

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



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Fellow Veterans
The hot days of summer have descended upon us and many Veteran activities have taken a respite for the summer.

The Veteran's Council continues to meet throughout the summer months with speakers having topics of interest to our Veteran's organizations.

Our newsletter, **The Patriot Reader** continues to be published through the summer and this months edition has some excellent personal interest stories. Please continue to furnish our editor, Michael Rothfeld with stories or newsworthy events about your respective organizations.

I have recently re-

turned from our Navy League National Convention in Honolulu. The Honolulu Council did an outstanding job of hosting this years convention and aside from the many committee meetings that consumed most of the day, the planned evening events were incredible including a Wounded Warrior reception at the WW II Air Museum on Ford's Island and a Historical Tour which included The Arizona Memorial, The USS Missouri, and the Bowfin. Pearl Harbor continues to be a Naval place of prominence with a buildup of Naval forces in the PACRIM area.

On Saturday, 7 July St. Johns County Parks and Recreation and Northrop Grumman hosted a softball tournament at Treaty

Park. There were 10 teams from St. Augustine and Jacksonville that participated in the tournament. All proceeds raised during the day-long event went to benefit the USO. SGT.Major Dan Blackman, USA (Ret) provided an Army Color Guard and 12 year old Faith Miller sang the National Anthem to begin the tournament. Joe Shakar, Supervisor of Recreation and Parks, SJCO says they plan to make this an annual event to help raise money for the USO

Bill Dudley, Chairman
Veterans Council of St. Johns County



Special Points of Interest

- Wreaths Across America
- Col. Whitmer, US Army, ret
- IRS Information
- A Remembered Hero
- POW/MIA Recognition Day
- Vets 4 Vets



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.



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Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Tropical Storms have blown in early, but despite Beryl’s arrival on Memorial Day, Clyde E. Lassen SVNH is proud to say we were able to continue on with ours in a safe indoor setting. A very special thank you to the keynote speaker, our very own Fernando Lavana. As part of our ceremony, the memorial bell was rung in honor of any Lassen Veteran who passed away since last Memorial Day. Taps was played in their honor.

Before the next storm blew through, the residents, staff and visitors enjoyed our “Welcome to Summer” party. Hundreds of water balloons were thrown, squirt gun triggers pulled and lots of popsicles consumed. Everyone enjoyed getting wet and having fun.

Flag Day was also celebrated by the residents in a special way. Elk’s Lodge #829 from Anastasia Island and the Boy Scouts of Troop #345 provided us with a wonderful ceremony. Flags from each era in our country’s past were presented and the history of each explained. The flags were honored with a gun salute and Taps. At the conclusion of the event, torn and tattered flags were respectfully retired by burning them with the proper ceremony.



Leo Chase

The CHASE/RESCORLA Scholarship Fund held its annual elections and elected as President– William Jefferson, Vice-President– Michael Pullium, Donna Pullium as Treasurer and Tom Crawford as Secretary. The Board members for 2012-2013 are: Septimus Connor, Rick Look, Michael Rothfeld, Sheriff David Shoar and Greg White. The Chase/Rescorla Scholarship Fund annually awards between five & ten scholarships to St. Johns students. It has tentatively scheduled its annual event on March 23, 2013.



Rick Rescorla

More information to follow as it becomes available.



Bloody Battle at Fort Mose

Fort Mose (pronounced “Moh-say) (El Pueblo de Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose) established approximately 1738 was the first free black settlement legally sanctioned in the South in a city that became part of the United State. Fort Mose, a Spanish community where black people could escape to seeking freedom from slavery. That freedom did not come without a price, they had to convert to Catholicism and fight in the black militia (not a bad thing). Freedom then and freedom now is not free, we all have to continue to fight in one form or another.

On 23 June 2012 I was privileged to be part of an annual event recognizing those brave inhabitants that was willing to stand their ground and fight. One cannot imagine what it feels like to stand on ground that black people had to fight so hard for just to say I’m free. This feeling is not to be taken for granted taking part in this annual event is not just a show by me or a day of dress up, but a chance for me to help tell the story so large I don’t know where to start. I will continue to support and tell the story of this event, and refer those interested to books and the internet that want to know more about this historical site and the struggles for life and death.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks for all that gave their time to reenact this event and for the many citizens who came out in support of and learn some of the history of this site. The National Park is to be recognized for the professional way they organized and conducted this historic event. Dan Blackman

Photos by Ted Pappas





Jacksonville National Cemetery

Hi! Memorial Day has come and gone. Our observance for those that have given the supreme sacrifice was left to us through our own special thoughts and prayers. The good Lord works in mysterious ways. Our program for that day was well prepared and many veterans volunteered their services. A great big thank



you for all of your hard work and planning that went into the Memorial Day Observance program. A special thank you goes to all of those leaders that committed their time and leadership in order to make this Memorial Day Observance a successful one. Another special thank you goes to U.F. Shands, Jacksonville and Ron Timonere for printing our beautiful program book .

Carillion Bell Tower: The blue prints for our Bell Tower has been approved. We would like at this time to move forward with this project. Our own engineers and contractor along with the Naval Seabees from the Jacksonville Naval Base will begin the construction of the foundation. The foundation will be finished in stone with a walkway. The estimated cost for materials with us doing the work will be around \$26,000. We are asking for any donations from the public sector in order for us to move forward with the project. Please mail your donations to Carillion Bell Tower, Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee, PO Box 56226, Jacksonville, Florida 32241.

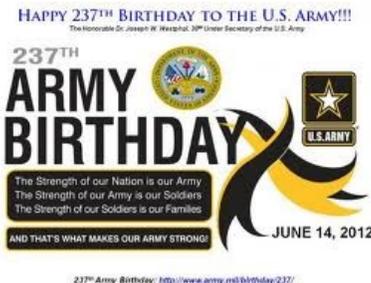


Veterans Memorial Center: Let me at this time speak about the Veterans Memorial Center at Jacksonville and the Extended VA's Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) Authority. We have written letters to all of our congressional legislators to renew the Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) Authority Law. This will allow us to move forward with our plans for the Veterans Memorial Center project.

In closing our Jacksonville National Cemetery is looking beautiful. Let us continue to work hard in making our cemetery one of the finest in our country. You make a difference in your continued support.

Yours through veterans, Dan Hughes, Chairman; J.N.C.S.C.

