THE SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN EAGLE

31 July 2026

Volume IX, Issue 7

Board Meetings		
Jan 20	Feb 17	Mar 17
Apr No Mtg	May 19	Jun 16
Jul No Mtg	Aug 18	Sep 15
Oct 20	Nov No Mtg	Dec 15

2026 Chapter/Other Meetings			
January 29 Chapter Lunch/ Induction of Officers	**February** No Meeting	**March** No Meeting	**April 13-16** Advocacy in Action 17 Chapter Lunch TACOM Guest Speaker
May 9 International Armed Forces Dining out	**Jun 16** Chapter Zoom	**Jul 16** Chapter Lunch Guest Speaker	**Aug 14** Michigan MOAA State Convention
Sep 19 Retiree Appreciation Day	**Oct 20** Chapter Zoom Mtg	**Nov 5** Chapter Mtg / Election of Officers **Nov 9** Veteran's Day Remembrance	**Dec 19** Wreaths Across America

Unless otherwise noted, our in-person meetings take place at "The Rusty Bucket" 30450 Telegraph Rd, Bingham Farms, MI 48025. The meetings are announced well in advance via email, our website and this newsletter. If you need information about chapter happenings, contact one of our Board members at this link.

Chapter Board Members

President & Treasurer
LCDR Rich Higgins, USN (Ret)

Vice President & Membership
CDR Roy Yaple, USN (Ret)

Secretary and Surviving Spouse Liaison
LTC Larry Powell, USA (Ret)

Chapter Address

Chapter Digital links:
Chapter web site, www.semimoaa.org

For all non-digital correspondence use the following address:
560 Barrington Rd. Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230

Membership

Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and their surviving spouses.
The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of military servicemembers and their families. Those who belong to MOAA not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving. Although membership in the national MOAA organization is not a requirement to join this Chapter, we strongly encourage you to join. The basic level of MOAA membership is free.
To become a member click HERE

Under the Eagle's Wing…a Message from the President

Fellow members,
It's a busy summer — here's what's on deck.

Summer AiA 2026

MOAA is rolling out its Summer Advocacy in Action campaign by July 10, focused on three priorities: the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 2102 | S. 1032), the Improve and Enhance WOTC Act (H.R. 6231 | S. 3265), and GLP-1 coverage for TRICARE For Life beneficiaries. Chapters and Councils will receive a Digital Tool Kit — scheduling and meeting guides, sample letters and emails — plus issue papers, a tutorial video, and an engagement dashboard. A Topic Training Webinar follows on July 30, with a public landing page live by July 31. MOAA is also seeking a state lead to help coordinate grassroots outreach (letters, emails, in-district legislator meetings) over the summer — I'm weighing whether Michigan Council of Chapters wants to take this on, and I'll keep you posted. You can read more about one of the underlying legislative issues — the Take Care of America's Veterans Act — in the article elsewhere in this newsletter.

I***naugural MCOC State Convention — August 14***

For the first time, Michigan MOAA members from across the state will gather for a statewide convention at the historic Doherty Hotel in Clare. Join us Friday, August 14 for speakers including CAPT Jim Carman (MOAA VP, Council/Chapter and Member Support), Terry Sabo (Director, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency), Christina Bahr, and — tentatively — Congressman Tom Barrett, along with sessions on chapter success, advocacy, membership growth, and community partnerships. Registration is just $35 and includes breakfast, lunch, and program materials. Optional Thursday welcome social and Friday dinner available. Discounted hotel rooms (code "MICoC") are held until July 14. Register at moaamcoc.com/convention — let's make this the start of an annual tradition.

Scholarship Program

I want to thank Secretary Larry Powell for volunteering as the Chairman of the Chapter Scholarship Program. Check it out at semimoaa.org/scholar. And I particularly want to thank one of our members for his generous $7000 anonymous donation, which funds the program for the 2026-27 school year and leaves money left over to start the following year's fund. Please consider making a donation of your own.

