



Commander's Corner



Welcome to a brand new year. I hope you all had a great Christmas/ Hanukkah and that you will have a very happy and prosperous New Year. I also hope that we continue our growth and can come up with more ways to serve and help our veterans.

As we head into 2023 we are building a partnership with Washtenaw Community College. Since our participation in last year's VetFest WCC seems to have formed a bond with us. Chaplain Bull approached them about moving the Veterans Resource Center to their facility and they welcomed it with open arms. They are now meeting in the TI building on the second floor. They are also sponsoring a table and paying for part of the cost of our 100th anniversary dinner at their facility. We are partnering with them to hold this year's VetFest at their facility.

We are heading into our busy season now and I hope some of you will step up and help out. There are several ways that you can participate that does not include hardly any physical activity. Several of those events are 1) the U of M ROTC Tri- Service Awards at Rackham Hall. Twenty-four recipients will receive a certificate, and a Legion ribbon and medal. Three cadets/midshipmen will receive a certificate and a small Post 46 scholarship. 2) After that, we have our annual Poppy Drive. This year not only will we hold the event at the two Busch's but we have also added a separate one which will take place at the Maple Village Kroger. Details and signup will be sent out later. As in the past the Busch's poppy proceeds will go to support WACU. The Kroger proceeds will go to Guitars for Vets. 3) We will be honoring the security police at the Kettles VA Hospital by providing them with lunch. This has become a yearly tradition for our post. 4) We will be placing a wreath again this year on Memorial Day at Veterans Memorial Park for all the members we have lost in the past year, and for all vets who have given the ultimate sacrifice.

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Fisher House Detroit Update

Detroit, MI – 1/4/2023 – The Dingell VAMC has acquired property in Detroit for the site of a new Fisher House, which will provide temporary accommodations for the families and caregivers of Veterans and active-duty military receiving care at Detroit VA medical facilities.

"We are so thrilled! This brings us one step closer to opening the doors to Fisher House Detroit," said Amy Kennebeck, interim director for Dingell VAMC. "We are fortunate to find a site this close to the medical center to provide a home away from home for the families of Veterans while they are treated at Detroit VA."



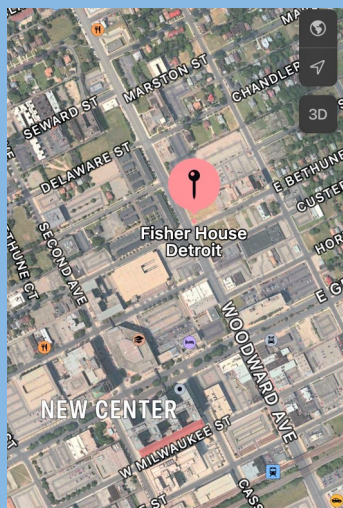
Fisher House Michigan is raising funds for the construction of the VA Detroit Fisher House. Those interested in supporting this project can find more information at www.fisherhousemichigan.org.



Fisher House Executive Director Kate Melcher said "We've been looking forward to this announcement since 2018, and we are grateful for financial support from Detroiters and Michiganders from every county in our state. Their support will be life-changing for the thousands of Veteran families who will stay in the 20-suite VA Detroit Fisher House for years to come."

About the Detroit VA

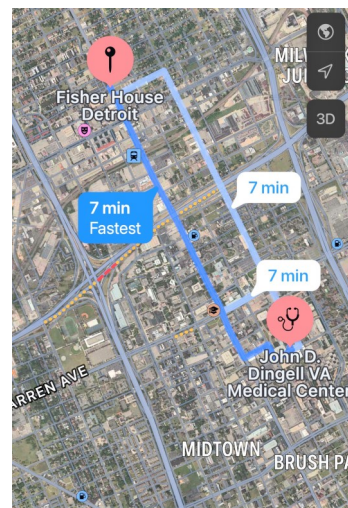
Since 1939, the Detroit VA Healthcare System has been improving the health of the men and women who have so proudly served our nation. In 1996, the medical center moved from Allen Park, Michigan to the current location on John R. in Detroit. One of the newer VA facilities in the country, we consider it our privilege to serve the health care needs of our Veterans. Services are available to more than 330,000 Veterans living in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and St. Clair counties. This population represents approximately forty-four percent of the Veteran population in the lower peninsula of Michigan. For more information, visit www.detroit.va.gov.



The Detroit Fisher House will be located at 7618 Woodward Avenue near The Lodge and I-94 interchange, in the iconic New Center neighborhood. It is located at the former site of Lelli's Steakhouse.



