



Ann Arbor Post 46

Celebrating 100 Years Of Service

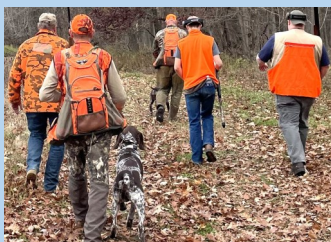
Commander's Corner



I recently had an opportunity to participate in a pheasant hunt at Camp Liberty. Located near Brooklyn, Camp Liberty is a non-profit dedicated to helping veterans of all abilities experience the outdoors. The Camp is situated on 130 acres of prime wildlife habitat along the Raisin River.

The camp hosts several hunts a year for deer, pheasant, and turkey, all guided by expert volunteers. The camp has ground and raised hunting blinds, food plots, and groomed walking

paths. Veterans are selected by random draw. The facility has three motorized off road track chairs for those who have difficulty or can no longer walk. Veterans as well as non-veterans can participate in many of the volunteer opportunities offered at the camp. There was a wide range of experience among



the male and female veterans who participated. I had not

hunted in years, but it was great getting outside for the fresh air, exercise, and time to spend with some great people. To learn more, please visit their website at www.camplibertymichigan.org.



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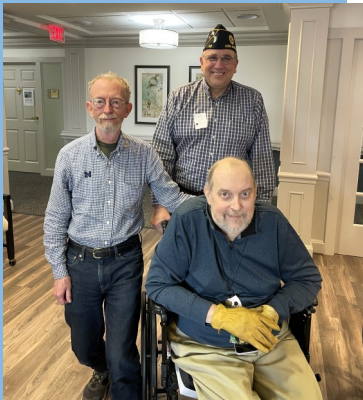
When emotional issues reach a crisis point, contact the Veterans Crisis Line.

Visiting With Veterans



I had the pleasure recently of giving a Veterans Day presentation to residents at University Living, a senior assisted living facility here in Ann Arbor. We discussed the history of the American Legion and Post 46. The event was well attended with veterans, spouses of veterans, and several additional residents participating. Many talked about their service or that of their spouse's service in the different branches of the military.

I presented Post 46 Challenge Coins to three veterans who attended and gave Department of Michigan American Legion pins to the spouses of other veterans. The real surprise for me was when a resident asked me if I know anything about a program called Boys State. Another resident quickly raised his hand and said he too, had attended Boys State in the 60s. Both had great memories of the program and told me about running for office and their experience.



The largest demographic in the US is the Baby Boom generation. The oldest of that group is now 80. For the next 20 years, we will see an unprecedented number of people moving into assisted living facilities which will correspondingly see an increase in their veteran population. With a smaller family size, my experience has shown me many of these veterans are often living alone. With over 21 senior assisted living facilities in Ann Arbor, I will be working on a plan this year to see how Post 46 can work with these organizations to meet their veterans needs with programming and or connecting them to unrealized benefits.

Commander Nichols



During the Post Holiday Dinner, donations of money and gifts were collected for the annual Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. Members were very generous and brought in new unwrapped gifts for children in our area. In addition, more than \$366.00 was raised in cash donations. In the picture is Shani Byrd, local representative for the program accepting the donations from Post 46.

The Toys for Tots program began in 1947, when Diane Hendricks, the wife of Major Bill Hendricks of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, made a doll for a needy child to receive for Christmas. When the couple determined that no organization existed to provide the doll to a child, they started a campaign to provide toys to children.

In Washtenaw County 1,703 children were supported by the program and 16,336 gifts were distributed. Thank you again to all who helped us make this holiday season a little brighter for a child and a family.

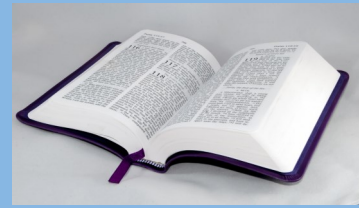
Commander Nichols

Prayers for Veterans

Dear God, you know the emotional pain these our Veterans experience. Give them rest from their PTSD and the negative memories that come. Replace their anxiety with your peace. Bring healing to the hearts and minds of each Veteran who is suffering. Lord, you know what each one needs. Grant them wisdom, provisions, and hope to move forward to heal.

Let us not forget the sacrifice of our Veterans. Bless them and remind them that their service was for the good of our country. Thank you for bringing them home safely. Bless their future. Give them faith to overcome obstacles they may face. Help their families, friends and country to appreciate their sacrificial service to their Country.

[From prayforeverything.com](http://prayforeverything.com)



Prayers for Members

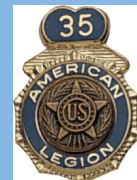
We have many members who are going through physical ailments in their lives right now that can always use our prayers for healing. Many do not want mentioning. Some of these have cancers, some have failing organs, and others have operations pending or in progress. We have lost several members over the past year. Pray for those left behind. Pray for all our members, their significant others, those who do not want to be identified, and the medical professional who take care of them.

