

The Patriot Reader

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

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Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld



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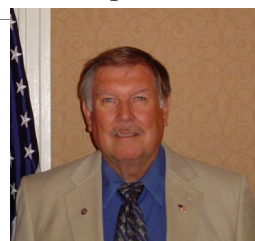
Message from the Chairman

Fellow Veterans:

August was a very busy month for your Veterans Council. We participated in many activities around the county including the raising of a new home for Gunny Sgt. John Hayes, the Homeless Standdown, participation in the West Point Society Wreath laying and luncheon just to name a few of the important events. We are in the process of planning for the upcoming Veterans Day ceremony at Francis Field on Nov. 12 with an additional ceremony planned for the Veterans Park on Anastasia Island next to the Police Station.

We have an expanded program this year for our Veterans Day program downtown at Francis Field with the Nease High School NJROTC Precision Drill Team performing along with some of the other local High School Bands, First Militia, Military displays, and other pageantry. Our keynote speaker for this year's event is Rear Admiral Sinclair Harris. Admiral Harris is the newly appointed commanding officer of U.S 4th Fleet and US Naval Forces Southern Command, headquartered at NS Mayport.

There are many other important upcoming events coming up that are covered in this month's



Patriot Reader newsletter. Also some very interesting articles as our newsletter continues to expand. Please share our newsletter with others in your address book when you receive it so that we can continue to reach out to all our Veterans and others in our community.

Thank you for your service and for all that you do to support our Veteran's.

Bill Dudley

Chairman

St. Johns County
Veterans Council

St. Johns County Commission Chairman Mark P. Miner to attend Warrant Officer Flight Training for the Florida Army National Guard



St. Johns County Commission Chairman Mark P. Miner, an Infantry Non-Commissioned Officer in the Florida National Guard, has been selected to attend Warrant Officer Flight Training this fall as a member of the Florida Army National Guard. Miner, who served two tours in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn, has left County Commissioner on August 10. Miner is expected to be placed on orders to report to Fort Rucker, Alabama for training beginning August 11.

"While I am saddened to take a leave of absence from the Board of County Commissioners, the opportunity to attend Warrant Officer Flight Training is the culmination of a life-long dream for me," said Miner. "While my heart will remain in St. Johns County, serving our country in this capacity is an honor for which I will forever be grateful."

All the veterans in the county want to thank you for all the work you have done on our behalf. We all wish you and Cheryl all the very best in the years ahead.

***Bill Dudley, Chairman, Veterans Council of St. Johns County,
on behalf of the Veterans of St. Johns County***



An Announcement

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, starting October 1 we will publish, post on our website, and distribute this Newsletter on the first of the month. All articles are due by the 21st of the previous month. We are planning on listing veterans meetings/events in a monthly calendar so please be sure to send us your meetings and events.



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Colonel, US Army (Retired)
Attorney and Civil Mediator

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***This article is re-printed with the permission of the St. Augustine Record
and reporter Sheldon Gardner***

By SHELDON GARDNER sheldon.gardner@staugustine.com

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Ryan Timoney wasn't expected to recover well, if at all, after a suicide bombing injured him and killed two of his fellow soldiers in Afghanistan in May.

He was in a coma for weeks, and he was not able to talk for more than a month.

His first signs of progress came with the squeeze of a hand and some words scribbled on paper.

But when he received a Purple Heart on Friday, Ryan Timoney gave a speech.

"It was a very good moment," Timoney said in a phone interview from Tampa. "...it's an emotional event because you think about the guys that you've lost."

Scores of people gathered on Friday for a Purple Heart award ceremony at James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, where Timoney has been recovering. U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Richard Stone spoke and presented the award to Timoney, and St. Johns County officials including Commission Chair Mark Miner and veteran's council chair Bill Dudley attended.

Timoney, a Bartram Trail High School graduate, speaks slowly and carefully. He still has a long way to go to recover, and he has trouble choosing his words.

Overall, though, his recovery has been "happening beyond the explanation of science," said his father Greg Timoney, who lives in St. Johns. He described his son's progress as "a miracle."

Timoney, 26, and 12 soldiers from a unit based out of Fort Sill, Okla., were attacked by a suicide bomber in Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan, on May 20, his mother, Diane Timoney, said.

The attack killed Capt. Jesse A. Ozbat, 28, of Prince George, Va., and 2nd Lt. Tobias C. Alexander, 30, of Lawton, Okla., according to the Department of Defense.

The explosion sent a piece of shrapnel through Timoney's head, shattered his leg and lodged a ball bearing dangerously close to his spine. He was transferred from Walter Reed Army Hospital in Bethesda, Md., to Tampa in June.

Timoney remembered what happened in Afghanistan, as his unit was leaving a police station in Tarin Kowt.

"There were two guys together behind me," he said. "We were in a line trying to space each other out."

And a young man, a "kid," with bulky clothing, "He walked right into our ... group," Timoney said. "One of the guys in front of me drew his weapon — I didn't even see him."

Then the explosion.

"He got the two guys who were behind me ... I was the next close guy after that," Timoney said. "I was on the ground ... One of 'em grabbed me ... one guy ... he threw me on his back."

Continued on next page

Timoney said he remembers the man putting him in the back of the truck.

"That's when I blacked out," he said. "I don't remember anything else."

Timoney works each day on improving his speech, and he continues to heal from injuries that have kept him in a wheelchair.

Greg and Diane Timoney said that it will be at least November before he can go back to Walter Reed for two major surgeries — one to put a titanium shell in his head where part of his skull is missing, and the other to remove the special frame that is holding his leg together.



Standing behind Lt. Ryan Timoney and girl friend Kelby Sims are, from left: former St. Johns County Commissioner Mark Miner; Al Carter, Deputy Director FDVA; Greg Timoney, father of the Lt.; VSO Joe McDermott, Diane Timoney, mother of Lt. Timoney; Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley & Vice Chairman Dan Blackman

Ryan Timoney said the support he has received has helped him through the recovery.

"I just want to thank everyone for their support," he said. "I know a lot of people have been on Facebook."

During the ceremony on Friday, Ryan Timoney was able to stand near his girlfriend, Kelby Sims, with the help of a walker during the National Anthem and a prayer.

He said he is focused on recovery and "is trying to let time" decide where the future will take him, and when asked if he had any final comments, he chose two words: "Fight on."



From Ray Quinn: When I was offered the opportunity to visit the Jacksonville National Cemetery, four of our veterans from Lassen fell into formation for the trip. On Wednesday 8 August the wonderful staff of Lassen transported our guys for the tour. Mr. Greg Whitney, director, provided a briefing and answered questions. The tour enabled one of our veterans the opportunity to visit his wife interred in 2009. My thanks to the staff of Lassen for their caring professionalism.

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The House That Trust Built



Veteran Receives New Home, By Michael Isam

St. Augustine , Fla , (August 13, 2012) – It was an almost normal day for August in Northeast Florida . Hot and muggy were the watchwords for an early Friday morning.