The Detroit Fisher House will be located approximately seven minutes from the Dingell VAMC.



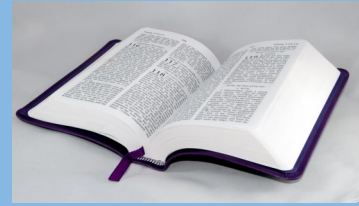
WORDS OF REFLECTION

“Father God, You know that it can be difficult for a person who has returned from battle or stressful military service to reintegrate into ‘normal’ everyday life. You know that veterans can feel isolated and alone even in the midst of their friends and families because there are few around who understand their experience. So I ask You to place in the path of our veterans those who do understand (or strive to), that they may feel less alone. Remind them often that while their fellow human beings may never fully comprehend, You see, You know and You identify with them in everything.”

“Lord, You know how deep a warrior’s wounds go. You know the loss that many of our veterans carry in body and soul. You know the memories that haunt them and the scars that many of them continue to carry. Please bring healing to those veterans who still hurt. Please grant patience and wisdom to those around them who cannot understand but can sometimes help the healing process. Please apply both natural and supernatural medicine to their wounds.”

“Almighty God, You know every veteran by name. You know their deeds, their hard work, and their perseverance. You know their needs, both material and spiritual. Please draw each one closer to you and grant them all the peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7), the peace of Christ to rule in their hearts (Colossians 3:15), and ‘joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand’ forevermore (Psalm 16:11).”

From Guideposts.com



Four Chaplains Day

Every year, American Legion posts nationwide commemorate the selfless acts of the Four Chaplains on or near February 3, designated Four Chaplains Day by Congress in 1948. Through interfaith services, memorial ceremonies and other solemn events, members of the American Legion Family lead their communities in honoring the chaplains and 668 other men who died when the *Dorchester* sank. Founded in 1951, the Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia encourages and supports these observances, and recognizes selfless service to community, nation, and humanity through its Legion of Honor award program.

Early on February 3, 1943, an enemy torpedo struck the Army transport *Dorchester* as it carried 902 officers and enlisted men, Navy armed guard, merchant seamen, and civilian workers in the North Atlantic. The Coast Guard cutter escorts *Comanche* and *Escanaba* rescued 230 men.

As the *Dorchester* took on water, four Army chaplains (see their names to the right) calmed frightened soldiers, aided the wounded and guided the disoriented toward safety.

On deck, they opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets. When there were no more available, the chaplains removed their life jackets and gave them to four young men. “It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven,” said John Ladd, a survivor.

As the ship went down, men in rafts saw the four chaplains, arms linked and braced against the slanting deck, singing hymns and praying.

Congress attempted to confer the Medal of Honor on the chaplains but was prevented by strict requirements of heroism under fire. It authorized a one-time posthumous Special Medal for Heroism, awarded by President Eisenhower in 1961; it was intended to have the same weight and importance as the Medal of Honor.

[From Four Chaplains Day Brochure](#)

THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

Lt. George L Fox, U.S. Army

Lt. Alexander D Goode, U.S. Army

Lt. Clark V Poling, U.S. Army

Lt. John P Washington, U.S. Army

Veterans Helping Veterans

Our post continues to reach out to veterans to help them get connected to the VA, get transportation to various destinations, visit veteran patients at the VAMC, help with food insecurities, and sometimes spiritual help for downtrodden vets. Here's some of the help we've provided this past quarter.

- ◇ Visited six hospitalized members.
- ◇ Performed Buddy Checks on many of our members to check on their general welfare.
- ◇ Purchased and delivered a stove for a veteran who provides housing for other veterans. This stove replaces one that stopped working.
- ◇ Purchased gift cards for Fisher House Ann Arbor to help with food and gas purchases for the guests and for guest supplies.
- ◇ Transported a couple of veterans to the VA Emergency Room who were having medical issues.
- ◇ Helped a veteran process pop cans and then help him shop for groceries.
- ◇ Presented a donation to Hope Clinic.
- ◇ Received a membership award from Department.
- ◇ Delivered a motorized wheelchair to a veteran family.
- ◇ Helped move the Veteran Resource Center to Washtenaw Community College.
- ◇ Began talks with WCC to help coordinate their VetFest for this year.
- ◇ Arranged rides for dozens of Veterans.
- ◇ Delivered food to Dexter veteran apartments, Hope Clinic, and the Staples Center.
- ◇ Delivered Panera "dough-nations" to Fisher House Ann Arbor numerous times.
- ◇ Sponsored our Cub Scout Pack's Pinewood Derby.



