



At Your Service

Spring, 2024

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 all meetings! You can contact the Wethersfield Veterans Commission through our webpage at wethersfieldct.gov/social/veterans. You can also email us at veterans.commission@wethersfieldct.gov or contact a town liaison below.

Interested in serving on the Veterans Commission? We have a vacant position. Please email veterans.commission@wethersfieldct.gov to request more information.

Commission Members

Rick Newell, Chair
Jennifer Glick, Vice Chair
Sandra Rhodes, Secretary
Mark Rudewicz
Trisha Giscombe
Laura Bloomquist
Sean Cattanach
Dave Williams

Student Representatives

Thomas Clark
Sean O'Leary

Town Liaisons

Rachael Mattioli, Assistant Director, Wethersfield Parks and Recreation
(860) 721-2894
Email: rachael.mattioli@wethersfieldct.gov

Daniel Rosario, Elderly Services Coordinator, Wethersfield Social and Youth Services
(860) 721-2880
Email: daniel.rosario@wethersfieldct.gov

Mayor Ken Lesser, Town Council Liaison
Email: ken.lesser@wethersfieldct.gov

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

A Very, Very Special Thanks to Commissioner Doug Shipman!

Doug Shipman served as the Chair of the Wethersfield Veterans Commission from the very beginning of its existence 6 years ago! How can we adequately thank Doug for his effective leadership and commitment to serving veterans in the community beyond his own military service? Doug is sorely missed by all members of the Commission but we wish him all the best!

Thank You to the Wethersfield Transition Academy!

As always, the Veterans Commission offers its sincere thanks to the students of the Wethersfield Transition Academy for their important role in mailing this newsletter to over 900 Town veterans. The students are an invaluable service to the Veterans Commission keeping Town Veterans informed of activities and services. Thank you!

Thank You Boy Scout Troop 85!

Many thanks to Boy Scout Troop 85 for their fund-raising activities to benefit the Veterans Commission. The troop has designed custom-made lawn signs acknowledging the service of military veterans and sells them throughout the community with all proceeds, now totaling \$1,741, donated to the Veterans Commission. Again, many thanks for their creativity and hard work!



Memorial Day Parade

The annual Wethersfield Memorial Day Parade will take place **Saturday, May 25** stepping off at **9:00 am** from the CT DMV. The parade will be immediately followed by a Memorial Day Ceremony at Village Cemetery. This year's parade theme is the "80th Anniversary of D-Day."

For more information please visit

wethersfieldct.gov/memorial-day or email memorial.day@wethersfieldct.gov.

Dedication of Dan Camilliere Way and Green

Wethersfield Town Council approved unanimously for a portion of Garden Street to be ceremonially named "Dan Camilliere Way." The Northbrick Green will now be called "The Dan Camilliere Green." Dan Camilliere was an illustrious resident of Wethersfield, serving on the Democratic Town Committee, the Town Council, including two terms as mayor, a founding member of the town's Veterans Commission, and a longstanding member of the Memorial Day Parade Committee. He was a WWII Veteran who epitomized the motto "Service Above Self." A dedication ceremony will be held on Saturday, May 18 at 11:00 am at the Dan Camilliere Green.

Wethersfield Veteran and an Iconic Afghanistan Photo

Wethersfield Resident 1SG James Duggan is retiring from the CT National Guard after 38 years of service. He recently received the Order of Saint Michael on behalf of the Army Aviation Association of America. Duggan was the Flight Engineer on the famous Afghanistan rooftop landing in November, 2003, which has become immortalized in a photograph. Company G, 104th Aviation Regiment, made up of soldiers from the Pennsylvania and Connecticut National Guards, maneuvered a two-wheel landing of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter on the rooftop of a small house. They were responding to a call from U.S. soldiers operating on the ground in northeastern Afghanistan to evacuate detainees (suspected enemy combatants) to a safer location for more questioning. As Flight Engineer, Jim Duggan, along with other crew members, helped execute this successful landing.

To see the photograph and read a full article about the landing, visit: helis.com/database/country/AF/

Coffee with a Veteran

Please join Veterans Commission Members for Coffee with a Veteran on **Saturday, May 18, 12:00-3:00 pm** at the Donut Station, 486 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. Thank you to the Donut Station for hosting this event!

Veterans Photo Share

The Veterans Commission is exploring the possibility of partnering with the Wethersfield Historical Society to embark on a Veterans Photo Share project. If you are a veteran, or a relative of a veteran, interested in participating in this potential project please email the Veterans Commission at

veterans.commission@wethersfieldct.gov

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony Held March 28th at CT DVA

In the 1970's, due to intense anti-war feelings about the Vietnam War, anyone who served in Vietnam was not given an embracing welcome upon returning to the U.S. However, in May 2010, the State of CT was one of the first states to proclaim March 30th as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. It was on March 29, 1973 that the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam.

Hundreds of Vietnam Veterans, family members, and friends gathered at the CT Department of Veterans Affairs in Rocky Hill for this year's ceremony. Speakers included CT DVA Commissioner Ron Welch, Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, U.S. Congressman John Larson, as well as representatives from the CT National Guard, the VA CT Healthcare System, and Vietnam Veterans themselves. Vice-Chair of the Wethersfield Veterans Commission, Jennifer Glick, was the Master of Ceremony. She is a Vietnam Veteran who served in the Army Nurse Corps 1970-1971 and was presented with a Quilt of Valor.

