

# The Patriot Reader

## VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

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Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld



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### Inside this issue:

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### Message from the Chairman



Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home	Pg 2,3
Bill Ingram, ex POW at MOSH	Pg 3
Missing in America Project	Pgs 4,5
LCpl Long's new home	Pg 6
Thank you to COJ, UNF, & VVA	Pg 7
Wreaths Across America	Pgs 8,9
Sgt Bob Dinkins	Pg 10
Cpl George Aigen, WW II veteran talks about Dachau	Pg 11
UNF, COJ Vietnam program	Pg 14
New Local VFW Post	Pg 15

Fellow Veterans. As the Holidays approach, I hope each of you will remember those who are serving in our Armed Forces and will not be spending this Holiday Season with their family and loved ones. This is a time for reflection. Thinking back on those years when you were in uniform and perhaps far from home...how important your family was to you. I encourage each of you to send a care package, write a letter, have your organization to send a remembrance gift or just contact a service member's family if you know someone and thank them for their service.

time to honor our Veterans in such a way. Through these documentaries, we have been able to inform our community of the significant sacrifice or our military men and women who have fought to protect this great Nation. I would like to personally thank the CTH committee who worked so hard at putting this program together. A big Bravo Zulu to Michael Rothfeld, Gary Bruce, Ray Quinn, Michael Pullium, Joe (Mac) McDermott, and Bill Dudley for the herculean effort to produce the show, raise the funds, and the contribution of many hours of personal time to make it a huge success. We also thank all our sponsors for their financial support as well. Without them we could not have produced the documentary to honor our Veterans.

Our Veterans Day ceremony this year was another major success. A big shout out to all the Veterans organizations who participated in this year's ceremony. We are especially ap-

preciative of the JROTC cadet units who participated and demonstrated their skills in close order drills. Harry Metz did an outstanding job of organizing the first militia, Men of Menendez, and other re-enactors to help us celebrate the military presence for 448 years of continuous service and protection by our military. We are also very appreciative of Rear Admiral Ricky Williamson, Commander, US Navy Region Southeast, NAS Jacksonville of giving of his personal time to be our keynote speaker.

I would like to wish everyone the best of the Holidays and thank all our Veterans for their service.

Bill Dudley,  
Chairman  
Veterans Council of  
St. Johns Co. Inc



### Special Points of Interest

*Jax Maritime Heritage Center  
Capt. Giles Norrington  
LTG Ronald Bailey  
American Legion Post 194  
DAV Chapt. 6 donates van to VA  
American Legion Post 37  
USS Adams, Come Home!  
Gen. Bullard visits Camp Blanding  
Chesty Puller  
France honors 3 FL WW 2 veterans*

Our recent Commitment to Honor program was another overwhelming success. Although not as many attended this year's program as our last documentary, it was nonetheless a great success. I have received many accolades both personally and through emails for the appreciation of our Veterans Council to take the

# Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

*Patriotism is our motto*



Outside the auditorium at the Veteran's Day Program at Anastasia Baptist Church



Resident and Dietary Manager enjoying a dance at the Black & White Ball



Colonel Taylor speaking at the Veteran's Day Ceremony



Resident and Wife enjoying a dance at the Black & White Ball

**FROM COL Taylor:** "This is a note to express to you how proud I am to be in this facility – How much I appreciate being in the Clyde E. Lassen State Veteran's Nursing Home.

I am now in my 83<sup>rd</sup> year and as I reflect back on that service (which included 30 years as a regular US army officer) I cannot remember a finer facility.



Col. Ed Taylor, USA, ret.

In addition to the beautiful building, the staff itself is outstanding. In my experience it is extremely unusual to find such facilities as large as this is, in such fine condition. A large portion of that is due to the staff itself, and its attitude towards the facility and its patients.



Col. Ed carrying a wounded enemy soldier to safety

We as patients realize most of the things staff does make our stay better. As chairman of the Veteran's Council of St. John's County, I played a small part in this facility and particularly its location. I am very proud of that.

**Diane** you guys have a fine "outfit" here – please keep it that way."

## ***Cheers for Veterans, from the St. Augustine Record***

American Heritage Girls Troops FL 4678 (St. Augustine) and FL 1412 (Jacksonville) met at Clyde E. Lassen Veterans Home to participate in a special Veterans Day commemoration last week. U.S. Rep. Ron DeSantis as well as other distinguished speakers and veterans were on hand to honor the residents who have served the country in the U.S. military.



American Heritage Girls posed for a group photo after visiting the Clyde E. Lassen Veterans Home on Veterans Day. Contributed photo

Letters from local elementary students thanking the veterans were read and “God Bless America” was sung by the American Heritage Girls.

Residents requested an encore to which the girls obliged as many residents sang along.

The 52 girls participating, aged 5 to 15, then visited with the veterans and their families, and presented crafts they made for the event.

This was a special day for the girls to show their appreciation for and to interact with the history and heroes. American Heritage Girls is a national organization that “builds women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country.”

Information about the St. Augustine troop can be requested by emailing [AHGFL4678@mail.com](mailto:AHGFL4678@mail.com).

***On Wednesday November 6th the Museum of Science and History (MOSH) in Jacksonville hosted ex WW II POW Bill Ingram and a showing of FVPPI’s “Stolen Freedom”. In attendance was Robert Mitchell, President of Rolling Thunder FL Chapter 4 who performed the very moving “Remembrance Ceremony” and Michael Rothfeld, Producer of the documentary.***

***Jacksonville’s own Bill Ingram spoke about the sinking of his ship the USS Houston when he was only 17, his capture in Java and his forced labor in Burma. Bill was one of the men who helped build the Bridge over the River Kwai.***



Chief Bill Ingram



Remembrance table



Robert Mitchell, President,  
Rolling Thunder FL 4



## The Jacksonville National Cemetery Greetings from the Support Committee at the Jacksonville National Cemetery!



The Support Committee invites everyone to attend its next scheduled meeting on **Monday, February 3rd**, at 7:00pm. The meeting will take place at Community Hospice, 4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257 in Conference Room A

Chairman Howard  
McGillin, COL US  
Army ret.



### MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT – “CALL to HONOR” #1

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone that participated or attended MIAP’s November 8<sup>th</sup> first multiple “Call to Honor”. We interred, with full military honors, at the Jacksonville National Cemetery, 12 veterans and 1 spouse of a veteran. There were 7 Army veterans, 1 spouse of an Army veteran, 1 Marine Corp veteran and 5 navy veterans that were laid to rest. The longest of these that went unclaimed dated back to 1998. This day and service was all for our “Forgotten Heroes”.

Through the diligent efforts of Andrew B Coleman III, LFDIC, Sheila Williams, LFD, CFSP from AB Coleman Mortuary and Sharon Gilley, MIAP Genealogist, family members for two of the veterans and the one spouse was contacted and attended our service for their loved ones. They had no idea their relative’s cremated remains had never been claimed. It was a privilege for MIAP to have them attend this service to honor their loved ones. MIAP volunteers stood as family for the other veterans that no next of kin could be located.

The day was quite windy but that did not stop supporters and members of our communities from attending. It was so overwhelming to see close to 300 people in attendance. Starting from AB Coleman Mortuary on Moncrief Road the hearse was escorted by members of VMEA (Veterans Motorcycle Enforcement Association), ALR (American Legion Riders) and PGR (Patriot Guard Riders) and other rider associations to the Jacksonville National Cemetery

Along with the staff of the JNC other organizations that participated were, The Navy Band Southeast from NAS Jax, Beaches Honor Guard, Navy Honor Guard, Legionnaires Auxiliary, Sons of Legions from many American Legions within the 5<sup>th</sup> District of FL, active duty military from the USA, USMC & USN, JNROTC from Orange Park High School, The Jacksonville Ladies, Boys Scout Troop 180 and the Air Force Sergeants Association. The support we also received from the local media is worth mentioning also.

As you can see our first multiple service accomplished what MIAP - FL set out to do. We honored our “Forgotten Heroes” in a dignified manor and at the same time we made the public aware of what MIAP is doing across the United States. This was the first of many “Call to Honor” that MIAP – FL will be holding. Currently we have another 95 veterans/spouses who have been verified for interment at the JNC from another funeral home in the area.

