



Prieskorn Press

1923

Serving Veterans for Over 100 Years

2025



Veterans Memorial Park
Ann Arbor, MI

Commander's Corner



The Times They Are A-Changin

Growing up in the early 70's, I didn't listen to a lot of music from the decade before on the radio. By the time I became a teen, Rock and Roll had moved on from social commentary to long guitar solos, big hair and lots of makeup. I recently saw the movie *Complete Unknown* based on the early life and music of Bob Dylan and was surprised to learn how much of his music I did know but paid little attention to during my life.

One song, *The Times They Are A-Changin*, struck a chord with me when I received a call from a local cannabis shop.

They wanted to donate \$1,000.00 to the post as part of state program. Last year Michigan received 87 mil in tax revenue from these shops.

The caller had no idea who I was or my back ground. He didn't know I retired from the Michigan State Police or for most of my career I worked on or ran multijurisdictional drug enforcement teams all over the state. He also didn't know half way through my career I came to understand the war of drugs was mostly pointless. Through more than a decade of experience of arrests, search warrants and trials coupled with research and education, I came to understand the drug addiction crisis America faced was more of a medical treatment crisis and not one that could be solved solely by criminal enforcement.

Some post members wanted to reject the donation; others were just skeptical. For me it was a great opportunity for a paradigm shift. With a VA hospital in our backyard and with the passage of The VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2023 which mandates research on the effects of cannabis on veterans, particularly those with PTSD, the decision was easy.

I went to the shop, received the check and took a picture of myself and the owner. We laughed when I told him what I did for a living. We said we probably knew a lot of the same people; he socially, me professionally. I told him we would put the money to good use; sponsoring a local youth to Boys/Girls State or the Student Trooper Program. If you have a local cannabis shop in your area, know they are looking to donate to non-profits. The times, they surely are a changing!

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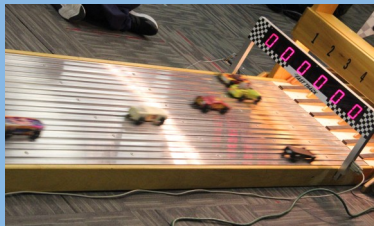
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Cub Scout Pack 131 Activities



Blue & Gold Banquet

Pack 131 held its annual Blue & Gold Banquet on February 19, a tradition they have performed for 58 years. Catered food was provide before the start of the ceremonies. Six dens were present to receive awards and patches, perform skits, and some graduated into a Troop. The "crossover" into a Troop is performed by the Cub crossing over the Arrow of Light bridge, and their shoulder epaulettes are changed from Cub Scout to Boy Scout. Towards the end of the event, Post 46 Cmdr Nichols and Vice Cmdr Draper were presented with the new Charter for 2025– 2026. The evening ended with all the Cubs getting sugar highs to go home with as they were offered



slices of cake.

Pinewood Derby

On February 9 Cub Scout Pack 131 held it's annual Pinewood Derby at our American Legion Post. Lots of kids were there to compete for the fastest. . . . and slowest pinewood car. Over twenty cars were entered. A scout from the Lions Den won the Golden Turtle award for the slowest car of the day, and one from the Arrow of Light Den won the fastest of all the dens. The leaders allowed Post 46 member Bob Kurtz and Vice Cmdr Dave Draper to start some of the races. Some of the cars were recorded going over 200 miles per hour. All the kids, AND adults seemed to enjoy themselves. Pack 131 has thirty-five scouts ranging from kindergarten through fifth grade. They have been a chartered Pack for fifty-eight years and are very active. For more pictures click [HERE](#), and [HERE](#). Pictures were taken by Dave Draper and Navy vet David Frailing respectively.



Christmas Program



In December our Cub Scout Pack made Christmas ornaments and at another event entertained the residents of University Senior Living in Ann Arbor. There were several veterans in attendance including one that was retired Coast Guard. We are very fortunate to be sponsoring a very active Pack and to have so many adults to lead them including our own Dr. Karl Edelman.

Prayers for Veterans

O God, Great and Almighty creator, we thank and praise You for the freedom we enjoy in our country and pray that our liberties will continue to be protected.

Thank You for America's heroes, that have fought for our freedoms and who have faithfully served our country. We honor all of our veterans, for their sacrifices and for their courage and integrity.

