



Roscommon County Veterans Affairs  
Monthly Newsletter

Website: <http://www.roscommoncounty.net/201/Veterans>

“Serving those who Served”

Month: January 2016 3rd Edition

Deadline for February’s Newsletter: January 22, 2016

Greetings, the office of the Roscommon County Veterans Affairs has decided to publish a monthly newsletter which will be shared with all of our Service Organizations within the county on a regular basis. This newsletter will also be placed on our Roscommon County Veterans Affairs website (<http://www.roscommoncounty.net/311/Veteran-Services> ).

It is our hope that this information will be of value to your members and displayed within your organization in a location that your members are aware of and have access to. We have **enlarge the font** for the newsletter based on feedback, hopefully, it will be easier to read. We would like to also announce any future events and/or activities your post is sponsoring that we can help spread the news under the Service Organizations section. If your post has an email address that this can be sent that would be helpful as occasionally this may be publish to advertise a special event involving Veterans in your area.

Electronic copies of the newsletter will allow the reader to have access to the various links found in this newsletter. If individual Veteran wishes to receive these newsletters electronically have the Veteran send a email to [veterans@roscommoncounty.net](mailto:veterans@roscommoncounty.net) with a Subject Line: Request for RCVA monthly newsletter. Our office will also provide our minutes of our Board meeting monthly as well as the Accumulative Total spreadsheet showing our office service to Veterans in our measurable categories.

The format for this newsletter will be by War Periods, but is not limited to only war time Veterans; **Peacetime Veterans have benefits**, too. For VA benefits available for Veterans during a certain War Periods, see the November 2015 1<sup>st</sup> Edition for specific information.

**World War II (April 6, 1917 – November 11, 1918);**

**World War II Veterans**

World War II (WWII) was the most widespread war in history with more than 100 million people serving in military units. About 16 million Americans served during WWII, and many of



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those Veterans are now receiving VA benefits including Pension and Health Care. WWII Veterans who were a part of the Occupation Forces assigned to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan soon after the detonation of Atomic-Bombs over those respective cities, and those American prisoners of war ( POW's ) who were housed in close proximity to those cities are sometimes called "Atomic Veterans."

### **Korea Conflict ( June 27, 1950-January 31, 1955)**

Approximately 5.7 million Veterans served in the Korean War. Korean War Veterans are more prone to suffer from disabilities related to cold injuries as a result of exposure to severe cold climates. Cold weather accounted for 16% of Army non-battle injuries and over 5,000 U.S. casualties of cold injury required evacuation from Korea during the winter of 1950-1951. In many instances, Servicemembers could not seek or were unable to obtain medical care for cold injuries because of battlefield conditions.

### **Vietnam Era (August 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975)**

#### **Vietnam Veterans**

United States military involvement in the Vietnam War officially began on August 5, 1964; however, the first U.S. casualty in Vietnam occurred on July 8, 1959. Approximately 2.7 million American men and women served in Vietnam. During the war, over 58,000 U.S. military members lost their lives and 153,000 were wounded. There were 766 prisoners of war of which 114 died in captivity. The war was officially ended by Presidential Proclamation on May 7, 1975.

**VA Updates Agent Orange Ship List:** This week (November 25), VA added six new ships and expanded the dates for some already on the list of ships that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam. Veterans whose military records confirm they were aboard these ships qualify for presumption of herbicide exposure. To check if your ship or boat has been added to the list, visit: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/shiplist/list.asp>.



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Persian Gulf War/OIF/OEF... (August 2, 1990 through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation)

### Gulf War Veterans

More than 650,000 Service members served in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm from August 2, 1990 to July 31, 1991. For VA benefits eligibility purposes, the Gulf War period is still in effect. This means that anyone who served on active duty from August 2, 1990, to present is considered a Gulf War Veteran. For example, the Veterans Pension benefit requires service during a wartime period. Therefore, any Veteran who served on active military service for any period from August 2, 1990, to the present meets the wartime service requirement.

### Services/Benefits for All Service Members

**Veteran designation on Michigan Driver's licenses and state IDs:** More than 57,000 Michigan Veterans have taken advantage of this program to have their licenses and/or IDs identified with a Veteran status. Veterans may receive this designation **free during renewal** or pay a small fee before or after renewal dates to have it placed on your license. Proof of service, such as a discharge document (DD-214) is required at the Secretary of State office. Any questions, please call our County office at (989) 275-6047. This Veteran designation **does not** meet several of the chain stores (i.e., Home Depot, Lowes) requirements for a Veteran discount. It never hurts to ask any business/restaurant if they offer a discount to Veterans. Do us a favor and let us know if it is in Roscommon County and we will add it to our list.