Army's 237th Birthday -- On June 14th the Army Birthday was celebrated at the Florida National Guard Headquarters. Pictured are Maj. Gen. James Tyre (left), Pvt. Brie Harrell, and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Hosford, who cut a ceremonial cake with traditional swords at the event.



From SGM Ray Quinn:

First Militia Chapter, Association of the United States Army sponsored the celebration of the 237th birthday of our United States Army. A traditional Army birthday cake was cut utilizing an officer's saber and a noncommissioned officer's sword. In addition to Maj Gen Tyre, Commander of



Photo by Debra Cox

the Florida Army National Guard, Major General Emmitt R. Titshaw, the Adjutant General of Florida and Brig Gen Joseph Balskus, Commander of the Florida Air National Guard were in attendance. Serving as the master of ceremonies, Sgt Maj (Ret) Ray Quinn reminded the audience of the significance of the streamers attached to the Army flag. He stated that each streamer represented the significant battles or campaigns in Army's history. He also mentioned when the flag is posted the Lexington streamer is always placed foremost representing the first action of our new Army.



WORLD WAR II MERCHANT MARINE: THE FORGOTTEN SERVICE

The U.S. Merchant Marine is one of the oldest services, formed in 1775, serving the country in war and peace time.



When World War II started the Merchant Marine was called on by President Roosevelt to help supply our troops around the world from North Africa , Europe, and to the far reaches of the Pacific. The merchant seaman and their ships were in on every invasion, with the much needed supplies. The casualty rate was the highest of any service, with 1 in 26 paying the ultimate price with over 750 merchant ships sunk, sending these seaman to a watery grave.

President Roosevelt wanted to include the Merchant Marine under the G. I. bill and he sent his recommendation to congress, but he died before the war ended, and his proposal died with him. The G. I. bill provided job preference, home loans, College education, health benefits, plus other benefits to the troops after the war, but the Merchant Marine were not included.

Seven years ago, Congressman Bob Filner introduced a bill called “The Belated Thank You To The Merchant Marine of W.W. II” that passed in the house and went to a senate sub-committee where it died, after having more than some 60 senators as as co- sponsors. This bill would provide a monthly pension to the some 8,000 Merchant Seaman still living whose average age now is 86. This bill would make up in a small way for all the lifetime benefits lost under the original G.I. Bill, according to Congressman Filner and help these veterans in their retirement years. Today this bill remains dormant in congress.



Edward F. Trester, W.W. II Veteran, Maritime Historian

Ed Trester is a member of *The St. Johns River Chapter Merchant Marine Veterans*. Meetings are held monthly on the 2nd Saturday 12:00 noon at the Golden Corral restaurant, 11470- San Jose Blvd. Jacksonville. For information call Ed at (904) 471-8897 Anyone interested in maritime events is welcome.



Florida Department of
Veterans' Affairs



Sponsored by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs



The Florida Dept. of VA has
provided these websites for
your assistance.



Burial and Memorial Benefits

<http://www.cem.va.gov/>

CHAMPVA

<http://www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/>

Education Benefits

<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

Federal Jobs

<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

Health Care Eligibility

<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility>

Home Loan Guaranty

<http://www.homeloans.va.gov/>

Life Insurance

<http://www.insurance.va.gov/>

Memorial Certificate Program

<http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp>

Mental Health

<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>

My HealtheVet

<http://www.myhealth.va.gov/>

National Resource Directory

<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>

Prosthetics

<http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/>

Records Archive

<http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel>

Returning Servicemembers

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>

Women Veterans

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov>

VA Vet Centers

<http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>

VA Home Page

<http://www.va.gov/>

VA Benefit Payment Rates

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/rates>

VA Forms

<http://www.va.gov/vaforms>

Veterans Employment and Training

<http://www.dol.gov/vets>

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

<http://www.vetsuccess.gov/>

*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



Fort Matanzas

Important Online Veterans Links:

www.axpow.org

American ex POWs website/bulletin

www.amervets.com

Veterans & Resource guide

www.vietnamexp.com

The Vietnam experience

www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0193320.html

Military & Veterans websites

www.NationalVNWarMuseum.org

The National Vietnam War Museum

**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*

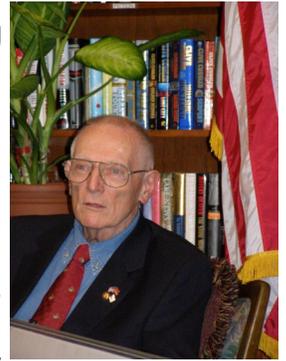
Then & Now, Joseph "Mac" McDermott

Joe McDermott, right on left, seen here in Firebase Schroeder, is a combat veteran who served his country in Vietnam from 1968-1969. He served in Co. D, 2nd Bn, 39th infantry, 9th Infantry Div.



Joe "Mac" McDermott today serves the veterans of St. Johns County as its Veterans Service Officer.

From LTC Jim Vanairsdale, USMC ret., St. Augustine: Following every conflict The Corps faces its most serious threat, not from nations that would do our country evil but, rather, from the politicians and military of our own country. While I was still in college and headed for a commission in the Corps we were told that we probably never serve on any active duty, that the Corps was going to be reduced to about the size of the NY PD. Korea changed all that.



The Corps was down to about 100,000 and headed south when the Communists attacked. We didn't have a division. It was put together from small detachments aboard ship, embassies, reserves and skeletons of battalions. Fortunately most had served in WW II. They served magnificently at Pusan, Inchon, Seoul, the Reservoir and a couple years of intense fighting generally along the 38th parallel. It was said that the actions of those Marines guaranteed a Marine Corps for the next 500 years. That sounded great but it was only the down payment.

We have always had powerful adversaries among the other services. Eisenhower, Bradley and, yes, MacArthur sought to get the Corps either totally assimilated into the other services or made a separate Corps within the Army. In Korea MacArthur changed his attitude after seeing what the Marines accomplished. Right after WW II Bradley said there would never again be an amphibious operation against a defended shore (Inchon??). Truman was no friend of the Corps. Fortunately we had many powerful friends in Congress. Nowadays practically no one in Congress has ever served.

I would argue that we have earned the right to defend our country against any future foes.

Below is a letter I recently wrote for the Leatherneck Magazine. It was selected as "Letter of the Month".