Continued next page

Next Chapter Meeting — July 16

Join us Thursday, July 16, Noon–2:00 PM at TACOM (6501 E. 11 Mile Road, Detroit Arsenal) as Chris Causley, founder and president of the Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society, presents "Donald Nelson and the Arsenal of Democracy." Lunch (Jimmy John's) included. $20 per person — CLICK HERE to RSVP by July 10.

Looking forward to seeing you this summer.

Rich

Rich Higgins, LCDR, USN (Ret.)
President
Southeastern Michigan Chapter
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

Disclaimer

- The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit military and veterans association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors.
- The Southeastern Michigan Chapter of MOAA (SEMI M OAA) is affiliated with the Michigan Council MOAA and the national MOAA Organization and are all nonpartisan
- All material or other information - including links - contained in the SEMI MOAA newsletter is provided as a public service to military service members and their families.
- The contents of this publication is subject to periodic updating.
- Although every attempt is made to ensure that information is accurate and timely, the content is presented "as is" and without warranties.
- Use of the information is strictly voluntary and at the user's sole risk.

US Representative Names and Districts

Click to open webpage

5 - Tim Walberg
6 - Debbie Dingell
7 - Tom Barrett
8 - Kristen Rivet
9 - Lisa McLain
10 - John James
11 - Haley Stevens
12 - Rashida Tlaib
13 - Shri Thanedar

119th Congress

Legislative Corner

The MOAA Advocacy Update

Every week, MOAA's advocacy leaders and other experts discuss issues of importance to our members and the uniformed services community. Watch the latest **here**.

To stay informed, you can subscribe to the MOAA YouTube channel **here.**

To contact your legislators and to learn about what MOAA is working on with Congress, click **here**.

MOAA Takes Pragmatic Approach to Supporting Landmark Veterans Bill

The following article was sent to all MOAA members by MOAA President and CEO, Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret). It is provided in case you missed it. You can read the full article by clicking on the title above.

To All MOAA Members,

The legislative environment in Washington has been difficult for many years across multiple administrations, regardless of who was in control of Congress. It made our work at MOAA more dynamic and difficult on many levels. This has never been more evident than with ongoing debates over the Take Care of America's Veterans Act (TCAVA) where information, statements, positions, and proposals have been changing by the hour.

The TCAVA is a sweeping landmark legislative package sponsored through both the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs committees, primarily driven by the majority. TCAVA bundles more than 60 individual bicameral and bipartisan provisions addressing veterans' benefits, health care, education, transition assistance, caregiver support, and survivor benefits. Among the included provisions are 23 pieces of MOAA-supported legislation, including three of MOAA's longest-standing legislative priorities:

- It includes our top MOAA enduring priority, the Major Richard Star Act, which provides meaningful relief to combat-injured Chapter 61 retirees who currently lose military retired pay because of the offset with VA disability compensation.
- It includes our tier one veterans' priority for this Congress, the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act, which would support family caregivers who sacrifice careers and retirement security to care for severely wounded veterans.
- And it contains the Love Lives On Act, critical legislation for our surviving spouse members that would eliminate the penalty that terminates survivor benefits for spouses who remarry before age 55.

The package also carries 20 other additional bills MOAA has supported individually.

The package also contains a directed funding mechanism that generates significant debate, as funding has been and continues to be the biggest roadblock to passing veteran legislation. The TCAVA directs funding of the full package by codifying VA's proposed rating schedule changes for sleep apnea and tinnitus. We share the concerns other organizations have raised about this offset and traditionally believe legislating changes to disability ratings, the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD), is not standard and is not a path we would typically support.
Ideally, we would see no changes to the two disability ratings, we would see a waiving of pay-go rules with no funding offsets required, we would see funding for the Major Richard Star Act through the Department of War and Armed Services committees where the issue resides, and we would have a perfectly clear picture on whether or not the rating changes would occur through VA action or White House direction.

