

PROPOSAL: CAPTAIN JIMMIE HOBAUGH NO. 407 LODGE OF RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

Executive Summary

Following guidance from Grand Lodge leadership and recognizing the unique opportunity to serve Michigan Freemasonry in a meaningful way, we propose transitioning from our original military affinity lodge concept to establishing **Captain Jimmie Hobaugh No. 407 Lodge of Research and Information**—Michigan's first research lodge dedicated to preserving veteran Mason stories and developing leadership resources for the Craft.

This approach eliminates concerns about membership competition and financial burden while creating lasting value for all Michigan lodges. The number 407 remains available and perfectly honors Captain Hobaugh's command of USCGC Woodrush (WLB-407).

Current State & Rationale for Transition

Where We Started

- **Original Vision:** Traditional military affinity lodge requiring 15+ charter members
- **Initial Support:** 20+ interested veteran Masons across Michigan
- **Website:** Mi407.com established with Captain Hobaugh's biography and testimonials
- **Documents:** Petition drafts, endorsement templates, and formation plans developed

Why We're Pivoting

1. **Grand Lodge Guidance:** Concerns about membership impact on existing lodges
2. **Strategic Opportunity:** Veterans are currently the largest source of new Masons
3. **Greater Impact:** Research lodge can serve ALL Michigan lodges, not just one location
4. **Zero Financial Burden:** No per capita, assessments, or charter fees to GL
5. **Proven Model:** Michigan Lodge of Research and Information #1 demonstrates success

What This Preserves

- Captain Hobaugh's legacy and the 407 designation
- Military fellowship and shared purpose
- Contribution to Michigan Freemasonry
- Engagement opportunity for veteran Masons statewide

Captain Jimmie Hobaugh: The Perfect Namesake

Captain Jimmie Harris Hobaugh (1936-2014) embodied the intersection of military service and Masonic dedication:

- **Military Legacy:** 37-year Coast Guard career culminating as Commanding Officer of USCGC Woodrush (WLB-407) during the Edmund Fitzgerald search
- **Masonic Journey:** 33° Scottish Rite Mason, Past Potentate of Ahmed Temple, longtime Treasurer of Bethel Lodge #358
- **Community Leader:** Executive Director of Le Sault de Ste. Marie Historic Sites, Rotarian, mentor to countless servicemembers and Masons

The number **407** is available on Michigan's lodge roster and directly connects to his ship's hull number—a perfect tribute linking his military and Masonic service.

What is a Lodge of Research and Information?

Constitutional Framework (Blue Book §4.17)

- Formed exclusively for **researching and publishing Masonic information**
- Cannot confer degrees (no competition with existing lodges)
- Minimum 15 Master Masons to petition
- Territorial jurisdiction covers entire state
- Meet quarterly (not monthly)
- **Exempt from all Grand Lodge fees and assessments**
- Membership by plural affiliation only

Our Unique Focus

While Michigan Lodge of Research and Information #1 covers general Masonic scholarship, Hobagh No. 407 would specialize in:

1. **Veteran Oral Histories:** Preserving stories before we lose WWII/Korea/Vietnam generation
2. **Military Leadership Applications:** Translating military best practices for lodge governance
3. **Mentorship Programs:** Structured frameworks based on military mentoring models
4. **Veteran Support Resources:** Helping lodges better serve military members

Vision & Mission

Mission Statement

"To preserve the stories and wisdom of veteran Masons, develop leadership resources based on military best practices, and strengthen Michigan Freemasonry through research, education, and fellowship."

Core Objectives

1. **Document & Preserve:** Create Michigan's first comprehensive archive of veteran Mason oral histories

2. **Educate & Train:** Develop practical leadership modules for lodge officers
3. **Connect & Support:** Build statewide network of veteran Masons while supporting all lodges
4. **Research & Publish:** Produce quarterly transactions and special publications

Deliverables & Timeline

Year One: Under Dispensation

Q1 (Formation)

- Submit petition with 15+ signatures
- Establish bylaws (dues: \$30/year)
- Create oral history collection protocols
- Launch revised Mi407.com as research repository

Q2 (First Meeting - Sault Ste. Marie)

- Installation at Bethel Lodge #358
- Hobough memorial presentation
- Distribute oral history kits to founding members
- Begin collecting first 10 veteran stories

Q3 (Second Meeting - Grand Rapids area)

- Present white paper: "Military Leadership Principles for Lodge Officers"
- Launch "Michigan Veteran Mason" podcast
- Workshop: "Building Effective Mentorship Programs"

Q4 (Third Meeting - Detroit area)

- Publish first research paper on veteran contributions to Michigan Masonry
- Beta test "After-Action Review" template for lodge improvement
- Submit charter petition with first-year accomplishments