What separated this from a “normal” day was the scores of volunteers scurrying around making sure the coolers were filled with ice and bottled water and other drinks. Folks were busy filling out registration forms and donning the bright red t-shirts proclaiming their mission, “Homes For Our Troops Build Brigade, GySGT John Hayes, St. Augustine , FL , 2012.”

Escorted by Rolling Thunder FL Chapter 4, Patriot Guard Riders, and Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, Hayes and his family were greeted by supporters lining both side of the street; flags on one side with VFW Bryan Tuten Memorial Post 2391 Color Guard, and a string of red shirts on the other. It was reminiscent of a similar event in 2011 when Hayes came to support his friend Marine Cpl. Tyler Southern watch his new home be raised.

Rolling in a wheelchair, Hayes was hugged by more than one well-wisher as he proceeded to the tent for the opening ceremonies. Southern, with his incredible smile was waiting for him. “I’m so happy for John and his family,” said Southern. “There is nobody more deserving and we are going to be neighbors.”

Doreen Lewis, Mistress of Ceremonies, got the celebration off to a good start by proclaiming “short speeches” and the rest of the speakers followed suit.

From there the building began in earnest. The walls were already constructed waiting to be raised. The first formed a frame for Hayes and his family as he put in a ceremonial nail. “Lucky this thing is powered by air,” said Hayes “or we might be here all day.”

According to the Homes For Our Troops website Hayes was on his 4th deployment when he lost both of his legs. An Explosive Ordinance Disposal Technician, Hayes and his team were on a routine mission when undetonated ordinance was discovered. Hayes stepped on a buried IED while retracing his steps to assist. The result was traumatic amputations of both of his legs. Hayes required multiple lifesaving resuscitations on the trip from Afghanistan to Landstuhl , Germany .

Once stabilized, he was brought to Bethesda National Naval Medical Center where during his first week in the hospital, he miraculously survived a series of grueling surgeries. A serious infection led to a rare hemi-pelvectomy amputation of a leg or pelvis on his left side. Hayes has endured over sixty surgeries thus far.

When asked about life during the last year he chuckled, "Therapy, therapy, and more therapy." As part of the recovery process both Hayes and Southern participated in a 5k run.

Photos and a video are available below:

Day 1 photos - <http://spotted.staugustine.com/galleries/index.php?id=337443>

Day 2 photos - <http://spotted.staugustine.com/galleries/index.php?id=337453>

Video – YouTube - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUZoI76Qivw&feature=g-all-lik>

[All photos & video by Michael Isam](#)

Building Gunney Hayes' new house



Homeless Veterans Get a Day of Relief by Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (August 21, 2012) – “The turnout is the largest in current memory” said Heather Andrews of the County Veteran Service Office (CVSO). She should know, she has been coordinating these events for the past 6 years.

The event, held Saturday at the Elks Lodge on Anastasia Island, has been a Godsend to homeless veterans.

“Veterans are homeless for many reasons,” said Andrews. “Many of them just can’t deal with society and society can’t deal with them either. In a lot of ways, even with all the breakthroughs in treatment, the stigma of the returning veteran and mental health is still there.”

Not all have issues of mental health. They are not crazy. They just can’t cope and the stresses of “normal” life are more than they can deal with at any one time. There is a regime to daily life that begins with the rising of the sun. It is a lifestyle reminiscent of military life where the day is mapped out for you, but minus the “3 hots and a cot” guarantee.

According to one veteran, who wished to remain one of the nameless faces in the crowd, “There are places to go for food, but I have to be there early. To be there early, I have to be organized. That means up, cleaned, belongings packed and on the road in less than twenty minutes.” Those belongings are scarce. Packed in a bundle fitting on a bicycle or a backpack are a few changes of clothes, a bedroll, and now, thanks to the stand down, an actual folding G.I. cot.

The veterans were met by a cadre of volunteers. Sign in, backpack for new items, teams from the VA to assist with benefits, legal aid, showers, clean clothes, gloves, cots, bedrolls, jackets, boots and more. After the shower; haircuts, a dental check-up, podiatry, and finally food! Hotdogs and hamburgers were the fare of the day, and water, lots of water.

The continuous stream of “Thank You, God Bless You” was met with a constant stream of “Thank you for your service and wish we could do more.”

“I’m going to hibernate for a week,” said Andrews, “I have so many organizations to thank for their assistance. It is sometimes overwhelming to see the out-pouring for these folks. The constant source of assistance from every veteran organization, not only in the county, but statewide, is ...” Andrews walked away, unable to speak.

After hibernation comes the post-mortem of this event and plans anew for next year.



The West Point Society of North Florida Annual Ceremony Commemorating the end of the Florida Indian Wars



The West Point Society of North Florida held its annual ceremony commemorating the end of the Florida Indian Wars and remembering those, including the many West Point Graduates, who perished in them on Saturday, 18 August at the National Cemetery in St. Augustine. As noted by Major Elizabeth Evans who welcomed all in the name of the society. This was the fifth year the society has organized the event, which began with an encampment of period re-enactors in front of the National Guard Headquarters at St. Francis Barracks. The following march to the three pyramids in the cemetery is modeled after a grand ceremonial parade through St. Augustine on 15 August, 1842. The disinterred remains of Major Francis L. Dade's command, ambushed and annihilated by Seminoles in 1835 and hundreds of other officers and men who perished during the wars to their final resting place under three pyramids in the cemetery. The ceremony itself at the pyramids included historical remarks, the laying of the society wreath, the cadet prayer, and closed with a cannon salute and the haunting bugle notes of taps.

Following the ceremony at the pyramids, the assemblage of about 100 had lunch in the nearby officers club and heard a memorable talk by Mr. Robert Thrower, Tribal Preservation Officer, of the Porch Band, Creek Indians. He was introduced by Lt. Colonel (ret.) Gregory Moore who noted that the event has grown steadily over the years, and the society's intention for continued expansion as St. Augustine nears its 450 Anniversary Celebrations in 2015. Indeed, as noted in remarks by Colonel (ret.) Joseph Nattzinger, this year the West Point Society was most happy to welcome the members of the Dade City based Seminole Wars Foundation. Their leader, Frank Laumer, gave appropriate historical remarks during the proceeding and noted the Foundation's desire to work with the society in future years in developing the event.

Added to the program this year was the field display and firing of a "6 pounder." The cannon is an exact replica of that which accompanied Dade's column on the fateful day in 1835 and was manned by a 6 man team of the Peace River Artillery under Mr. Jerry Fischer. Also joining the re-enactors this year were Jerry and Linda Morris with a period display of how soldiers lived in the field, and a honor guard drawn from the 3rd Battery, Fifth Artillery led by Lt. Colonel Harry Metz. All in all, the stage was set for an even larger, most impressive event in 2013, designed to bring due recognition to the most difficult Indians Wars in Florida, and to those who fought and perished in them. *Colonel (ret.) Joseph Nattzinger*

See a short video of this event at: http://youtu.be/9CNY_ivGyxU



Major Elizabeth Evans & Col. Joseph Nattzinger, US Army ret.