Why I Support MOAA's Position on the Take Care of America's Veterans Act

Why I Support MOAA's Position on the Take Care of America's Veterans Act
The Take Care of America's Veterans Act (TCAVA) is one of the most comprehensive veterans' bills Congress has considered in years. It combines more than 60 bipartisan measures covering health care, education, caregiver support, transition assistance, survivor benefits, and veterans' compensation. Most importantly, it includes several of MOAA's highest legislative priorities, including the Major Richard Star Act, the Veteran Caregiver 3R Act, and the Love Lives On Act.

Like many of you, I wasn't thrilled when I learned the bill would be funded in part through changes to future VA disability ratings for sleep apnea and tinnitus. MOAA wasn't thrilled either. In a perfect world, Congress would fully fund these long-overdue benefits without touching the VA disability rating schedule. CLICK HERE to read MOAA's position.

After taking a hard look at the political realities, MOAA concluded that this legislation represents the best opportunity we've had in years to move several major veterans' priorities across the finish line. I believe they're right.

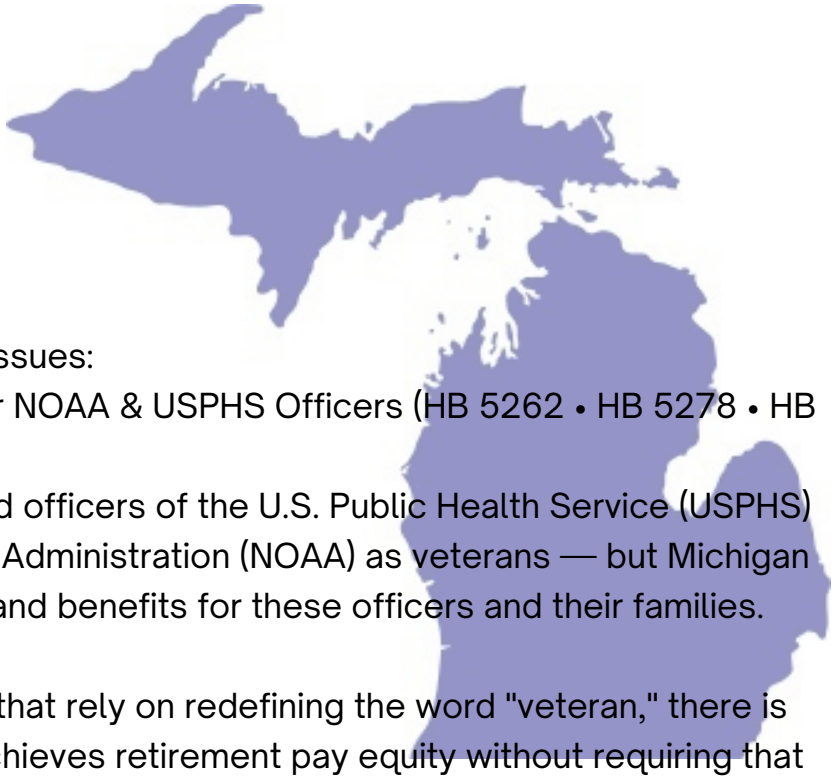
A key point is that if the VA is likely to make these rating changes administratively anyway, shouldn't any savings be reinvested in veterans instead of disappearing into the U.S. Treasury? TCAVA answers that question by directing those dollars back to benefits for veterans, caregivers, survivors, and military families.

Just as important, veterans who are already receiving compensation for sleep apnea or tinnitus would see no reduction in their current disability ratings. Any changes would apply only to future claims. Good people can disagree on the funding mechanism, and several respected veterans' organizations have taken a different position. I respect that. But after weighing the entire package, I believe MOAA made the right call. The chance to finally pass landmark legislation like the Major Richard Star Act may not come again for a long time.

Sometimes leadership means waiting for the perfect plan. Sometimes it means recognizing an opportunity, however imperfect, and accomplishing the mission. I believe TCAVA is one of those opportunities.