If you would like to know more about MIAP please go to our website @[www.miap.us](http://www.miap.us). You can also contact us @ [miapjax@yahoo.com](mailto:miapjax@yahoo.com). We are still in need of volunteers to help work our project. Our goal is to work with every funeral home in the State of Florida to locate all unclaimed veterans, spouses and dependents.

**MISSION COMPLETE “YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN”**, Kathy Church, MIAP – FL State Coordinator

Pictures on next page



St. Augustine, FL, November 19, 2013



On **Sunday, December 1, 2013 at 11:00 a.m.**, a groundbreaking ceremony will be held for LCpl Brandon Long's new home.

Marine Lance Corporal Brandon Long was on his first deployment when he lost both of his legs in an IED blast in Sangin , Afghanistan on December 21, 2010.

Two days before the birth of his daughter, LCpl Long was walking through an area comprised of nothing but river rocks, while on a foot patrol with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, when he stepped on an IED resulting in multiple traumatic injuries. Heroic measures took place over the next hour as his squad fought to save his life while waiting for a helicopter to arrive for MEDEVAC.

Due to the tremendous amount of blood loss, LCpl Long required resuscitation multiple times during the ordeal; losing 98% of his blood volume by the time he arrived at a local field hospital.

LCpl Long was next airlifted to Landstuhl , Germany before arriving at Bethesda Naval Medical Center where he remained for 2 years enduring surgeries and rehabilitation before returning home to Indiana .

LCpl Long and his wife, Nicole, are the proud parents of Claire who Brandon credits with getting him through his ordeal and on the road to recovery. She became his reason to push harder and be an involved parent.

The ceremony will be held on Honey Branch Lane off CR208 about 6 miles from SR16

The home is being built through Homes for Our Troops. This is the third home built for a disabled veteran and family in St. Johns County .

Tyler Southern and John Hayes received homes earlier. The public is invited.

Media Contact:

Michael Isam,

[mtisam@comcast.net](mailto:mtisam@comcast.net)

904-687-8777

## Kudos to the City of Jacksonville, the University of North Florida and Vietnam Veterans of America



The editor of this newsletter wants to personally thank **Alan Verlander, Executive Director for Sports and Entertainment** for selecting **Bill Ingram**, ex POW and WW II veteran from Jacksonville to be introduced to the world at last month's Florida/Georgia football game. Mr. Verlander said, when Bill was introduced, "that moment in time sent chills and appreciation all through the stadium."



Alan Verlander



Bill Ingram

Mr. **John K. Schwarz, Executive Director, USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association and Next Generations**, has contacted Mr. Verlander for film of Bill being introduced on the field and Mr. Verlander has agreed to try to locate the footage. John plans on showing the footage at the upcoming annual re-union on March 14th, in Houston, TX.

The City of Jacksonville, represented by Mr. **Ken Johnson, Senior Policy Advisor Military Affairs** hosted a discussion of Vietnam at UNF as part of their "Week of Valor". The locally produced Vietnam documentary was shown and a very moving discussion of the Vietnam War followed. Several of the men in the documentary were part of the discussion, Harry Manford, Tom Crawford and documentary interviewer, historian and Vietnam veteran Terry Allan. Blane Wilson from the Jacksonville chapter of VVA also joined in.



From left: Ray Wikstrom, Ken Johnson and Rich Carey



The Vietnam presentation at UNF was hosted by **Ray Wikstrom, UNF's Director of the Military and Veterans Resource Center** and **Rich Carey, MVRC Transition Coach**. Thank you Ray and Rich for hosting and allowing our Vietnam heroes to tell their stories at your fine University.



Anthony D'Aleo

The **Jacksonville Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America President Anthony D'Aleo** assisted in the UNF Vietnam program from the beginning, Without Tony's help the program would not have been the huge success it was.





The Wreath Across America project for the St. Augustine VA National Cemetery is a Community based project lead by community members and veterans of St. Johns County.

Our mission is to remember, honor and teach families of the sacrifices our fallen veterans made who are buried at this location. This project is a coordinated event conducted annually for the community and is scheduled this year on December 14, 2013 at noon nationwide.

The Wreaths Across America project is a 501 (c) (3) project with a goal to place an Evergreen Wreath on the grave of every veteran throughout the United States and especially at The St. Augustine VA National Cemetery.

Our project is in jeopardy of not providing 100% coverage without additional community support this year. For those that have donated we can't thank you enough, and for those that would like to ensure we provide 100% coverage again this year please print the below form mail it in or go on line and make your donation at [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org). We are told that we need approximately **269 Wreaths** at this time to complete this year's project. The cemetery has 1218 graves and markers and buried there are Soldiers from the Dade Battle, Civil War, Buffalo Soldiers and many others.

The project is headed by the Veterans Council of St. Johns County Inc. The Project Coordinator is SGM (Ret.) Daniel Blackman. Dan Blackman may be reached at (904) 669-6423. Evergreen Wreaths are \$15.00 each. Help us reach our target... ask everyone you know to assist.

We invite the business community and citizens to assist in reaching our goal so that a wreath may be placed on every grave and marker on 14 December 2013 at noon. Your tax deductible donation may be made at [www.wreathacrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathacrossamerica.org) and select St. Augustine VA National Cemetery ID #FLSNSA and Sponsoring Group ID #FLVCSJC01 or contact me for a Sponsorship form for a direct donation by making your check payable to Wreaths Across America. Thanks for all of your support.

Daniel Blackman (904) 669-6423



## 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](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org)

If you wish to make your sponsorship with a credit card please visit our website for a secure online transaction.

**Wreaths Across America Day Saturday 14 December 2013**

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

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

**Sponsoring Group Contact:** Daniel Blackman [sgm500@gmail.com](mailto:sgm500@gmail.com) or 904-669-6423

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

**\*\*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)  
 The Veterans Council of St. Johns County Inc.  
 P.O. Box 2117  
 St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117  
 Questions? Call (904) 669-6423

**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>.

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.



*In the recently published, "Welcome Home, A Monument of Honor" by Ross Lewis there is a story about St. Augustine's own Bob Dinkins. Many of you have seen Bob as he is a volunteer at the St. Johns County Veterans Service Office.*



### **SGT (E-4) Robert D. Dinkins - Military Service**

**Jan 22, 1969** - Enlisted in U.S. Air Force at Coral Gables, Fl. Basic Training and Aircraft Maintenance schools at Lackland and Sheppard AFB, TX.

**Jul 1969 to Jan 1971** assigned to the 374<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing, Naha, AB Okinawa. Duty, served as a Crew Chief for aircraft maintenance on C-130A aircraft.

**Dec 1969 to Nov 1970** Pacific Air Forces, 7th Air Force, Detached to the 834<sup>th</sup> Air Division, DET 1 and 2, Tan So Nhut AB and Cam Ranh Bay AB, Republic of Vietnam. Duty, served as a Crew Chief for aircraft maintenance on C-130A aircraft (Tactical Airlift) Combat Support.

**Jan 1971 to Dec 1972** assigned to 316th Tactical Airlift Wing, Langley AFB, Virginia. Duty, served as a Crew Chief for aircraft maintenance on C-130E aircraft with world wide deployment to Europe, South and Central America, and Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Thailand and Korea).

#### **Campaigns -**

- 1969 -1970 Republic of Vietnam
- 1972 - Eastern Offensive ( Constant Guard II) Republic of Vietnam

#### **Medals/Ribbons -**

- Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
- Good Conduct Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
- Vietnam Service Medal
- Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

**Sep 1975 to Sep 1978** Air Reserve civilian technician with the 920<sup>th</sup> Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, at Kessler AFB, Ms. Duty, served as a Crew Chief for aircraft maintenance on WC-130H aircraft with deployments to Central America, the Caribbean, Mexico and Alaska (Storm tracking and Hurricane Reconnaissance).

*"My wife Irene and I live in St. Augustine for the past 29 yrs. We have two sons and four grandchildren living here also."*

*Bob has been volunteering at the VSO for about three years. He says he volunteers whenever Mac drafts him.*

October 9, 2013 This article is reprinted with the permission of the reporter, the Valdosta Daily News and Joyce and George Aigen

## **Holocaust horrors**

### **Veteran helped liberate Dachau**

Dean Poling, Assistant Managing Editor, The Valdosta Daily Times Wed Oct 09, 2013, 11:00 AM EDT  
VALDOSTA — Nineteen-year-old Army Cpl. George Aigen had experienced much fighting with the 1269th Combat Engineers Company B. He'd seen a horrible number of things.

