

2025

# Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal

Leave no ornament behind!



Each year, November 1<sup>st</sup> marks the beginning of LMVFM's annual Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal. Each gift received between **November 1-January 31** sponsors the adoption of a one-of-a-kind, handcrafted ornament which is named for the donor. Your ornament, which was made by a veteran or family member will be hung on our Christmas tree, photographed, and posted on our Facebook page, and website for you or someone you have honoured to see.

By sponsoring for adoption one of our ornaments, you are helping us to provide **free** Christ centered counselling and services, in the coming year to those who have sacrificed so much for the freedoms that we enjoy. There are over 300 ornaments, including a large number of *military themed ornaments* representing each branch of service waiting to be adopted in honour of your serving military member or veteran.

**Adopt your ornament today** with a gift of any amount to LMVFM. online at [lmvfm.org](http://lmvfm.org) or by mail to LMVFM Christmas Appeal, 3480 Stellhorn Rd., Fort Wayne, IN 46815.

Your Thrivent Choice Dollars help us help our veterans and their families.

Donating your Thrivent Choice Dollars is easy  
Call 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted say "Thrivent Choice" which will connect you to a friendly Customer Care Agent and tell them that you would like to donate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to:  
**Lutheran Military Veterans & Families Ministries.**

**Lutheran Military Veterans & Families Ministries**  
3480 Stellhorn Rd.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46815  
260-755-2239

Online Donations help us help them!



Scan with your phone



It's easy and it won't cost you a dime!

You can help support our work with veterans and their families by registering your **Kroger Plus Card** and selecting "Lutheran Military Veterans & Families Ministries" to receive rewards.

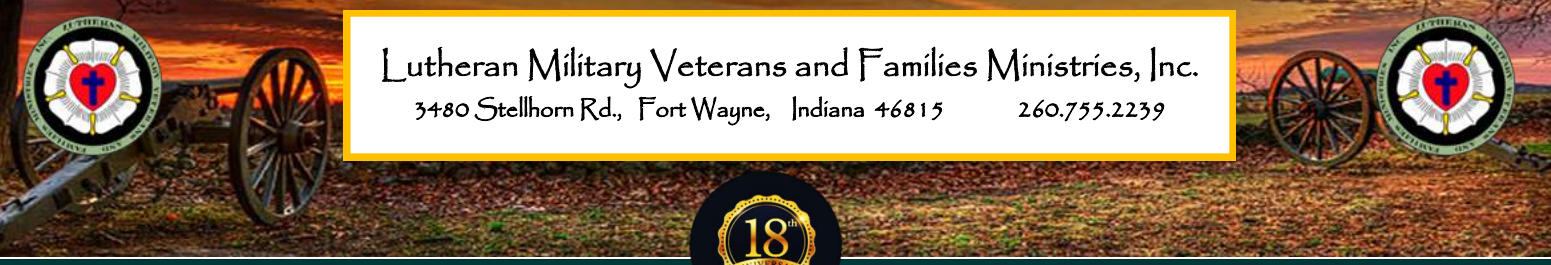
### Enrolling your Kroger Card

- Enrolling your Kroger Card is easy by either calling: **1-866-221-4141**, and when prompted giving the number **YY371** for Lutheran Military Veterans & Families Ministries, or
- on-line at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com)



LMVFM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit ministry.  
Your gifts are tax-deductible

Find us on Facebook



Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.  
3480 Stellhorn Rd., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46815 260.755.2239



Fall

2025

**"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him."**  
James 1:12

As we celebrated our 18th birthday (21 October) I reflected on a question I was asked many years ago: "If you only had today, what you had thanked God for yesterday, what would you have right now?" It's a question that guides our ministry team especially during our morning prayers.

So in answer to the question we will begin by thanking God for the two missions he gave us 18 years ago. The first mission was to provide our nation's veterans, contractors and their family members with free Christ centered counselling and care-without caveat. The second mission was to provide congregations, groups and others with the training they need to also care for them. The sticky bit to this was that is we were to accomplish this without any government funding or assistance. All of our funding and resources we would need would have to come through ministry friends, congregations, nongovernment grants, and fundraising efforts. As an introvert, the thought of having to go out and ask people for the money needed was more than overwhelming.



Fortunately, God knew how challenging fundraising would be for me. In our 3d year of ministry, He planted the idea of launching our annual Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal (see pg 4). The appeal, which raised just under 10k that first year, raised just over 100k in 2024. The funds from these appeals have served as our primary fundraiser and have allowed us to provide the thousands of hours of free counselling and resources to our veterans, contractors and their family members over these 18 years

The ability to provide free counselling and care to our veterans, contractors and their family members, without caveat, is an honor. More importantly, the greatest blessing comes when we are able to share with them that the reason their care is free, is because people who honor their service and care about them have paid for them to receive it, as Christ Himself has done for us. For many, it has been the first time that they have heard of His love, and see it in action.

We thank God for providing us with the many ministry opportunities we've had to educate and assist congregations and groups in their mission to care for the veterans, contractors and families in their communities across the country.

Often times people who have not served or had someone in their family serve in the military do not feel that they know enough to help those in need of counselling or support. By working and educating congregations and groups about the unique challenges of military service we increase their confidence and ability to work and minister effectively to those within their own communities.

One of the greatest gifts God presented us with this year, is our intern Carley Kenefic. Carley who is in her senior year of high school, is a military "brat" feels called to be an Air Force Chaplain. Her time with us is filled with a mixture of administrative tasks as well as military related tasks including education about the unique challenges of military service that Chaplains are often called upon to deal with among services members and their families.