Year Two & Beyond

- Quarterly meetings rotating across Michigan
- Annual Transactions published (ISBN, print-on-demand)
- Partner with VA for veteran service officer training
- Develop lodge officer training curriculum
- Create statewide veteran Mason database (with consent)

Organizational Structure

Officers

- **Worshipful Master:** Overall leadership and vision
- **Senior Warden:** Programs and publications
- **Junior Warden:** Membership and outreach
- **Secretary:** Digital archives and correspondence
- **Treasurer:** Simple dues management
- **Historian:** Oral history program coordinator

Committees

1. **Oral History Committee:** Interview protocols, equipment, transcription
2. **Publications Committee:** Quarterly bulletin, annual transactions
3. **Leadership Development Committee:** Training modules and workshops
4. **Technology Committee:** Website, podcast, digital archives

Why This Matters Now

The Urgency

- **Demographic Reality:** We're losing WWII veterans daily; Korea/Vietnam vets are aging
- **Recruitment Opportunity:** Veterans are the fastest-growing segment of new Masons
- **Leadership Crisis:** Many lodges struggle with succession planning and officer training
- **Untapped Resource:** Military veterans bring proven organizational and leadership skills

The Opportunity

- First specialized research lodge in Michigan since Lodge #1
- Addresses real need identified by Grand Lodge leadership
- Creates lasting legacy honoring both military service and Masonic principles
- Provides practical resources every Michigan lodge can use

Support from Leadership

"I think this is a great idea! ...Veterans are the biggest source of new masons right now and veterans services are a hot topic within the GL. I don't think this concept will have too much problem getting chartered." — **RW Craig Lehrke, Grand Lodge Officer**

Call to Action

For Potential Members

We need 15+ Master Masons to sign our petition. As a founding member, you will:

- Shape the direction of this historic lodge
- Preserve veteran stories for future generations

- Develop resources that strengthen all Michigan lodges
- Maintain your primary lodge membership (plural membership)
- Pay modest annual dues (\$30 proposed) with no Grand Lodge assessments

How to Join

1. Review this proposal
2. Confirm your interest via Mi407.com or email robertwlinn@gmail.com
3. Provide: Name, Member Number, Primary Lodge, Military Branch/Era
4. Attend virtual town hall (date TBD)
5. Sign formal petition

For Supporting Lodges

Even if you're not joining, you can help by:

- Sharing this proposal with veteran members
- Providing letter of support for our petition
- Identifying veteran members willing to share their stories
- Hosting future quarterly meetings

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How is this different from a regular lodge? A: Research lodges don't confer degrees, meet quarterly instead of monthly, and focus exclusively on education and publication. Members must maintain membership in a regular lodge.

Q: What are the costs? A: Proposed \$30 annual dues. No fees to Grand Lodge (charter, per capita, or assessments are all waived for research lodges).

Q: Do I need research/writing experience? A: No. We need interviewers, transcribers, event organizers, and brothers who simply want to share their stories.

Q: Can non-veterans join? A: Yes, though our focus is veteran-related research. Non-veterans who support our mission are welcome.

Q: Where will we meet? A: Quarterly, rotating around Michigan. First meeting at Bethel Lodge #358 (Hobaugh's home lodge).

Q: How do we preserve oral histories? A: Digital recordings with transcriptions, archived on secure servers with print backups. Interviews follow established protocols with consent forms.

Next Steps

Immediate (This Week)

1. Finalize this proposal with committee feedback
2. Update Mi407.com to reflect research lodge focus
3. Schedule virtual town hall for interested brothers
4. Begin drafting formal petition and bylaws

Short Term (Next 30 Days)

1. Collect 15+ signatures for petition
2. Secure letters of support from lodges
3. Develop oral history interview protocols
4. Create first leadership development outline

Medium Term (Next 90 Days)

1. Submit petition to Grand Lodge
2. Plan inaugural meeting program
3. Design oral history collection kit
4. Build founding member roster to 25-30

Conclusion

Captain Jimmie Hobaugh No. 407 Lodge of Research and Information represents an evolution of our original vision—one that better serves Michigan Freemasonry while honoring our military heritage. By focusing on preserving veteran wisdom and developing leadership resources, we create lasting value for all Michigan lodges while maintaining the fellowship and purpose our veteran brothers seek.

This is our opportunity to build something truly meaningful: a living memorial to Captain Hobaugh and all veteran Masons who have served both country and Craft. Their stories deserve preservation. Their wisdom deserves sharing. Their legacy deserves this lodge.

Join us in making history.

For more information or to express interest:

- **Website:** Mi407.com (being updated)
- **Email:** robertwlinn@gmail.com
- **Committee Chair:** Robert Linn, Past Master, Bethel Lodge #358