Photos by Ted Pappas

*Veterans Council of St. Johns County,
"Helping All Veterans"*

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County welcomes article submissions from all County Veterans & organizations. Articles should be of interest to all and veterans related. Submissions may be edited &/or shortened and used if space permits.

Send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org



Maj. Dade's Monuments
St. Augustine National Cemetery

Important Online Veterans Links:

Top 50 Military Websites

<http://topmilitarysite.top-site-list.com/>

Veteran/Military Websites

[www.amervets.com/warlib6/
warlib6.htm](http://www.amervets.com/warlib6/warlib6.htm)

Top Military Websites-Rankings

<http://topmilitarywebsites.com>

**The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. is a
Not For Profit Florida Corporation.**

Our formation date was July 4, 2001 in a proclamation issued by the St. Johns County Commissioners. It is composed of representatives of the various veterans' organizations within St. Johns County.

The Veteran's Council will work with city and county governments and other local organizations to achieve the mutual goal to provide a central agency to assist in the coordination and presentation of matters concerning veterans and veterans activities in St. Johns County.

The Veteran's Council will endeavor to precipitate, stimulate and assist various organizations as they perform patriotic events. One of the major purposes is the promotion and education of national patriotic matters.

**The St. Johns County Veterans Council meets the last
Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the Elks Lodge,
1420 A1A So., St. Augustine.**

**Visit our Website: www.veteranscouncilofstjohns.org
(please note the NEW web address)**

**Veterans Service Office
1955 US 1 South, Suite 550
St. Augustine, FL 32086**

(physical location)

*The VSO Office is located in the St. Johns County Health
and Human Services complex, behind the VA Clinic.*

*The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily,
Monday through Friday excluding holidays.*

*Service is by appointment.
Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161
Joseph McDermott, CVSO
Rick Rees, Assistant VSO
Heather Andrews, Assistant VSO
Tammy Shirley, Office Specialist*

The locally produced *Vietnam documentary, Service, Sacrifice
and Courage* has received 65,200 views to date on YouTube.

You can view part of it at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8Cs6Th7VNC>



Florida Veterans Programs & Projects, Inc. in association with Rolling Thunder Florida are making available free copies of its "Prisoners of War: Stolen Freedom" documentary to all Veterans Groups. Just contact Michael at: 904-829-0381 or mrothfeld@AnyVeteran.org and I will mail them or meet you to give you as many free copies as you need. Our goal is to have as many people see the documentary as possible.

**Submitted by Glen Tilley, Past Commander,
VFW Bryan Tutton Post 2391**

George McCrea has been a VFW member for over 45 years. He served 34 years in the Army, retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer four. George became active in the VFW while serving in the Vietnam War. He has held every position in the VFW at Post level excluding Quartermaster. Currently, he is serving as our Post Senior Vice Commander and House Committee Chairman. While serving at the Post, he has been faced with one challenge after another. Through it all, he has been an outstanding leader and advisor to the Post Commander, keeping the members advised and calling on their support to aid our Post. Dedicated to the standards of the VFW, George has an insatiable desire and ability to help the veterans, their families and the community at all times. He instills in each of us to do better in our positions. He encourages volunteerism from everyone. His community service is bountiful. In addition to the VFW, he serves as an officer in the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Treasurer for Vets-4-Vets, member of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County Florida Warrant Officer Association, and he has been Grand Marshall for many years at the Massing of the Colors for the Memorial Day Ceremonies in St. Johns County. Additionally, he was Coast Guard Auxiliary Commander for two years while serving for twenty years with the Coast Guard Auxiliary. During that time he was a recruiter for the Coast Guard, an instructor, stood radio watches and also remained on call for search and rescue missions. He also works daily as a PSA Officer for the Support Services Division of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Department, works with the Homeless Coalition, St. Francis House and Habitat for Humanity. If he sees a need, he's on it and with dedication and enthusiasm.

George was instrumental in establishing the Vets-

4-Vets program in St. Johns County. Designed much in the concept of the VFW National Unmet Needs Project, the Vets-4-Vets program coordinates the efforts of all county veterans' organizations into one entity, thereby providing a more efficient and effective means of support for the vital yet unfulfilled needs of our veterans and their families. The program provides a wide range of financial and advisory support for those veterans and families who identify a need, such as rent, utilities, food, etc. Always willing to volunteer whenever he is called upon, George has provided countless hours around the Post providing lawn and yard maintenance, equipment repair and facilities repair. He has provided



transportation to many veterans when needed, picked up supplies and building materials, kitchen supplies and has donated same on many occasions. His experience with mechanical equipment has proven as asset to the Post. He recently rented a storage facility to house donated household goods and furnishings to be issued to needy veterans at a later date. Cost savings to the Post and veterans are too many to calculate.

George always keeps the welfare of the veterans and their families utmost on his mind. Through the volunteerism noted above, his dedication and true caring spirit is obvious. At 76 years old, George performs all these tasks like a true warrior and to the admiration of all who know him or benefit from his benevolence.

I could go on, but I think I have made my point. This and more is why, retired CWO-4 USA, our Veteran of Foreign Wars, Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391 of St. Augustine, Florida Senior Vice-Commander, George McCrea, is our nominee for the G.I. Joe Award 2011-2012.

On the right is one of George's many awards.

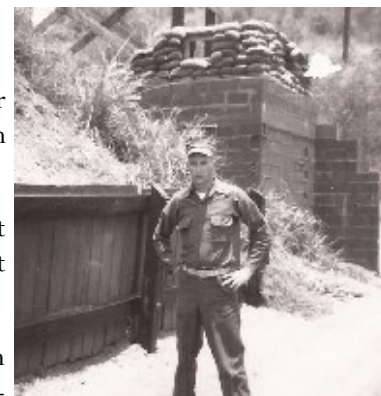


THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS Do You remember it?

As we approach THE 50TH Anniversary of what was the closest event to a nuclear war ever, I always reminisce. However most people today have the 1000 yard stare when you say Cuban Crisis.

As a young dumb country boy from the hills of East Tennessee and fresh out of that great University known as PARRIS ISLAND I returned from weekend liberty to find myself a part of this historic event.

A new found friend who was from Philadelphia had invited me to go home with him on weekend liberty, as I had never visited to the city of brotherly love I was excited. The weekend was uneventful as I remember and on the long drive back to Camp Lejeune on Sunday night I was not looking forward to a week of mess duty. We had to wait on one of our guys in D.C. or Maryland which put us behind schedule getting back to the base. The mess Sergeant had given strict instructions DO NOT BE LATE ON Monday morning we start at 4 A.M. Needless to say when we rolled through the main gate it was 4:40, I think Lejeune Blvd was at least 20 miles long in those days.



Jim Bellamy

As we were approaching the 10th Marines area we noticed several 6xby's staged with concertina wire on the front and Marines in full gear loading on the trucks. When I ran into the Mike Battery barracks I noticed everyone had their field pack & sea bag hanging on the end of the bunk. Doing a Superman quick change from civvies to uniform, I ran to the mess hall ready to get a full chewing out. Much to my surprise before that could happen Gunny appeared and ordered me back to the barracks and told me to pack and be in the gun park in 15 minutes. Being the good PFC that I was I complied a quick as possible.

