



The Circuit Court for Prince George's County Veterans Court Team accomplished a landmark achievement over the summer.

The team prepared simultaneous benefit packages for the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of 2019 Graduate Veteran Wilbert F. Dickerson. After three years of hard work by the team, Mr. Dickerson received favorable relief from the Army Review Board Agency. **Veteran Dickerson is now an Honorably discharged Veteran of the United States Army!** Mr. Dickerson is a decorated Combat Infantryman who was discharged from service February 16, 1973. For over 48 years Mr. Dickerson has not been allowed to receive any benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. He has suffered from a long life of addiction problems, severe pain, and mental health problems related to his service.

With this upgraded discharge status, Mr. Dickerson received benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and access to a variety of resources denied to him due to his Other Than Honorable (OTH) discharge status.

The Prince George's County Veterans court team has been highly successful assisting our veterans with obtaining their rightful benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under the leadership of the Chief and Administrative Judge the Honorable Sheila Tillerson Adams, Veterans Court Presiding Judge the Honorable Beverly J. Woodard, Director, Mrs. Julisa Cunningham, Veterans Court Coordinator Mrs. Candice Edwards, team members Mrs. Courtney Haggins, Ms. Chanika Pritchett, Mr. Don Sanders and Mr. Gary E. Roberts, the team works tirelessly to better the lives of the Veterans served through the program.

The Circuit Court for Prince George's County Veterans Court program (CCPGCVCP) is a supervised, voluntary, sanction/incentive-based, 12-month comprehensive treatment program for high-risk, high-need offenders referred to Veterans Court by their defense attorney. Veterans entering the Judicial System with a misdemeanor or felony level offense with prosecutorial consent, documented substance use dependencies and or behavioral health concerns are its focus. Upon acceptance, participants are required to attend regular court hearings before a presiding Judge, maintain curfew, participate in substance use treatment, undergo frequent drug testing, as well as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counseling and mental health services, if needed. The Judge leads the team's efforts, focusing on sobriety, recovery and accountability as primary goals and the Veteran's Court Team insures the implementation of these goals for each participant. Another key component of the program is the Veteran Mentors. These are volunteers who have served in the Military and will act as a support mechanism for each Veteran in their treatment process.

For more information about the Veterans Court program please contact Program Coordinator Candice Edwards at cnedwards@co.pg.md.us.