

The Patriot Reader

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

CHAIRMAN BILL DUDLEY

VICE CHAIRMAN RAY QUINN

SECRETARY GEORGE APRIL

TREASURER MICHAEL ROTHFELD

Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld

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Message from the Chairman



Fellow Veterans:

I hope all our Veterans exercised their constitutional duty as Veterans this week and voted. The most basic right of all American citizens and one of the tenets of our service as Veterans for which we fought and served our Nation was to assure we have the opportunity to elect our leaders at every level of government. When we do not exercise this right, we allow those who lack the qualifications to hold office the opportunity to be elected.

On September 4, the Veterans Affairs will be conducting a Town Hall meeting at the Elks Lodge from 1-2 PM. The general public is invited to attend. It is imperative that we fill the Elks Lodge meeting room with Veterans to address the issue of our Community

Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). We still have no answers from the VA on this issue which is so critical to our Veterans in St. Johns County. We have approximately 215 days left before the VA has to vacate the building they are currently in. This is hardly enough time to prepare a new temporary facility and certainly not enough time to build a new CBOC. The VA has declined every reasonable offer presented to them by our County Administration. The fact that the VA has declined all the County's offers for help and has further declined to inform the Veterans in this county what their plan is to assure there is no interruption of our health care, is total arrogance on the part of the VA. They have had 4 years to address this problem. They have chosen

to sit on their hands and waste valuable time until we are now at a crisis point. I still hear rumblings of eminent domain, an action that is neither acceptable to our Veterans or the County Administration.

I hope you will attend the Town Hall meeting on September 4th and have your voice heard. As a Veteran this is a service you are entitled to. Even if you do not use the CBOC for your primary health care, many of your fellow veterans do, so I encourage you to be present to help support them.

Bill Dudley, Chairman
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County



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Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Patriotism is our Motto



Residents participating in a watermelon eating contest



Residents exercising their right to vote



Mr Biggs shopping at the Farmer's Market



Staff making "Lassen's Largest Banana Split"



Jordy putting the last "cherry on top"



The Final Product!

WINE AND WAR STORIES! The First Florida Vet-Together (The Wine Bar August 29th, 6-8 PM)

VetTogether: Wine and War Stories at The Wine Bar, Jacksonville Beach!

New Owners of The Wine Bar and a recently separated Vet back from Afghanistan team up for a great social networking event and community building on August 29th from 6 - 8 PM.

This is Open to Vets, Active Duty, and Military Supporters.

We Are Hosting Once a Month so come on out meet new friends, Bark at old ones and don't be afraid to stick around a little while longer! It is A Wine Bar.

320 1st St N #1, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250, **Phone:**(904) 372-0211



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, September 8th** 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.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

[VA Expands Patient-Centered Community Care \(PC3\) Contracts to Provide Access to Primary Care](#)

08/13/2014 01:00 AM EDT

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that primary care has been added to the services available to Veterans through VA's Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) contracts, a key and evolving part of the non-VA medical care program. Eligible Veterans are already able to access inpatient specialty care, outpatient specialty care, mental health care, limited emergency care and limited newborn care for female Veterans following childbirth under PC3.

From Dr. Jane Karp, COL, USAF, ret. We've put the contacts for almost all your health questions in one convenient health index. Add this site to your FAVORITES for a link to take you to VA websites with valuable information:

<http://www.va.gov/health/newsfeatures/2014/August/Veterans-Have-A-Health-Question-Search-Here.asp>

The Disabled American Veterans Chapter 6, of St. Johns County, has a EZ-Access Modular Ramp System available for a Veteran that needs one that requires a turn, and two ramps to get from the porch to the sidewalk. This ramp cannot be parted out...must be used as manufactured.



**For more information, contact A. J. Sartin
(904) 669-1946**

This article is reprinted with the permission of the St. Augustine Record and its author, Tracy Jones

Local council supporting veterans

Group coordinates events, pushes for veterans' rights in St. Johns County

BY TRACY JONES Correspondent

Florida has the third largest veteran population in the country, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In St. Johns County alone, more than 20,000 veterans call the area home.