Not to be forgotten in our prayers are those serving on active-duty both abroad and domestically. Many of our service personnel did not get to celebrate the holidays, a time they would normally spend with their families and friends gathered around them.



2024 Membership Longevity Milestones

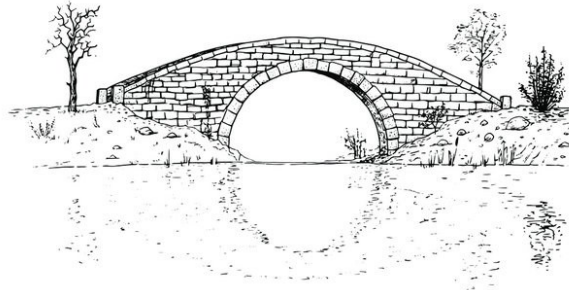
Bill Bryan	10 Yr	Eric Fretz	10 Yr
Ken Bupp	10 Yr	Steven Gulick	10 Yr
Donald Cain	30 Yr	Clifford Morris	40 Yr
John Devine	10 Yr	Allen Owens	40 Yr
John Falsetta	10 Yr		



Veterans Day 2023



Veterans Day for our post began around 0720 hrs at Veterans Memorial Park with the lowering and then raising of our American Flag. Then some of the participants ruck marched back to our post, about four and a half miles away. While they were marching, other members were preparing breakfast at the Post. Bob Kurtz, Eric Downey, and Bruce Lowry formed the cooking team and served up pancakes, eggs, hashbrowns, bacon, and coffee. It was estimated that around thirty guest attended the breakfast.



We are laying the foundation for those that follow.

An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at the evening, cold and gray,
To chasm, vast and deep and wide
Through which was glowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream had no fears for him
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near,
“You are wasting strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again will pass this way;
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide
Why build you the bridge at the eventide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head:
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said
“There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way,
This chasm that has been naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pit-fall be, He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him.”

Member Spotlight



Bill Lipton Specialist 5 U.S. Army

1968 - 1970

A friend once asked me why being a veteran is such a big deal. After all, it was “only” two years. I pointed out that many were in the service for the rest of their lives, and others still suffer from physical and emotional wounds. While my experience in the Army was good, it was still two years of my life, when my peers were advancing in their careers, and enjoying the prime of their lives. While I was extremely fortunate, others were not. Until the pandemic, I was a volunteer at The Breakfast At St. Andrew’s, where I saw that many of our homeless clients are veterans, irreparably hurt by their service.

I was drawn to the American Legion by its selfless dedication to helping veterans in all ways, such as supporting government actions to improve services and providing direct aid to those who need it. History shows that veterans are too soon forgotten, so the public must be constantly reminded of our service and needs.

My service was reluctant, but I felt it was necessary. I graduated from Tufts University with a degree in physics, in 1967, and then started graduate school, at Brown University, that fall, intending to earn a Ph.D. in physics. That dream evaporated when graduate school deferments were canceled, in 1968. Perhaps foolishly, I enlisted in the Army OCS program, to avoid the uncertainty of waiting to be drafted. I married in 1968, just before entering the Army.

During Basic Combat Training and Combat Engineer training, at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, I soon found that I was not meant to be an officer, and was extremely fortunate in getting into atomic demolitions munitions, serving the rest of my time in a tedious but safe assignment at Fort Belvoir, VA.

While serving, I applied to the Harvard University, School of Public Health, and was admitted, starting in the fall of 1970. It was a struggle, but I finally earned a doctorate in radiological health.

My first job was at Argonne National Laboratory, near Chicago, as a health physicist, starting in 1975. My wife and I lived in Naperville, IL, in the western suburbs. The best part of our lives was adopting two children from Korea, who arrived at the ages of 6 months and 6 years, in 1979 and 1981.

With layoffs likely, we moved to Michigan, where I started with Detroit Edison, as a radiological engineer, at the Fermi 2 nuclear power plant, in 1982. Although initially reluctant to move, we have grown to love Ann Arbor.

Professionally, I earned credentials as a Certified Health Physicist and a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager. Despite long hours at work, I was able to serve as president of the Pioneer High School PTSO, as well as to participate in professional societies.

I retired from Detroit Edison, now DTE, in 2008, and have enjoyed retirement life, especially before the pandemic. I volunteered with the Breakfast at St. Andrew’s and continue to serve on its governing board.

While a member of the American Legion since the 1980s, I did not participate until Dave Draper encouraged me to join Post 46. I am grateful to Dave for reaching out to me.