As an American soldier and as a Jewish male, he'd heard rumors of the Holocaust, the Nazis' systematic slaughter of the Jews.

"We heard rumors about concentration camps," Aigen says, "but we had no idea ..."

The reality struck in 1945, as Germany fell, and the Americans and Allies liberated these camps. Aigen neared Dachau, an infamous name now, a name of evil, but he had no idea making his way closer to the camp.

The Third Infantry entered Dachau first. These soldiers were several minutes ahead of Aigen and his comrades. Walking closer to the camp, Aigen saw American soldiers, who had witnessed the horrors of war for months, "they were sitting on the ground crying," he says. "Then I knew. We've got something to worry about."

Walking to the camp was one of the most physically and mentally daunting tasks for Aigen during the war. The American soldiers were exposed. Grass cut low. They had learned through hard lessons that open spaces were dangerous. They felt like ducks in a shooting gallery. "You're suspicious of everything. You think of all the possibilities," but no gunshots were fired.

Entering the camp, in German, was the sign: "Work will make you free." Inside, death.

Aigen witnessed rail cars filled with dead women and children. "No men. They were all dead." Two-thousand, three-hundred and ten. So many women hang out of the rail cars. Dead bodies everywhere. Prisoners in black and white stumbling, shuffling, aimlessly, from place to place. Others seated, unmoving, their backs against barracks walls.

Aigen helpless. The Army immediately helpless to aid the living. "We had nothing to use to help these people, except for a little bit of water," Aigen says.

Inside of a barracks, Aigen saw rows of cots stacked four high from floor to ceiling. No movement save one. A prisoner pushed up from a cot. Just his head rising. Skin stretched across bone. Aigen says it looked like a skull rising to briefly inspect the American troops. Then the prisoner's head dropped from view ...

George Aigen spent two days at Dachau. Often asked, Only two days? He says, "Yeah, we had a war to fight. We had to go on."

Today, Oct. 9, marks Aigen's 88th birthday, but he has carried the nightmarish visions of those two days for each day of the nearly 70 years since.

Yet, for years, for decades, he said little of those days or of his World War II experiences. He was busy. He didn't want to think about it. He came home to Brooklyn from the war. He met his wife, Joyce. They raised a family. He built a career. He and Joyce moved to Valdosta several years ago to be closer to family.



George Aigen was an 18-year-old New York University student in 1943 when he was drafted into the U.S. military. After decades of silence, he now shares his experiences from the war with groups of young people.

He never shared his war experiences with his children or grandchildren. Joyce knew. Some friends knew. Some members of the Temple Israel congregation knew, but Aigen never said much about it.

Valdosta State University history professor Louis Schmier knew. In 2005, preparing a series on the Holocaust, Schmier approached Aigen about sharing his story. Aigen agreed. It marked the first time he publicly discussed his experiences of entering Dachau.

Since 2005, Aigen has made his Dachau/World War II presentation 42 times. He's discussed it at the university, in area schools, in the temple, and in other forums. In some talks, he gauges the ages of his audience for how much he shares.

Speaking to college classes, Aigen notes that he was younger than most of the students when he returned to the States from the war.

In 1943, Aigen was 18, attending New York University, when he was drafted. His father drove him to a big building. His father hugged him goodbye. "I didn't know if I would ever see my father again."

He recalls being in line with thousands of other teens and young men. Medical examination: listening to each draftee's chest, the doctor said, Oh, you got a heart; oh, good, good, you can serve.

Draftees were selected for a military branch as easily as three men rotating through the line, each counting off, saying, Army, Navy, Marines, like eenie-meenie-minee-mo, but with each tap making the draftee an "it" of soldier, sailor, marine. "That's how I got in the Army," Aigen says.

Sixty years after the war, his decision to speak about his experiences was more complicated than his selection for the Army. He weighed Schmier's invitation. His wife encouraged him to do it, saying it was his responsibility to share his story, to let people know what can happen in the world. Iranian leaders denied the Holocaust ever happened.

As a liberator of Dachau, Aigen knew the harsh realities of the Holocaust. As a Jewish male, he felt a responsibility to share his experiences, but it wasn't easy. It still isn't easy. Even seated in his home, bearing witness one on one can take an emotional toll.

He recalls incidents with terrible clarity. In discussion and presentation, he keeps a folder filled with years and numbers close at hand. He gets questions. He can see the shifting expressions on his audience's faces.

After a presentation, he often receives mail. One letter stands out. A student wrote that Aigen had changed her mind about the Holocaust.

Recently, he spoke to a Valwood class about his experiences. In an email, teachers Vallye Blanton and LaVie Marshall noted, "The students were excellent listeners and were very interested in what he told us. They were especially moved by his memories of visiting a concentration camp. There were tears in many students' eyes when he told us about being in France in May of 1945 when the church bells started ringing because the war in Europe was over."

He traditionally concludes his discussions with the story of how he learned the war ended, but meeting with Aigen in his house, a question brings forth one more story.



George Aigen stands with wife Joyce outside of their Valdosta residence. Before making South Georgia home, George was raised in Brooklyn, went to war in Europe and participated in the liberation of Dachau

In World War II, Jewish-American soldiers had an H stamped on their dog tags to denote their Hebrew faith. Considering they were fighting Nazis, did having an H on his dog tag ever concern George Aigen?

He doesn't answer directly, but the story he tells implies this fact of military life didn't strike him until after he returned home to the States. He ran into an old friend, Ralph Cohen, a Jew who served with the American military in Europe.

Cohen told a story of being with his Allied unit when they encountered a much larger German unit. The Americans fought from inside of a house until they felt compelled to surrender.

The Germans entered the house and ordered the Americans to make a line. The Germans walked down the line demanding dog tags from each man. They inspected the dog tags then handed them back before moving onto the next American soldier. They stopped at one soldier, took his dog tags and noticed the H embossed into the metal. The Germans dragged the Jewish-American soldier from the line, took him outside, and shot him.

Watching this, Cohen yanked his dog tags from his neck before the Germans resumed their inspection down the line. He dropped the dog tags and nudged them by foot under a piece of furniture.

Stopping at Cohen, the Germans demanded his dog tags. Cohen said he had lost them. The Germans stared him in the eye for a long moment then moved onto the next American soldier.

Cohen was taken prisoner, but he lived to return home and tell his tale to George Aigen — a man who for years did not want to discuss what he saw, but believes now he must tell as many people as possible with the hope a Holocaust will never happen again.

*George was honored by the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust at the Georgia State Capital On April 28, 2006*

*George's unit was cited twice by the War Dept. (which today is the Dept. of Defense) for:*

- #1 amongst the first troops into Munich,*
- #2 served for 180 consecutive days in combat zone*

*Decorations: European, African, Middle Eastern Service Medal, Awarded two Battle Stars, American Service Medal, and WW II Victory Medal*

*George has spoken to the VSU History classes as well as to many of our schools in Lowndes County and Lawson Chiles H.S. in Tallahassee. He has spoken to many organizations, churches, Temples, at least 45 times to date. George spoke at the Highland Christian Church to Middle and Upper students in November. Joyce Aigen told me: "My grandson Neil teaches in a Charter School( Renaissance HS for Innovations. ) Located In Harlem in New York City. I sent Neil a copy of the article that Dean wrote and you are including in your Newsletter and Neil was so interested that he suggested we have a web cam session between his students and George. Valdosta State University set it up in one day and it was terrific. On October 18<sup>th</sup> we had this session and it lasted two hours. It is great to have this interaction between New York and Georgia (our grandson and grandfather) and be able to teach each other about WW II and Dachau."*



George Aigen speaking to a class of "Learning in Retirement" members at VSU

*Editor's note: in November, Bill Dudley, Gary Bruce and I appeared on Melissa Ross's Public Radio show. While waiting in the "green room" I met Phillip Bergman, Vice President of AXIA Public Relations Firm. Naturally our conversation was about local veterans and Phillip mentioned a GA friend of his who was a WW II veteran and was one of the first soldiers to liberate Dachau. I took the contact information, followed up with several emails and you have just read George Aigen's story.*

## City of Jacksonville and UNF Honor Vietnam Veterans

On a rainy Friday evening in November, the COJ and UNF hosted a reception, Vietnam documentary showing and a panel discussion consisting of local Vietnam veterans. This event was coordinated by Capt. Ray Wikstrom, the Director of the UNF Military and Veterans Affairs Resource Center; Rich Carey, UNF MVRC Transition Coach;



From left: Capt. Ray Wikstrom of UNF, Ken Johnson—City of Jacksonville and Rich Carey of UNF



SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn, moderator, leads audience discussion on Vietnam at UNF

ADM Victor Guillory, Director of the COJ Dept. of Military Affairs Veterans and Disabled Services; Ken Johnson, Senior Advisor Military Affairs of the City of Jacksonville; and Michael Rothfeld, President of FVPPI and producer of the documentary. The audience consisted of Vietnam veterans, their families, members of the Jacksonville Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America and UNF students.