When I arrived at the gun park, my section chief explained that we were on alert and were moving out today. Fast forward to about 22:00 hours when we rolled out the gate on our way to Moorehead City, where I received my first encounter of a Navy LST. I am not sure how long it took to load the ship but we did and became part of a B.L.T (Battalion Landing Team) and sailed into the Atlantic. My first time aboard a ship. A day or two later found u LST 1177 docked at Mayport Navel Station I managed to go ashore and call home to let my parents know I was alive and well, only then from my Dad did I learn about the Cuban crisis.

We spent the rest of the cruise in the Atlantic not knowing what was coming next but fully expecting to land in Cuba at some point.

When the word came down, we were going back to Lejeune everyone was ready as many of us were Boots not only in the CORPS but also to living aboard ship.

It was nighttime as we approached the North Coast south of Wilmington we hit a very bad storm and were on the mess deck watching a movie when the ship felt as though the bow was pointing to the stars and then it slammed down and it sounded as though we had been bombed or torpedoed. The squawk box came on with "FIRE, FIRE ON THE TANK DECK THIS IS NOT A DRILL" knowing that all of our trucks were filled with 155mm rounds and powder the pucker factor went to the top. HOWEVER when the Gunny sent us down to the tank deck to redog the trucks it went off the charts. Later we found out that the ramp to the top deck had fell and smashed the Commanders jeep and one of our ¾ ton trucks, we also received the word that the ship had lost part of the steering and was headed back to Charleston,S.C. for repairs.

Docked in Charleston we fell in to a daily routine and had Dungaree liberty . Life was good at the Horseshoe Bar until the Sailors became jealous because they had to wear dress uniforms on liberty, shipboard life became a grudge match. The day before Thanksgiving we received word that several families had invited those of us who wished to have Thanksgiving dinner with a family

were welcome, however that evening one of our Marines went ashore who did not have liberty and became sick on Moonshine and had to be taken to the hospital, needless to say the Navy had their revenge as ALL MARINES WERE CONFINED TO THE SHIP on Thanksgiving day.



Jim Bellamy today

Some time around the first two weeks in December, we finally loaded on to Cattle Cars and returned to Lejeune, and our howitzers and equipment sailed in to Moorehead City after Christmas.

I did eventually land in Cuba, and spent a total of 18 months in Guantanamo Bay, I have a few stories from that experience, but that is another time.



Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Patriotism is our motto at Clyde E. Lassen

State Veterans Nursing Home

We love our volunteers at Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

We here at Clyde E. Lassen have many volunteers that visit. I would like to take a moment to show some pictures of our wonderful volunteers. We want invite anyone to be a volunteer here to help with our many opportunities to benefit our Veterans. We welcome new ideas from volunteers at any time. We have volunteers that come and share their talents in many ways. Singing/music, reading, visiting, assisting with outings, conducting worship services/communion, and bringing pets by for a visit are just a few of the ways we utilize volunteers. We have volunteers that come on a weekly or monthly basis. We have others that come when they find they have extra time. We can usually fit anyone in at any time! If you feel this is something you might like to do please contact Leigh at 904-940-2193 for information. We love our volunteers!



Ready to Assist, the Florida National Guard Foundation

For more information, please visit our website at www.floridanationalguardfoundation.org



FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD FOUNDATION – WHO WE ARE

The Florida National Guard Foundation was founded as a Non Profit Organization in April 1983 with the purpose to provide charitable and educational aide in the form of money and other property and services. The Foundation also agreed to administer a scholarship program developed by the Florida National Guard Association of Florida.

Through the years the focus of the Foundation shifted more towards providing financial assistance to our soldiers and airmen. The Foundation operates as Direct Support Organization of the Florida Department of Military Affairs as provided by Florida Statutes, Chapter 250.115. The Foundation is organized and operated exclusively to raise funds; request and receive grants, gifts, bequests of moneys; acquire, receive, hold, invest and administer in its own name securities, funds or property and make expenditures to or for the direct or indirect benefit of the Florida National Guard.

Because the Foundation is a Direct Support Organization of the Department of Military Affairs, operating expenses are kept extremely low. This allows more funds to be placed in the hands of those Soldiers and Airmen that need financial assistance while serving our state and nation.



The Bryan Tutton Memorial VFW Post 2391 Tank

By A. J. Sartin

When you mention the VFW Post 2391, the first thing people ask is, “What kind of Tank is that in front of the Post”?

The tank is a M60-A3 Patton Tank. It is on-loan from the United States Army.

The 105 mm Gun, Full Tracked combat M60, also known unofficially as the M60 Patton, is a first-generation Main Battle Tank (MBT) introduced in December 1960. It was widely used by the U.S. and its Cold War allies, especially those in NATO, and remains in service throughout the world today, despite being superseded by the M1 Abrams in the U.S. Military.

In 1978, work began on the M60-A3 variant. It featured a number of technological enhancements, including smoke dischargers, a new flash-lamp pumped ruby-laser based rangefinder (AN/VVG-2) that could be used by both Commander and Gunner, and the M21 ballistic computer, and a turret stabilization system. All active American M60s eventually underwent the conversion to the A3 model.

The M60-A3 was phased out of U.S. service in 1997, but it remained a front-line MBT into the 21st centuries for a number of other countries.

The M60-based AVLB and the M728 CEV were the only variants of the M60 deployed to South Vietnam.

The M60-A3 in front of the Post does not have an engine or any electronics. The gun turret has been plugged and the hatches welded closed.

By-the-way, an M60-A3 Patton Tank was involved in a civilian Police Chase in 1995, when one was stolen by Shawn Nelson from a California Army National Guard armory and taken on a rampage through San Diego, California. Nelson was killed by police when he refused to surrender, after the tank became stuck on a concrete freeway divider. News footage of this incident has been shown numerous times on World’s Wildest Police Videos and other similar programs.

A new brochure is available for all veterans with visual, physical, mental and learning disabilities in accessible format. It can be obtained through Braille and Talking Book Library 1-800-226-6075 or the National Library Service, go to: nls@loc.gov or dt00@loc.gov from Dr. Jane Karp, Col USAF ret.



LEATHERNECKS: "Always Faithful!"

The Oldest City Detachment #383, Marine Corps League, St. Augustine lives up to the US Marine Corps motto: "*Semper Fidelis*" ("Always Faithful") by faithfully delivering their monthly coffee and donut treats to the veterans at the VA Outpatient Clinic in St. Augustine.



These Marines and Navy Corpsmen arrive on the 3rd Tuesday morning of each month at the waiting room spearheaded by the Detachment's Chaplain, Woody Rodgers (photo: shown @ the far end of the counter). A small token of appreciation to our veterans saying: "we don't remember you, we just never forgot!"