Rich Higgins

Advocacy at the State Level



At the state level, we are focusing on two issues:

ISSUE 1 — Aligning Veteran Recognition for NOAA & USPHS Officers (HB 5262 • HB 5278 • HB 5279 • HB 5280)

US Code Title 38 recognizes commissioned officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as veterans — but Michigan law does not, creating gaps in recognition and benefits for these officers and their families.

OUR FOCUS — HB 5280

While there is some opposition to the bills that rely on redefining the word "veteran," there is little to no opposition to HB 5280, which achieves retirement pay equity without requiring that redefinition. Our advocacy efforts are therefore concentrated on securing passage of HB 5280.

ISSUE 2 — Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Pilot Program for Michigan Veterans (HB 5456 • HB 5457)

These companion bills passed the Michigan House of Representatives in June 2026 and are now before the Senate Committee on Health Policy. Together they would establish a hyperbaric oxygen treatment pilot program for Michigan veterans and military service members — a therapy that has shown promising results in treating traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress.

TAKE ACTION — Contact Your Legislators

The MCOC Legislative Action Center makes it easy. Enter your information once, select a bill, and your personalized email opens pre-filled in your own email client — ready to review and send. A phone call script is generated automatically. Nothing is stored or collected.

It takes less than 5 minutes.

To take action click this **link**.

Michigan MOAA State Convention – Join Us in Clare!

Mark your calendar now for the Michigan Council of Chapters' first statewide MOAA convention, to be held **Friday, August 14, 2026**, at the Doherty Hotel in Clare, Michigan. This inaugural event will bring together MOAA members and chapter leaders from across the state for a day focused on strengthening our chapters and expanding our impact in support of the uniformed services community.

The convention will center on three important themes that define MOAA's mission at the local level: Membership, Advocacy, and Community. Throughout the day we will share ideas for growing and sustaining strong chapters, discuss effective ways to support MOAA's legislative priorities, and explore opportunities for chapters to deepen their engagement within their local communities.

We are assembling an excellent lineup of speakers. Confirmed participants include **Captain Jim Carman, USN (Ret.), CAE,** Vice President, Council/Chapter and Member Support. **Terry J. Sabo**, Director of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, **Christina Bahr**, Capitol Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison, and **Congressman Tom Barrett.**

Registration opens on June 15th.

For those traveling from a distance, a block of rooms has been arranged at the Doherty Hotel using the reservation code MICoC. Discounted rates are $112 for Thursday night (August 13) and $156 for Friday night (August 14).

You can learn more about the event and RSVP here:

👉 https://www.moaamcoc.com/convention.html

We hope members from every Michigan chapter will consider joining us for this important first statewide gathering. Your participation will help ensure that this new Michigan Council convention becomes a valuable annual opportunity for collaboration, leadership development, and fellowship among MOAA members across our state.

CAPT Jim Carman

Vice President, Council/Chapter and Member Support

Congressman Tom Barrett

Michigan's 7th Congressional District

Terry J. Sabo

Director, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency

Christina Bahr

Surviving Spouse Liaison Capitol Area Chapter Mich.

Why I'm Going to the First-Ever Michigan MOAA Convention August 14, 2026

Roy Yaple

Reasons to Attend

➤ ***Participate in History***

To participate in the largest ever concerted meeting effort for the four Michigan MOAA chapters. The Convention is nearly a decade in development and a Michigan extension of what the MOAA motto, "Never Stop Serving," means for our state.

➤ ***Connect with Fellow Members***

To meet MOAA chapter members from all four Michigan chapters in person and discuss why their membership experience provides positive value.

➤ ***Support Our Military Families***

To see how we can support our spouses within MOAA, especially surviving spouses. The Convention will feature a dedicated breakout Q&A session with the Surviving Spouse Liaison from the Capital Area Chapter.

