

## DO YOU STILL HAVE THEIR SIX? VETERAN COURTS SEEK MENTOR VOLUNTEERS



*"A Veteran is someone who, at one point, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America' for an amount of 'up to and including his or her life.'" – Author unknown.*

Every member of the American Legion has written this check. The amounts that some veterans paid have been higher than others. A number of our Brothers and Sisters in arms return home after their tour of duty and, for whatever reason, find it difficult to assimilate back into civilian life. As a result, they run into trouble with the law, whether because of fighting, domes-

tic abuse, or substance abuse.

As recently recognized by Governor Rick Snyder:

"Generations of men and women in our U.S. Armed Forces have put themselves in harm's way to protect our residents and preserve our freedoms. At times, the injuries they sustain while in service to our country are unseen, causing uncharacteristically negative behaviors and affecting a veteran's actions back home."

Many of us veterans from older eras know too well the lack of support available to assist with re-integration into society. Fortunately, this is changing, largely because of the efforts of Judge David Jordon, Retired, whose father was a career Air Force officer that flew missions in three wars. In 2010, Judge Jordon helped create a manual to develop veteran treatment courts in Michigan. Veterans' treatment courts shift the focus from the stigma of being a criminal to the honor of being a veteran; highlighting individual worth and collective value to society, and concentrate on getting the veterans the individualized help that they need. In 2012, the Michigan Legislature enacted statutory provisions

authorizing these courts. Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr., recently praised the importance of these courts and urged all Michigan judges to develop veteran treatment courts in their communities:

"These courts recognize that service and sacrifice do not stop when a veteran concludes service in uniform. With the help of volunteer mentors, brave men and women are afforded support needed to overcome challenges that can be exceedingly difficult if faced alone. Veterans have served us, and now, our duty is to serve them, so I urge you to give serious consideration to starting a veterans treatment court in your community or making one accessible to local veterans through a regional partnership."

As noted by our Chief Justice, **volunteer veteran mentors** are a necessary component. These are veterans are willing to stand by the side of their brothers and sisters in arms. They are willing to **be there**. They let these veterans in the program know, "hey, I still have your six." Without volunteer veteran mentors, the program does not work as well. And veteran mentors are desperately needed.

The role of a veteran mentor is to provide support and guidance to veteran participants as they progress through the courts. Mentors are matched as closely as possible to their mentees based on their branch, era, rank, gender, and combat exposure. Mentor duties include:

- Attending all scheduled court hearings.
- Communicating frequently with their mentee to provide ongoing support and encouragement and ensuring that he or she is following the treatment plan, attending appointments, etc.
- Assisting their mentee in answering questions about court procedures and accomplishing the conditions set by the court.
- Staying in contact with the mentor coordinator and providing him or her with progress updates on their mentee, raising

any concerns about their mentee's behavior or circumstances, and staying up to date on mentor trainings, meetings, etc.

It does not take much to qualify as a veteran mentor. Mentor requirements are as follows:

- Be an honorably discharged veteran of one of the branches of the United States military (including National Guard and Reserve branches).
- Be available to attend court hearings and other meetings as needed.
- Complete mentor training and any additional training as requested by the court.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding a veteran participant/mentee's case and personal information.

Most, if not all, veterans consider it an honor and a privilege to have served their country. It is also an honor and a privilege to serve those who have served, to continue to give back. To continue to have your Brother's or your Sister's six. In order to work, the veterans treatment courts need you. The mentor role cannot be filled by civilians. It must be filled by someone who has gone through the same experiences that the mentees have gone through. The mentor must be a Brother or a Sister. I am asking you to take up this call to arms. To help them fight the good fight. To help them win their personal war.

If you are interested in becoming a veteran mentor, you need to contact the nearest veteran's treatment court because each court works a little differently. Visit [www.michiganlegion.org/vetcourts](http://www.michiganlegion.org/vetcourts) to view a list of courts and contacts to volunteer.

Thank you for your service. Thank you for continuing to serve your fellow veterans. Semper Fi.

Sincerely,

Kimberlee A. Hillock  
LCpl, USMC  
Veteran Mentor  
American Legion Member

### Past State Commander Glenn Ainslie Remembered

Glenn H. Ainslie passed away peacefully at the age of 89 on December 2, 2015 in Charlotte, Michigan with his loving wife Sue at his side.

Glenn was a loving, tender husband to Sue during their 25 year marriage. He was a wonderful father to Bill Norton (Megan) and Wendy Adams (Kyle) and a devoted brother to his sister, Elaine Wilt. He had four children from a previous marriage, Russell Ainslie, Pegg Ainslie, Robert Ainslie and Michael Ainslie. He had several grandchildren, Philip Ainslie (Stephanie), Melissa Sigel (Ben), Amanda Berryhill, Brendan and Jake Adams. Nieces Spring Boehmer, April Maynard, nephew Steve Avery and more friends than one can count. He was preceded in death by his mother, Della Gertrude Ainslie (Smith), father, Russell Chester Ainslie and brother, Gayle plus many close friends.

Glenn was a veteran and served his country during the Korean Conflict and World War II. He was a proud American and continued to serve as a member of Hastings American Legion Post #45 for 59 years. He was elected State Commander of The American Legion in 1980 and also served in several capacities on the National level. He retired in 1996 as Administrator/Director of Legion Villa in Battle Creek.