June 2012: Letter of the Month

I am writing in response to the last paragraph of Corporal Frank Murphy's letter that appeared in the April "Sound Off." Corporal Murphy apparently spent his nine years in Marine aviation and expresses concern at how he is looked at by those who served in the infantry.

I served as an infantry officer my 20 years on active duty, and I am proud of that service. But, Corporal, anyone who would consider you as something different from any and all other Marines is a fool. Do not forget that. We have all been privileged to be called "Marine." Our current Commandant, God bless him, has reminded us that there are no "ex, Reserve, retired, former, draftee" Marines. We are all "Marines."

From time to time, I meet someone who has served in our Corps. Out of curiosity, I usually ask when and where they served. Often the reply is, "Oh, I didn't serve in any war." It is like an apology. I tell them, truthfully, that peacetime service is more often than not the most difficult time to serve. The military services have lost their "glamour." Money is short; time is even shorter, for there are fewer people to get the job done. Politicians, the press and the public in general have lost interest. Rudyard Kipling expressed the phenomena thusly: "For God and the soldier we adore, in time of danger, not before! The danger passed, and all things righted, God is forgotten and the soldier slighted."

The peacetime Marines have always had the difficult task of, under the most trying circumstances, keeping our Corps fighting trim and ready to be the "first to fight" when our country is threatened. And so, Cpl Murphy, be of good heart. We have all been in this together, and it will be ever so. When I close my eyes for the last time I will be unworried, knowing that Marines will always be there for any task assigned them.

**LtCol James B. Vanairsdale, USMC (Ret)
St. Augustine, Fla.**

SERVICE DOGS AID IN THE RECOVERY OF PTSD



There is a little known secret in Northeast Florida, K9s For Warriors a small non-profit organization with a big mission is helping our wounded American warriors return to civilian life with the dignity and independence they deserve. Since 9/11 and the resulting conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan there are

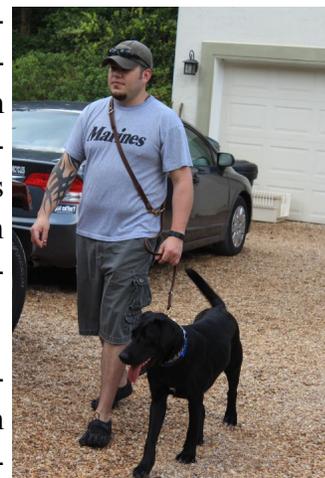
over 500,000 disabled military warriors. One in five suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress an invisible wound from war. Symptoms of PTSD are mental changes, including, but not limited to; hyper-vigilance, hostility, aggression, depression, suicide, paranoia, acrophobia, nightmares, panic attacks, poor coping skills, memory loss, and lack of trust. PTSD affects not only the warriors but their families and the workplace. Studies have proven there are actual physical changes in the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex of the brain adding to the horrific war experiences that warriors have endured. One Warrior said it best, “You know the feeling you get when you are almost in a car accident, your heart races the adrenaline flows...most people recover from that feeling in seconds, soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress do not, they feel that way many times a day and common everyday occurrences can trigger those feelings over and over again you never get to rest at ease and when you do sleep, often aided by a lot of medication the nightmares start.” These feelings often lead them to isolate and withdraw from public life. One in six soldiers returning from war will attempt suicide.



There is hope for our men and women suffering from post-traumatic stress, service canines are a medically proven recovery aid for our suffering warriors where medications often fail. Service canines are considered medical equipment and are recognized by the U. S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, and the American disability act of 1990.

At K9s for Warriors their philosophy is to involve the veteran in the final training of their new service canine partner, allowing them the opportunity to be part of the solution to their recovery. Their academy is staffed by skilled certified canine handlers and trainers who train the canines prior to the warriors’ arrival. 95% of the canines used in the K9s For Warriors’ program come from Rescue Shelters. Each academy is three weeks in length where warriors from around the country learn the skills needed to finish the training of their own canines. K9s For Warriors’ provide a service canine, training, certification, equipment, seminars, vet care, most meals, and housing, free of charge. Each warrior is responsible for their own transportation to and from the facility which is located in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Classes are limited to three to five warriors in each session.

The dogs are trained to “block” a command which places the dog between their warrior and the public, giving the soldiers the space they need to feel comfortable in crowds. They are trained to “cover” a command in which the dog will face back-



wards, literally covering the warriors' backs, allowing them to stand in a line at a bank or visit an ATM without worrying that someone will come up behind them without warning. The service canines can also sense when a warrior is about to have a panic attack and will respond to their warrior alleviating the attack before it can take place or reducing the severity of the attack. The bond between warrior and service dog is strong they are together 24/7. Two of the service dogs that have graduated from the K9s For Warriors program are able to sense on coming seizures in their warriors, alerting them before they begin.



Coquina Veterans Commander, FVPPI Director
Harry Manford visits K9 for Warriors

Sierra, a beautiful golden retriever and former shelter dog saved her warriors' life. He and Sierra came home from work and he wasn't feeling well, he just wanted to lie down and go to sleep. Sierra wouldn't let him; she was agitated, restless and would not let him lie down. He walked her and she still wouldn't settle. He started to get annoyed with her but remembered his training from K9s For Warriors, "listen to your dog". He called his girlfriend and told her what had happened; she came over and drove him to the hospital. Two hours later he was in emergency surgery; he had a clot in his artery and was having a heart attack. Sierra met him in the recovery room, when they went to hook the monitors up he told the nurses, "no need, Sierra is here and she'll let you know if I need you".

Service dogs can and do heal our warriors in so many ways that is the message of hope Shari Duval, President and founder of K9s For Warriors wants people to know. Our Warriors return from war broken, they arrive at our campus on two legs hurting and in need; they leave our facility after three weeks on six legs on the road to recovery, on the road back home.

K9s for Warriors has broad based community support. In 2011 they received a grant from The Wounded Warrior Project and partnered with TBC Retail in a Fall Promotion in their Tire Kingdom/Service Central stores. Additionally K9s for Warriors enjoys the support of members of The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Military Generals and Admirals and locally the base commanders of both NAS Jacksonville and Mayport Naval Air Station.