The Oldest City Detachment Marine Corps League will participate in the StandDown and we were in attendance for the house raising for Marine Gunnery Sergeant Hayes on the 10th of August.

You might mark your calendar for our Sept. meeting we have Staff/Sgt Fairbanks coming and giving a power point presentation on the Wounded Warrior Regiment, also the Poisoned Patriots will give their program on the up coming event in September.

Meeting date is 4 Sept. we will have a program on Wounded Warrior Regiment 9 (this is a Marine Program) also will have the gentleman from Poisoned Patriots who was at the Vet Council meeting. We will be participating in the Jeep beach event with them on the 9th of Sept. On Sept 18th we will serve coffee & donuts at the VA Clinic as we do every third Tuesday. Also the Ladies Auxiliary will be installing their new officers at our meeting on the 4th.

Marine Corps League Detachment 383 meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 1900 hrs, at the St. Augustine Elks Lodge 829

1420 A1A So., St. Augustine 32080. Phone 904-461-0139,

mclfl383.org

The St. Augustine Navy League Council

The St. Augustine Navy League Council (SANL) is proud to inform the public of the importance of the sea services to the safety and security of our Country. We also sponsor and reward personnel assigned to Naval Aviation and surface Units at NAS Jacksonville & Mayport, and to the Coast Guard at Mayport & Cecil Field. In addition, SANL supports its own Sea Cadet Battalion and deserving high school students by awarding scholarships to Cadets in the Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corps (JROTC) at St. Augustine, Nease, Matanzas and Flagler Palm Coast High schools.



The Navy League of the United States was founded in 1902 with the encouragement of President Theodore Roosevelt. The Navy League is unique among military-oriented associations in that it is a civilian organization dedicated to the education of our citizens, including our elected officials, and the support of the men and women of the sea services and their families. You need not have served in the military to be a member of the Navy League.

Contact Us:

St. Augustine Navy League Council

P.O. Box 5194

St Augustine, FL 32085-5194

CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Ladies Auxiliary VFW is pleased to present scholarships to assist members who wish to further their education by pursuing a college degree or a career direction at technical school. **This is also available to the spouse, daughter, and son of a member who is eligible to apply.**

One scholarship in the amount of \$1000 will be presented to a selected candidate in each of the four Ladies Auxiliary VFW Conferences. This is designed to assist adults 18 years of age or older who wish to continue their education in college/vocational/technical school of their choice. Applicant must include a typed essay of 300 words or less describing their commitment to their goals and how this scholarship will help them attain these goals. **Qualifying member must have been a member of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW for one year prior to application. Previous national winners are not eligible.**

Additional eligibility details and application can be found at www.ladiesauxvfw.org/prgrams/scholarship.

Application must be received at by the Director of Programs, Ladies Auxiliary VFW National

Headquarters, 406 W. 34th St. 10th Floor, Kansas City, Mo. 64111 no later than **February 15, 2013.**

Anyone needing more information or having questions should contact Debbie Tilley, Auxiliary President, VFW, Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391 @ 460-9345 or dktilley@comcast.net.

\$30,000 Scholarship for High School Students: STUDENTS > PARENTS > TEACHERS

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, more than 50,000 high school students compete for more than \$2.3 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording a broadcast script on an annual patriotic theme. Entries need to be received by VFW, Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391, St. Augustine no later than November 1, 2012. What a wonderful classroom project this would make for any high school teacher.

This year's theme is, *Is Our Constitution Still Relevant?*

Prizes and scholarships are awarded at the local, district, state and national level. Department (State) winners receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., March 2-6, 2013, to tour the city, meet our nation's leaders, be honored by the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary and receive their portion of \$152,000 in national awards, the top scholarship being \$30,000.

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12, who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions; or in an overseas U.S. military/civilian dependent school. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over and previous Voice of Democracy first place state winners are ineligible.

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or – 5 seconds max.) essay on a standard cassette tape or CD. One student per CD or cassette. Preferred format for CD's is the audio CD format. When burning your CD, make sure that "Create Audio CD" option (or similar) is selected so the program can properly convert your sound file and burn it to CD. After it has finished, be sure to play back your audio CD on a system other than your computer, such as a standard radio or car CD player, to verify that the conversion/burning process was successful. Label the recording, neatly typed essay and attach a completed entry form. Provide these items to your local VFW Post for judging. All recordings must be in your own voice. Hearing/speech impaired students should contact the Voice of Democracy National Office at (816) 968-1117 for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. The body of the essay must not identify you in any way, although the recording & typed essay should be labeled with your name, to show ownership. You may enter only one Voice of Democracy competition per year.

All entries begin at the Post level. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. State winners are invited to Washington, D.C where their essays compete in the finals competition.

If you are interested in the Voice of Democracy Scholarship program, please contact Debbie Tilley, Ladies Auxiliary President to the VFW, Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391 in St. Augustine at either 904-460-9345 or dktilley@comcast.net and she will provide you with the application form and answer any questions you might have.

Again, the deadline to the VFW is November 1, 2012.



Wreath Sponsorship Form

*Sponsored wreaths are placed on the grave markers at state, national veterans cemeteries as well as local cemeteries each December. Wreaths may be purchased online at www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org If you wish to make your sponsorship with a credit card please visit our website for a secure online transaction.

Name:		Cemetery ID Number FLNSA
Address:		
City:		
State:	Zip :	Sponsoring Group ID Number FLVCSJC01
Phone: ()		
Email:		

Cemetery Designation: **St. Augustine National Cemetery**

Sponsoring Group Contact: Daniel Blackman sgm500@gmail.com or 904-669-6423

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual= 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Family= 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business= 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate= 100 Wreaths or more	\$15.00 each wreath		
		Grand Total	

****WE REGRET WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT GRAVE-SPECIFIC REQUESTS****

Please make checks payable to: **Wreaths Across America™**

**Mail check and form to: c/o Daniel Blackman (WAA), St. Johns County Veterans Service Office
P.O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117**

Questions? Call (904) 669-6423 or (904) 540-1630

Thank you for your Sponsorship and joining us in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach!

Please note that **all** sponsorships are sent directly to the location and
no wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA is an IRC§501(c)(3) exempt non-profit Maine corporation, FEIN 20-8362270, registered (# CH34722) with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Contributions are deductible from taxable federal income as charitable donations under IRC§170 and/or IRC§6115. Wreaths Across America™ does not use professional solicitors. 100% of funds received benefit the mission: to purchase wreaths to lay at the gravestones of Veterans. More information may be obtained from our website [http:// www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org). A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. The toll-free number of the Department is 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352)—calling from within the State of Florida or (850) 488-2221—calling from outside Florida.



\$10,000 SAVINGS BOND & TRIP TO WASHINGTON D.C.

STUDENTS< PARENTS< TEACHERS

Conducted nationwide, this Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) & its Ladies Auxiliary sponsored youth essay competition "The Patriots Pen", gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on democracy with the prospect of winning U.S. savings bonds. We invite you to join the more than 129,000 students who participated last year in this contest. The top 46 national winners all receive at least a \$1,000 savings bond. The first-place award is currently a \$10,000 savings bond plus an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the winner and a parent or guardian. What a wonderful classroom project this would make for any middle school teacher.

