



At Your Service

Fall, 2022

Welcome to the Fall, 2022 issue of *At Your Service*. This issue includes new and updated articles for Veterans services and contact information within Wethersfield, surrounding communities and State and Federal agencies. The Wethersfield Veterans Commission traditionally meets from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, except for July and August. The public is welcome to attend the monthly meetings! You can contact the Wethersfield Veterans Commission through the Town staff liaisons listed below, or visit our webpage at wethersfieldct.gov/social/veterans

Commission Members

Doug Shipman, Chair
Rick Newell, Vice Chair
Sandra Rhodes, Secretary
Frank Sena
Mark Rudewicz
Jennifer Glick
Trisha Giscombe
Laura Bloomquist, Alternate

Student Representatives

Anthony Kaplun
Hamza Sisic

Town Liaisons

Rachael Mattioli
Assistant Director, Wethersfield Parks and Recreation
(860) 721-2891
rachael.mattioli@wethersfieldct.gov

Ryan Biggs, Town Council Liaison
ryan.biggs@wethersfieldct.gov

Mailing Address:
Wethersfield Parks and Recreation
505 Silas Deane Highway
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Join us for the Veterans Day 2022 Ceremony at Wethersfield High School!

The Town's Veterans Day Ceremony will take place at 11:00 a.m. on November 11, 2022, at the flag pole in front of Wethersfield High School (411 Wolcott Hill Road). Free parking is available in adjacent lots.

We want to hear from YOU!

Please help us continually improve our Newsletter by answering a few short questions! This five-question survey should take only *two minutes* to complete. To begin the survey, visit surveymonkey.com/r/RHRQ3YJ

OR scan this QR code with your cell phone QR scanner or iPhone camera.



Welcome WHS Student Representatives!

We are pleased to announce our new WHS student representatives, Seniors Hamza Sisic and Anthony Kaplun. Hamza plans to go to Army flight school and become a helicopter pilot. Anthony will be majoring in Finance at CCSU.

Their roles include attending monthly Commission meetings, providing updates to the Commission on relevant activities and events happening at WHS, sharing information about Veterans activities and events with WHS students and staff and participating in planning, assisting and encouraging student involvement in the Memorial Day parade and Veterans Day events.

Need Copies of Your Discharge Records?

If you need copies of your DD214 or other discharge records, they can be obtained through the National Archives. To access your records call 1-866-272-6272, go to vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html or request via mail. Note that a form is required which is available at the Town Assessor's Office.

Mail the completed form to:
National Archives & Records Admin
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740

A Reminder: Town of Wethersfield Tax Exemptions for Veterans

Veteran's exemptions are available to Wethersfield residents as of the October 1st assessment date for those who served during one of the state mandated dates of war or military campaigns as well as received an Honorable Discharge (DD214 must be filed with the Town Clerk's Office by September 30th).

Exemptions are based on certain qualifying conditions, with additional benefits granted to Veteran's with a VA disability rating or low income (State mandated income limits and proof required). Deceased Veteran's spouses will continue to receive their benefit until re-marriage. Additionally, if you are a CT resident on Active Duty, you may be eligible for the total exemption of one passenger motor vehicle.

Applications are available online at wethersfieldct.gov/assessor

For questions about tax exemptions, or to obtain an application, contact the Town of Wethersfield Assessor's Office at:

505 Silas Deane Highway
Wethersfield, CT 06109
860-721-2810
assessor@wethersfieldct.gov

Mental Health Services for Veterans

The psychological challenges of readjusting to home are ever present for Veterans returning from military campaigns involving war, from Vietnam to more recently, Afghanistan and Iraq. Veterans continue to face barriers to mental health treatment including stigma, shame, and lack of understanding, as well as logistical barriers such as long wait times and travel distances. The National Veterans Foundation reports that many of the crisis calls that counselors handle begin with issues of isolation and loneliness. These issues can be flags for developing mental health conditions, substance abuse, or suicide. Due to the high rate of Veteran suicide, suicide prevention is the Veteran's Administration's highest clinical priority.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a United States-based suicide prevention network of over 200+ crisis centers that provides 24/7 service via a toll-free hotline to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Just dial **988**. For more information visit [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)