➤ ***Stay Informed on Legislative Issues***

To ask questions about recent developments in long-sought legislative goals, including the Taking Care of American Veterans Act, the Richard Star Act, and the 3R Act. How do we stay persistent and vigilant with federal and state legislators when progress seems to be slow?

➤ ***Learn About the MVAA***

To learn what the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) is and what it means to me and fellow veterans.

➤ ***Hear Outstanding Speakers***

To hear from and ask questions of four outstanding invited speakers, as well as panel presentations.

Convention Highlights

✓ ***Convenient Central Location***

The Convention is centrally located for all four Michigan chapters in Clare, Michigan. You can travel to the Convention and return home the same day—or stay overnight.

✓ ***Discounted Hotel Accommodations***

Stay at the Convention Hotel, the Doherty Hotel, at a discounted rate arranged for attendees for the nights of August 13 and August 14. (Please reserve individually.)

✓ ***Easy Drive***

The large majority of travel times (Traverse City, Grand Rapids, and Lansing) are less than two hours (Detroit about three hours).

✓ ***Meals Included***

Continental breakfast and lunch are provided on August 14 as part of the Convention registration fee.

✓ ***Nearby Attractions***

Close to Soaring Eagle Casino, local golf courses, and home to Jay's Sporting Goods.

✓ ***Thursday Evening Social***

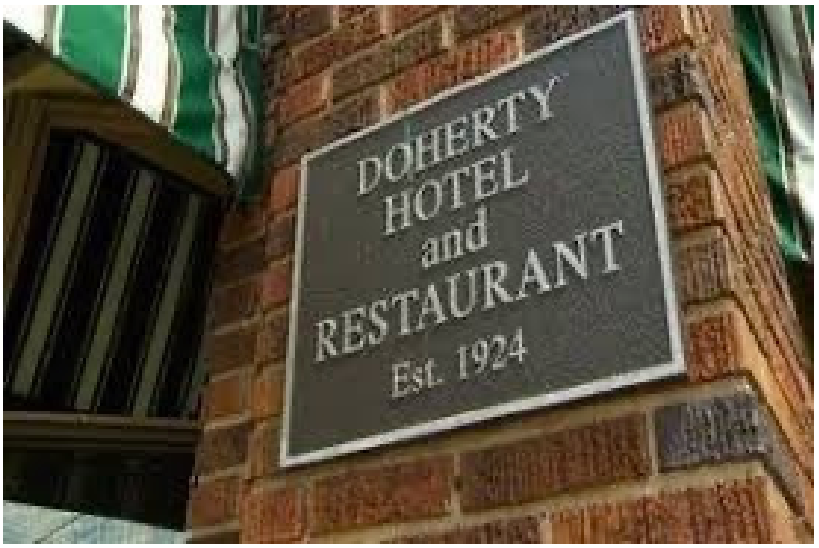
Optional complimentary Thursday evening social with a cash bar.

(Cont'd next page)

(Why I'm Going cont'd.)

✓ Affordable Registration
Convention registration: $35 per person
✓ Optional Friday Dinner
Dinner: $35 per person
✓ Free Parking
Free parking at the Doherty Hotel.
✓ Everyone Is Welcome
We welcome new MOAA and chapter members, but you are not required to be a MOAA or MOAA chapter member to attend.

One More Reason..
To be able to say I attended and provided appropriate feedback for use in preparing a meaningful After Action Report to help shape future Michigan state conventions.



Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society

Who is Donald Nelson?!

We will be returning to the **Detroit Arsenal** for our next meeting. Our guest speaker will be **Chris Causley**. Chris is the founder and current president of the Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society in Eastpointe, Michigan. Chris will enlighten us on the a very interesting man. See you there!

Mark your calendars for Thursday, July 16 from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.
6501 E. 11 Mile Rd, Warren, MI
Building 219 Classroom

Installation Access- The Detroit Arsenal is accessible with a military ID. If you do not have one, please contact Larry Powell L-spowell@ameritech.net; (586) 382-0124 to be added to the access list.