For more than a decade, a local group has been working hard to raise awareness about veterans' issues and improve the quality of life for the men and women who served their country in the armed forces.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County consists of area veterans, as well as representatives from 28 local veterans groups, such as the Vietnam Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The nonprofit organization provides services for military and former military personnel, hosts military-themed events and chronicles the experiences of local veterans through documentaries.

As the number of local veterans continued to grow, a handful of St. Johns County veterans thought there should be a streamlined organization for the various veterans groups, said Bill Dudley, a former Air Force pilot and current chairman of the council.

After a proclamation from the St. Johns County Commissioners, the council was created in 2001 and has been flourishing since.

"The council now is so active and so well-established in the county and in Northeast Florida for that matter," Dudley said. "Our attendance is 40 or 50 in every council meeting." In fact, other councils from other counties in Florida have contacted Dudley for guidance on how to have a strong, unified effort similar to the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.

Since its inception, the Veterans Council has worked to improve the quality of life for local veterans.

The organization was instrumental in creating the Clyde Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home in St. Augustine, a 120-bed facility for local vets. In addition, the group supports the Wreaths across America Program, which aims to place wreaths on all veterans' headstones.

Prior to the council's involvement, about 10 percent of headstones received a wreath, Dudley said. Now, all area veterans' headstones have their own wreath each December. "We started out with a handful of people, and now we probably have a couple hundred people helping us," Dudley said. "[We want to] make sure our veterans get represented and supported."

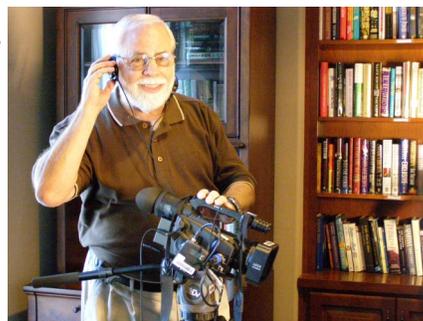


Chairman Dudley

Council members also honor service members with proper burials. Missing in America is a nonprofit organization that searches funeral homes for the unclaimed cremains of veterans. Once Missing in America has found the cremains of a veteran in St. Johns County, the Veterans Council hosts a service with a band and color guard, and buries the deceased with full military honors.

In addition to hosting Memorial Day ceremonies and Veterans Day events, the council helps distribute and hosts the viewing of documentaries that highlight the experiences of local veterans.

The documentaries are spearheaded by Michael Rothfeld, a former teacher in Brooklyn, N.Y. Rothfeld’s entry into documenting local veterans began after he realized there were many World War II veterans in Coquina Crossing, his neighborhood in Elkton. “I found out there were 34 World War II veterans living in my community,” Rothfeld said. “I started speaking with them and realized they were all getting older and won’t be around much longer. I tried to find a way to record their stories without any money.”



Michael Rothfeld

Rothfeld teamed up with Flagler College to complete the interviews and later partnered with the council to create more documentaries. More than 1,200 people attended the premiere of the council’s last film at Anastasia Baptist Church, Rothfeld said. The documentary was about local prisoners of war.

The latest documentary will be completed within a month. It features two veterans and their service dogs from K9 for Warriors in Ponte Vedra Beach.

The Veteran’s Council of St. Johns County meets the last Thursday of each month at the Elks Lodge on Anastasia Island. Typically, the meetings feature a guest speaker and lively discussion on hot-topic issues related to veterans.



Photos by Rick Rees & Michael Rothfeld



Clinic Agreement Appears Etched in Jell-O as VA Zigzags Again, By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (August 5, 2014) – According to Assistant County Administrator Jerry Cameron, the VA is asking St. Johns County to "Hold in Reserve" the piece of property off Inman Road as they are exploring other options.

This is very same property on which the VA agreed, at least in principal, to place a temporary home for the Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) to insure uninterrupted service for the health needs of the county's veterans.

St. Johns County is home to more than 20,000 veterans and a little more than 5,000 are patients at the current CBOC.