After the screening of the Vietnam documentary, *Vietnam: Service, Sacrifice and Courage*, the moderator, MSG Ray Quinn, US Army ret., introduced the Vietnam veterans on the panel: Harry Manford, USMC, Tom Crawford, USMC, Terry Allan, US Army and Capt. Blane Wilson, US Navy, ret. Each man spoke and answered questions from the audience. After a brief lull, MSG Quinn opened up questioning from the audience. That is when the magic happened. The Vietnam veterans in the audience started telling how they were treated when they returned home. This led to a very lively discussion from the veterans and their family members. Many in the audience were moved listening to the stories of how returning Vietnam Veterans were treated.



Vietnam veterans Tom Crawford and Harry Manford



Documentary producer Michael Rothfeld, ADM Guillory and BG Capps



Vietnam veteran Terry Allan makes a point

# New VFW Post seeks Members & Community Support

Post organizer, A. J. Sartin said, starting a VFW Post means making it relevant to the new generation of War Veterans, Armed Services personnel, their families and the Community. It means correcting misconceptions and breathing life into an organization, that some still view as a place where old men wear special caps and gather just to trade war stories.

Furthermore, it means having a permanent place for Veterans to go to on Veterans Island. There's a severe lack of facilities to meet the needs of local Veterans. A lot of the Veterans can't drive 20 or 40 miles to another Post on the mainland, especially at night.

For decades, Veterans' Organizations have supported Armed Services Personnel before, during and after deployments, lobbied government officials on their behalf, as well as promoted civic education and community service — all of which is still vital today, Sartin said.

With roots tracing back to 1899, the VFW has a history of serving as a strong voice for Veterans, helping them access services and benefits promised by the government. Sartin envisions the same at the local level for the Post. He said support for a VFW Post can be especially helpful to returning Veterans, who may have to deal with problems, such as recovering from battle injuries and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, thoughts of suicide, permanent injuries and/or loss of limbs. They must also readjust to being with their families and readapting into civilian life, finding employment in a bleak economic situation, filing for disability compensation, and getting the rehabilitation, education and training programs needed.

The Post is aimed at the tens of thousands of new Veterans minted in Iraq and Afghanistan during the last decade, as well as the many more Active-Duty service members currently stationed and fighting overseas, and those have fought in past wars. He listed several challenges faced, including the erosion of medical benefits, overhauling of retirement and a 20 percent workforce reduction. Besides helping members get what they've earned and cut through the bureaucratic tape, the Post provides endless support and camaraderie.

Sartin believes the experience of serving in the Military is a unique one, with commonalities that cross time and generations. What makes the VFW different from some other Military Organizations is all of its members have served in harm's way to protect and defend the Country and have a special bond of experience forged in sacrifice and danger.

The fundamental difference between the VFW and other Veterans Organizations, and one in which we take great pride, is our eligibility qualifications. Membership in the VFW is limited to those on active duty or honorably discharged who have received a campaign medal for overseas service; have served 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days in a War, Insurrection, or Expedition, or have ever received hostile fire or imminent danger pay, Sartin added.

Membership in the VFW is available as Annual Membership with annual dues or as Life Membership with a one-time membership fee (calculated by your age). Annual membership dues are currently \$45.00.

For more information, visit [www.VeteransIslandVFW.org](http://www.VeteransIslandVFW.org)



A. J. Sartin



## **Jacksonville Maritime Heritage Center receives gift signed by 11 survivors of Battle of Midway**

By [Clifford Davis](#) Fri, Nov 22, 2013 @ 6:35 pm | updated Fri, Nov 22, 2013 @ 7:38 pm , this article is re-printed in its entirety with permission of its author and the Times Union.

The Jacksonville Maritime Heritage Center added another piece of history to its new moorings inside the Jacksonville Landing Friday, a painting signed by 11 survivors of the June 1942 Battle of Midway.

The painting, donated by the Jacksonville branch of the Naval Order of the United States, depicts the B-25s of the Doolittle Raid awaiting takeoff from the USS Hornet, which fought in the Battle of Midway two months later and was finally sunk by a combined Japanese attack near Guadalcanal in October.

The Doolittle raid was the first major U.S. retaliatory air strikes against Japan in World War II after Pearl Harbor.

The center is a fitting home for the painting.

“Jacksonville being a Navy town, we like to have anything we can that features important moments in U.S. Navy history with ties to the people who actually participated in the event,” the center’s director Paul Ghiotto said.

The painting was initially given to the Naval Order for sponsoring an honorary dinner in June where they hosted the Midway survivors who signed the piece of art.

“I couldn’t think of a better place for it than here,” said J. Michael McGrath of the Naval Order. The painting is significant not only for its history, but also what it represents.

“The Battle of Midway is recognized by Naval historians as being the turning point of the War in the Pacific,” Ghiotto said.

Before the Battle of Midway, the Japanese were on the offensive everywhere in the Pacific. Their eyes were set on Midway Island because it was literally midway between America and Asia and would serve as a launching point for future operations against the U.S., most likely Hawaii.

Though the Japanese had the larger force, U.S. intelligence had broken the Japanese code and knew the attack was coming and scored what would become a crucial victory in the war.

Forever after Midway, the Japanese Naval forces would be on the defensive while the Americans took back the Pacific inch by grueling inch.

Gifts like this one are important for the center, which is operated almost entirely by volunteers.

“It means an awful lot,” Ghiotto said.

# SEA'S 2nd Annual Rails to Trails Festival

**Honoring our Military Veterans Past & Present  
Pearl Harbor - World War II**

**December 7th, 2013 10:00am to 4:00pm  
Armstrong Park 4950 Harvey Ave. Elkton, FL 32033**



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ARTS & CRAFTS

COUNTRY COOKING

BAKED GOODS

REFRESHMENTS

FARMER'S MARKET



SEA's (Spuds, Elkton, Armstrong, Community Help Resource Center, Inc) solicits your financial support to develop a community center and to promote programs which serve the needs of rural and at-risk children and families experiencing crisis.

**Join us for a Fun Walk and Bike Ride on the**

**Bring your family, bikes & walking shoes  
Invite your friends!**

Entertainment by Willie Green Blues Singer and others

**Vendor Booths Available for Rent**

**NEEDED:**

**SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, CYCLISTS, WALKERS**



Recreation and Parks  
Where Everybody Plays



Housing & Community  
Development

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
MALINDA PEEPLES 904-806-3939  
KATHY TAYLOR 904-824-5314  
MARGARET MURRAY 904-692-3561



Harry Manford introducing  
Capt. Giles Norrington

## The Orange County Regional History Center in Orlando

On Thursday November 7th, FVPPI had its "POW: Stolen Freedom" documentary shown at the Orlando Museum. Attending from FVPPI were Board members Vice President Harry Manford, whose voice was used in the voice over, Earl Kidwell interviewer; and President and Producer Michael Rothfeld. Also attending were US Navy Capt. and Chaplain Eileen Norrington and son Gilles. After the showing, US Navy Capt. Giles Norrington, one of the four men in the film answered questions and spoke about his time in captivity in North Vietnam and later in the "Hanoi Hilton". We would like to thank the Museum and Amanda Neely for coordinating this event.