Veterans History Project

The United States Congress created the Veterans History Project (VHP) in 2000 as part of the American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress, one of the world's most respected research and cultural institutions.

VHP's purpose is to collect, preserve and make accessible the personal accounts of U.S. military veterans and Gold Star Families so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand their service.

The Chapter is considering collecting personal accounts from members in the chapter. Veterans from all branches and ranks of the United States military who served from World War I through the more recent con!icts are eligible to participate. As contributors to this national preservation effort, volunteers from around the country interview veterans and collect first person narratives. VHP accepts veterans' personal narratives in the forms of original, unedited audio and video recorded interviews, photographs, letters, diaries, journals and unpublished memoirs.

In order to be accepted, we must follow the 30-20-10 Rule:

- 30 minutes is the minimum length required for audio- or video-recorded interviews

and/or

- 20 pages is the minimum number of pages required for memoirs, diaries or journals

and/or

- 10 is the minimum number of photographs, letters, maps or pieces of 2-D artwork

If you are interested, or know someone who is interested, in participating in this project, send an email to Larry Powell at L-spowell@ameritech.net, with the subject Veterans History Project (or VHP).

MOAA SIGNATURE GROUPS

Join MOAA Leadership and your fellow MOAA members on these hosted cruises and land tours.

July 12-21, 2026	Highlights of Eastern Europe River Cruise	9-nights from **$3,999**
October 1-10, 2026	Western Europe Yacht Cruise	9-nights from **$4,999**
April 25-May 2, 2027	Castles Along the Rhine River Cruise	7-nights from **$4,199**
July 19-27, 2027	France & Spain Yacht Cruise	8-nights from **$5,799**
September 14-25, 2027	Circle Iceland Yacht Cruise	11-nights from **$8,999**
Sept. 25-Oct. 4, 2027	Battlefields of WWI & WWII Tour	10 days from **$6,495**

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Email Address: mail@MOAAvac.com

For complete details, including detailed day-by-day itinerary, please visit us online

Free Meta AI Glasses Now Available for Blind Veterans

Meta has announced an incredible new initiative that will provide free Ray-Ban Meta AI glasses to every legally blind veteran in America. These AI-powered glasses can describe surroundings, read printed text aloud, identify objects, answer questions about what the wearer is seeing, and help veterans complete everyday tasks with greater confidence and independence. For many, it's technology that can truly change daily life.

The program was inspired by Army veteran Don Overton, who lost his vision during Operation Desert Storm and worked with Meta to demonstrate how AI glasses can restore independence. In partnership with the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) and several national veterans' organizations, Meta is making these glasses—and the training to use them—available at no cost to eligible veterans. More than 130,000 legally blind veterans are expected to qualify.

If you are a legally blind veteran, or know someone who is, getting started is simple. Visit the Blinded Veterans Association AI Glasses Program at bva.org/glasses to request a free pair. Every recipient will also receive hands-on training, monthly webinars, and ongoing support to help them get the most from this life-changing technology. This is an extraordinary opportunity to regain independence, stay connected, and experience firsthand how AI is transforming accessibility.

9/11 National Day of Service

The VA National Cemetery Association (NCA) in partnership with Carry The Load and Just Serve is organizing the 9/11 National Day of Service to commemorate the 25th anniversary of 9/11. The event includes a brief ceremony and instructions to volunteers on headstone cleaning and beautification. This is a great service opportunity for employee engagement, youth groups, and individuals. Participants are encouraged to post on a Veteran's memorial page at VA's Veterans Legacy Memorial.
To register go to this link: https://www.carrytheload.org/patriot-day/

$152 Million in State Funding Just Cleared. The Construction Window Is Open.