This year's theme is "***What I Would Tell America's Founding Fathers***" and the deadline is November 1, 2012.

All entries begin at the Post level. Individual students will need to submit their entry directly to the VFW, Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391. The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by local VFW Post. Post winners advance, one for every 15, to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The one first-place district winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW National competition. The winner from each Department (State) then competes for the national prizes.

Patriot's Pen is open to 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students enrolled in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Home-schooled students also are eligible. Dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools may also participate. (Foreign exchange students and former winners that placed in the National finals are excluded from the contest.)

You must write your own essay. The essay must be typewritten in English. It cannot be less than 300 words or greater than 400 words in length. Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count. (Essays over or under these word amounts will be eliminated.)

A contestant's teacher, counselor or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling, but the content must remain the contestant's. All essays become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

If you are interested in the Patriots Pen Essay contest, please contact Debbie Tilley, Ladies Auxiliary President to the VFW, Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391 in St. Augustine at either 904-460-9345 or dktilley@comcast.net and she will provide you with the application form and answer any questions you might have.

Again, the deadline to the VFW is November 1, 2012.



To My Fellow Vietnam Veterans and Friends:

It is time to reflect and share our Vietnam experiences with society! There will be a five month one man exhibition by Jerry Domask, a VVA member, of multi-media paintings at the grand opening of the newly enhanced University of North Florida (UNF) Lufrano Intercultural Gallery entitled, *Reflections - Vietnam War 45 Years Later*. The Vietnam Series is dedicated to former POW, Major Ted Gostas, USA (RET) and to all Vietnam Veterans and their Families.

The grand opening reception is September 7, 2012 between 5:00 – 7:00 at the UNF Lufrano Gallery. The gallery is located at the UNF Student Union/ Building 58E, Suite 2401, 1 UNF Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224. Free parking is available at garage #58, adjacent to the Gallery. The exhibition dates are from August 20 – December 7, 2012.

UNF is bending over backwards to make this exhibition the best and biggest since its inception in 2004. The Chapter will soon be receiving a formal invitation highlighted by a print of one of the paintings called "The Face of War". The evening will consist of live 1960' music, a vocalist singing the Star Spangle Banner, hors d'oeuvres befitting a grand opening and adult beverages. It would be wonderful to fill the September opening reception with Vietnam Veterans identifying them selves as such. Please bring your families, friends and neighbors.

The Vietnam series was initiated to document history from my perspective. It was based upon my personal observations and shared conversations with fellow comrades-in-arms and former POW, Major Ted Gostas (RET). I explored my past experiences during and after the Vietnam War to better understand them on a personal level and to put them in context from a historical perspective reflecting back 45 years.

All wars have common denominators such as pain, suffering, death and destruction. The Vietnam War was unique in the fact there were no American wars prior to or after Vietnam where the public scorned and alienated the soldiers who fought. This is something that most Americans simply are unaware of, especially in light of the respect now given to soldiers regardless of one's feelings or politics. The paintings address war in general, while concentrating and probing those issues related specifically to the Vietnam War. Many questions were raised related to the war, the veterans, their loved ones, and society in general. The questions raised far outnumbered the answers found.

War is haunting to all veterans. Vietnam was no exception. Nobody returns home the same. It stays with you. There is nothing to compare it with; you just live with it as best as you can. War veterans seldom, if ever, talk about their experiences. If one was not there, it cannot be fully understood. Going back to examine the Vietnam War was intimidating, yet a necessary process of self clarification. It was approached with much hesitation and dread.

My brush strokes subconsciously and consciously guided me through the process of sorting, organizing and examining my recollections, thoughts, and understanding of this time. How do you dislodge suppressed memories from 45 years? Some days I painted boldly, other times there was hesitation and doubt. I became obsessed with the pursuit for clarity, driven 24/7 to explore, dig, uproot and reconcile my personal experiences during and after Vietnam. I painted to understand myself and put the war in a historical context from my perspective. The series was not easy. It was scattered with many landmines and barriers of time and fear of the unknown. I was compelled to proceed. Paint flowed, emotions raced, guts churned, perspectives challenged, denials explored, blood pumped and internal feelings raged! I opened Pandora's Box!

Painting the Vietnam War series helped me to understand myself in the context of 45 years of history. It is hoped it will help others to do the same, especially the veterans. It's okay to feel, to speak and to share your feelings. You may hold your head high. You may be proud of your service. You may seek counseling. It is okay.

Brief Bio

Jerry Domask retired (1962-1982) from the Army after 20 years service. He has an undergraduate degree in Fine Art, painting & sculpture, from the University of Wisconsin. He returned to his roots of art after his military and private industry experience some 40year plus later at the University of North Florida. He has taken the equivalent of 33 additional credits in art as a special audit student over the past four years. Most relevant of his art showings and awards are two multi-media paintings in the permanent collect of the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago.

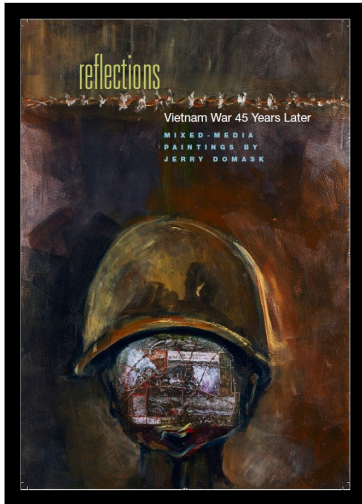
He served as an advisor under the Military Advisory Command Vietnam (MACV) from Dec 1967-1968 to the Vietnam Regular Forces in Saigon during the TET Offensive.

Jerome ((Jerry) Domask, Army Retired, 904-221-7940 (H), 904-386-0622 (C)

Upcoming Exhibition

The newly expanded Lufrano Intercultural Gallery will host Jerry Domask's *Reflections – Vietnam War 45 Years Later*, August 20 to December 7.

The Reflections series is an eclectic fusion of styles, combining representational work, surrealism, and experimental modernism. Symbolism weaves among pieces depicting the pain, suffering and death associated with the Vietnam War and other conflicts. The series is based on Domask's personal observations and his shared conversations with fellow comrades-in-arms, including former POW Ted Gostas. He explored his past experiences during and after the Vietnam War to better understand them on a personal level, and to put them in historical context 45 years later.



For more information, contact Chris Bender at chis.bender@unf.edu or (904) 620-2475.

Contributed by Harry Metz, Lt. Col., ret. You may have served in Combat or in non-combat. You may have retired out or you may have served for a short time. You may have been a draftee or a volunteer. You may have served in the Corps, Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard or the Merchant Marines, BUT YOU SERVED. You did not run off to England or Canada, etc. YOU DID YOUR JOB HONORABLY and for that I am PROUD to call you Brother/Sister.

