America’s active and retired military, their families and communities:

**Salute to Military Families:** The VFW, along with supporting sponsor NSK Corporation, will honor over 400 local military guests at the Salute to Military Families hospitality event on Sunday, August 19, for the Pure Michigan 400. Guests will enjoy complimentary pre-race hospitality, goody bags, event t-shirts, pit tours, celebrity appearances, special access to pre-race ceremonies compliments of MIS and grandstand tickets for the Pure Michigan 400.

Today’s military salaries often don’t afford U.S. service members the luxury of attending sporting events or entertainment activities. The Salute to Military Families program was designed to provide unique, VIP experiences at these venues to recognize veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice. Since 2009, the VFW and the VFW Foundation has hosted over 1300 local military guests to this special race event at MIS.

**Hometown Hero:** Specialist John Rendak, U.S. Army National Guard, and his wife Gina of Grand Rapids, Michigan, will attend the race weekend as special guests of the VFW. As the Hometown Hero, Specialist Rendak and his wife will receive exclusive VIP access, including weekend RV accommodations at MIS; admissions to the VFW pit road suite and Salute to Military Families. In addition they will receive garage passes; pace car rides; introductions at the VFW 200 drivers’ meeting and pre-race ceremonies passes. After the race they will have access to the VFW 200 victory lane celebration, including a photograph with the race winner.

Specialist Rendak served in the U.S. Army as a Sergeant from 1981 to 1987 with service in Germany and Honduras. Since 2009, Specialist Rendak has served the U.S. Army National Guard and has served tours in Iraq and Kuwait.

**Military Ticket Discount presented by VFW:** Active or retired U.S. Military personnel and/or VFW members receive great ticket discounts to all MIS races in August. Sunday tickets start at just \$17.50, and discounts are available for Friday and Saturday events. Tickets can be purchased at [www.mispeedway.com/military](http://www.mispeedway.com/military). Offer expires August 13, 2012.

**50/50 Charity Raffle benefitting the VFW Foundation:** The VFW Foundation will benefit from an exciting new program at MIS, giving fans the chance to win a daily cash prize with proceeds split between the winning ticketholder and the VFW Foundation. Raffle tickets will be sold Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the New Holland Fan Plaza and inside the ticket gates. Winning ticket numbers will be announced at MIS each day and will be posted online following the event.

Funds raised will support the military assistance programs of the VFW, including:

- Unmet Needs, which has provided more than \$4.3 million in direct financial assistance to over 3,100 military families for rent, mortgage, utilities, vehicle repair, medical expenses and basic food expenses;
- Operation Uplink, which has provided over 6.6 million free connections home for deployed troops and hospitalized veterans since 2006; and
- Military Assistance Program, which provides troops and their families critical support before, during and after deployment and has hosted nearly 2 million military families at events worldwide since 2007.

**Race Program Fundraiser:** Michigan International Speedway and Americrown have partnered to donate a dollar from every program sold to the VFW. Americrown sells the official race weekend program at 33 different locations at MIS.

**Honoring Our History Travelling Gallery:** The VFW has partnered with Waddell & Reed to bring the Honoring Our History Tour to the New Holland Fan Plaza at MIS, August 17-19. The custom 18-wheel “big rig” truck has been transformed into a travelling World War I gallery. The unique exhibit offers a free, interactive and educational experience designed by the National World War I Museum – the first and only American museum solely dedicated to preserving the artifacts, history and personal experiences of World War I.

The travelling gallery features 66 World War I artifacts, such as weapons, uniforms, posters and flags and was developed by Waddell & Reed to celebrate the company’s 75th anniversary. The company’s founders, Chauncy Waddell and Cameron Reed, were both veterans of World War I. The exhibit includes Waddell’s flight gear, his flight suit and log book.

The exhibit's mission is to raise awareness and funding for museums and cultural institutions across the country. By travelling to 75 cities in nearly every state, Waddell & Reed hopes to raise \$500,000 in total donations over the course of the year. Funds raised at MIS will be split between the National World War I Museum and the VFW Foundation. For more information, please visit [www.honoringourhistory.com](http://www.honoringourhistory.com).

**National Anthem Performance by VFW National Home for Children Chorus:**

Members of the VFW National Home for Children Chorus will perform the National Anthem during pre-race ceremony for the VFW 200 Camping World Truck Series race. They will also receive complimentary tickets to enjoy the VFW 200 race at MIS.

The VFW National Home for Children, located in Eaton Rapids, Mich., serves as a living memorial to America's veterans by helping our nation's veterans and military families. For more information, visit [www.vfwnationalhome.org](http://www.vfwnationalhome.org).

**Goodyear Gives Back Care Package Event:** The VFW and Goodyear have teamed up to host a care package event at MIS on Thursday, August 16. Care packages will be assembled by local volunteers, including VFW members, at MIS and shipped to troops stationed overseas with a special focus on Michigan-based units. The event is part of the annual Goodyear Gives Back program benefitting deployed U.S. Armed Forces and their families directly and through programs operated by Support Our Troops. Consumers and race fans can learn more by visiting [www.Goodyear.com/GivesBack](http://www.Goodyear.com/GivesBack).

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**About the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW):** The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is a nonprofit veterans service organization composed of combat veterans and those currently serving in uniform. Founded in 1899 and chartered by Congress in 1936, the VFW is the nation's largest organization of war veterans and its oldest major veterans organization. With more than 2 million members located in more than 7,400 VFW Posts worldwide, NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS. VFW and its Auxiliaries are dedicated to veterans service, community service, legislative advocacy and military service programs nationwide. For more information or to join, visit our website at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

**About the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Foundation:** The VFW Foundation is the official charity of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW), America's oldest and largest service group for combat veterans. The mission of the VFW Foundation is to support programs that secure, manage and distribute resources to improve the lives of veterans, military service personnel, their families and communities. These programs and services are provided at no cost to the recipients. The VFW Foundation is one of the nation's highest rated 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. For more information, please visit [www.vfwfoundation.org](http://www.vfwfoundation.org).

**About Michigan International Speedway:**

*Nestled in the lush Irish Hills of Southeastern Michigan, Michigan International Speedway is the Great Escape, a venerable NASCAR national park where fans can get away and enjoy the very best in racing and camaraderie. It's the love of racing and the thrill of a great time for race fans and drivers alike.*