Michigan lawmakers approved $152 million in state funding on top of nearly $1 billion in federal investment already headed to Selfridge. The work is confirmed, the contracts are coming, and the clock is running. Click **here** to learn more.
Source: MACOMB A&D INTEL

Wreathes Across America

The Chapter will be adopting the Roseland Park Cemetery in Berkeley. We will be **raising funds for scholarships** through the purchases of wreathes. ***You can purchase wreathes throughout the year*** and participate in the wreathe laying ceremony on 19 December. To purchase 1 or more wreathes, click on this **LINK**

2026 THEME: REMEMBER ME

"We often speak of "our service members" as though they are one unified group. Yet within that group are countless individuals, each with a name, a family, and a story that helped shape the freedoms we cherish today. While we honor them collectively, we can sometimes overlook the deeply personal sacrifices: the parent who never met a grandchild, the young recruit asked to shoulder more than any teenager should, the veteran who returned home carrying memories too heavy to share."

- Karen Worcester, Executive Director, Wreathes Across America

The $8,000.00 surprise: IS YOUR FAMILY READY?

Are you aware of what the VA pays for your veteran's funeral? Thanks to Ed Ruckle for the following information.

What the VA pays	What the VA Misses
Gravesite	Funeral Home
Grave Opening & Closing	Casket
Headstone	Flowers
Burial Flag	Cremation Urns

- Check your Veterans Group Life Insurance
  - Will it cover your costs?
- The VA allowance ranges from $300-900. Your out of pocket costs could be as high as $8000.
- You can now get a "Pre-need Letter"
  - Complete VA form 40-10007, the VA will provide the Pre-Need Letter (Click **here** to go to the webpage)
  - At time of death, provide the letter to the funeral director and relieve a lot of stress on the family
- Talk with your family and write down what you want so they don't have to guess
- For more info, check Ed's page at this **link**

VA Healthcare, Pension and Compensation; Weekly Zoom Calls

If you are in the White Lake or Milford area, please feel free to contact Henry Storm ancientgrape@gmail.com or Roy Yaple (yapler@comcast.net) about the VA breakfast meetings, Monday and Friday at 7AM at Leo's Coney Island in White Lake and Wednesday at 7AM at the Americus Grill in Milford. Breakfast is pay as you go and a wonderful place to enjoy fellowship with other veterans and ask questions on VA-related topics.

If you are applying for VA Healthcare or considering filing a VA disability claim, and are looking for help, please consider attending the weekly 4PM Thursday Zoom coffee or the noon Sunday Zoom podcast on VA Healthcare and Disability Claim topics.

This is the **link** for you to save to access the Website. Here you will find all of the links that are individually listed below :

- 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST Sunday Noon Veteran **Sitrep** Podcast
- 4:00 - 5:00 PM EST Thursday **Vet Talk**
- Facebook Page Trusted Helpers: A daily update on what is happening with your VA benefits
- 550+ Videos, created by Air Force Veteran Ed Ruckle, answering questions veterans, like you, have asked.

Please note that the VA 1010EZ, the form for applying for VA Healthcare has been revised as of July 2024. If you applied in the past and were denied VA Health Care, another look with the new form may be appropriate to see if you qualify for VA Healthcare.

Something New!!

For the past 14 years, I have been helping veterans and their family members navigate the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) websites, and help them find the information they were looking for. Over the years I have gather thousands of documents, created hundreds of slide decks, video overviews, audio overviews, infographics, sitemaps, visual roadmaps, and battle plans.

It didn't take me long to realize, the information collected was for the veteran community, the processes and skills sets, I that used, to gather that information applied to their spouses, dependents, parents, and caregivers as well. Rather them keep this gold mind of information locked up in my filing cabinet, I thought - it was time to share. Click to go to **Ed's Blog.**

The end of a relationship. Loss of a job. Housing instability. Feeling a loss of purpose. At some point, everyone will face a challenge. Some of those challenges may develop into a crisis.

Recognizing a crisis in yourself or those you care about can help you know when to find support.

24/7 Confidential, Crisis Support, for Veterans and Their Loved Ones

Dial 988 then Press 1

Or text 838255