Giles Norrington with Museum  
Asst. Director Kimberlee Riley



Capt. Giles Norrington



Sketch by Giles Norrington

**M**y friends, on Sunday, December 8, 2013, St Philips Episcopal Church will celebrate its Unity Day, a special service and event in the Anglican church family. This year, we will have the honor to have Marine LTG Ronald Bailey, the first African -American to lead the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines Division. General Bailey is also a St. Augustine, Florida native.



Lieutenant General Ronald L. Bailey currently serves as the Deputy Commandant Plans, Policies, and Operations.

**The St. Philips Church family is honored to have General Bailey join us for this very special occasion and we want to make sure our military friends and Veterans have the opportunity to attend.**

**Event: St Philips Episcopal Church Unity Day Observance**

**When: Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Where: St Philips Episcopal Church, corner of Pearl & Union Streets**

**Time: 10 AM**

**Ken Johnson**

**Senior Policy Advisor Military Affairs**

**City Hall at St. James Building**



## Happy Thanksgiving Veterans

Every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, members and friends of American Legion



Post 194 in West Augustine provide a Thanksgiving meal to Veterans and families on an Eat In, Take Out or We Deliver basis. Residents of Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home were among the many enjoying a hot Thanksgiving Meal.



*Submitted by Michael Isam*

**Saturday, November 2, 2013**

**[House passes bill to help Blue Water Navy Vietnam vets](#)**

**[http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2013/October/30/Viet\\_BlueWater-30Oct13.html](http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2013/October/30/Viet_BlueWater-30Oct13.html)**

**WASHINGTON – The House of Representatives has passed a bill sponsored by Congressman Christopher Gibson (R, NY-19) that would move the ability of Vietnam veterans who were assigned to ships off the coast and were afflicted with Agent Orange to receive benefits.**

**Military personnel who served on the ground and contracted the disease have been covered automatically, but those on board ships off the coast of Vietnam have been required to list detailed specifics of how they contracted it, making it almost impossible to gain benefits.**

**READ MORE: [http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2013/October/30/Viet\\_BlueWater-30Oct13.html](http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2013/October/30/Viet_BlueWater-30Oct13.html)**

**[WE HAVE A BILL!](#)**

**[S.1602](#)**

**Latest Title: A bill to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a national center for the diagnosis, treatment, and research of health conditions of the descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during service in the Armed Forces, to provide certain services to those descendants, to establish an advisory board on exposure to toxic substances, and for other purposes.**

**Sponsor: [Sen Blumenthal, Richard](#) [CT] (introduced 10/29/2013) Cosponsors (None)**

**Latest Major Action: 10/29/2013 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.**

**READ MORE: <http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/1602>**

**[Exposure to Agent Orange by Location](#)**

**<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/militaryexposure.asp>**

**[Exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam](#)**

**Exposure on land in Vietnam or on a ship operating on the inland waterways of Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975**

**[Blue Water Veterans](#)**

**Possible exposure on open sea ships off the shore of Vietnam during the Vietnam War**

**[U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Ships in Vietnam](#)**

**List of ships and boats with operations in Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975**

**[Korean Demilitarized Zone](#)**

**Exposure along the demilitarized zone in Korea between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971**

**[Thailand Military Bases](#)**

**Possible exposure on or near the perimeters of military bases between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975**

**[Herbicide Tests and Storage Outside Vietnam](#)**

**Possible exposure due to herbicide tests and storage at military bases in the United States and locations in other countries**

**[Agent Orange Residue on Airplanes Used in the Vietnam War](#)**

**Possible exposure of crew members to herbicide residue in C-123 planes flown after the Vietnam War**

**READ MORE: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/militaryexposure.asp>**



## American Legion Post 37, information provided by Adjutant Kevin McKeefery

IT WAS A GREAT NIGHT AT OUR HOME POST 37. WE SUPPORTED THE SEA CADETS AND THEY SUPPORTED US FOR THIS NIGHT. WE ARE GLAD TO HAVE THEM ABOARD AND THEIR PRESENCE WAS FUFILLING WITH THE VOLUNTEERS FOR THE NIGHT. WE ARE FAMILY, FOR GOD AND COUNTRY---- KEVIN MCKEEFERY/ VICE COMMANDER/ADJUTANT



In 2012, the D.A.V. Chapter 6 donated a new Ford 12 passenger van to the V.A. for transportation of Veterans from the St. Augustine clinic and Gainesville Veterans Hospital. It is driven five days a week....every week. We are blessed, to have volunteer drivers from the Council On Aging.

We are pressed into service all along the route between St. Augustine to Gainesville. If a veteran needs a ride, we do stops in Hastings, Palatka, Hawthorne, and Interlaken. It just makes sense to pick them up along the way.

This was the third such van, that the Chapter has given to V.A.. It is time, due to high mileage, to buy another Van for this purpose. Donations from Individuals and Organizations is our only source for this funding.

“Our vets deserve the very best we can give them,” says St. Johns Veterans Service Officer Joe McDermott “and it does take a village to make sure that happens.”

Veterans can schedule a ride by calling the COA Transportation Service at 904-209-3710.

For more information, contact D.A.V. Commander A. J. Sartin at:  
[FloridaDude@bellsouth.net](mailto:FloridaDude@bellsouth.net) .

**Guess who I am?** Pictures taken in 1968 in Pleiku South Vietnam. I can't believe I was ever that thin and had all that hair! Who am I?

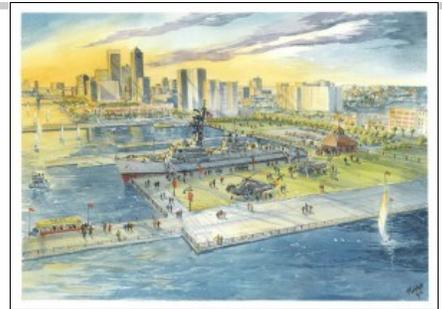


**CLUES: Doesn't comb his hair, initials only please.  
Member of VFW, DAV, VVA, CVMA, & other letters of the alphabet...  
and the Veterans Council.**

**How much is that doggy in the window?....**

### **AN UPDATE ON THE EFFORT TO BRING HOME THE USS ADAMS!**

Jacksonville's City Council unanimously approved and Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown signed COJ Ordinance 2013-0408 authorizing the mooring of the USS Adams on the northbank of the St Johns River at the historic Shipyards property in Downtown Jacksonville. The ordinance had 11 co-sponsors, lead by the immediate past President (Mr. Bill Bishop) and the current President (Mr. Bill Gulliford). The northbank location removes the requirement to finance and build a berthing pier and a much quicker opportunity to open the museum.



USS Adams Northbank rendering by Flagg Design Studio

Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) has established a special USS Adams sub-committee and is working closely with JHNSA to review an endorsement and investment package proposal in support of the project.

Synovus Bank has partnered with JHNSA and approved a \$100,000 Line of Credit. Together with our partner, Client Focused Media, ([www.cfmedia.com](http://www.cfmedia.com)) JHNSA will launch a fundraising and marketing/branding campaign later this fall.

Our business partners and agencies continue to work with JHNSA to fine tune the very detailed engineering, towing, berth restoration, environmental, and refurbishment plans and estimates. The U. S. Navy has expressed their pleasure with our updated progress and the quality of the approach that Team ADAMS has employed to obtain the ship from the U.S. Navy.

JHNSA continues to add generous co-guarantors towards a multi-million dollar capital funding line of credit to fund the return of USS Adams to Jacksonville and her initial refurbishment prior to opening.

JHNSA continues to welcome corporate representatives from Fortune 500 firms (IBM, Siemens, Holland & Knight, etc...) and local small businesses to our Board of Directors and core team. These new Team ADAMS members are opening many new doors and avenues of support!

We are truly at the tipping point of the first phase of obtaining and opening the Adams Class Naval Ship Museum in late 2014/early 2015. We hope you can join us at our 5<sup>th</sup> annual USS Adams Navy Party, presented by W. W. Gay Mechanical Contractors, at Jaxtoberfest ([www.jaxtoberfest.com](http://www.jaxtoberfest.com)) and help push us over the goal line!