As we celebrate these freedoms, we ask Your blessing on those veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice while defending our country. Bless their families and comfort them with the thankful prayers of a grateful nation.

We thank you for our veterans, past and present. Through the efforts of these individuals, help us continue to promote justice in all nations.

Guide us as our Post begins nominations for leadership. Grant us the strength and skills to continue growing our membership and our call to duty to help fellow veterans and their families. Amen.

* * * * *

Post Everlasting

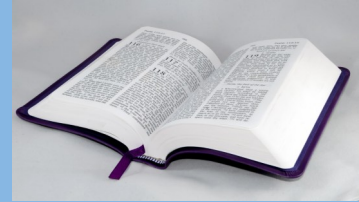
Since January of 2025, we have lost members to their battles with different ailments, diseases, and disasters. Keep their respective families in your thoughts and prayers.

Paul Wright, U.S. Coast Guard, Vietnam Era, 25 year Legion member
Wilbur Bigelow, U.S. Navy Reserves, WWII, 3 year Legion member

* * * * *

Elmer White

On March 24 longtime member Elmer White was interred at Great Lakes National Cemetery. Joining with the family were members of our Post, Legion Department, and VVA Chapter 310. A short ceremony was performed before he was laid to rest.



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988

SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

PTSD & Suicide Stats & Help

In a report to the Michigan Commanders Group, HHS made the following report on suicides in this country.

USDHHS reported that in 2022 there were 49,449, in 2023 there were 49,300+ which equates to about one every eleven minutes.

The CDC stated that suicide is the second leading cause of death among ages 10– 14 and 20– 34, and the third leading cause for ages 15– 19.

The DOD has been keeping records of active-duty suicides since the Civil War. And yet, the Pentagon reports that between the years of 2014 and 2019 2,530 active-duty Army personnel have died due to suicide. The DOD also reported that during 2022 they saw 493 active-duty suicides. In 2023 they saw 523, a 9% increase. The primary cause of death among US soldiers is suicide, more than any other cause!

Young women and teens have seen their suicide rates doubling. The highest suicide rate is among men 75 and older– 44 per 100,000. Over , half of these suicides were accomplished through alcohol and drugs.

The VA has said approximately forty or more veterans are taking their own lives each day.

According to one report, Michigan has seen and 18% increase in suicides since 2012.

** * **

If thoughts and feelings from past trauma are bothering you, take the first step in seeing if your symptoms may be related to PTSD. [Take the PTSD self-screen](#). The self-screen can help you understand if your thoughts, feelings and behaviors may be related to PTSD.

If you are coping with PTSD or trauma and haven't met with a health care provider, [make an appointment today](#). PTSD treatment works, and you have options.

If you have PTSD or believe you are experiencing symptoms of PTSD, the [PTSD Treatment Decision Aid](#) is one of the best ways to learn about effective treatment options. You can share your results with your doctor, who can do a full assessment for PTSD or refer you to someone who can.

From the U.S. Dept of Veteran Affairs

Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**

24/7 confidential crisis support for active duty, veterans and their loved ones

If you're a service member in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, trained responders 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You're not alone - the Veterans Crisis Line is open to all service members and veterans.

DIAL 988 then PRESS 1 **TEXT 838255** **Chat online at [veteranscrisisline.net/chat](#)**

Member Spotlight



Ed Savitski
Staff Sergeant
U.S. Army
17th Signal Battalion

1948- 1952

I was raised in Bessemer, a small town on the far western edge of Michigan's upper peninsula. Like most boys in that area, I grew up fishing and hunting so I was pretty good with a gun. In high school, I was First Lieutenant of our ROTC rifle squad.

Jobs were scarce in the U.P. after I graduated so I began working odd jobs downstate in Grand Rapids until I was drafted into the Army in 1948. I went through basic training at Camp Breckinridge in Kentucky, then was trained in the signal corps at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey before being shipped to Germany. Considering many of my friends were shipped to Korea, whose conflict was just heating up at that time, I considered myself fortunate.

The 17th Signal Battalion was based in Karlsruhe, Germany, near the French border. The main task of our unit was to set up temporary radio relay stations in remote areas, driving our trucks to specified locations then raising an antenna and tuning the radio equipment to enable long-range communications.