In the vernacular of veterans this is a case of 'Different day, same stuff'.

The commissioners expressed exasperation that after nearly 3 years of talks with the VA, we are back to the original offer. "I know", said Cameron. It just plain defies logic."

"Today's offer," said Cameron, "if cleared by the commission, will essentially build the CBOC to the VA specifications and, as a carrot, offer to extend the current lease at the same level, thereby eliminating the need for the VA procurement division to be involved at all." "We have," he said, "Senator Rubio and Congressman DeSantis' offices on board and ready to assist in whatever capacity needed."

Kevin Wiseman, **Project** Manager for St. Johns County Construction Services said, "We can build it. We can have it completed and have the VA moved in ahead of the March 30, 2015 deadline. The main contractor has all the necessary subcontractors on site at the present time and they are primed and ready to move forward now." "But," said Wiseman, "and it is a giant but, the time window gets smaller with every passing day."

Bill Dudley, chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County speaking during the public comment period said, "I am completely perplexed by the stalling techniques the VA has instituted in this process." "Many of our 5,000 plus veterans who receive care at the CBOC are elderly." "Everyday," he continued, "there are a large number of phone calls expressing concern about how they will be able to get health care."

"I have to fall back," said Dudley, "on the promise made by the VA staff in Gainesville and Washington that health care service for the veterans of St. Johns County **WILL NOT BE INTERRUPTED.**"

"Each veteran in St. Johns County," said Dudley," needs to be contacting the VA directly and

lodging a complaint with the office of the new VA Secretary or contact the Office of the Inspector General.”

“I applaud the patience of the commissioners,” said Dudley, “and especially Mr. Cameron during this exhausting process.” Cameron thanked Dudley saying “It is my staffs work making me appear good.” “It is the staff of the various offices that deserve the lion’s share of credit in this entire process.” “They have performed a yeoman’s job”, he continued, “each and every time doing the research and putting together a comprehensive report to present. I applaud them.”

At the end of the public comment period, Commissioner Ron Sanchez immediately made a motion to move forward with the proposal to the VA. Chairman Jay Morris seconded. After making the modifications offered by the County Administrator and Legal offices, the motion passed 4-0. Commissioner Stevenson was unable to be at the meeting.

Does the VA really care? Who knows? The rate of movement within the VA bureaucracy is akin to the space exploration days when the carrier moving the shuttle travelled at a rate of one mile per hour, which is apparently faster.

[Disclosure: The author of this story is the current Commander of DAV Chapter 6 who receives his medical treatment from the VA and is assigned to the St. Augustine CBOC.]



From left: John Reardon, Joe McDermott, Bill Dudley & COL Jane Karp, USAF, ret



Jerry Cameron, Assistant County Administrator



Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley



New Health & Human Resources Building,
NW corner

By [Lorena Inclán](#)
ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. —



The Department of Veterans Affairs had until 5 p.m. Friday to let St. Johns County know whether it was going to accept its offer to move to into a brand-new county building still under construction.

But county leaders said they have yet to get a response. County leaders have offered the VA space in their new facility at no extra cost to them.

The new facility is being built off San Sebastian View and that offer to be housed still stands but the VA is running out of time. As one veteran put it, right now it's crisis mode.

St. Johns County Veterans Council chair Bill Dudley was right.

“I doubt that we will see an answer today,” Dudley said.

Friday came and went with no word from the VA.

“It's a no-brainer. It's the best deal for the VA that they could possibly have offered to them and to not to accept it leaves the veterans and certainly leaves me just scratching my head,” Dudley said.

Despite the county administrator sending a letter to the VA a year ago explaining the time constraints, the county still has no response. For Dudley and thousands of other veterans, the silence is frustrating.

“We don't have an interim site, we don't have a permanent site and we got a lot of questions about what's going to happen with our health care,” Dudley said.

A county spokesperson said over the last couple days, the VA has opened up a bidding process with contractors for a temporary building. It is still unclear whether that building is here on that site or somewhere else. By March 31, the current VA building has to vacate.