Member Spotlight



Laurel Burkel Colonel U.S. Air Force

1991- 2018

Colonel Burkel was a student at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor before/when she enrolled in Air Force ROTC at Michigan. She went to Michigan to be an orthodontist, was in the dental school's Preferred Admissions Program, and the Honors College - she came across friends who were in Air Force ROTC and decided to give it a try. 33 years later, she doesn't regret it at all. She loved AFROTC's camaraderie, teamwork, emphasis on fitness, etc. She's SO glad she didn't end up becoming an orthodontist.

Colonel Laurel "Buff" Burkel retired from the U.S. Air Force in December 2018 after over 27 years of service. She is a distinguished graduate of the University of Michigan's Air Force Reserve Officer Training Program and holds a bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in Human Resource Management (MS) from Chapman University, National Security Affairs (MS with Distinction) from US Naval Postgraduate School, and Strategic Studies (MA) from the US Air Force Air War College. Colonel Burkel is a senior navigator with more than 2,100 flight hours (including 285 combat and combat support hours) in training, F-4, C-141, and C-130 aircraft. Over the course of her military career, she commanded an operational C-130 squadron, both at home and deployed, and served in a variety of leadership positions at the group, wing, major command, Headquarters Air Force, joint, and international levels, including tours in the Republic of Korea, Canada, and Afghanistan. On her last deployment in 2015, Colonel Burkel served as the advisor to the Afghan Air Force's Director of Training in Kabul, Afghanistan. Her deployed tour was cut short due to the injuries she sustained from the October 2015 NATO helicopter crash in Kabul that took the lives of two of her subordinates.

Colonel Burkel now serves as an inspirational/motivational speaker, sharing the story of her survival and recovery from the crash to highlight the power and positivity of our support to and for each other and its fundamental connection to our personal resilience.

Colonel Burkel is an Air Force Wounded Warrior (AFW2) and serves as an AFW2 Program Ambassador and Mentor. She is a member of the St Louis Blues Warriors hockey team, a USA Hockey-affiliated disabled veterans hockey program, and serves as the Blues Warriors Delta Team captain. Colonel Burkel is also an assistant coach with the Southern Illinois Lady Hawks girl's hockey team, currently in their inaugural season. She is a member of the Girls Scouts of Eastern Missouri Board of Directors and is also a member of numerous professional and service organizations.

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS



<u>Name</u>	<u>BDay</u>
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Andrew Livingston	April 01
Melissa Wheeker	April 04
James Lollar	April 06
Bill Estep	April 15
John Zarzecki	April 19
Jeremy Shaffer	April 25
Terrance Reed	April 28
Richard Moore	April 29
Daniel Zaleski	April 30
Bob Shannon	May 04
Christopher Salata	May 05
Douglas Sager	May 08
Matthew Walczyk	May 10
Michael Worzniak	May 14
Larry Swisher	May 15
Jeff Dillon	May 18
Michael Hill	May 20
Steven Cox	May 24
Greta Krapohl	May 24
Joseph Edwards	May 31
Angus Burch	June 02
Siddharth Vemuri	June 04
Thomas Burnham	June 06
Eric Fretz	June 06
John Burge	June 09
David Barera	June 12
Peter Roopas	June 18
Ronald McCready	June 19
Monte Clark	June 24
Robert Kehn	June 24
Al Symons	June 25
James Peters	June 27
Gilbert Smith	June 27

2023

Membership Milestones

<u>Member</u>	<u>Years</u>
David Barera	10 Yrs
John Falsetta	10 Yrs
Robert Harvey	10 Yrs
Glen Johnston	10 Yrs
Patrick McDevitt	30 Yrs
Douglas Short	10 Yrs
Gilbert Smith	50 Yrs

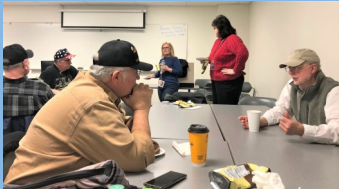
Legion Riders Legacy Run

Do you like to ride motorcycles. Here's an opportunity to do something you love and raise money at the same time for a great cause. It is on the west side of the state but would be well worth the trip. As you can see from the flyer to the left the event is being hosted by Legion Riders Chapter 2 in Grand Rapids. Click [here](#) to read more about the event and the course. Read the introduction letter by clicking [here](#).

The Legacy Run was started in 2006 by Legion Riders to raise awareness and money for a national American Legion program - the Legacy Scholarship Fund. This Fund was started in 2002 to give children of military members killed on duty, and the children of 50 percent or more disabled Veterans, a chance to have an education and to extend the legacy of their parents, our Veteran brothers and sisters, who sacrificed much for our country.