**Certified Veteran –Friendly Employer program:** Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency (MVAA) has recognized 34 organizations for their efforts to hire and support Veteran talent in the workforce.





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**57 schools earn veteran-friendly status:** Student veterans and their dependents can choose from more than 50 veteran-friendly schools committed to providing on-campus, veteran-centric services to better support their academic and transitional needs. MVAA's Veteran-Friendly School program recognizes institutions of higher learning for their dedication to student veterans and dependents utilizing their G.I. Bill and other educational benefits. Michigan 43 colleges and universities are 100 % compliant with the Choice Act, offering in-state tuition to all recently released Veterans and their families.

**Michigan Veterans Trust Fund:** In FY 2014, \$2,482,845 dollars distributed to 2,157 Veterans and their families in need of emergency assistance. These funds are only available to war time Veterans.

**Radical Individual Ready Reserves (IRR) Plan to Call Back Veterans:** The goal is to make this historically disorganized component into a more integrated, reliable and useful part of the "total force" in an era when the services are under pressure to reduce active-duty personnel strength and its associated high costs. If you have members in your organization who have not serve their total service obligation, they need to be aware of this plan and the potential implications.

### **Reserve and Guard Retirees**

The Senate recently passed a bill with language to grant "honorary" veteran status to as many as 200,000 Reserve and National Guard retirees — those not deemed veterans now because they did not serve a qualifying period of active service under federal orders. The House is expected to adopt similar language soon. Impacted retirees are those who left service without a DD-214 or Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty. Though they had 20 or more



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“good” years of drill points earned on weekends and through annual training, they were never called to active duty.

### Helpful Veterans Information

Michigan is home to the 11<sup>th</sup> largest Veterans population in the country with 658,469 Veterans; here in Roscommon County we have 2,821 Veterans.

Michigan Veterans receive capita federal spending ranked at 48<sup>th</sup> out of 53 states and territories, which is an improvement as several years ago Michigan was dead last or 53<sup>rd</sup> of 53 states and territories.

Michigan is projecting 30,000 plus Michigan Veterans returning to Michigan due to the recent drawdown. A lot of the younger Veterans are having a hard time transferring their skills to civilian workplaces. Unemployment rate for Michigan Veterans was 7.3% in 2013.

More than half of Michigan’s 658,469 Veterans are not officially counted in the labor force. Only about 44% of our Veterans are in the workforce.

Michigan Veteran Community Action Teams (VCAT) are forming around our Communities. Roscommon County falls into Region 3 of the Governor’s Prosperity Regions who just had their “kickoff” meeting on Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> in Gaylord. The concept behind these VCAT is to implement the no wrong door concept among service providers to Veterans **and their families**. A “warm hand off” is the operational concept of making sure the Veteran is not only given the service provider information but for the agency to call the service provider while the Veteran is still in the office and provide the Veteran a Point of Contact within the service agency. Please call the Roscommon County Veterans Affairs office for more information.

In Michigan, nearly three quarters (72%) of Veterans are aged 55 and older.



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Michigan’s Veteran population is older than that of the U.S. Veteran population as a whole, with a significantly higher proportion Vietnam Veterans residing in the state.

No Wrong Door for Michigan Veterans: The Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center (MVRSC) and MichiganVeterans.com provide one-stop access for Veterans and their families seeking information, resources and support as they transition through each chapter of their lives. Callers to 800-MICH-VET (800-642-4838) are provide about Veteran-specific programs as well as a warm hand-off to programs available to all Michigan citizens.

Veteran Homes in Michigan – Michigan is home to two (2) superb state owned Veteran homes in Michigan.

### **Roscommon County Helpful Information**

Roscommon County Veterans Affairs (RCVA) office is open five days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the County Building in Roscommon and has started offering office hours every Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Houghton Lake Community Center (aka Houghton Lake Senior Center) starting Thursday, December 3, 2015.

The RCVA office recently requested local businesses to identify if they provide any type of Veterans discounts here in Roscommon County. Sadly, only one business responded to this attempt though our office is aware that there are more service providers and/or businesses in Roscommon County who do offer Veterans discount. Our office is asking for your help in developing this list for Roscommon County. Our office is also aware certain “chains” may offer Veterans discount but this varies from one business to another.

The one business who did reply was:

Family Eye Care, P.C., Dr. Jay C. Jenkins in Houghton Lake and Roscommon

- 40% off materials from usual and customary on any spectacle orders



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- 30% off services, to include specialty testing such as Visual fields, Ocular coherence and Visual Evoked Potentials for disease management

Minutes of our December 3, 2015 Roscommon County Veterans Affairs monthly meeting are as follows:

Meeting called to order at 12:00 noon by Chairman Don Mraz.