K9s for Warriors' mission is to empower our heroes to begin their recovery with their new service canine. Each month they graduate three to five new ambassadors of the K9s for Warriors program and of the North East Florida area. They return home to start their new lives as productive members of society. They enroll in college, start new jobs and most importantly return to their families with dignity and independence. One of their warriors' wives said it best, "thank you for giving me my husband back, when I talked to my husband on the phone his second week at K9s For Warriors it was the first time in two years I heard the voice of the man I love, he left for war and didn't come back the same man; he was suffering and I didn't know how to help him. Orion, his service dog and K9s for Warriors have returned him to me. God Bless You". To learn more about K9s For Warriors visit their website at www.K9sforwarriors.org

The Veterans History Project has compiled a web-based listing of those sites which have preceded or which compliment their own. The main criteria used to choose sites for this list were accessibility and authority.

[U.S. Coast Guard](http://www.uscg.mil/history/oralhistoryindex.asp) <http://www.uscg.mil/history/oralhistoryindex.asp>

U.S. Coast Guard website. Includes oral histories from former commandants, general oral histories, and primarily WWII experiences; is expanding and has already added Viet Nam experiences.

[U.S. Naval Institute Oral History Program](http://www.usni.org/heritage/oral-history) <http://www.usni.org/heritage/oral-history>

Comprehensive, tape-recorded interviews with people who have made history in the naval profession; these interviews are then transcribed, annotated, indexed, and bound. Have also included some specialized projects involving early WAVE officers, and Vietnam War prisoners of war.

[WWI: The World War I Document Archive](http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/memoir.html) <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/memoir.html>

Archive of primary documents from World War I; links to numerous memorials and personal reminiscences, with links to other WWI sites worldwide.

[Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II](http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu/) <http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu/>

Records the personal experiences of men and women who served on the home front and overseas; based on in-depth interviews of individuals who lived through World War II, beginning with an initial target group of Rutgers College alumni and Douglass College alumnae (formerly, New Jersey College for Women). Currently features about 238 oral history interviews. Interviews are searchable with Google search engine.

[Southern Arkansas University- Memories of America's War Oral History Project](http://peace.saumag.edu/swark/oral_history/veterans.html) http://peace.saumag.edu/swark/oral_history/veterans.html

Memories of Veterans Coordinated through SAU's History Department

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 dto@loc.gov

from Dr. Jane Karp, Col USAF Ret

From Michael Isam



For daily and up to date news and events that affect veterans go to:

Veterans Today - <http://s11.zetaboards.com/CFLNewsChat/forum/27519/>

Are you a veteran? Do you need a job?

Every week, a new list of available jobs are posted to:

FL Jobs for Veterans - <http://s11.zetaboards.com/CFLNewsChat/forum/3008165/>

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.

The Lonely Grave by John Lockhart (1923-2010)

(reprinted with permission of the Lockhart family)

The following story was first printed in the St. Johns River Light in September 1996.



There's a lonely grave in San Lorenzo Cemetery at St. Augustine, FL. It is lonely because few people visit it or even know the man interred there. He was a machinist from Covington, KY and had no family in St. Augustine. We know little about him except that he gave his life for his country. In April of 1942, a body washed up on St. Augustine Beach. Papers found on him identified the body as Michael James Monahan. The coroner listed his death as due to exposure in the Atlantic after being torpedoed.

Fifty-three years later, a reporter for the St. Augustine Record was digging through old files and found a short article about the man's body being washed ashore on St. Augustine Beach and how it had been buried in San Lorenzo Cemetery. The reporter Mike Grogan, was curious so he visited San Lorenzo Cemetery and found where the grave was located but it had no marker. After checking with the cemetery personnel and obtaining a copy of the death certificate, Mike Grogan wrote an article about the grave with no stone. A member of the St. Johns River Chapter of the American Merchant Marine Veterans who lived in St. Augustine at the time and saw the story and sent it to John Lockhart, then editor of the St. Johns River Light. John researched a bit and found that Michael James Monahan had been a machinist on the SS Gulf America which was torpedoed and shelled off Jacksonville Beach, FL on April 10, 1942 by U-123 commanded by Reinhard Hardegen. The Gulf America was on its maiden voyage with 90,000 barrels of fuel oil destined for New York. A dance was being held in the Pavilion on the pier at Jacksonville Beach and many people rushed out when they heard the explosions and saw two distinct fires. They thought that two ships had been torpedoed. Actually, it was two large separate pools of oil burning on the surface.



Michael Gannon, a professor at the University of Florida became interested in the sinking of the SS Gulf America and this interest led him to Germany where he found and interviewed Reinhard Hardegen who was the commander of the U-123. From this research by Michael Gannon, a book "Operation Drumbeat" evolved.

Twenty-four crew members and five Navy Armed Guard survived the torpedoing of the tanker. Hardegen told Gannon that he brought the U-123 around where it was between the beach and the Gulf America to finish the tanker off with shell fire as he was afraid to fire at the Gulf America from seaward because his shells might overshoot the tanker and hit Jacksonville Beach. A Navy Armed Guard survivor who wanted anonymity was 17 years old when the Gulf America was torpedoed and he claims that the real reason Hardegen brought the U-123 between Jacksonville Beach and the burning oil from the Gulf America was because there was an off shore breeze which was blowing the burning oil towards his submarine. Positioning his sub between the beach and the tanker kept the U-123 upwind of the burning oil.

When Mike Grogan's story of the seaman with the unmarked grave ran in the St. Augustine Record, the cemetery placed a temporary marker on Michael James Monahan's grave. But this is not the end of the story. The U.S. Maritime Commission and the War Shipping Administration named a Liberty Ship that was being built at the J.A. Jones Construction Company's yard at Panama City, FL for him, the S.S. Michael James Monahan.

Seaman Michael James Monahan is one of the few who lost their life at sea but found a burial place on land and he has not been forgotten. One of the St. Johns Chapter members, Henry Billitz (died in April 2005) lived in St. Augustine and his wife is buried in San Lorenzo Cemetery. When he visits his wife's grave, he carries a second bunch of flowers and places them on Michael James Monahan's grave. So Shipmate Monahan, your soul can rest at ease because you have not been forgotten. The members of your seagoing fraternity in the American Merchant Marine Veterans, St. Johns River Chapter and reporter Mike Grogan of the Record will not rest until your government honors you as a veteran and gives you the permanent marker that you deserve.

Clyde Everett Lassen, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Clyde Everett Lassen (1942 – 1994), a native of Fort Myers, Florida, was a retired Commander in the United States Navy and a Naval Aviator. As a Lieutenant, he received the Medal of Honor for his rescue of two downed Naval Aviators while piloting a search and rescue helicopter in Vietnam.