It's a very special year for this event! Not only is it the 17th Annual National Legacy Run (and the 7th Michigan State Run), but it is also the 30th Anniversary of the American Legion Riders. The State of Michigan has the unique distinction of being the birthplace of the Riders. Every Chapter in the nation got its start in Garden City, Michigan In 1993!

With all that in mind, we'd like to make this year's Run a memorable one, and one that really helps build the Legacy Fund in the way only the Michigan American Legion family can do!



VRC

In the first week of February the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) moved its operations to Washtenaw Community College to increase it's outreach to more veterans. That goal was reached almost immediately as several college students dropped by between classes and at lunch time. It was heartwarming to watch as the older generation interfaced with the younger generation. Over the next month and a half a few of those students were counicled by Chaplain Bull to talk about veteran benefits and VA entitlements.

WCC has been very generous with our post. They have invited us to be active in some of their veteran activities like assisting with their Veterans Day flag raising ceremony and helping plan a VetFest that will take place in July. On top of that they allowed the VRC to use one of their classrooms twice a week and also allowed them to bring in a supply cabinet so that Chaplain Bull does not have to cart everything in and out each day.

Our post is very proud to be a sponsor of the VRC. Since its inception our post has recruited a dozen or so new members and helped countless others.



Veteran News

PACT Act

On August 10, 2022, President Biden signed into law the [Honoring our PACT Act of 2022](#). Section 804 of this law is the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 (CLJA), which allows people exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune to file new lawsuits.

You may have seen advertisements from lawyers, law firms or others seeking to represent you in litigation related to this new law. These lawyers, firms and private parties are not connected with VA benefits or services. Whether you decide to seek relief under the CLJA is entirely your decision and will not influence VA's decision to provide you benefits or health care based upon your exposure. It also will not affect the amount of benefits or health care VA can provide you. The VA recommends that filing a claim should go through the VA process. You can submit a claim for your PACT Act-related benefits now. Claims received by August 10, 2023 may be paid back retro to August 10, 2022. Visit VA.gov/PACT or call 1-800-MY-VA-411 to learn more and file a claim.

It's important to know, however, that if you are awarded relief by a court in a lawsuit brought under the CLJA, the award must be offset by the amount of any disability award, payment or benefit VA provided to you or your legal representative relating to exposure to water at Camp Lejeune. This would reduce the amount of the award you receive from the court, but it would not affect your VA benefits.

Benefit News

Post 9/11 veterans discharged before October 1, 2013 can enroll in VA health care during a special one year period between October 1, 2022 and October 1, 2023. It is recommended that these younger veterans get enrolled during this time frame even if you may not apply for benefits for many years.

Compensation rates for benefits have been raised starting in January of 2023. These new rates are based on the latest cost-of-living adjustments.

Be aware of caregiver scams and pension poaching.

Veterans in Suicide Crisis

As of Jan. 17, veterans in suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non-VA health-care facility free of charge. Eligible veterans include those discharged or released from active duty after more than 24 months under conditions other than dishonorable. Also included are members of the reserves who served more than 100 days under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operations. Victims of military sexual trauma or harassment incurred during their service time are also eligible. Significantly, veterans need not be enrolled in the VA system to receive this benefit.

Under the new benefit, VA will provide, pay for or reimburse treatment and transportation costs for up to 30 days of inpatient or 90 days of outpatient care. VA will also determine eligibility for other benefits and include referrals for follow-up treatments following the period of emergency suicide care.

From American Legion Online Newsletter



Washtenaw County Veterans Treatment Court



Veterans Treatment Court is a non-adversarial, post-sentencing, and problem-solving program that works toward helping justice involved veterans with substance abuse or mental health conditions. The program is centered on intensely monitored probation and treatment compliance. Eligible non-violent veteran defendants are diverted from a traditional criminal justice track to a treatment based approach. Veterans Treatment Court helps participants access additional resources that might not be available in traditional criminal courts. Furthermore, it creates a supportive community amongst the veteran participants.

Program requirements change as a participant moves through specially designed program phases. Sanctions will be imposed if participants do not follow probation or treatment requirements. Rewards may be given for successful progression through the program.

The Veterans Treatment Court program is 18-24 months long. Each participant's length of involvement with the program is dependent on their ability to comply with court orders and treatment plans, remain drug and alcohol free, and achieve personal goals.

Veterans Treatment Court is held every other Wednesday from 9:30am - 12pm on the fifth floor of the Justice Center in courtroom three. At review hearings, the presiding judge will interact one-on-one with each participant in a non-adversarial manner. Local veterans and citizens are welcome to attend.