As a mobile unit, we moved around a lot and saw the destruction and rebuilding of many German and French towns and cities, even several years after the end of WWII. Later in my deployment, our unit was transferred to Orléans, France, to help set up a permanent radio installation there. While on leave in Paris, I signed up as a member of the American Legion at Post #1. At the time of my discharge in 1952 I was a Staff Sergeant in charge of a dozen men.

I've always said: While I went to *school* in Bessemer, I got my *education* in the Army. After returning from duty, I found the training in radio and electronics I received served me well. I had good jobs repairing Dictaphones and, ultimately, elevators for Westinghouse in the Ann Arbor area where I'd settled, got married, and raised 4 kids. I recently re-joined the American Legion at my local Post #46 here in Ann Arbor and have enjoyed the camaraderie of the group very much.

Editors note, Ed celebrated his 96th birthday in March. Our post provided a birthday cake for the occasion. He joined our Post last year.



WWII Ruptured Duck Pin

Bits & Pieces

Flag Presentation



Vice Cmdr Dave Draper was given a piece of history from the family of a veteran. They donated an American Flag that was flown at the museum site of the sunken U.S.S. Arizona. Vice Cmdr Draper gave it to our Historian, Ron McCready, who placed the flag in a nice display case and placed a nameplate describing its historic use. It is now proudly displayed on our wall at the Post.



That's A Wrap



Suzanne and Ted Monfette recently donated the cart enclosure shown here, in memory of their son Major Trevor J. Monfette, a US Marine Corps veteran who lost his battle with cancer. The cart is used at the Ann Arbor Fisher House to transport guests from Fisher House to the VA Medical Center located next door.

Previously, the cart had a plastic zip-up wrap that was hard to get into and out of for both the guests and the driver.



WCC SVA Open House

In February the Student Veterans of America held an open house at Washtenaw Community College. Our own Barbra Hughes (left) was elected President of that SVA and this was one of her first activities. Our Post set up a table at the event and there was interest from several students in joining our Post. Shown



to the right is Michael Green, who is the Commander of District 2 and a Post 46 member, along with Post 46 Comander Scott Nichols.



StoryPoint Coffee Hour

We've had good turnout lately at our monthly hosting of coffee hours at the Saline StoryPoint Senior Living Center. We had eight Post 46 members and eight residents attend at our February event. Each month on the third Friday we get together with the residents who are veterans to socialize and "swap lies". We occasionally invite guest speakers and we try to arrange offsite visits to places of interest to the resident vets.

Interesting Facts: Ann Arbor VA Medial Center



2023

This editor was given an article from Dale Leslie concerning the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor. The article highlighted the Ann Arbor Medical Center and it's Executive Director, Dr. Creasman. Dr. Creasman has been the Executive Director since 2018. She said that "the Ann Arbor VA is one of the top five VA hospitals in the country an it has a five star rating." This VA Medical Center treats about 80,000 patients annually.



1956

Also in the article was a little bit of history you may not have heard about. Groundbreaking took place on September 30 in 1949 on a sixteen acre site. It opened October 12, 1953 and was formally dedicated on October 18 of the same year. At that time there were twenty-six patients. Sixteen months later the facility had 4,500 patients. Today the Ann Aarbor VA serves about 2,500 patients per day which includes southeast Michigan and northwest Ohio. They boast that 550,000 outpatients and nearly 5,000 admissions are seen annually. They currently have an operating budget of \$650M. It has 105 acute care beds and 40 community living center (extended care) beds.

Bingo At The VA



Our Post continues its long standing tradition of hosting bingo at the VA in Ann Arbor on the second Friday of each month at 1900 hrs. We set up the bingo machine and prepare all the tables for a fun night with the short-stay veteran patients in the Community Living Center. We present prizes of crisp two dollar bills: three for first prize, two for second, and one for third place. Around 1945 hrs. we play cover-all where all squares on their board have to be covered. The prize is whatever is left in the "kitty". That ranges from \$30 to \$50. The patients always express their gratitude for us coming out to share a good time with them.

Congressional Medal of Honor



On March 25th of each year we celebrate National Medal of Honor Day. The Medal was first awarded on March 25, 1863 by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to Private Jacob Parrott. Parrott was a member of Andrews' Raiders during the Civil War. The medal is the highest honor for military valor in action, and more than 3,500 people have been awarded the Medal of Honor. In Michigan, there have been 110 awardees. Highlighted below are two Michigan recipients, both of whom served during the Vietnam War.