You may have served during Korea, WWII., Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Iraq or Afghanistan, But you served, you did not run. You have a DD 214 with those words "HONORABLY DISCHARGED" the two most noble words in the world. Again I am proud to know each and every one of you. Brother-Sister, life is too short to wake up with regrets. So love the people who treat you right. Forgive the ones who don't, just because you can. Believe everything happens for a reason. If you get a second chance, grab it with both hands know this. If it changes your life, let it. Take a few minutes to think before you act when you're mad. Forgive quickly. God never said life would be easy, he just promised it would be worth it.

Today is Band of Brothers' Day; send this to all your brothers, fathers, sons and fellow veterans you know. Happy Brothers' Day! To the cool men that have touched my life: Here's to you!! I was never a hero, but I am thankful I served among them. A real Brother walks with you when the rest of the world walks on you. Send to all your Band of Brothers, because the fake ones won't.



The 450 Military Commemoration Committee has established a list of speakers to provide information to organizations who want to learn about the St Augustine 450th Military Commemoration Committee's program. Organizations can contact Ron Radford for more information. His e-mail address is: RONRAD267@aol.com



The **Veterans History Project** of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war.

The Project collects first-hand accounts of U.S. Veterans from the following wars:

- World War I (1914-1920)
- World War II (1939-1946)
- Korean War (1950-1955)
- Vietnam War (1961-1975)
- Persian Gulf War (1990-1995)
- Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts (2001-present)

In addition, those U.S. citizen civilians who were actively involved in supporting war efforts (such as war industry workers, USO workers, flight instructors, medical volunteers, etc.) are also invited to share their valuable stories.

The St. Johns County Public Library System has partnered with the Library of Congress's Veterans History Project. They are looking for volunteers willing to conduct audio or video interviews with veterans. If you are interested in participating in this effort to preserve the stories of our local heroes, please contact Amy Ackerman @ 904-827-6960, aackerman@sjcfl.us at the Bartram Trail Library or Mikki Sampo @ 904-827-6940, msampo@sjcfl.us at the Main Library.



Not since 1966, when Sgt. Barry Sadler filled the air waves with his “Ballad of the Green Berets”, has there been an opportunity to direct the national spotlight on the hero’s of our armed forces like we have today!

This year our R&R group, **‘The Jelly Bean Bandits’** wrote and recorded “Rolling Thunder”, a music video that was tagged the Official theme of this years **‘Rolling Thunder Tribute XXV, Washington DC’**, by the Center for American Military Musicians Opportunities (CAMMO). The song played several times throughout the day and opened for Gary Sinese and the Lt. Dan

Band. Soon after we returned home from the Memorial Day services in DC, we were informed that our music video had been nominated for this years 55th Grammy Awards.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

We are asking ALL Military, Veterans and Supporting Organizations, to scan their membership and friends for any voting members of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS). We are asking for a vote on the first ballot due to arrive in October in **Field 80, “Best Short Form Musical Video”**.

This is an excellent opportunity to join together to be able to showcase the mission of **‘Rolling Thunder’** on a world-wide stage and to give America’s military the appreciation and rewards they so richly deserve while remembering the ultimate sacrifices of our POW’s and MIA’s

Sincerely thanking you in advance for all considerations, Fred, Jack, Joe, Mike

The Jelly Bean Bandits, “Until they ALL come home!!”

September is Military Suicide Awareness Month

The title of a recent Time article is “More U.S. Soldiers have killed themselves than have died in the Afghan War.” The numbers are shocking. Since 2001, 4,486 U.S. troops have died in Iraq, 1,950 died in Afghanistan, and 2,676 died by suicide.

According to the U.S Department of Defense, the U.S. Army reported 165 confirmed suicides in 2011 for active-duty service members, 82 for Army National Guard and 36 for Army Reserve. That is a staggering total of 283 suicides for the members of the U.S. Army in one year.

This is only part of a tragic story that all branches of the military along with the Department of Veterans Affairs are working to change by working to lower these heartbreaking numbers, providing better mental health services and bringing awareness to the public. A reported 20-30 percent of returning soldiers have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a major contributor to suicidal thoughts.

“Suicide is a soldier, family and institutional tragedy that all of us must work together to defeat.” said Lt. Gen. Jeffrey W. Talley, chief of Army Reserve and commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve Command.

The Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars mourns the death of every single soldier, no matter the cause. To show our support of the military’s own September Suicide Awareness Month, we will be promoting the Suicide Awareness Teardrop pins and stickers. Auxiliary members have been asked to wear a teardrop each day in the month of September. We encourage the public to join us. You may download your own Teardrop stickers at www.ladiesauxvfw.org under “Programs” then “Americanism”. The teardrop template can be downloaded on any sticker paper. Please show your support and concern for this issue and bring awareness to this problem. If anyone has a loved one who may need help, they can call the VFW National Home’s hotline at 800-313-4200 or the National Suicide Prevention hotline 800-273-8255.

Past LAVFW National Americanism Director Sandi Onstwedder said “It’s a small gesture of solidarity and concern. These men and women are our heroes, and anything we can do to bring this issue to light is a chance to help one of them.”

FROM the CHAIRMAN: Fellow Veterans,

*Please see the article below from our FDVA office in Tallahassee. As you can see Wal-Mart has taken action against questionable charities representing themselves as Veterans or soliciting for Veteran's organizations. The most egregious of these organizations and the one we in St. Johns Co. are most familiar with is the **Veteran's Support Organization (VSO)** mentioned in this article. We have encountered them many times.*



This is a most despicable organization that would represent themselves as Veterans supporting Veterans and give only approximately 17% of the \$5.7 million they collect to help the Veterans and keep the rest for themselves in the way of lavish salaries.

I encourage each of you to print a copy of this article and keep it in your car. If you encounter these parasites fleecing our community at any of our local stores, please take a copy of this article to the store manager and make them aware that these people are imposters and are not helping our Veterans, especially our St. Johns Co. Veterans.

Thank you for all you do to help our Veterans.

Bill Dudley

Aug. 11, 2012 Written by R. Norman Moody, FLORIDA TODAY

Walmart suspends veterans charity as advocates seek stricter rules

Solicitors claiming to collect money in the name of veterans in front of Brevard County stores may soon have guidelines to follow if local advocates have their way.

Walmart already has decided to suspend one group from asking for money at its stores.

Walmart spokeswoman Kayla Whaling said the company has taken a closer look at the organizations requesting to solicit on its properties and decided to suspend Veterans Support Organization until it investigates further.

"The group is no longer welcome to fund-raise or solicit outside our stores until we know more," she said.

Bill Vagianos, the president of the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center and vice chairman of the Brevard Veterans Council — a coalition of more than 70 veterans organizations — said that the topic of creating guidelines for groups claiming to collect money for veterans at stores and on the street has now been propelled forward in the wake of a FLORIDA TODAY investigation published Sunday.

"I recommend that we have a uniform criteria," Vagianos said. "It's been a topic of discussion for years. We're just now taking up the initiative."

Also in the wake of FLORIDA TODAY's findings, that many groups collecting money for veterans do not meet standard charity guidelines for how much actually goes to veterans programs, at least one major retail chain has suspended allowing one of the largest organizations collecting in our area to set up outside its stores.