The Mission

On June 19, 1968, Lassen, then a 26-year-old Lieutenant, junior grade flying a UH-2 *Seasprite*, embarked on a mission to recover two downed naval aviators whose plane had been shot down deep in North Vietnamese territory. Upon reaching the hilly terrain where the aviators were hiding, Lassen made several attempts to recover the aviators, but dense tree cover, enemy weapons fire and intermittent illumination frustrated his efforts. Lassen turned on the landing lights of the helicopter, despite the danger of revealing his position to the enemy. After the pilots made their way to the helicopter and with his bullet-riddled helicopter dangerously low on fuel, Lassen evaded further antiaircraft fire before landing safely at sea onboard a guided missile destroyer with only five minutes of fuel left in the helicopter's fuel lines. The account of the rescue was logged as a successful, routine search and rescue mission.

LT Lassen became the first naval aviator and fifth Navy man to be awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery in Vietnam. He remained in the Navy for a career and retired in 1982 with the rank of Commander, residing in Pensacola, Florida until his death in 1994. In 2001, a destroyer was commissioned and named after him: the USS *Lassen*. A SH-60 *Seahawk* was painted to commemorate his actions.



MEDAL OF HONOR—Lt. Clyde E. Lassen, USN, in cockpit of UH-2, poses with members of HC 7's flight crew. Lt. Lassen received the Medal of Honor after the hazardous rescue of two F-4 pilots whose aircraft was downed at night over North Vietnam. (USN photo)

Medal of Honor citation

Rank and organization: Lieutenant, U.S. Navy, Helicopter Support Squadron 7, Detachment 104, embarked in U.S.S. Preble (DLG-15).
place and date: Republic of Vietnam, June 19, 1968. Entered service at: Jacksonville, Fla. Born: March 14, 1942, Fort Myers, Fla.



Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as pilot and aircraft commander of a search and rescue helicopter, attached to Helicopter Support Squadron 7, during operations against enemy forces in North Vietnam. Launched shortly after midnight to attempt the rescue of 2 downed aviators, Lt. (then Lt. (J.G.)) Lassen skillfully piloted his aircraft over unknown and hostile terrain to a steep, tree-covered hill on which the survivors had been located. Although enemy fire was being directed at the helicopter, he initially landed in a clear area near the base of the hill, but, due to the dense undergrowth, the survivors could not reach the helicopter. With the aid of flare illumination, Lt. Lassen successfully accomplished a hover between 2 trees at the survivors' position. Illumination was abruptly lost as the last of the flares were expended, and the helicopter collided with a tree, commencing a sharp descent. Expertly righting his aircraft and maneuvering clear, Lt. Lassen remained in the area, determined to make another rescue attempt, and encouraged the downed aviators while awaiting resumption of flare illumination. After another unsuccessful, illuminated rescue attempt, and with his fuel dangerously low and his aircraft significantly damaged, he launched again and commenced another approach in the face of the continuing enemy opposition. When flare illumination was again lost, Lt. Lassen, fully aware of the dangers in clearly revealing his position to the enemy, turned on his landing lights and completed the landing. On this attempt, the survivors were able to make their way to the helicopter. En route to the coast he encountered and successfully evaded additional hostile antiaircraft fire and, with fuel for only 5 minutes of flight remaining, landed safely aboard U.S.S. Jouett (DLG-29).

The Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home opened in St. Augustine in 2010.



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**COL George Whitmer, AUS, Ret.
St. Johns, FL**

My Vietnam story is different from most. I was in graduate school (M.S. in entomology) at the University of Kentucky when the draft came after me. In order to "avoid" the draft, I signed up with the Army Medical Service Corps (MSC) which allowed me to obtain my M.S. in entomology and then enter the Army with a direct commission as a Captain. I got married in June, 1968 and we went to Fort Sam Houston, TX in September, 1968 for my MSC basic officers course. Eight weeks later, we left for the 6th Army Medical Lab at Fort Baker, CA (the little white buildings underneath the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge). At that time, I knew very little about the Army and being in a Med Lab didn't do much to further my Army knowledge. I fully expected to spend my three years there. However, in January, 1969, I received my orders to Vietnam and by the end of May I was there.



Upon arrival at Ton Son Nhut, AFB, I was bussed to Long Binh to a Replacement Bn. They apparently "lost" me because I stayed there for about 5 days before they determined where I was to go. I was in Vietnam alone, not knowing where I was supposed to go or what I was supposed to do and with little military knowledge. Finally, I was flown to An Khe, north central II Corps, to the 172d Preventive Medicine Unit. I was given some information about what I was supposed to do and then sent to LZ English near the small village of Bong Son (northern II Corps) where I took command of the Bong Son Section of the 172d. I still had no idea what I was supposed to do for the next year. Fortunately, I had a great bunch of PM Specialists there who had been without a commander for a few weeks but were very good at what they did. The first thing I did was get them all together and tell them that I knew nothing about what they did so they would have to train me to do everything they did. I can honestly say that I was mentored by a group of PFCs, SP4s and SP5s. They taught me well and took me around to meet all of the persons and units I would be working with for the next year.

LZ English was the base camp for the 173d Abn Bde. We provided PM support for the 173d's AO in the Bong Son valley. This included mosquito control (malaria prevention) with 2 gal hand sprayers, a fogger pulled behind a jeep and from helicopters with an aerial spray rig. The unit would provide the chopper and we would provide the spray rig and a man to operate it. Other activities included mess hall inspections, water purification and water point inspections, mosquito collection and identification, trapping and killing rats and combing them to collect fleas. We identified the mosquitoes to determine if they were carriers of malaria and dengue fever. Fleas were identified to determine if they were the Oriental Rat Flea which carried plague. Malaria, dengue fever and plague were endemic to the area. We also accompanied the doctors and medics at B Med (LZ English had a Clearing Station) when they went out into "the boonies" on MEDCAPs (Medical Civil Affairs Programs) to treat the local Vietnamese. All of us were armed but the VC never bothered us as they were treated as well (don't ask, don't tell?).