The VA released this statement: “The Department of Veterans Affairs will continue with the current competitive procurement. The County is welcome to respond to VA’s ad for temporary space which was published on August 7, 2014, in Fed Biz Ops and it is open to all those meeting the VA’s requirements set forth in the advertisement.”

As of Monday, Aug. 11, the county still had not heard back from the VA about the building

- See more at: <http://www.actionnewsjax.com/news/news/local/st-johns-county-offers-va-building-has-yet-hear-ba/ngyH6/#sthash.IUZMXfSf.dpuf>



Faces of Freedom

I could not help but wonder, as I knelt down beside the upright granite headstone at St. Augustine National Cemetery this Memorial Day, what Marine Cpl. Earl Charles Greene looked like.

The Korean War veteran was only 20 years old when he was laid to rest in that historic and hallowed ground. I never met him -- he was interred more than 15 years before I was born -- but I imagined he looked a bit like his younger brother, a career Army man whom I know quite well. That's my Uncle Charles.

My eyes led me down the rows in the stone garden to the area directly under the flag pole. The crowd was assembling to remember those who had paid the ultimate sacrifice, and to have the names of those veterans who were recently departed read aloud.

I decided that morning I would begin working on my next book; a volume that would put faces with names and preserve the legacies of the many veterans in the First Coast area. I sat down with four men that day -- Pearl Harbor survivor Duane Reyelts, D-Day paratrooper Mario Patrino, and WWII veterans Ralph Crews and John Tinny -- and explained to them the concept behind my book.



Mario Patrino

I wanted to photograph the faces of some of our national treasures and publish a book, with the working title "Faces of Freedom", in 2016. Each defining portrait would be accompanied by text summarizing the subject's military career, and printed alongside a secondary photo that featured an artifact from their time in the service.

I wanted to photograph the faces of some of our national treasures and publish a book, with the working title "Faces of Freedom", in 2016. Each defining portrait would be accompanied by text summarizing the subject's military career, and printed alongside a secondary photo that featured an artifact from their time in the service.

Thankfully all four men agreed to meet with me and the book is beginning to take shape quite nicely, representing men and women from WWII through to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Each portrait is captured in high-resolution black and white. A large format print is then signed and inscribed by the subject and my intent is to have a local showing in an art gallery with the originals once the book is released. I also produce additional copies to give to each individual as a way of thanking them for their service and for granting me some of their time for this book endeavor.

What started with those four gentlemen in the cemetery quickly spread through the veteran community and on Facebook where I started a page to share the works and project with the public (<https://www.facebook.com/officialfacesoffreedombook>).

I currently have enough names and stories to carry me through October 2014 if I photograph one veteran per week, and I am always open to learning about other men and women who have served honorably and currently live in the First Coast area.

If you or someone you know fits in this scope please email me their name and a brief summary of their military career and I will reach out to them in the coming days and weeks to discuss further and begin the process of picking out the best artifact to photograph along with them!

I can be reached at thefacesoffreedom@gmail.com.

Respectfully, Mark Cubbedge



Bill Ingram



Veterans provide for comrades and continue to serve their country. By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (August 18, 2014) – It takes much more than a village to provide for veterans.

Have your doubts? Ask Tammy Shirley of the St. Johns County Veterans Service Office. Saturday was the culmination of a year's worth of work to pull off a successful stand down for the homeless veterans of St. Johns County.

"This is my first year doing it on my own," said Shirley. "Prior to this I worked with Heather Andrews who spearheaded the event for several years. She made it look easy"

This year's stand down at the Elks Lodge on Anastasia Island was a great success. About 30 veterans and 50 civilians were served. Most of those being served were single but there were several cases of husbands and wives. Many of the homeless were under 30 indicating the toll war has had on our young people.

Each person who came was met at the door by a volunteer. In many cases, that volunteer was a member of the Marine Corps League, Oldest City Detachment # 383. The volunteer escorted them through a number of stations to make sure that they were getting all the needed assistance available to them. This included county and federal offices. Veterans were brought to the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic table where a number of staff were available to get them into the medical system. Besides medical there were a number of other agencies including Legal Aid.