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<u>Name</u>	<u>BDay</u>
Sara Call	Jan 02
Mike Green	Jan 02
Michalia Runice	Jan 02
Mujahid Malikulmulk	Jan 04
Don Cain	Jan 07
Don Eschelbach	Jan 08
Jacob Wright	Jan 10
Mary Pokryfki	Jan 11
Jeff Harvey	Jan 14
Vandoren Fullard	Jan 16
Lawrence Read	Jan 16
Joe Cobos	Jan 17
Dave Draper	Jan 19
David Tindle	Jan 21
William Smiley	Jan 21
Don Miller	Jan 22
Elmer White	Jan 23
Chris Campbell	Jan 26
Frank Papp	Jan 26
Carter Hower	Jan 30
Mike Cook	Feb 04
Eugene Smith	Feb 04
Joshua Perkins	Feb 04
Harry Krass	Feb 07
Barbara Hughes	Feb 08
Joseph Boisseau	Feb 10
Steven Gulick	Feb 10
Dale Peterson	Feb 10
Alan Owens	Feb 14
Steven Sykes	Feb 15
Anthony Derezinski	Feb 17
Richard Stull	Feb 17
Nate Berry	Feb 20
Russell Andres	Feb 21
Leonard Winkelman	Feb 23
Larry Shepperdson	Feb 25
Douglas Viland	Feb 25
Ryan Donahue	Feb 28
Richard Tejan	Mar 01
Bruce Lowry	Mar 01
Benjamin Dixon	Mar 08
Jake Li	Mar 08
Richard Sienicki	Mar 10
Wilbur Bigelow	Mar 18
Donald Hackbarth	Mar 18
George Hudson	Mar 19
Brian Jones	Mar 19
Bob Bull	Mar 20
George Yee	Mar 20
James Crosby	Mar 22
William Bryan	Mar 22
Benjamin Whisman	Mar 23
Dale Hammar	Mar 28
Joseph Bridson	Mar 31
John Briggs	Mar 31

Legion Supports the GUARD Act

The American Legion National Executive Committee passed [a new resolution](#) reiterating its support for penalizing unaccredited companies that charge veterans for benefits claims assistance during a special meeting on Dec. 12.

Right now, there are more than 100 unaccredited claims companies “illegally profiting millions of dollars from veterans under the guise of legitimate professionals. Some veterans are being taken advantage of while others are content to pay the exorbitant fees,” he said.

These companies charge veterans for assistance with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits claims that The American Legion provides at no cost to any veteran.

Resolution 1 calls on Congress to:

- Pass legislation that restores criminal penalties for people or companies violating VA rules regarding representing or charging veterans fees to file, prepare or prosecute initial VA claims without VA accreditation.
- Oppose legislation that would allow unaccredited parties to become legal representatives without completing the accreditation process.

There are two bills pending in Congress related to the issue, the Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding (GUARD) VA Benefits Act and the PLUS (Preserving Lawful Utilization of Services for Veterans) Act.

The American Legion supports the GUARD Act. The legislation would reinstate criminal penalties for unaccredited claim representatives who charge unauthorized fees while assisting veterans with filing a VA disability claim.

Conversely, the PLUS Act would force VA to recognize applicants for accreditation automatically after 90 days, even if they fail to meet VA standards. This legislation also calls for a fee cap of \$12,500 to be paid by the veteran.

“Our national commander made it clear that we oppose the PLUS Act — in September when a letter of opposition was sent to Congress, in October during his visits on Capitol Hill, and again last month in his [published Commander’s Message](#),” James said.

After the vote, American Legion National Commander Dan Seehafer said, “Our agenda was short today but very important. Our position is now crystal clear to all unaccredited firms wishing to exploit veterans, and that is, not on our watch!”

With the current congressional term concluding soon, it is likely the legislation will be a focal point for the next session.

Excerpts from Legion Online Update

AARP Cites Sinise For Veterans Work

AARP is presenting actor and humanitarian Gary Sinise with an honorary Purpose Prize award for his contributions to military members and veterans through the Gary Sinise Foundation, started in 2011. Learn more at aarp.org/purposeprize.



AARP continues to add to its services for veterans and their families. New and updated offerings include:

- ◆ Employment Help: A retooled AARP veterans job site includes several free, accredited courses to build skills for moving into civilian life. Go to aarp.org/VetsJobCenter.
- ◆ Burial Benefits: AARP’s Veterans Burial Benefits Guide offers tips for end-of-life options and details on veteran survivor benefits eligibility. Find the guide at aarp.org/VetsBurialBenefits.

Bingo at the VA



Glen Johnston calling the numbers



Melanie Nau presenting the winnings of the cover-all to its winner.