Free, confidential support is also available 24/7 every day of the year for Veterans, Active-Duty members, family members, and friends through the **Veterans Crisis Line** (or Military Crisis Line): 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text 838255 or chat at [veteranocrisisline.net](https://www.veteranocrisisline.net)

For Wethersfield Veterans, the **Hartford Vet Center**, located 25 Elm Street in Rocky Hill, is a convenient location to receive counseling for mental health concerns, as well as alcohol and drugs, bereavement, and military sexual trauma.

You can reach the Hartford Vet Center at 860-563-8800 or the 25/7 Call Center at 877-927-8387.

Other services include employment counseling, benefits assistance, referrals to

community agencies and liaison with VA facilities. Services are also offered through Mobile Vet Centers, virtual appointments and at other community locations.

Forever in My Heart Foundation

Are you a disabled military Veteran who might benefit from the assistance of a Service Dog? The Forever in My Heart Foundation was founded to make an impact in the lives of homeless dogs in animal shelters and disabled military Veterans in our communities. Dogs are trained to be of service to disabled Veterans.

Visit their website at foreverinmyheartfoundation.org for more information, including the application process to apply for a Service Dog. Applications are reviewed by the Foundation's Veterans Committee and involve an interview with a member of the Committee as well as with a Registered Nurse. If you have any questions, contact Mickey Ulizio either by text or phone at 203-530-0274.

Open Doors Outdoors

Are you looking for a fun way to deal with stressful life challenges? Open Doors Outdoors provides specially designed outdoor programs for Veterans and their families, such as hiking, kayaking, and snowshoeing. The goal is for participants to experience adventure as well as build new connections with their surroundings, with loved ones and with themselves. The activities are 100% free for participants.

For more information, go to opendoorsoutdoors.org

The PACT Act and Camp Lejeune

The PACT Act is a new Federal law that expands VA health care and benefits for eligible Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances including the Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Health Issues. This law helps provide generations of eligible Veterans and their survivors with the care and benefits they have earned and deserve.

The following links and contacts will help answer your questions about what the PACT Act means for you or your family. You can also call the VA at **800-698-2411 (TTY: 711)**. You can file a claim for PACT Act-related disability compensation or apply for VA health care now. Additionally, you can contact John S. Carragher at 860-616-3683 at the State of CT Dept. of Veteran Affairs, Advocacy and Assistance, regarding questions and/or claims around the PACT Act. There is also a CT DVA Vets Infoline: 1-866-928-8387.

PACT ACT:

va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/

va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/camp-lejeune-water-contamination/

Note: There are many TV ads from law firms regarding class action lawsuits by Veterans. We encourage you to begin with the VA regarding your eligibility and benefits under the PACT Act.

Veterans Commission 2022 - 2023 Goals

The Wethersfield Veterans Commission is a partnership with Town, State and Federal resources...and **YOU**. Our goals are intended to help you and your family become aware of, and have access to, the services available. You are the most important part of our partnership.

Our 2022 - 2023 Goals are:

- Provide information to Wethersfield Veterans about benefits, services and opportunities for participation and support.
- Foster youth involvement with Veterans.
- Encourage increased Veteran participation and engagement in Veterans events such as the Memorial Day parade, Veterans Day ceremony and other opportunities.
- Connect Wethersfield Veterans to Town services and other resources.
- Sponsor outreach activities to build Veteran awareness of the Veterans Commission and available resources.

Interested in serving on the Veterans Commission? We have an Alternate position available. Please email veteranscommission@wethersfieldct.gov to request more information.

Thank you to the Wethersfield Transition Academy!

The Veterans Commission offers its sincere thanks to the students of the Wethersfield Public Schools (WPS) Transition Academy for their important role in mailing the Newsletter to over 900 Town Veterans. Visit wps.wethersfield.me/schools/wethersfield-transition-academy for more information.