Looking to help the stores and donors understand how the collections are distributed, Vagianos said a committee will be formed to come up with guidelines that would be shared first with veterans organizations.

The guidelines then would be offered to local and regional managers of stores such as Walmart,

Publix and Winn-Dixie, where solicitors set up patriotic displays and collect money in drop buckets. The veterans organizations would be asked to follow the guidelines, but it would be up to the stores whether they adopt them.

“We would come up with some kind of criteria...” Vagianos said. “It would be more of a questionnaire.”

Vagianos said stores and malls should have a vetting process for all charitable drives that would at least require the groups to produce organizational documents, mission statements, records on funds distribution and individual identification of solicitors.

*One group that has come under fire in multiple states is **Veterans Support Organization**, based in Stuart. It collects at multiple sites in Brevard and across Florida, and reported collecting \$5.7 million in donations in 2010, despite giving only about \$1 million that year in grants to veterans causes and operation of a residential facility for homeless veterans near Miami. VSO solicitors were paid \$1.7 million, and another \$1.4 million went to cover other costs of the “work program.”*

Criticism centers primarily on what many consider to be too small a percentage of money collected going to veterans causes.

VSO counters that it hires homeless and jobless veterans and other needy people to do the collection, which helps them to eventually transition into permanent jobs. Its officials said hiring veterans and others to solicit is the organization’s major expense.

*Other groups such as **Veterans In Need Foundation** and **Disabled Veterans Foundation**, both based in South Florida, also have been criticized for not giving more of the money they collect to veterans.*

Whaling said the other groups also will be looked at.

Publix said in a written statement: “...we strive to be supportive of our local communities, which includes following current guidelines for sidewalk solicitation and taking appropriate action when necessary.”

Publix checks for valid charity status and verifies insurance status with the organizations. A spokesman said that if a concern is raised by store management or a complaint is filed, the company would take a look at the organization.

Winn-Dixie did not respond to a request for comment.

“To me, you should be from Brevard County if you’re going to collect in Brevard,” said Maurice Meisner, a past president of the Brevard Veterans Center and a member of the Korean War Veterans Association. “The money should be spent here.”

Vagianos said the criteria should apply to all organizations, including those such as American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Jewish War Veterans and others.

Al “Gunner” Dudley, commander of American Legion Department of Florida, said the topic of unfamiliar organizations soliciting in communities around the state has been elevated in the public eye since the FLORIDA TODAY investigation published.

“It upsets me,” he said. “There is no accountability at all. The government should be concerned.”

Dudley said that while he believes there should be some strict regulation for soliciting funds for veterans causes, his organization has not yet formally come up with criteria.

“We’re just now getting feedback,” he said.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

August 6, 2012

Contact: Gary Newman 904-269-1857

Richard Mayo 904-228-6985

**Vietnam Veterans of America to Hold Town Hall Meeting on
Generational Effect of Agent Orange**

Jacksonville, FL---Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters 1046 & 1059 will hold a Town Hall meeting to address the birth defects, diseases and learning disabilities affecting the children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans. The forum will be held on Tuesday, September 18, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. at the Morocco Shrine Center, 3800 St. Johns Bluff Road S., Jacksonville, FL (in the Activity Building in the rear of the Center).

"We cannot be silent about the effects of our battlefield exposures on our children in the face of overwhelming evidence connecting many diseases and birth defects to exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam," said Tom Hall, Agent Orange Committee Chair and coordinator of the VVA Agent Orange Town Hall meeting for Vietnam Veterans of America, Florida State Council.

"We encourage all Vietnam veterans with children and/or grandchildren suffering from illnesses, learning disabilities or physical disabilities to come share their stories. We will explore issues surrounding Agent Orange exposure, including scientific information, health effects and methods for educating the public and elected representatives about the issues of Vietnam veterans, their children and their families," said Hall.

The goal of the town hall meeting is to bring attention to the hidden cost of our service and to encourage the government to create and maintain a registry of these birth defects as well as assist our doctors in finding ways to diagnose and treat these birth defects. Veterans of all wars are subjected to many contaminants and most were not aware of what was being used or what effects most would have on their health. Said Hall, "Our children and grandchildren are innocent victims of our war and need the help of our government to cope with these problems. We worry who will be there to take care of them when we are gone?"

In keeping with VVA's founding principle, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another." Vietnam veterans throughout the state of Florida continue to fight for the welfare of our nation's veterans from all wars.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veteran's service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."



Vietnam Veterans of America presents:

Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting

**Tuesday, September 18, 2012
at 6:30 p.m.**

Learn about the effect of Agent Orange on Veterans,
their children, grandchildren
and future generations

Panel includes:

- Mokie Porter – V V A Director of Communications and “Faces of Agent Orange Programs”
- Nancy Switzer – National President of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America
- Clay and Duval County Veteran Service Officers

Meeting located at:
Morocco Shrine Center
Activity Room, 3800
St. Johns Bluff Road South
Jacksonville, Fl.

Hosted by:
V V A Chapter 1059 Clay County
V V A Chapter 1046 Duval County
CONTACT: Gary Newman
904 2691857/ agnjustice@yahoo.com



Chip in 4 VETS
9/28/2012



2nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament

September 28, 2012

8:30 am Shotgun Start

Shamble Format

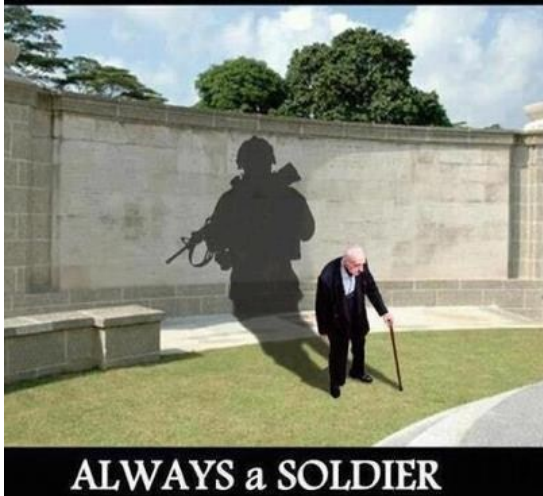
Two Better Balls

Awards Luncheon & Raffle

Tom Heilman
Registration Chairman
174 Laterra Links Circle,
102 St. Augustine 32092
904-940-6914



Once a SOLDIER



ALWAYS a SOLDIER

Please don't forget to send your articles or Veteran organization information for the Veterans Council of St. Johns County Newsletter to Editor Michael Rothfeld at: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org

We want to tell everyone about where you served, who you served with, any interesting or exciting battles you were in, etc. We also want to know what you are doing now, what veterans groups you belong to, how to join, when they meet and what they do.

The views expressed in The Patriot Reader Newsletter articles, submissions and spotlights are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County or the editors of The Patriot Reader. It is the purpose of this periodical to share a variety of information that pertain to local veterans and their organizations.