Pledge of Allegiance was given to the National Flag.

Members present: Don Mraz; Ken Melvin, and Tom Sheppard; Staff: Director of Veterans Affairs: Kevin C. Sherman. Excused: Ron Schrieber; Guests: None

Public Comments – None.

Minutes of last meeting, 12 November 15, and Office Report Accumulative Totals for November 2015 were presented, accepted and filed. Motion by Tom Sheppard and seconded by Ken Melvin to approved minutes and Office Report. Motion Carried.

Correspondence. 2016 Preliminary Budget Worksheet, Monthly Newsletter and Email regarding Taxes;

Burial and Graver Markers: Roscommon County had expenses for 7 burials at \$2100.00 and two grave markers for \$150 for a total of \$2250. Motion by Tom Sheppard and seconded by Ken Melvin to approved burial expenses. Motion Carried.

Medical Transportation

We had 13 trips for medical transportation for \$1,115.42. Collections from the office throughout the month was \$433.70. Motion by Tom Sheppard, seconded by Ken Melvin to pay transportation claims for \$1,115.42. Carried

Monthly Office Expenses:



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Claims and Accounts for monthly office expenses submitted for \$992.05. Motion by Tom Sheppard, seconded by Ken Melvin to pay monthly office expenses. Carried

#### Veteran's Relief Fund Application:

One application was presented. One application for \$23.67 (Voucher 231) was approved by the Director for a Veteran's storage rental while homeless. Motion by Tom Sheppard and seconded by Ken Melvin to approve this application. Motion carried.

#### Director's Report

Today is our first day at Houghton Lake Community Center, initial report all is going well. The Committee asked for the totals of number of visits be recorded on Accumulative Total spreadsheet. Discussion was held regarding office hours during Christmas and it decided to post the name of Committee members who will be in the area on door to the office. Director stated he will be available locally to address any true emergencies. Committee member's appointments are being addressed through the Commissioners for the last two renewals.

#### Old Business:

MVAA Grant for \$17,500, \$15,000 for Employee and \$2,500 for equipment has been submitted. Decisions will be made in January 2016. Director advised the Committee that we will bring Heath on board for part time employee status from December 11-23<sup>rd</sup> for a total of 9 days.

#### New Business:

Discussion was on 2015 Cost Allocation Payment Increase as to the amount of the increase which was explained being based on the 2013 calendar year when the office had full time staff, along with all the rest of the criteria (i.e., floor space, copier, postage, etc.)



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Director also mentioned after the first of the year the office will be purchasing some office equipment to address our ever growing collection of pamphlets, booklets and resource material.

Good of the Order: None

Public Comments: None

Motion by Tom Sheppard, seconded by Ken Melvin to adjourn, Meeting adjourned at 1:05 PM.

Minutes taken by: Tom Sheppard, Acting Secretary

### **Questions and Answers/ Requests Driven**

Q&A/ Who is Heath Nemeth?

Heath Nemeth is our new County Veteran Service Officer who began officially in the new position of County Veteran Service Officer effective 1 January 2016. Our office has been fortunate to have him as a Work Study Intern through Kirtland Community College since May 2015. Heath has taken the State of Michigan accredited course and will be attending the national accreditation course this year in May in South Carolina. From the compliments we are receiving in the office from those who have come in contact with him, he is a most welcome asset to the office and we have high expectations of him in the months and years to follow.

Little information on:

Heath Nemeth, Graduated Dow High School 1991, Attended Ferris State University, 4-1/2 years in United States Army (Artillery), Afghanistan (OEF) 2011-2012, single Dad to 17 year old daughter named Morgan Nemeth, Lives in Gerrish Twp, State Accredited Service Officer. Received Masters Captains license at age 22, loves fly fishing, hiking.



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Q&A/ What is Tom Sheppard's involvement in the office?

Tom has asked to cut back his volunteerism to two days a week beginning January 1, 2016. For those who don't know, Tom has been a volunteer for over five years working thirty five hours a week for no pay assisting Veterans here in Roscommon County. Tom has not only assisted the Director, Kevin C. Sherman, become familiar with the world of Veterans Administration benefits but has been very helpful in addressing the earned benefits of National Guardsmen and Reservists and their family members. For those individuals who have worked exclusively with Tom in the past will now be transitioned to Heath Nemeth or Kevin C. Sherman. We have prepared for this day of his retirement and we will hard to honor Tom and his commitment by being ready to assist the families he has been involved with over the years. We wish the best to Tom and his wife as they begin a new chapter in their lives.