After two months, HQ, 172d moved up to Da Nang and I moved my unit up to Chu Lai, base camp of the Americal Division. The size of my unit almost doubled because our AO became the southern half of I Corps (from the I Corps/II Corps line all of the way north to Da Nang and from the South China Sea on the east, all of the way to the Laotian border. We supported all of the Army and Marine LZs and Fire Bases in that area. Our enemy were now NVA rather than VC. Instead of mortar attacks, we usually got 122mm rockets. We traveled all over the area by jeep, three-quarter and deuce-and-a-half. We seemed to get ground fire while in choppers much more often than we were shot at while in ground transportation. However, we generally were not bothered while in ground transportation. Since we never traveled in convoys or at night, I guess the NVA didn't think we were important enough to mess with. I have literally driven by jeep, three-quarter or deuce-and-a-half from Nha Trang (north of Saigon) all the way up to the DMZ.

I started my year in Vietnam as a shy, just out of college boy with no knowledge of the military and left country as a confident, experienced leader who could talk easily to PFCs and generals alike. I have often said that Vietnam was an experience that I wouldn't care to repeat but I wouldn't give anything for it. It was tough because when I got married, I wasn't even in the Army and less than 11 months later, I was in Vietnam. We have now been married almost 44 years and have two adult children. What I learned there has given me confidence that has helped me in everything I have done since then.

After my three years were up, I got out of the active Army and joined the active reserves. I retired in 1993 as a Colonel with 25 years. I commanded a preventive medicine unit for over 12 of those years with exercises in Ecuador, Honduras (4 times) and Germany and when I retired, I was the last PM unit commander in the Army (active and Reserve) that had also commanded a PM unit in Vietnam.



While in Vietnam, I took my camera everywhere I went. I recently took the 397 color slides I took over there and had them put on a CD and also made into color photographs and put into an album. Although I wrote down what each one was at the time I took them, I was surprised that I can remember them without reading the descriptions. I guess there are some things that you don't ever forget.

Exempt Organizations and Election Year Pitfalls from John Mountcastle

Organizations exempt from income tax must continue to act in furtherance of their exempt purposes to keep their tax-exempt status. These organizations must also file annual information returns with the IRS (most frequently, Form 990-N which is completed on-line and due by May 15th each year). If they have paid staff, they must also file Employer Federal Tax Returns.

There are five types of activities that can jeopardize an exempt organization's tax-exempt status. Veterans' organizations recognized under IRC §501(c)(19) have fewer restrictions than §501(c)(3) charities, §501(c)(4) social welfare organizations and §501(c)(7) social clubs, but these activities could still trigger unfortunate targeting of your Veterans' organization for further examination and possible revocation of exempt status:

1. Private Benefit / Inurement

- a. activities that do not serve a public interest and
 1. substantially benefit the private interest of any individual or organization
 2. no part of the net earnings may benefit a private shareholder or individual (this includes unreasonable compensation and asset sales below fair market value)

2. Lobbying

- a. substantial activity designed to influence legislation
 1. prohibited for all IRC §501(c)(3) charities
 2. other Veterans' organizations organized under IRC §501(c)(19) have some leeway

3. Political Campaign Activity

- a. directly or indirectly participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. This includes making contributions to campaign funds or making public statements for or against the candidate.
- b. the organization may invite a political candidate to speak at its events, provided:
 1. it affords equal opportunity to all political candidates seeking the same office
 2. it does not indicate support for or opposition to any candidate
 3. no political fundraising occurs
- c. the organization may invite a candidate to speak in a non-candidate capacity (e.g., the speaker is a public figure); equal access to all candidate need not be offered, provided that the inviting organization ensures that:
 1. The individual is chosen to speak solely for reasons other than candidacy for public office,
 2. The individual speaks only in a non-candidate capacity,
 3. Neither the individual nor any representative of the organization mentions the speaker's candidacy or the election,
 4. No campaign activity occurs in connection with the candidate's attendance, and
 5. The organization maintains a nonpartisan atmosphere on the premises or at the event where the candidate is present, and
 6. The organization clearly indicates the capacity in which the candidate is appearing and does not mention the individual's political candidacy or the upcoming election in the communications announcing the appearance.
- d. Public Forums
 1. An organization may invite several candidates to speak at a public form; however, the sponsoring organization may not demonstrate any bias for or against any candidate
- e. Business Activity
 1. Charities' business activities include renting mailing lists, leasing meeting halls or office spaces, accepting paid political advertising in newsletters, etc. Factors suggesting a charity's business activities would violate this prohibition include:
 - a. The Charity's goods, services or facilities must be made available to all candidates on an equal basis
 - b. The good, service, or facility is available only to candidates and not to the general public
 - c. The fees charged are not at the organization's customary and usual rates
 - d. The activity is conducted only for the candidate, rather than as an ongoing activity of the organization
- f. Voter Education, Registration and Get-Out-The-Vote Drives
 1. These activities are permitted, if conducted in a non-partisan way
 2. Leaders of charities must not make partisan comments in official organization publications or at official functions (leaders are permitted to speak their mind as individuals, but not as officials of the exempt organization).
- g. Advocacy for or against issues that are in the public area is permitted. This includes lobbying for or against legislation (e.g., A Veterans' group advocating a strong national defense argues that sequestration will unfairly impact the Department of Defense).

4. Activities generating excessive unrelated business income (UBI)

- a. A charity can have too much of a good thing! If an exempt organization's unrelated business income (e.g., hall rentals)

becomes a driving force and exceeds other sources of revenue, the argument could be made that the organization is unfairly subsidized by its exempt status (as it pays no property or sales taxes, nor income taxes).

- b. Careful and accurate accounting of expenses attributable to unrelated business income not only reduces the federal income tax due (Unrelated Business Income Tax) but minimizes the risk of revocation of the exempt status.
- c. All exempt organizations with unrelated business income must file Form 990-T annually.
- d. The IRS has announced a FY2012 effort by Exempt Organizations Examinations, which will investigate exempt organizations that (a) report substantial unrelated business income but declare no tax due on Form 990, or (b) have not filed information returns.