*Florida Veterans Programs & Projects, Inc. and the Veterans Council of St. Johns County are working on a new documentary to premiere in November 2014. In order to complete this important documentary about how wounded warriors are able to succeed in today's society with the aid of K9s, we are asking for your help. Please look at the short trailer of what we have done so far and please consider contributing: <http://vimeo.com/71966728>*

*All contributions are tax deductible. Please make checks out to Florida Veterans Programs & Projects, Inc. and mail to 4905 Los Altos Circle, Elkton, FL 32033. Thank you.*



### **Short Summary**

**This documentary tells the story of the K9 For Warriors Program which month after month is radically changing the lives of Post-9/11 veterans who are suffering with PTSD and pairing them with rescued dogs trained to be service dogs. Veterans have described the success of the story as "waking up from a nightmare".**

- This short documentary is intended to promote the efforts of K9 for Warriors and recruit more donors and veterans**
  - It is important to educate the public about PTSD and how rescued dogs are being used to heal and comfort veterans who thought life for them was over**
- This documentary will allow us to take the inspiring and positive message of K9 for Warriors global letting the world know that healing is not just possible, it's happening.**

**We want to share this uplifting and positive message in a sea of bad news and difficulty that will create a greater audience for the program and it's possibilities.**

### **What We Need & What You Get**

**We need your help. There are production expenses involved in making any film. Please support us to make this film a reality!**

- Post 9/11 Veterans are suffering in unacceptably high rates and need relief beyond the medication and services that are being offered to them at no avail**

**This project is being sponsored by FVPPI and the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.**

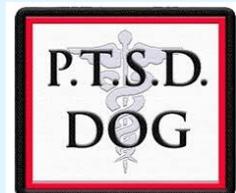
### **Other Ways You Can Help**

- Please help us spread the word about this film and fundraising.**
- Forward the trailer on your social media.**

**Email people or even call folks to help us make this happen**



**THANK YOU for being part of this important film about Veterans, rescued dogs and miraculous healing.**





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# Former Adjutant General and WWII veteran returns to Camp Blanding

Written by [Master Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa](#) // November 7, 2013

**STARKE, Fla. (Nov. 7, 2013)** – A living legend returned to Camp Blanding Joint Training Center this week, walking the grounds he covered as a young Soldier more than 70 years ago.

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Kennedy C. Bullard, the former Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard and a World War II veteran, visited the National Guard training post on Thursday morning as part of a tour provided by Camp Blanding staff.

Bullard, 95, served in the Florida National Guard from 1939 to 1981, and headed the organization as the Adjutant General from 1975 to 1981.

One of his first training posts as a member of the field artillery was Camp Blanding in north-central Florida.

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Kennedy C. Bullard, the former Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard and a World War II veteran (left) talks with Camp Blanding Joint Training Center Operations Officer Lt. Col. Gray Johnson during a visit to the Camp Blanding Museum, Nov. 7, 2013.

Bullard, 95, trained at Camp Blanding in the early 1940s. Photo by Master Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa

“There is a lot of nostalgia here,” Bullard said during a tour of the post. “I think it was very primitive here when I came here in 1940.”

After a command briefing with current Adjutant General of Florida Maj. Gen. Emmett Titshaw Jr. and senior leaders from Camp Blanding, Bullard received an escort around the post, seeing how time and technology changed the installation since his initial arrival in late 1940. He visited training facilities, the post headquarters building that bears his name, and the Camp Blanding museum where he related stories about his training time at the installation.

“Everything has changed so much and everything has been upgraded,” Bullard said. “Camp Blanding – when I (first) came here – a good portion of it was underwater. We lived in tents. It was very primitive, but we thought it was pretty good.”

Bullard was born in Palatka, Fla., in 1917. His family moved around the Southeast for much of his childhood, and he joined the Florida National Guard’s 116th Field Artillery in 1939. He was mobilized in 1940 for training at Camp Blanding, and in 1941 completed Officer Candidate School at Ft. Sill, Okla. As a U.S. Army Soldier he fought in World War II with the First Armor Division in North Africa, and later received a Purple Heart for a wound to his hand he received during the 1944 Battle of Anzio in Italy.



Maj. Gen. (ret.) Kennedy C. Bullard, the former Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard and a World War II veteran talks with Camp Blanding Joint Training Center Operations Officer Lt. Col. Gray Johnson during a visit to the Camp Blanding Museum, Nov. 7, 2013. Bullard, 95, trained at Camp Blanding in the early 1940s. Photo by Master Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa

After the war he re-joined the Florida Guard’s 116th Field Artillery, working his way up through the ranks to serve as the commanding general of the 53rd Infantry Brigade from 1970 to 1975. On Aug. 13, 1975, he became the Adjutant General of Florida. He served in that position until Dec. 31, 1981, when Maj. Gen. Robert Ensslin took command of the Florida National Guard.

“From my experience, the military made me grow up,” Bullard said. “It made me become a person who was more caring. When you have Soldiers under your command, you always have to think what’s going to happen to them before you take any action. That is important.”

After the briefing, the general related that he was still impressed with the facilities and personnel at the 73,000-acre training post, and was especially impressed with the Soldiers and Airmen who make up the Florida National Guard today.

“I’m proud of them, and I know they are making a tremendous number of sacrifices with deployments...,” Bullard said. “I’m proud of our military.”



Maj. Gen. (ret.) Kennedy C. Bullard, the former Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard and a World War II veteran, stands in front of the post headquarters building which bears his name, at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Nov. 7, 2013. Photo by Master Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa

Below is the December 2013 work site schedule for the **Veterans Mobile Access Point** team. You may notice that our hours at each site are shorter than usual. This is to allow our Veteran Employment Representatives the opportunity to conduct some one-on-one outreach with Veterans in your particular area in the afternoons.

I ask that you make our schedule available to your Post members and help us get the word out that we are available to assist Veterans who are seeking employment.

Thank each of you for your continued support of our local area Veterans and their family members.

Sincerely, Catherine L. Phillmon, Local Veterans Employment Representative

215 N. Market Street, Suite 200, Jacksonville, FL 32202, [\(904\) 997-3100 ext.2313](tel:(904)997-3100), [www.worksourcefl.com](http://www.worksourcefl.com)

<b>Veterans Mobile Access Points Team December 2013</b>						
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
1	2 AM LEGION 202 7441 SR 21 Keystone Hts 10AM-1:30PM	3 AMERICAN LEGION 137 5443 San Juan Ave, JAX, FL 32210 10AM-1PM	4 USO Mayport 2560 Mayport Rd JAX Beach 10AM-1PM	5 VFW POST 8255 2296 Aster Ave Middleburg 10AM-1PM	6 Webb Wesconnett Library 6887 103 <sup>RD</sup> St 10AM-2PM	7
8	9 AM LEGION 316 1127 Atlantic Blvd. JAX Beach 10AM -1PM	10 Five Star Vet Center 40 Acme St Jax, FL 32211 10AM - 1PM	11 AM LEGION 54 626 S. 3 <sup>RD</sup> ST Fern. Beach 10AM-1PM	12 Regency Square Library 9000 Regency Sq Blvd 1 PM-4PM	13 VA Clinic Downtown 10AM-1PM	14
15	16 AM LEGION 202 7441 SR 21 Keystone Hts 10AM-1:30PM	17 VFW POST 8255 2296 Aster Ave Middleburg 10AM-1PM	18	19 VFW Post 2391 6184 US 1 S. St. Augustine 10AM-1PM	20 VA Clinic Southpoint 10AM-1PM	21
22	23 <b>TRAINING</b> 	24 <b>MERRY CHRISTMAS</b> 	25 <b>MERRY CHRISTMAS</b> 	26 <b>TRAINING</b> 	27 Outreach	28
29	30 VFW POST 3349 3301 Reid St. Palatka, FL 10AM - 1PM	31 <b>TRAINING</b> 	WorkSource Veteran Mobile Access Points (VMAP) an extension of our career centers. Providing use of laptops, 3G/4G and knowledgeable staff to help veteran job seekers target their resumes, locate potential employers and occasional workshops covering a variety of work readiness topics. Contact VMAP at 904-866-9838 for more information			



**The Veterans Council wants to thank AJ Sartin for being the VC website administrator. John Mountcastle has set-up a guide for all veterans/not for profit groups on what you need to know to stay in compliance with IRS regulations.**