We are thankful not only for the support, gifts and talents that Carley brings to LMVFM, but for God giving us the opportunity to help her in her journey to military chaplaincy.

As we continue our Journey into this 18th year of ministry we thank God for bringing us through this point in ministry.

2025 has been a challenging year for our ministry. Often times there is the temptation to view challenges in the negative because they often hit at the worst time possible. However, if we've learned anything over these years is that every challenge is also a gift that provides us with the opportunity grow, and make better things that need to be repaired before they are broken, or replaced after they do. Thank you God for the challenges you have provided us and the growth that has come from them.

Leslie

# Holiday Support for our Homefront Hero's: Military Caregivers



Creating a holiday plan can also ease stress. By making a schedule for shopping, decorating, and cooking, caregivers can manage their time better. It's important to involve veterans in the planning process. Veterans need to have a voice in holiday planning. When veterans feel included in decisions, have their needs heard it helps them feel valued and connected to the family.

Additionally, caregivers should prioritize self-care. They must take time for their own needs, even during the holiday rush. This could mean setting aside a few moments each day for relaxation, such as a short walk or enjoying a favorite hobby. Caregivers who take care of themselves are better equipped to support their loved ones.

Throughout the year, and especially during the holidays Churches have the ability to be a great source of support for veterans and their families. If your congregation is interested in helping veterans and their families we would welcome the opportunity to assist you. Please feel free to contact us at: 260.755.2239

The holiday season should be a time of joy and happiness, but for family members caring for veterans, it can bring unique challenges. Veterans may face physical injuries, mental health issues, or emotional distress that can affect their well-being during this time. Family caregivers often take on the responsibility of supporting their loved ones while trying to create a festive atmosphere. This can create stress and pressure, making it harder for everyone to enjoy the holidays.

**There are an estimated 5.5 million military caregivers in the United States.**

One major challenge is the emotional strain that veterans may feel during the holidays. Many veterans experience memories of past traumas, especially if they served in combat. These feelings can resurface around this time of year, making it hard for them to relax and enjoy family gatherings. Family caregivers often express feeling helpless watching their veteran struggle during the holidays. At the heart of this, is the frustration of feeling as though they are walking on eggshells around their veteran as they try to help them, without making things worse.

Another challenge is time management. Caregivers often have to balance their caregiving duties with holiday preparations. This includes shopping for gifts, planning meals, and organizing family events. The extra work can become overwhelming, leading to burn-out. Caregivers might feel guilty if they can't give their loved ones their full attention during this busy time. They might also feel isolated, and simply tired as they may not have the chance to enjoy the holidays like others do.

**Military caregivers consistently experience worse health outcomes, greater strains in family relationships, and more workplace problems than non-caregivers.**

To support the well-being of family members caring for veterans, simple strategies can be put into place. First, open communication is essential. Caregivers should talk to the veterans about their feelings. Sharing worries can lighten the emotional load and help everyone feel more connected. It is important for caregivers to listen and be supportive without pushing for immediate solutions. A safe space to express emotions can make the holidays feel less daunting for both parties.

Another helpful strategy is to set realistic expectations. Rather than aiming for a perfect holiday, families need to focus on creating small, meaningful moments together. Instead of hosting or attending a big holiday party, families could plan a cozy dinner at home with favorite dishes. This can ease pressure on the caregiver and the veteran, allowing everyone to enjoy the simple pleasures of being together.

## We Want You...



2026 is right around the corner and we're already beginning to schedule visits with congregations around the country. We schedule our visits on a first come basis. With demand for our seminars and programs on the rise we want to encourage you to call us and get on our yearly calendar at a time that works best for you.



And, yes, in answer to the question that is always asked, Yes we will bring "the dog" (Dooly or Cooper)!

**To schedule your "Binding the Wounds of War" seminar call: (260)755-2239.**

# LMVFM's 18th year: Serving *with Christ's Love* those who serve



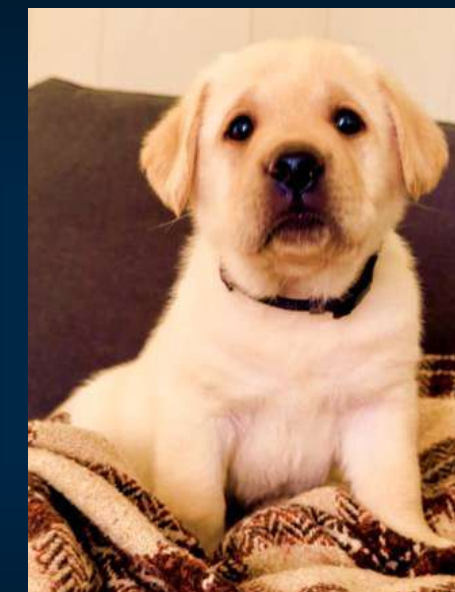
Team "LMVFM" were so blessed to celebrate our 18th Birthday in October at Granite City Food & Brewery surrounded by our family, friends, ministry partners, veterans, and others. As we begin our march into this new year, we thank God for the support He has and continues to provide us.



## Paws & Effects



Cooper recently celebrated his first birthday. During his first year of training Cooper has shown himself to be a natural working with our clients.



On the 3d of November, we welcomed to our Paws & Effects Pack, "Sir Winston-Stanley-Kipling"



Dooly, who is a favorite among LMVFM friends celebrated his 7th birthday in October. He continues to serve as the leader of LMVFM's Paws & Effects Pack.