5. Failure to comply with annual reporting obligations

- a. While charities are exempt from federal income tax and unemployment tax, charities, like all exempt organization, have information reporting obligations
- b. Since 2008, almost all exempt organizations have had to file an annual return or notice. Only churches and church-affiliated entities still have no filing requirement.
- c. Consequences for failure to file required returns:
 1. Form 990, 990-EZ or 990-N Information returns:
 - a. Returns are due annually, most often on or before May 15th. Exempt organizations that fail to file a required information return by the due date (including extensions) must pay a penalty of \$20 or more per day for each day the return is late. This penalty also applies if the return is incomplete or does not contain correct information. The maximum penalty depends upon gross receipts and can be as high as \$50,000.00!
 - b. if organization fails to file for three consecutive years, its tax status is revoked as of the filing due date for the third return. The organization must reapply using Form 1023 (Veterans' organizations file Form 1024) and pay the appropriate user fee. If the charity show reasonable cause for not filing, the reinstatement may be retroactive. This is important for contributions to be tax-deductible by the donor.
 - c. The organization's officers designated to comply with exempt organization's reporting requirements, but who willfully do not, may be fined \$10 per day until delinquent returns are filed (maximum fine \$10,000).
 2. Employment forms (for charities having paid staff)
 - a. Form 941 Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return
Employer Social Security and Medicare taxes and amounts deducted from Employees' earnings for federal income tax, Social Security and Medicare
 - b. All persons in the organization who are determined to be responsible for the collecting, accounting for, and paying these taxes may be assessed a trust fund recovery penalty if taxes that must be withheld are not withheld or paid when these unpaid taxes cannot be collected from the Employer

The prohibition against "Political Campaign Activity" by a charity is absolute. ANY transgression may result in a §501(c)(3) Charity losing its tax-exempt status, its ability to receive contributions that are deductible from their donor's federal taxable income, and the charity paying an excise tax on its political expenditures. In addition, the charity must file Form 1120-POL US Income Tax Return for Certain Political Organizations.

Did you know that the IRS offers free on-line courses designed to help you keep your organization's exempt status? These courses can be found at <http://www.stayexempt.irs.gov>.

Also, you can verify your exempt organization has filed information returns or has had its exempt status revoked, by going to <http://www.stayexempt.irs.gov>.

If your exempt organization has any questions, I will be happy to try to answer them or refer them to the appropriate resources. Please contact me at (904) 687-5668 or John@Mountcastle.org with your questions.

You and your organization worked hard to get its exempt status. Don't jeopardize that status by allowing any of the above activities!

Organizations with average annual gross receipts ≤ \$10,000 during previous four years \$400; > \$10,000, \$850. Certain organizations applying for reinstatement of automatically-revoked exempt status under transition relief (annual gross receipts ≤ \$50,000 in their most recently-completed tax year with a timely-filed information return) and filing Form 1023 or 1024 not later than December 31, 2012 (per Rev. Proc. 2011-36), \$100.

Arline Barber of Coquina Crossing submitted this article about her cousin, MG James Dalton. This article appeared in the Waterbury Republican-American newspaper on May 28, 2012. It is the story of a forgotten local hero, BG James Leo Dalton II

A borough hero fades into history

Monday, May 28, 2012

by Alia Malik, Special to the Citizen's News



Picture on the right: Brig. General James L. Dalton, left, with Gen. Douglas MacArthur, center. -Contributed by the Naugatuck Historical Society

His name is read aloud with the borough's war dead each Memorial Day and adorns a street sign in the Glendale neighborhood of Naugatuck.

Other than that, Brig. Gen. James Leo Dalton II, an assistant division commander in the U.S. Army who was felled by a Japanese sniper's bullet during World War II, is barely remembered in the borough.

"In all of the things I've done in the past, I've never heard his name mentioned," said Robert Genovese, who has for decades been active in borough veterans' affairs. "It's probably a shame."

Newspaper articles published during the Vietnam War identify Dalton as the highest-ranking Army officer in borough history. At the time of his death in 1945, he was one of the Army's youngest generals, and his superiors told the New York World-Telegram that he might have commanded the Army one day if he had lived.

"The General, who in his prior command as Regimental Commander for the 161st Regiment had been exposed so many times to extreme danger, was suddenly killed in his moment of triumph," wrote Sgt. James P. Cundari in a 2007 memoir. "In a war of this type, even Generals got killed."

Dalton, 35, had been promoted from colonel only the month before his death. "It goes okay out here Pete, like any other corner of the war men live hard and scramble and scratch to beat the other guy — and some don't come back," Dalton wrote in a letter dated April 25, 1945, to a friend in the borough. "We will win this war and I hope we never face the prospects of another such ..."

As assistant commander of the 25th Division, Dalton's leadership was instrumental in the capture of Bate Pass, a strategic point in the Philippines. On May 16, 1945, the day after the battle was won, Dalton was shot in the head while inspecting the Japanese defenses he had just conquered. The government of the Philippines later renamed the area Dalton Pass.



MG Dalton's funeral in the Philippines

Dalton was with five others when the sniper opened fire, according to the World-Telegram. He was shot trying to take cover under an overhanging rock. He fell against the leg of Lt. Col. J. D. Vanderpool, and rolled back into the line of fire already dead, Vanderpool told the newspaper.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur expressed "great sorrow" at Dalton's death, and in 1966 told the Waterbury Republican his "dedication to his country and his bravery in combat established a record never equaled."

He left a wife, Katherine Starbird, the poet laureate of Vermont, and



two young daughters. They were living in Vermont by the time Dalton died, but his aunt Esther still lived in the borough. Newspaper articles report his military mass filled St. Francis Church.

Dalton's family moved to Naugatuck shortly after his birth in New Britain. He grew up in a neighborhood he called The Hill, which includes Galpin Street and Highland Avenue, and went to St. Francis Grammar School. A borough friend, George McNamara, described him decades later in the Waterbury Sunday Republican as "a typical youth, one who loved the outdoor life."

BG James Leo Dalton

Dalton graduated in 1927 from Naugatuck High School. The yearbook indicates that Dalton, known as "Jimmy," ran track and played football.

"Jimmy certainly does sail on when it comes to the track team, but Jimmy did not stop with the cinder path," his entry reads. "He sailed right through his studies to the shores of Annapolis, where he is our first alternate."

Dalton entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1929, graduating four years later as a second lieutenant. He started his military career in the cavalry at a time when cavalrymen still rode horses instead of tanks, and was assigned to Fort Ethan Allen in Vermont — presumably where he met his wife.

During a polo match, Dalton's horse took fright and nearly trampled a group of spectators, according to numerous newspaper retellings. Seeing the danger to the crowd, Dalton pulled on the reins until the horse fell, with Dalton underneath. His sacrifice earned him a spinal injury and six months at Walter Reed Hospital in Maryland. After his hospital stay, he was assigned to the infantry.