"We allowed the veterans in first," said Shirley. "In the back of the hall we had a myriad of G.I. surplus goods. "We had mats to put on the ground under the sleeping bags, mosquito netting, back packs of several sizes," continued Shirley, "There were many pairs of boots and tons of clothing for men and women." "After we processed the last veteran, we closed that section off and began with the civilians."

The Elks Lodge made the shower rooms available so people could clean up. Just before the showers were bags of toiletries, clean towels, and undergarments. Once through the showers was the line to get a haircut and the line was continuous.

"We could not have accomplished this task without the help of the many veteran organizations in St. Johns County," said Shirley. "I owe much to them, the Elks Lodge, and to the Veterans Council of St. Johns County for

being here for the homeless.”

“Being veterans, we are in a unique position,” said Bill Dudley, current chairman of the council, “of understanding the needs of other vets. Many can empathize, but few really know and understand.” “Our purpose, as a council, is to be of service to our veterans and veteran organizations. I believe we currently have 28 organizations represented in the council.”

“We also wish thank Two Men and a Truck for their help transporting the surplus goods,” continued Dudley, “and especially Leonardi Nursery for sending Brian and his forklift to unload the pallets. We could not have done it without him.”

After the drawing for special items came the food generously supplied by the Elks Lodge. The hot dogs and hamburgers were a hit as always. While all this was happening up front, in the back room the surplus items were gathered up, binned and made ready for a trip back to the VA to be shared at other stand downs in Florida.

Many times were heard the words “God Bless You for being here.”

“We do not do this for the glory,” said a veteran who wished to remain anonymous, “We do it for our brothers and sisters. This is what one does for family.”



Gidget the Wonderdog makes sure all is right with the world



L to r, Brian from Leonardi Nursery and council chairman Bill Dudley



The End



Joe McDermott (l) & Rick Rees of the SJC Veterans Service Office



Tammy Shirley of the SJC veterans Service Office draws tickets for the raffle



The CBOC crew



The Crew— Those who did the set up and breakdown



★★ *... the Friendly Post* ★★

STUDENTS MAY WIN UP TO \$5000

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391 and its Ladies Auxiliary in St. Augustine are proud to announce the theme for 2014-2015 Patriots Pen youth essay

competition: **"Why I Appreciate America's Veterans"**. Conducted nationwide, this VFW sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on democracy. Patriot's Pen is open to 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students enrolled in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Home-schooled students also are eligible. We invite you to join the more than 104,000 students who participated last year in this contest. The top 46 national winners all receive at least \$500. The first-place national award is currently \$5,000 plus an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the winner and a parent or guardian.

Students can ask a teacher or youth group leader to supervise their progress in the competition. Essays must be no less than 300 words and cannot exceed 400 words and should be submitted to the Post, along with the completed Patriot's Pen entry form no later than the November 1 deadline.

JUDGING CRITERIA:

Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points: You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively. Theme development is worth 35 points: Answer all relevant facts about the theme such as the who, what, where, when and why. Relate the theme to your own experiences. Clarity of ideas is worth 35 points: Write your essay in an easy-to-understand format. Leave your reader with a clear understanding of your explanation of the theme.

National Prizes include the various amounts listed below:

1st: \$5,000	7th: \$1,750
2nd: \$4,000	8-9th: \$1,500
3rd: \$3,500	10-11th: \$1,250
4th: \$2,750	12-13th: \$1,000
5th: \$2,500	14-15th: \$750
6th: \$2,000	16-46th: \$500

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by local VFW Posts. Post winners advance, one for every fifteen, to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The one first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW National competition. The winner from each Department (state) then competes for the national prizes. (Cash prizes are given out at each of the four levels). For information and to be sponsored by VFW 2391, please contact Gera Judge at 904-342-8634 or Debbie Tilley at 904-460-9345.

