

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. Minutes of January 25, 2018

Officers present: Chairman Bill Dudley, Vice Chairman Ray Quinn, Treasurer John Mountcastle, Secretary Michael Rothfeld
Chairman Dudley called the meeting to order at 1900 hours

Chairman Dudley led the Pledge to the Flag, **Vice Chairman Ray Quinn** gave the Invocation
Last month's **Minutes** were approved as read
The **Treasurer's Report** was approved as read

Introduction of Guests: Mike Lee (USN), BG Mike Fleming (Ret), Craig Soleim (USN), Arnold Shaheen VVA 1084

Speakers: Mike Mitchell, Jacksonville Univ., Veterans Student Coordinator. JU Program for active duty, veterans & retirees. Teach them the GI Bill, and Chapter 35 and how to use money for schooling. Available to all students- beginner's orientation, counseling, tutoring and financial aid. 424 students in program, 40 staff.

BG Fleming, Sr VP- asks all students to set examples for other students.

Alison Simpson, Historian, FL National Guard. The FLNG has been in St Augustine since 1907. There are 12,000 NG in FL in 128 Units, 200 are deployed now. The NG Museum building was a Friary until 1960. Alison discussed in detail the 5 most common myths associated with the Museum building, see <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/histarch/sa.htm>

Committee Reports:

Mac: The SJC VSO will be at SPIN (Sr. Provider Information Network) at the Outlet Mall on March 3 from 1000 to 1430. The gov't is now refunding severance pay that was incorrectly taxed.

Ray: Thanked all who helped with the WAA cleanup.

The COL Ed Taylor Award, in honor of the founder of the VC of SJC and highly decorated, was presented to Judge H. McGillin, COL, USA ret, and co-founder of the Veterans Treatment Court. Judge McGillin accepted the Award on behalf of the VTC Team. There are 24 in court program, 22 still involved, 1 graduated, 1 dropped out.

Michael: Invited all to the AUSA Dinner meeting on Feb. 15 to hear Judge McGillin speak about VTC and to attend the March 28th Council meeting to hear the County Secondary Social Studies Curriculum Specialist talk about how Vietnam is taught in County Schools.

Ron Birchall: the Military Ball profits will be donated to the Veterans Council to be used to directly help veterans.

Chairman Dudley: Met with Dr McKenzie (CMO) and VA about location of new permanent CBOC- still no decision. Also discussed new ways to keep veterans in existing VA Health Care. Under discussion was a plan to add another van to start/end in Palm Coast travel to St Augustine and from there to either Jacksonville or Gainesville VA facilities.

The Council may purchase (with Grant money) 22 flag holders for St Augustine National Cemetery to line walkways during events. Also briefly discussed, but for further discussion is to have St Johns County designated as a Purple Heart County. The Council will be raising the POW/MIA Flags over the two County buildings in a ceremony with the County Commissioners (flags donated by Mike Cassata of the Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial).

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm. The next meeting of the Veterans Council will be on **Thursday, February 22**, 7 pm in the Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View.

Future speakers:

February 22, Leigh Devane, Traci Mansour, Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Chairman Dudley will speak about the Council's 2017 programs, projects, and events.

March 28, Laura Wynn, Curriculum Specialist, Secondary Social Studies, Advanced Academic Programs, SJC School District

April 26, Thomas Richardson, Asst Director, Veterans Employment & Training Service (VETS)