"The current criteria for the Medal of Honor was established in 1963 during the Vietnam War, and is for any military member who distinguishes themselves conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their life above and beyond the call of duty."

~ U.S. Army LTC Charles S. Kettles ~



On July 18, 2016 President Barack Obama awarded Kettles with the CMH. Kettles distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry while serving as Flight Commander, 176th Aviation Company (Airmobile) (Light), 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, American Division near Duc Pho, Republic of Vietnam. On 15 May 1967, Major Kettles, upon learning that an air-borne infantry unit had suffered casualties during an intense firefight with the enemy, immediately volunteered to lead a flight of six UH-1D helicopters to carry reinforcements to the embattled force and to evacuate wounded personnel. Enemy small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire raked the landing zone, inflicting heavy damage to the helicop-

ters; however, Major Kettles refused to depart until all helicopters were loaded to capacity. He then returned to the battlefield, with full knowledge of the intense enemy fire awaiting his arrival, to bring more reinforcements, landing in the midst of enemy mortar and automatic weapons fire that seriously wounded his gunner and severely damaged his aircraft. Later that day, the Infantry Battalion Commander requested immediate, emergency extraction of the remaining 40 troops, including four members of Major Kettles' unit who were stranded when their helicopter was destroyed by enemy fire. With only one flyable UH-1 helicopter remaining, Major Kettles volunteered to return to the deadly landing zone for a third time, leading a flight of six evacuation helicopters, five of which were from the 161st Aviation Company. Without his courageous actions and superior flying skills, the last group of soldiers and his crew would never have made it off the battlefield. Major Kettles' selfless acts of repeated valor and determination are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.

LTC Kettles passed away January 21, 2019. Both the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center and the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 310 were renamed in his honor.

~ U.S. Army Spc 5 James McCloughan ~



McCloughan was awarded the Medal of Honor on July 31, 2017 by then President Donald Trump. The company air assaulted into an area near Tam Ky and Nui Yon Hill. On May 13th, with complete disregard for his life he ran 100 meters in an open field through heavy fire to rescue a comrade too injured to move and carried him to safety. That same day, 2nd Platoon was ordered to search the area near Nui Yon Hill when the platoon was ambushed by a large North Vietnamese Army force and sustained heavy casualties. With Complete disregard for his life and personal safety, Private First Class McCloughan led two Americans into the safety of a trench while being wounded by shrapnel from a rocket propelled grenade. He ignored a direct order to stay back and braved an enemy assault while moving into the "kill zone" on four more occasions to extract wounded comrades. He treated the injured, prepared the evacuation, and though bleeding heavily from shrapnel wounds on his head and body, he refused evacuation to safety in order to remain at the battle site with his fellow soldiers who were heavily outnumbered by North Vietnamese Army forces.



Department of Michigan

Program Dates for 2025

March

March 1: Eagle Scout of the Year Award submission deadline.

March 5: Oratorical State Contest at the Michigan Historical Center in Lansing.

April

April 1: End of 2nd round postal match competition. Targets due to CMP must be postmarked on or before this date to be eligible for scoring.

April 4: Skilled Trades Scholarship deadline.

April 7: Teacher of the Year submission deadline.

May

May 1: Boys State Application submission deadline.

May 15: Baseball insurance purchase deadline.

May 16– 18: National Oratorical Contest at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, MI.

June

June 1: Final day for Baseball teams to register.

June 22– 28: Boys State program at GVSU in Allendale, MI.

July

July 1: Robert Turner Baseball Scholarship submission deadline.

July 15: Diamond Baseball Scholarship deadline.

July 20–25: Student Trooper program.

July 22– 26: Junior Shooting Sport Program American Legion National Championship (Individual Tournament).

July 23– 27/28: Class AA Baseball State Tournament, Midland, MI.

July 23– 27/28: Class A Baseball Tournament, Stevensville, MI

**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.
We meet on the first Thursday of
each month at 1830 hrs. at our
post, located at 3230 S. Wagner
Rd.



Scan here to check us out on our
website

BE THE ONE

TO **ASK** VETERANS IN YOUR LIFE HOW THEY ARE DOING.

TO **LISTEN** WHEN A VETERAN NEEDS TO TALK.

TO **REACH** OUT WHEN A VETERAN IS STRUGGLING.

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