STUDENTS MAY WIN A \$30,000 Scholarship

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391 and its Ladies Auxiliary in St. Augustine are proud to announce the theme for 2014-2015 Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Scholarship contest : **"Why Veterans are Important to our Nation's History and Future"**. Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, more than 50,000 high school students compete for more than \$2.3 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording a broadcast script on an annual patriotic theme. Prizes and scholarships are awarded at the local, district, state and national level. Department (State) winners receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., March 1-5, 2014, to tour the city, meet our nation's leaders, be honored by the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary and receive their portion of \$152,000 in national awards, the top scholarship being \$30,000.

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12, who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions; or in an overseas U.S. military/civilian dependent school. Students should record their reading of the draft to a CD. The recording can be no shorter than 3 minutes and no longer than 5 minutes (plus or minus 5 seconds). Entries begin at the Post level. Once the student creates their essay and completes burning the audio version to a CD, they can submit their typed version, CD and the Voice of Democracy entry form to their local participating VFW Post by the November 1 deadline.

JUDGING CRITERIA:

Originality is worth 30 points: Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest. Content is worth 35 points: Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to the other. Delivery is worth 35 points: Speak in a clear and credible manner.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.

For information and to be sponsored by VFW 2391, please contact Gera Judge at 904-342-8634 or Debbie Tilley at 904-460-9345.



**Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391- 2013
winner Nicole Thatcher NROTC Nease
High School with Glen Tilley, then
Past Post 2391 Post Commander and
District Six Youth Program Chairman**



By **Brittany Jones**

Action News spoke with a veteran who said sharing his story brought back painful memories. Nearly 40 veterans in the Coquina Crossings neighborhood have been featured in a World War II and Vietnam documentaries in St. Johns County. But, only half of the veterans are still alive. Action News Brittany Jones spoke to Harry Manford who is one of the veterans who is still alive. "At first I had reservations of doing the documentary because I don't want to bring back some memories of what I been through that I don't care to go through again," said Manford. Manford said the experience was so gory he wouldn't share the story with his children. "It's tough to put your buddy on a helicopter who is shot up or either killed. It's tough," said Manford. But Manford agreed to share his story with former history teacher Michael Rothfeld. Rothfeld said after talking to veterans in his neighborhood, he realized they're getting older and may not be around for long. With the help of students from Flagler College and St. Johns County veterans council, Rothfeld has been able to put together a handful of documentaries. Rothfeld said funding the films has come from donations, which allowed them to give them out for free. Rothfeld has been working on the documentaries since 2007. The documentaries include World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Prisoners of War and currently working on K-9's for warriors. The stories are being shared in local schools, libraries and museums. "Our younger people need to understand the values of the country and honor and respect of those that do the fighting," said Manford. If you would like to donate to help fund the current documentary, contact the St. Johns Veterans Council. Rothfeld said the latest documentary will be completed this month and premiered in March.



The full interview can be seen at: <http://www.actionnewsjax.com/news/news/local/local-st-johns-county-man-creates-series-veteran-d/ngtqy/>

West Point Society remembers Major Dade's Command

By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (August 23, 2014) – "The "bright glitter of arms" and "melancholy wail of music" escorted "wagons covered with the stars and stripes containing all that was of the honored dead, to the spot appropriated for interment, the garden of St. Francis Barracks."



So read part of the article in the *St Augustine News*, the newspaper dated August 20, 1842.

August weather has changed little since August 15, 1842. At midmorning on Saturday last, the temperature was pushing the mid to high 80's, and the humidity was off the chart. The only saving grace was the light breeze wafting from across the river.

Regardless of the weather, the faithful re-enactors of the Seminole War Foundation and the Dade Battlefield Society donned the clothing and uniform styles of the time. They assembled on the parade ground of St. Francis Barracks for the 7th annual commemoration of the end of the Second Seminole War, and to honor all soldier, civilian and Seminole who suffered and perished.

Many who live in the St. Augustine area are aware of the three coquina pyramids along the south wall of the St. Francis Barracks garden, which was renamed the St. Augustine National Cemetery in 1881.

The remains of Dade's 107 member command and eventually a total of 1468 officers and men killed in the Second Seminole War were interred in vaults under three coquina stone pyramids participants of the Seminole Wars are buried there.