**The IRS info page has been added to the WebSite under the IRS & Charities button.**

**[www.VeteransCouncilOfStJohns.org](http://www.VeteransCouncilOfStJohns.org) or  
[www.StJohnsVetsCouncil.org](http://www.StJohnsVetsCouncil.org)**

**If you click on them, the .pdf file opens. If the file does not open you can get Adobe Reader here, just click on <http://get.adobe.com/reader/> and you can download the file.**

**If you still cannot open this link contact Michael at:  
[mrothfeld@anyveteran.org](mailto:mrothfeld@anyveteran.org)**

**The Military Museum of North Florida is a non profit organization dedicated the honoring those men and women that have served their country in the armed forces via artifacts, displays and military memorabilia. Admission is free but donations are welcome.**



**The museum is located on Rt 16 in Green Cove Springs FL 1 1/2 miles East of US 17 and 1 1/2 miles West of the Shands Bridge.**

**The Museums' hours are: 10:00 to 3:00  
Thursday through Saturday and 12:00 to 4:00 on Sundays.**

**Call (904) 584-8719 for more information Herb Steigelman,  
Curator**

## Chesty Puller's son-in-law on life alongside the legendary Marine Remembering the family man behind the legend



The Navy's newest ship will bear the name of one of the Marine Corps' most revered, and decorated, heroes. The sea service held a keel-laying ceremony Nov. 5 in San Diego for the USNS mobile landing platform Lewis B. Puller, named for Lt. Gen. "Chesty" Puller, recipient of five Navy crosses and arguably the most famous Marine of all time.

Virtually every Marine knows about the towering warrior who took on guerrillas in Haiti and Nicaragua and fought valiantly in some of the bloodiest battles of World War II and Korea, but what was he really like? Marine Corps Times spoke with retired Brig. Gen. Mike Downs, Puller's son-in-law, about the man behind the legend.



Lt. Gen. Lewis Burwell 'Chesty' Puller (Defense Department)

A Silver Star recipient and Vietnam veteran who retired in 1992, Downs said he first met Puller in 1965; Chesty had been retired almost a decade and Downs was a fast-rising first lieutenant.

Drill instructors were already teaching Marines to recite "goodnight Chesty Puller, wherever you are" when he joined the Corps, Downs said. He met the Pullers when he was stationed in Yorktown, Va., shortly before he was promoted to captain. During a visit to their home, he was introduced to their daughter, Martha, who was home from school. They took a liking to each other.

Over the next few years, Puller and Downs got to know each other better. When Puller's son Lewis, Martha's twin brother, was severely wounded in Vietnam in 1968, Downs, who was nearing the end of his Vietnam deployment, was the first one to his side and the one to report back to the family on his condition. Lewis first ventured out of the hospital to attend Downs and Martha's wedding. Downs said he asked Puller for Martha's hand in the old-fashioned, traditional way, and though he asked that Puller's favorable response not be printed because it represented a private moment between the two men, he still remembered every word.

Puller died in 1971 at the age of 73.

Though Puller's family is very proud of his Marine Corps reputation — they attended the dedication of an 8-foot bronze statue of the highly decorated Marine at Semper Fidelis Memorial Park near Quantico, Va., last year — Puller's legacy to his family extends far beyond his time in the Marine Corps. "My wife is obviously exceedingly proud of her father, as she is of her mother," Downs said. "She would always be quick to point out that who she is proud of is Lewis B. Puller, the man, her father. She understands his reputation in the Marine Corps. Her relationship is not with the Marines, her relationship is with her father."

One day in 1966, after he and Puller had known each other for awhile, Downs asked the legend to autograph a photo of himself from a deployment to Korea. The inscription, he recalled, read "To Capt. Michael P. Downs, 1966. My friend and an excellent Marine who I predict will go far."



Puller is a heroic figure in Marine lore but his legacy to his family went far beyond the Corps, says his son-in-law, Brig. Gen. Mike Downs (ret.). (Courtesy of Brig. Gen. Mike Downs)

"I was really proud of that picture," he said. It hung in his office until after he married Martha in 1969.

Puller wasn't one to talk about himself, Downs said, and they didn't discuss his growing fame among young Marines.

But he thinks Puller might be surprised at the way his name has come to represent the "old Corps," as when Marines — young and old — indicate their disapproval of change by saying "Chesty's rolling over in his grave."

"He lived through huge change in the Marine Corps himself," Downs said. "There was a whole lot of difference between the Marine Corps of the '20s and '30s and the post-World War II Marine Corps, for sure. He certainly never lost his pride in the Marine Corps and his relationship to it ... he wouldn't endorse anything that he perceived to be going soft, but he would adjust. He adjusted to his time in the Marine Corps, so he would adjust to it today."

# France to honor 3 FL World War II veterans in Miami

By SUZETTE LABOY, Associated Press

Published: Monday, November 11, 2013 at 3:02 p.m.

Last Modified: Monday, November 11, 2013 at 3:02 p.m.

*CORAL GABLES, Fla.* - Three veterans from Florida received special honors Monday for fighting alongside France in World War II

"This is the very first time I've ever attended anything along this line," said Norman Kaiser, one of the veterans being honored at a ceremony held at the University of Miami in Coral Gables along with the Consulate General of France. "Whatever decorations I've gotten, I've never attended anything and I think this is very, very, very rewarding."



WW II veteran Arthur Nagler, left, is presented with a Legion of Honor medal by Philippe Letrilliart, the Consul General of France in Miami

Kaiser, 89, said he fought in France for about a month and his fondest memory was the day he was taken off the front lines.

He and the other veterans - Andrew Kunkle and Arthur Nagler - were awarded the insignia of the "Knight in the National Order of the Legion of Honor," the highest distinction that can be bestowed upon a French citizen or foreigner.

The Legion was founded in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte and rewards extraordinary military and civil accomplishments in the service of France.

Philippe Letrilliart, the Consul General of France in Miami, said the country decided about a decade ago to grant the honor to all the U.S. veterans who fought on the French side. A U.S.-led Allied invasion of France was a key to expelling Nazi German occupiers en route to Allied victory in the war.

"This was and this is the way we found to thanks for their dedication and sacrifice," Letrilliart told the audience at the ceremony. "I'm from Normandy so I know very well what you did for us. I know very well what we owe you. So from my heart and from the people of Normandy, thanks to you again."

Notable Americans who have received the award include: Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Dwight D. Eisenhower and former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The ceremony opened with the U.S. and French national anthems, followed by a promotion ceremony for Noel Christian Pace, a second-year law student who was recently promoted to colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. A paratrooper who served in Korea and Iraq, Pace came to the law school after successful careers in the military and civilian health care management.

# **HOLIDAY BAZAAR**

**Come on out to the Clyde E. Lassen State  
Veterans' Nursing Home on Thursday  
December 5<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9 a.m. for our  
Holiday Bazaar.**

**We'll have all sorts of crafters and  
vendors...homemade jams/jellies, jewelry,  
wreaths, handmade clothing, even new shoes  
and beauty items!**



**4650 SR 16**

**St. Augustine, FL 32092**

**904 940 2193 for any questions**

**Head to the outlet malls, go under I-95 and keep going  
for another appx. 5 miles (towards the St. Johns River).**



WASHINGTON (11/12/13) - With the holidays coming up fast, now is the time to consider mailing early, especially to loved ones overseas, said Peter Graeve, a retired Soldier who is now with the Military Postal Service Agency.

Despite the popularity of sending cards via the Internet and chatting on social media, Soldiers really like to receive something they can put in their hands, he said. "It's one of those traditions that's still with us. They still appreciate getting letters and packages."

Graeve said the volume of letters and packages increases this time of year due to gifts being sent by spouses, girlfriends, boyfriends, family and friends. But he said in addition to that, care packages seem to be especially popular.

Care packages include things like chocolates, soap and toothbrushes. "Even though they have it over there, the Soldiers really seem to appreciate receiving the items anyway," he said.

Although there are fewer Soldiers in remote areas of Afghanistan and other countries, there are still some in outposts that don't have Internet access, he said. These Soldiers especially look forward to mail call.

