



May 12, 2020

MG Paul D. Rogers
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
3411 N Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Lansing, MI 48906

MG Rogers,

Brodhead Armory was constructed in 1930 in Detroit with significant funding by the federal government to the State of Michigan to advance the training of the Michigan Naval Militia. The architect is William ‘Buck’ Stratton, married to Mary Chase Perry (Stratton), founder of historically recognized Pewabic Pottery in Detroit, to which tiles adorn the building.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Federal Art Projects (FPA) were established from 1936 to 1941, and Capt Brodhead engaged artists from Cranbrook Academy of Art and David Frendethal, to complete nautical murals. In addition, artist Edgar Yaeger, John Tabaczuk, Gustave Hildebrand, and James Johnson contributed to the murals and wood carvings, completing the richest WPA art collection of any building in Michigan.

The Navy League claimed tenant occupancy of Brodhead Armory. The following organizations were established: the Metropolitan Detroit Council (1942), the first Women’s Council of the Navy League (1946), and the James M Hannan Division of the Sea Cadets (1964). The James M Hannan Division has the distinction of being one of the first Sea Cadet units in the country, occupying Brodhead Naval Armory as their permanent residence.

The Michigan Naval Militia, Marines and Navy Reserve have trained and operated at Brodhead Armory and claim Brodhead Armory as their official training location. In the 1930’s, the 1st Battalion 24th Marines was established and stationed at Brodhead Armory.

Brodhead Armory was designated and listed at the State and National level as a historical landmark.

The 1st District passed our “Resolution of Support for the Restoration of the Brodhead Naval Armory”, located in downtown Detroit next to Belle Isle. The several of our AL Posts had passed the resolution before it was put to a vote at our March 9th District 1 Meeting. The Resolution was presented to Jim Semerad, CDR, USN (Ret), Chairman of the Board for the Brodhead Association.

It is hope of the 1st District (Metro Detroit) that Brodhead Armory will be operated by the State of Michigan via the Brodhead Association to preserve and protect the WPA assets, its historical designation, and to restore Brodhead Armory to its former stature.

Signed,

Jeff Haeseker
Commander, 1st District
American Legion, -Michigan

<https://al.aldist1.org/>