The ceremony was not only moving, but exhilarating for the many veterans in attendance. Keep this ceremony in mind next year – especially if you are a Vietnam Veteran – to attend, and possibly participate in some way. Be sure to visit the CT Department of Veterans Affairs website for this event as well as others held throughout the year. <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA>

LOCAL AND STATE RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

Town of Wethersfield Elderly Services:

Daniel Rosario is the Town's Elderly Services Coordinator providing citizens, including military veterans, with supportive community-based services, including necessary referrals, and information on Town and outside agency programs. Mr. Rosario can be reached at **860-721-2880** or via email at

daniel.rosario@wethersfieldct.gov. More specific information regarding Elderly Services can be found online at **wethersfieldct.gov/social**

Elderly Outreach and Case Management: For seniors with financial need who require assessment, referral or coordination of services to remain in their homes.

Transportation (Dial-A-Ride): Available to those age 60 and older and those with disabilities under age 60, who need transportation within the greater Wethersfield area. Priority is given to medical appointments. Yearly registration fee of \$78. ID cards are issued.

Health Insurance Options (C.H.O.I.C.E.S.): A program for Health Insurance assistance, for state and federal benefit and support programs which may assist Connecticut seniors.

Friendly Shopper and Friendly Visitor: For homebound seniors, Friendly Shoppers do grocery shopping and Friendly Visitors provide social contacts and a friendly face to visit on a regular basis.

Renter Rebate: Provides rent subsidies for seniors and disabled who qualify.

Tax Preparation Assistance: An AARP-run program from February to April each year that provides tax preparation assistance to low and moderate income residents who need help filling out federal and state income tax forms. To make an appointment contact Social and Youth Services at **860-721-2880**.

CT Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) The Office of Advocacy and Assistance is located within the CT DVA at 287 West Street, Rocky Hill. The Office provides assistance to Veterans, their eligible spouses, and eligible dependents in obtaining veteran's benefits under federal, state, and local laws.

Contact information: **portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/Office-of-Advocacy-and-Assistance**.

Manager: John S. Carragher at **860-616-3683**.

CT Veterans Legal Center: For help in facing legal challenges around access to the VA and veterans benefits, housing issues that might involve homelessness or eviction, consumer debt disputes, sexual assault, and discrimination. Also, there is assistance for veterans with a less than honorable discharge to upgrade their papers as well as for obtaining needed mental health services.

Please call **203-794-4291** or visit their website **ctveteranslegal.org**

Hartford Veterans Center: Located at 25 Elm Street, Suite A, Rocky Hill is available for services such as individual and group counseling, military sexual assault trauma counseling, substance abuse assessment and referral, and employment referral. Please call **860-563-8800** for more information.

Easter Seals Veterans Rally Point: Offers a variety of programs and services such as VA benefit consultation, Behavioral Health Services, Employment and Resume Assistance, Financial Assessment and Coaching, Case Management, Peer Meet-up Groups, etc. Locally, contact Veterans Rally Point II at **860-859-4148**. Located at 287 West Street, Rocky Hill.

Veterans, Inc.: Provides a clinical case management approach around the "total veteran," incorporating job training and employment services, health and wellness, and supportive services ranging from transportation to legal services. Located at 232 Arch Street, New Britain. Call **860-223-1799** or visit their website **veteransinc.org/about-us/**

FEDERAL RESOURCES

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Hartford Regional Office: Located at 555 Willard Avenue, 4th Floor, Building 2E, Newington. For assistance call Toll Free: **1-800-827-1000** or **860-666-7342**. Leave your name and phone number and a representative will call you back in two business days. Appointments can be made Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm or visit **va.my.site.com/VAERA/s/**

HEALTH CARE RESOURCES

Veterans Crisis Line 24/7: If you are a veteran, or concerned about a veteran, the Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource available to anyone, even if you are not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA health care. **Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. Or text 838255. Or have a confidential chat at www.veteranscrisisline.net.**

988 Suicidal Crisis Lifeline: Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the 988 Suicidal Crisis Lifeline is managed locally and is available for rapid access to trained crisis contact staff who provide people with referrals to resources, mobile crisis services, or emergency services as needed/desired. **To reach the Lifeline, call or text 988 or chat at www.988Lifeline.org.**

Update on CT Veteran's Directed Care Program (VDC): A state-wide program that is consumer directed providing older veterans services in their home from the caregiver of their choice.

- 1) You must be registered for VA Health Benefits to access the VDC Program. To register, call the VA Eligibility Center at **203-932-5711, ext. 3131**.
- 2) If already registered for VA Health Benefits, contact your VA Social Worker or VA Primary Care Physician to discuss a referral to the program.

For veterans living in the Hartford area, any questions about home care services can be directed to the North Central CT Agency on Aging at **860-724-6443** or to Danny Rosario, Wethersfield Elderly Services Coordinator, at **860-721-2880**.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Committee on Veteran Social Workers in CT: A support network for military veterans who are practicing social workers and social work students that engages in advocacy and education relating to a range of veteran issues. A key goal is to partner with veteran and military organizations in support of the health and well-being of veterans. If interested in the committee's work and are a practicing social worker or social work student, contact **VetSocialWorkers@gmail.com** or call **860-257-8066**.