Q&A/ What is the difference between 100% disability compensation and 100% Permanent and Total disability compensation?

**Disability Compensation** is a tax free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. Compensation may also be paid for post-service disabilities that are considered related or secondary to disabilities occurring in service and for disabilities presumed to be related to circumstances of military service, even though they may arise after service. Generally, the degrees of disability specified are also designed to compensate for considerable loss of working time from exacerbations or illnesses.

VA may grant a temporary 100 percent disability compensation rating to recover from surgery or immobilization of a joint by a cast without surgery for a service-connected disability. The



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temporary 100% rating may continue for 1 to 3 months depending on individual circumstances. Extensions up to an additional 3 months may be granted in severe cases.

Veterans with active prostate cancer are rated at 100 percent. That rating continues for six months following the completion of any treatment, such as surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy. After six months, VA requires that the veteran undergo an examination. Changes reported based on the examination will determine the veteran’s new rating. If the cancer hasn’t returned following treatment, then the rating for prostate cancer will be reduced.

VA will, however, rate the veteran on any related issues being experienced as a result of having had prostate cancer, such as voiding dysfunction. Veterans who have daytime voiding intervals between one and two hours, or awake at night to void three to four times will be rated at 20 percent. Veterans who void at intervals of less than one hour during the daytime, or awake to void five or more times per night, wear absorbent materials, or use an appliance (catheter), may be able to receive a higher VA rating.

December Roscommon County Veterans Affairs Office Totals

**December Veterans or Dependents Office Visits 96 Coordination of volunteer medical transport 19**  
**Personal Interviews 77 Telephone calls made 191 Telephone calls received 286**  
**Claims submitted/reviewed 62 Home or Nursing Home/Assisted visits 5 Records Request; DD 214 or other 3**  
**County Veteran Relief Fund Requests/Application 3 Medical Transportation: Number of Trips 16**  
**Burials 9**



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**Service Organizations in our County**

**VFW Post 4159 (Dues \$50)**

Post **4159 Charles M. Engel Post** (11<sup>th</sup>  
District)  
PO Box 774

Roscommon, MI 48653  
United States  
Phone: (989) 275-4136

*Meeting Location &  
Time*

219 Terrace Dr  
Roscommon, MI 48653  
United States  
7:00 PM 2nd Wednesday  
Commander: David A. Luck  
Service Officer: Ronald R. Schrieber  
Quartermaster: Gerald McCormick

**VFW Post 4034**

**Post 4034 Fred & Paul Kalis Post**

PO Box 591  
Houghton Lake Heights, MI 486300591  
United States  
Phone: (989) 422-6404  
*Meeting Location & Time*  
935 Loxley Rd  
Houghton Lake Heights, MI 48630-5051  
United States  
7:00 pm 2nd Wednesday

Quartermaster:  
Commander: Steven Bidstrup

**VFW Post 5680 St. Helen Post**

PO Box 376  
Saint Helen, MI 48656  
United States  
Phone: (989) 389-7492

*Meeting Location & Time*

1914 Lake St  
Saint Helen, MI 486569756  
United States  
7:00 PM 1st Wednesday

Quartermaster: Bruce Bridson  
Commander: Robert Hurd

**Service Organizations in our County**

**AMERICAN LEGION POSTS**

**Roscommon Post #96 (Dues \$45)**

PO Box 744  
Roscommon, MI 48653  
United States  
Phone: (989) 389-0164

*Meeting Location & Time*

219 Terrace Dr  
Roscommon, MI 48653  
United States  
7:00 PM 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
Adjutant: Don Croff  
Commander: George Ferguson  
Service Officer: Kevin C. Sherman



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**St. Helen Post #416**

10062 Ford Drive, St. Helen, MI 48656  
Phone: (989) 389-4630

*Meeting Location & Time*

10062 Ford Drive, St. Helen, MI 48656

7:00 PM 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday

Adjutant: Don Mraz

Commander: Phil Maylum

Service Officer:

**Prudenville Post #245** (Houghton Lake-  
Higgins Lake) Dues \$45 3564 S. Reserve Rd  
PO Box 318, Prudenville, MI 48651  
United States  
Phone: (810) 751-9983

*Meeting Location & Time*

3564 S. Reserve Rd  
Prudenville, MI 48651  
United States  
7:00 PM 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed

Adjutant: Elizabeth Cuddington

Commander: Bill Jammer

Service Officer: Tom Sheppard

**Service Organizations in our County**

**AMVETS**

**Amvet Post #13 (Dues \$37)**

8009 N Ausable Rd  
PO Box 335  
Higgins Lake, MI 48627  
United States

**Phone:** (989) 821-9838

*Meeting Location & Time*

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 6 pm

8009 N Ausable Rd  
Roscommon, MI 48653  
United States

Commander: Jerry Kilburn

Service Officer:

**MARINE CORPS LEAGUE**

Marine Corps League #684 CPL Jack A.  
Davenport

3564 S. Reserve Rd.  
**Prudenville, MI, 48651**  
United States

Phone: (989)

*Meeting Location & Time*

3564 S. Reserve Rd  
Prudenville, MI 48651  
United States

7:00 PM 2nd Wed

Commander: Jim Bowman

Service Officer: Mel Ward (989) 422-7415



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**Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)**

VVA Chapter #264

PO Box 773

Roscommon, MI 48653

*Meeting Location & Time*

FWW Post #4159

Roscommon, MI 48653

United States

7pm, 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday

Commander: Ed Nolff

Service Officer: Ronald R. Schrieber

**Continuing to Serve**

Think today's veterans are mostly suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and barely making ends meet? According to a recent report by [Got Your Six](#), just the opposite is true. Got Your Six notes that today's veterans tend to be engaged citizens, more likely to volunteer and vote than the general population. As a group, they earn more than non-veterans with comparable qualifications, complete educational programs at the same rate as non-veterans, and comprise only 8.6 of the homeless population.

**Veterans are among our most community-oriented citizens.** The study shows that they volunteer an average of 160 hours annually, 25 percent more than non-veterans. **They belong to civic groups and attend neighborhood meetings, often assuming leadership roles. Furthermore, 48 percent of them vote in elections regularly, 16 percent more than non-veterans.**

These findings should surprise no one. Those who serve in today's all-volunteer military usually do so out of a sense of commitment. Although the government offers educational, health, and other assistance to service members, of the scores of veterans I have interviewed, every single one has named duty to country, not benefits, as his or her primary reason for serving. Furthermore, nearly all -- including severely wounded soldiers -- say they would do it again.

Once soldiers transition to civilian life, many want to continue serving.



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### Service Organizations Page

**Service Organizations:** The Roscommon County Department of Veterans Affairs is asking all of our county service organizations in our county to provide our office with their annual dues and a contact list of their officers. Our office would like to refer returning Veterans to your organization and it would be nice if we can give them a good contact person. I've asked in previous correspondence for applications with your dues amount completed, if your organization have not done so, please consider helping us help you in your recruiting.

**Special Attention:** Recently the Roscommon County Veteran Affairs office was approached by a concerned citizen who asked if we participated in **Wreaths Across America**. Wreaths Across America's mission, Remember, Honor, Teach, is carried out in part by coordinating wreath laying ceremonies a specified Saturday in December at Arlington, as well as veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond. They also organize a week of



events including international Veteran's tributes, ceremonies at State Houses and a week-long "Veteran's Parade" between Maine and Virginia where we stop along the way to spread our message about the importance of remembering our fallen heroes, honoring those who serve, and teaching our children about the sacrifices made by veterans and their families to preserve our freedoms.

This week of events is made possible by thousands of volunteers who organize local ceremonies, raise funds to sponsor wreaths, and participate in the events. The cost of our programs is paid by individual wreaths sponsors, corporate donors and volunteer professional truck drivers.



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They also coordinate veteran services and recognition through a variety of programs, and provide schools with teaching aides for projects throughout the year.

For additional information:

<http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/about/#sthash.t3QiCuoy.dpuf>

My request to our Service Organizations within Roscommon County, interested citizens and/or corporate sponsors within Roscommon County is, “Can we bring this mission to Roscommon County, in part or to all of the County” and if yes, can we rely on your service organization to assist us in meeting this mission? If each service organization could take the one or two cemeteries in their area, it would be a manageable task and quite an honor to our fallen comrades. The cost of each wreath for fundraising this year was \$15.

If there is enough interest from the service organizations, our office would be happy to host a series of community meetings to discuss and determine if the community would support us in this mission. It would be our office hope for this to be a Service Organization initiative /Community Service outreach that many individual citizens and/or businesses would become active in this effort.

**Service Organizations -Would you be interested,( please respond yea or nay)? Please drop our office an email to [veterans@roscommoncounty.net](mailto:veterans@roscommoncounty.net) with the Subject Line: Wreaths Across America**

The Roscommon County Veterans Affairs Committee members and staff say to all of our Veterans and their families, “God bless our Veterans and God bless America.”

**Editor Note: This is our office third newsletter and we are open for articles for future newsletters and/or events you would like us to publicize with this monthly newsletter. Next month deadline is identified above, if you have any questions please call Kevin C. Sherman, Director, at (989)275-6047.**