The patient participants

For many years Post 46 has hosted bingo at the LTC Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center in Ann Arbor. Once a month we meet in the Community Living Center (CLC). Game winners are awarded crisp two dollar bills: first prize is \$6, second prize \$4, and third prize \$2. Towards the end of the games we ask who has not won a prize and then give them one two dollar bill. Our last game, which typically starts around 1945 hrs, is a cover-all where all spots on their card have to be covered. Whatever money is left over from the previous games that night is the winners prize. If there is more than one winner, they split the total. It's a lot of fun with a lot of interservice bantering going on. Sound like fun? Email me if you'd like to join us.

Courtesy of Dave Draper



Cans For Veterans

Several years ago Chaplain Bob Bull started what he called Cans for Veterans. He started accepting returnable pop cans and bottles, the purpose being to assist veterans or veteran-centered organizations with financial donations or gift cards. After a short period, he decided that the proceeds would be used for gift cards for the Fisher House and

VA in Ann Arbor on behalf of our post. At its prime, in 2021, over 36,000 cans and bottles were processed. That year the UAW, through a can drive, had donated over 24,000 of those cans to the effort. Fast forward to today and we will be lucky to collect 4,000 by the end of the year. Most of that total is from the Fisher House itself. We probably don't want to get back to the 36K level because of all the work it takes to process them, but it would be great to at least double our current levels. If you would like to donate your empty returnables please contact Bob Bull or Dave Draper.

Courtesy of Dave Draper

Great Lakes National Cemetery Post 46 Laying of Wreaths

Over the past few years our post has had a yearly tradition of laying wreaths at the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan for our members and any relatives of members who have passed and are interred there. This year was no exception. The event took place during the national Wreaths Across America event, which this year fell on December 16. A few of our members volunteered to make the roughly one hour trip to honor our veterans. As has been the case for the last couple of years, we had to park offsite at Ascension Genesys Hospital because of the high volume of volunteers that attend. Shuttle busses transported us to and from the cemetery. The line to get on the buses was way longer this year probably because, for the first time in many years, the weather was a lot warmer. Once we arrived at the cemetery we met up at one of the many sections there. Several semi-truck loads of wreaths were parked at strategic locations around the cemetery. Volunteers were allowed to take several wreaths each. If you wanted you could come back for another batch if they had more available, but because there were so many more volunteers return trips were impossible. As a matter of fact, Scott Nichols and Chris Campbell were not able to receive any wreaths because they were gone by the time the two had arrived.



One of the wreaths we placed was for member Steve Duncan.
Shown here is Commander Scott Nichols paying honors.



Member Mark Lindke's
Father



Member Chris Campbell honoring his father



Fisher House 2023

Here's what Fisher House Michigan donors and volunteers have contributed to over the past year.



Offered over 5,840 nights of lodging to military and Veteran family members; saved nearly \$1.5 million in out-of-pocket lodging and meal expenses; helped Fisher House Foundation break ground in Detroit in October 2023; met the MASCO Memorial Day Match AND the American Legion Patriot's Pledge Match challenges, providing over \$1.5 million (and counting) in support of construction for Detroit and support for Fisher House guests at VA Ann Arbor this year; supported a supplemental hotel lodging program when the VA Ann Arbor Fisher House was full—over 90 nights of hotel lodging offered; kept the kitchen stocked with nutritious groceries and provided weekly home cooked meals through the Meal Train program.

Numbers are important, but stories are essential. Veteran families and friends who have stayed at the Fisher House in Ann Arbor are sometimes at a loss for words when trying to describe the importance of this critical resource. Their gratitude for you abounds!

"Amazing! This is our first time at the Fisher House, didn't know what to expect. It is truly a blessing. Everyone is welcoming and so friendly. Thank you, thank you! I find it hard to find the words."

"Thanks so much for coming to my rescue in giving me a place to stay when my husband was kept over nite after a procedure didn't go well. Thanks so much."

Excerpts from Fisher House Flier

Long Time Member And A Local Legend Is Transferred To Post Everlasting

All our members are appreciated and loved, but some stand out in our memories. Doug Harvey was one of those. He was a forty-five year Legion member who was a Navy veteran during the Korean War. He was also Washtenaw County Sheriff during the Vietnam War Era. Believe it or not he was also a stock car racer. Doug could be a little rough around the edges but had a really big heart and was a true patriot. He and then Commander Michajlenko negotiated for over a year to have the current flagpole installed at the Ann Arbor Veterans Memorial Park. In a ceremony at the funeral service, Doug was transferred from our post to Post Everlasting. He will be missed.



Doug at our Veterans Day breakfast.



Memorabilia at the funeral home.



The final journey.



Honors paid along the processional.

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.

Inside Stories



Veteran Visits



Bingo At The VA

Erwin Prieskorn

American Legion Post 46

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