General Requirements

- Must be a U.S. Military Veteran and not be dishonorably discharged
- Must not be a violent offender and must not be a danger to the community
- Must suffer from a mental disorder or substance abuse issue
- Must present as a good match to the Veterans Treatment Court method
- Must submit to program requirements for 18-24 month



Program Information Contact:

Paul Graveline
Veterans Ct. Coordinator
Ph: 734.794.6761 ext.47542
Fax: 734.794.6762
Email: PGraveline@a2gov.org

Referral & Interview Contact:

Ken Ashenfelter
Probation Agent
Ph:734.794.6761 ext.47534
Fax: 734.794.6762
Email: KAshenfelter@a2gov.org

Sobriety Court

The 15th District Sobriety Court, which began in September 2004, is a problem-solving court that helps break the cycle of drug and/or alcohol addiction that has resulted in adult criminal activity. It is now clear that Sobriety and Drug Courts work. In addition to providing much needed effective treatment to participants, they provide safer streets, lower crime rates and cost savings to our jails.

The target population of the 15th District Sobriety Court is repeat offender drinking drivers within the city limits of Ann Arbor. However, as program capacity permits, the program has expanded its target population to include other jurisdictions within Washtenaw County and other offenses that are the result of a person's drug and/or alcohol addiction.

This 24 month program is based on intensive probation and community monitoring of the participant; enrollment in drug and/or alcohol treatment closer to the time of the offense; random and frequent drug and alcohol testing; random home visits by probation and/or police; attendance of 12-step program meetings; and other individualized services a participant may need.

The 15th District Sobriety Court uses a team approach to help participants achieve a life free from substances and criminal activity. The team is comprised of the judge, probation officer, judicial coordinator, bailiff, program coordinator, prosecutor, defense attorney, substance abuse treatment provider, mental health treatment provider, and a police officer liaison. Sobriety Court is held weekly on Fridays. The team meets the day before discusses all participants that are scheduled for that week.

Program information contact: Jennifer Johns, Sobriety Ct. Probatio Abent, 734-323-4707



The American Legion Celebrates 104 Years Of Service

A group of 20 officers who served in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in France during World War I is credited with founding the Legion. AEF Headquarters asked the officers to suggest ideas on how to improve troop morale. One officer, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt Jr., proposed an organization of veterans. In February 1919, the group formed a temporary committee and selected several hundred officers who had the confidence and respect of the whole army.

About 1,000 officers and enlisted men attended the Paris Caucus in March 1919. They adopted a temporary Constitution and the name The American Legion. The group also elected an executive committee to complete the organization's work. It considered each soldier of the AEF a member of the Legion. The executive committee named a subcommittee to organize veterans at home in the United States.

In May 1919, the Legion held a second organizing caucus in St. Louis. It completed the constitution and made plans for a permanent organization, setting up a temporary headquarters in New York City and beginning its relief, employment and Americanism programs.

Congress granted the Legion a national charter in September 1919. The first national convention convened in Minneapolis on November 10-12, 1919, adopting a permanent constitution and electing officers to head the organization. Delegates also voted to locate the Legion's national headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Legion continues to support the four pillars of service and advocacy upon which it was founded: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.



American Legion National Headquarters has a campaign running to try to reduce the number of veteran suicides. They want YOU to be the one that helps a veteran choose life, not suicide. If you see a person that looks like they might need help, offer them a call to 988 or you can call one of our Service Officers or officers. Let's take care of our own— our veteran brothers and sisters. If you are reading this online, click on the picture to get more information.



Our Success Stories

Erwin Prieskorn

American Legion Post 46

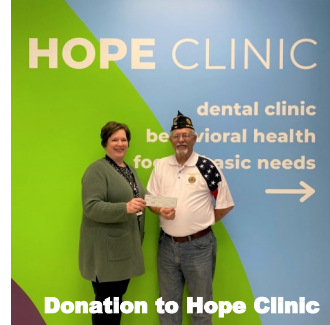
A staple in Ann Arbor since 1919, Post 46 is rich in history of serving veterans and the local community. If you know of a veteran that does not have an American Legion home give them a copy of this newsletter. Invite them to come out to one of our meetings and see what we are about. Let them know that we meet on the first Thursday of each month at 1830 hrs. at our post, located at 3230 S. Wagner Rd.



Post 46 Receives Membership Award



VRC Moves To A New Location



Donation to Hope Clinic

Erwin Prieskorn

American Legion Post 46

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PLEASE
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