### **Getting your package there on time**

To get mail to a Soldier by Christmas at APO/FPO/DPO AE 090-092, 094-098, 340, or 962-966, the latest a package can be sent to arrive on time is Dec. 17 - that means senders have to pay for Express mail. To send them earlier - and pay less - senders can put them in the mail by Dec. 10, and pay for either 1st Class or Priority mail.

Priority mail to APO/FPO/DPO AE 093 must be sent by Dec. 3.

The deadline for Parcel Post to all locations mentioned is Nov. 12.

The deadline for SAM parcels for all locations mentioned is Nov. 26. SAM parcels are paid at the Parcel Post postage rate with maximum weight and size limits of 15 pounds and 60 inches in length and girth combined. SAM parcels are first transported domestically by surface and then to overseas destinations by air on a space-available basis.

The deadline for PAL for all locations mentioned is Dec. 3. PAL is a service that provides air transportation for parcels on a space-available basis. It is available for Parcel Post items not exceeding 30 pounds or 60 inches in length and girth combined. The applicable PAL fee must be paid in addition to the regular surface rate of postage.

All classes of mail addressed to FPO/APO addresses must use the nine-digit ZIP code to ensure delivery. Mail not addressed correctly will be returned to the sender as undeliverable.

It is recommended that customers check with their local civilian or military post office for information on size restrictions and the possible need for customs declaration forms.

### **Restrictions**

As a reminder, some items cannot be mailed. Examples include switchblade knives, pornography, controlled substances, and explosive or incendiary devices. If in doubt as to what can or cannot be sent through the mail, contact your local civilian or military post office.

Some other tips include choosing a box with enough room for cushioning material around the contents, and ensuring that old labels and markings on used boxes are covered.

Senders should also be sure to use adequate tape to seal their packages, and reinforce the seams with two-inch wide tape. Use clear or brown packaging tape, reinforced packing tape or paper tape.

As a final note, customers are cautioned that packages must not be mailed in boxes that have markings related to any type of hazardous material, such as bleach, alcohol, or cleaning fluids. Parcels found by the U.S. Postal Service with such markings or labels on the outside of the box will not be processed.

**Meeting:**  
**First Tuesday of each month**  
**Time: 1900**  
**St. Augustine Elks Lodge #829**  
**1420 AIA South**  
**St. Augustine, FL 32080**



**Mailing Address:**  
**MCL #383**  
**P.O. Box 1752**  
**St. Augustine, FL 32085**  
**Telephone: (904) 461 - 0139**  
**[www.mclfl383.org](http://www.mclfl383.org)**



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**1st Prize**

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Valued at \$25,000

**2nd Prize AR 15 Rifle \$1,000 Value**



**3rd Prize**



This fundraiser is by The Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1046, Jacksonville, FL

The Drawing will be held on January 1, 2014 4:00 p.m. at the Five Star Veterans Center, Jacksonville, FL. You are encouraged to attend but **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE PRESENT TO WIN.**

Winners will be responsible for all taxes, fees and picking up or transporting their prize. The gift card can be mailed. The rifle winner must be of legal age.

Only \$20 per DONATION with OPPORTUNITY! You may purchase from members of VVA 1046 or online [www.VVA1046.com/trike](http://www.VVA1046.com/trike). More information can be obtained by calling 904-419-8821 or by going to the website below.

[www.VVA1046.com/trike](http://www.VVA1046.com/trike)

**ODDS OF WINNING ARE 1/1,500**

Proceeds to help pay for a Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Monument to be placed at the Jacksonville National Cemetery.



Above is an Artist's Rendition

**Donation  
\*WITH\*  
Opportunity  
Only \$20**



"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another"

*The raffle tickets will be mailed to your home address, they only cost \$20.00. If you can pass the word or this email to other Veterans we would deeply appreciate your help.*

## **Hey brother/sister, can you spare some time?**

I retired in 2000, did nothing for six years and then realized I was bored. Since I still had energy and my mind was still working fairly well, I looked around for something to do that would interest me. My senior community in Elkton was made up of more than 25% veterans and after speaking with many of them I was intrigued. My neighbor's stories were right out of a history text. I knew that their stories would be lost in a few years so I set about finding ways to record their stories for posterity. Many of you know my story so I won't elaborate any more except to say that I have succeeded in preserving the stories of many local NE FL veterans on film.

The point of this article is to let you know that you don't have to be a veteran to work with veterans and I am living proof of this. Many people don't realize that you can volunteer to work with and help veterans, even if you are a civilian. Senior volunteers at Flagler Hospital are not in the medical field, if you read to children in school you don't have to be a teacher and if you volunteer to help veterans you don't have to be a veteran. Many interesting, rewarding opportunities are open to you if you want to enrich and immerse yourself with people who have made America great. Veterans have so much to share. Do you want to learn and feel that you are doing something worthwhile also? Here is what you can do.

Contact:

Diane King, Administrator, Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home, 904-940-2193, [KingD@FDVA.STATE.FL.US](mailto:KingD@FDVA.STATE.FL.US)

Joseph McDermott, St. Johns County Veterans Service Officer, 904-209-6160, [jmcdermott@sjcfl.us](mailto:jmcdermott@sjcfl.us)

Bill Dudley, Chairman, Veterans Council of St. Johns County, [anuday00@aol.com](mailto:anuday00@aol.com)



# Vets 4 Vets

Gathering of Veterans  
at the  
5 Star Veterans Center  
40 Acme St.  
Jacksonville, Florida

## VETERANS WELCOME HOME

Every Saturday 0930-1130

**Starting on July 13th**

Stop by for a cup of Coffee & Donuts

**\*\*We will never forget\*\***



Currently sponsored by the Jacksonville Semper Fidelis Society and the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1046. All veterans, those who support veterans and veterans organizations are welcome and encouraged to support this project. Contact information:

Les Bertrand

Welcome Home Coordinator

Email: [les-Bertrand@comcast.net](mailto:les-Bertrand@comcast.net)

Phone: 904-248-9453



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*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](mailto:mrothfeld@anyveteran.org)



BG (Ret) Richard Capps, former Assistant Adjutant General FLARNG, addresses a group of Vietnam veterans at the University of North Florida

**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](http://www.veteranscouncilofstjohns.org)  
(please note the NEW web address)

**Incredible Vietnam reference**

[http://www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/  
Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html](http://www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html)

Website for US Navy Ships:  
[navy.mil/navydata/our\\_ships](http://navy.mil/navydata/our_ships)

**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.*

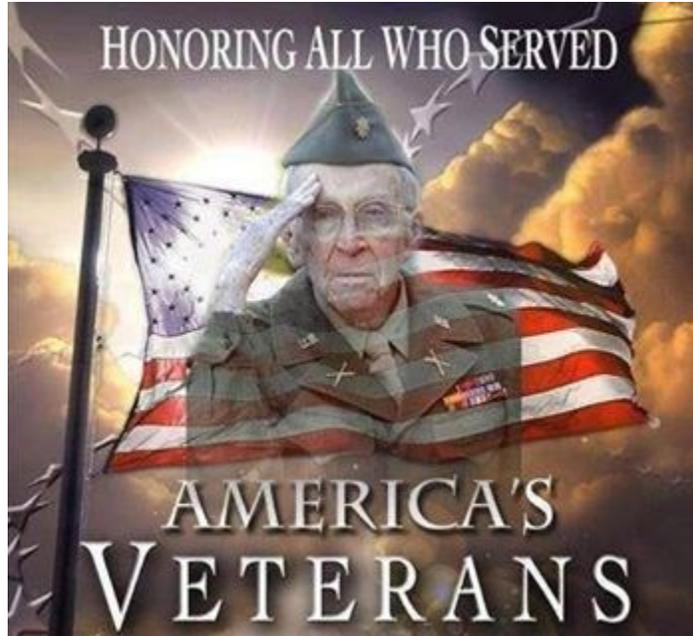
*Service is by appointment.  
Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161  
Joseph McDermott, CVSO  
Rick Rees, Assistant VSO  
Tammy Shirley, Office Specialist*

The locally produced *Vietnam documentary, Service, Sacrifice and Courage* has received **270,071** views to date on YouTube.

You can view part of it at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8Cs6Th7VNe>

*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](mailto: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.*



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](mailto: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.

**This is your Newsletter, please contribute.**

*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.*