Dalton was at Pearl Harbor during the 1941 bombing and later received the Silver Star medal as commander of the 161st Regiment, one of the two units that conquered the Japanese stronghold at Guadalcanal. He was widely quoted as saying, "Boy, am I glad to see you!" to the commander of the other unit as they met and shook hands on the battlefield.

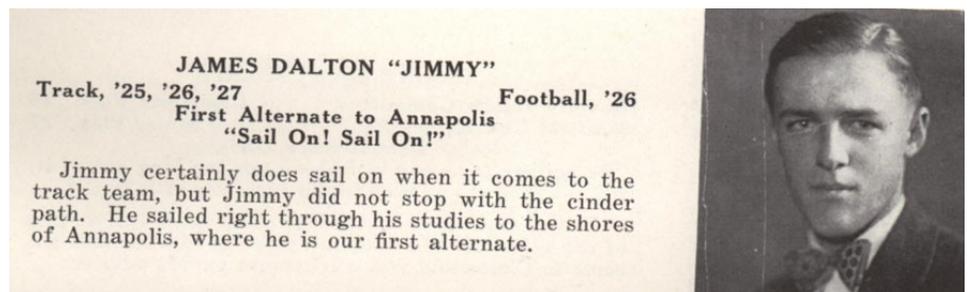
He was known as "Dusty Dalton" for conducting inspections in white gloves, which he would run along windowsills in search of dust.

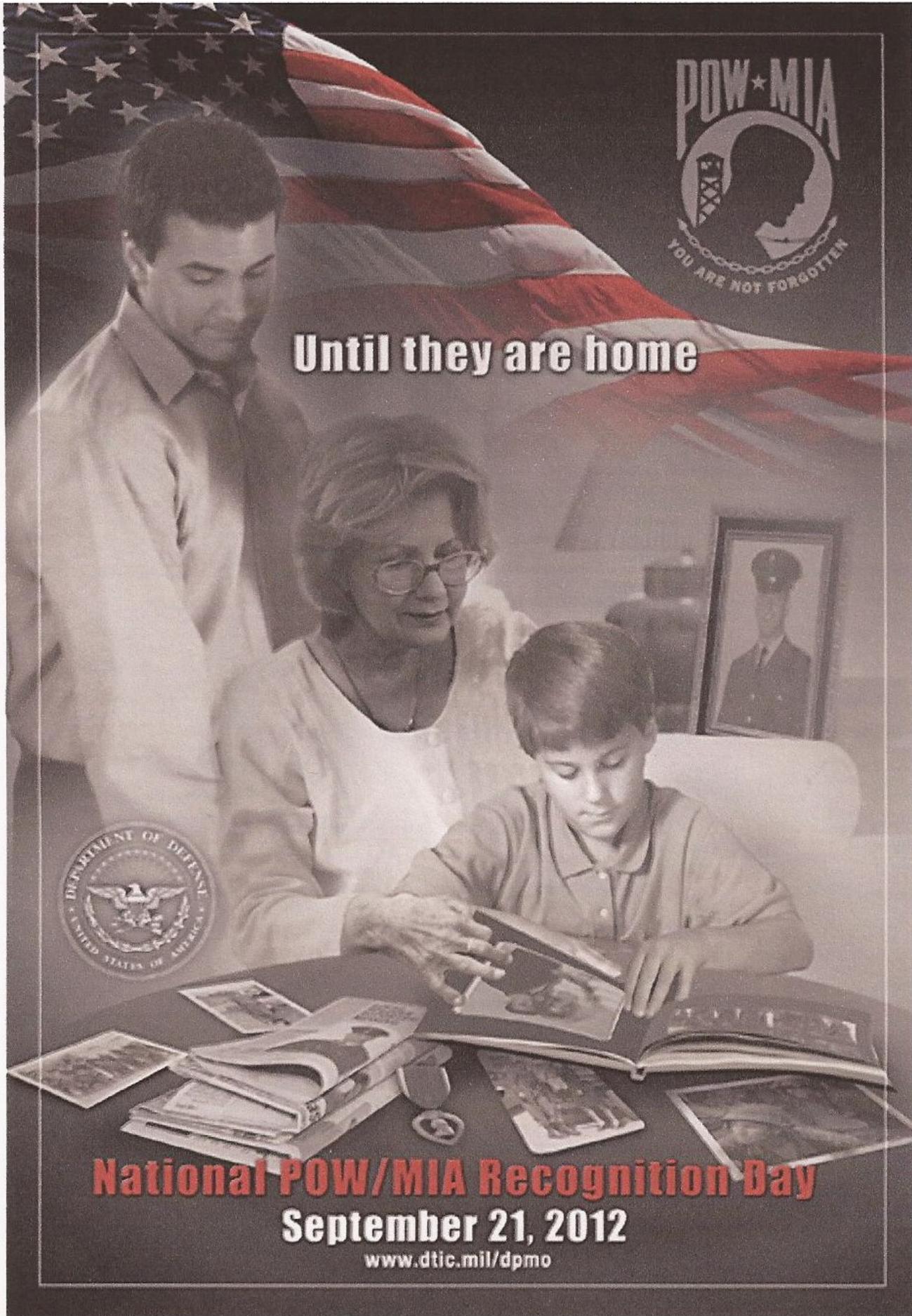
Borough veterans reacting to "draft card burnings, peace marches and other indications of a growing lack of patriotism among members of today's 'In' generation" proposed a scholarship program in 1966 in Dalton's name, according The Sunday Republican. The fund gave out a handful of scholarships before drying up, articles from the Naugatuck Daily News indicate.

Sixty-seven years from the month Dalton was killed, his story is fading into obscurity as his World War II contemporaries die, including the community icon Franklin Johnson Sr. two years ago. "The only person who would know anything about it would probably be Frank Johnson, and he passed away," said Stanley Borusiewicz, quartermaster of the borough's Veterans of Foreign Wars post.

Borough historian Sandra Clark believes General Dalton Drive was named in the early 1950s. Since then, she said, she has not heard much of the borough's onetime war hero.

"'Lest we forget,' and we do," Clark said.





Until they are home



National POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 21, 2012

www.dtic.mil/dpmo



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



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.