The Florida National Guard provided tents for the audience on the extreme south end of the parade ground and just east was located an exact replica of the 6 pound cannon used by Major Dade's column. At 10:00 a.m. the first of the many cannon volleys commenced announcing to the gathered that ceremonies were beginning.

The audience was greeted and welcomed on behalf of the Florida National Guard by Major Elizabeth Evans, a Year 2000 graduate of West Point. "Out of the 7 officers under Dade's command, 5 were West Point graduates including the first Commandant of Cadets, Captain George W. Gardner.

Evans, a member of the 20th anniversary class of the first females graduates of West Point (1980), spoke of David Moniac, the first Native American to graduate there. According to west-point.org, Moniac, who graduated July 1, 1822, was re-

turned to active military service as a Captain in the Mounted Creek Volunteers. There were 750 Creek Indians in the Regiment who wore white turbans to distinguish themselves from the enemy. Thirteen officers commanded the Mounted Regiment, including Captain Moniac, the only American Indian Officer.

On November 21, 1836, Major Moniac with his Mounted Creek Volunteers, the Florida Militia, and the Tennessee Volunteers moved into the foggy Wahoo Swamp where the Seminoles were massed in considerable force. They fought their way to the Withlacoohee River where Major Moniac was ordered to sound the depth of the water. When David Moniac entered the water, the Seminoles fired a deadly volley of musket fire, piercing his body with sixty-seven bullets and mortally wounding him.

According to Dade Battlefield Society, the records show Major Francis L. Dade spoke the following words of encouragement to 107 cold, tired soldiers in a pine forest on the morning of December 28, 1835. "Have a good heart; our difficulties and dangers are over now, and as soon as we arrive at Fort King you'll have three days to rest and keep Christmas gaily."

Within eight hours, only three soldiers would survive the battle that marked the beginning of the Second Seminole War.

According to historian Gregory Moore, Lt. Col., USA, Ret., the three men made their painstaking way to Fort Brooke. One died upon reaching the gate and one died of wounds, leaving one man alive from Dade's command.

The ceremonies concluded with a solemn march, counted by the sound of drums, along the original path to the "garden," the ceremonial laying of the wreath, words by dignitaries, the sounding of taps and a final cannon volley.

###

Photo credit Michael Isam



Retiring the Colors



Funeral Procession



Solitary Drum



Flag detail



Laying the Wreath

From Ted Pappas, Communications Committee,
St. Augustine 450th Military Commemoration Committee

Dade Cannon

The West Point Society of North Florida held its annual ceremony commemorating the end of the Florida Indian Wars and remembering those who perished in them at the National Cemetery in St. Augustine. On the 15 of August 1842 Major Dade and his command were laid to rest in three pyramids.



As part of the ceremony a exact replica of the 6 pounder cannon that was used by the American troops was fired as part of the ceremony. I attempted to catch the muzzle flash of the cannon on the five prior shots. The normal procedure for firing the cannon consisted of the crew loading the cannon and the officer giving the Ready --- Fire Command, the crew would than fire the cannon. On all prior firings I would trip the shutter at the Fire Command and would miss the flash. On the last shot I decided to hold the shutter down at the Ready Command. For some reason the officer hesitated after the Ready command, in the mean time I was holding down the shutter and firing away. I was afraid that the 36 MB images was going to fill the buffer and the camera would lock up. He finally gave the command to Fire. I did not see any flash and was convinced I had missed again. Several hours later I was viewing the days shooting on the camera monitor and was shocked to see this image. From the Ready Command until the cannon was fired I shot a total of 17 continuously frames, the flash was on the 16th.

Skill will never replace Dumb Luck

Veterans Treatment Court

The article was written by Howard McGillin, Colonel, US Army JAGC (Ret). The VTC team consists of Col Howard McGillin; Charlotte Matthews, LCSW, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator; and Bill Dudley.



Early this summer, I was privileged to attend a session of the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) presided over by Judge David Beck in Volusia County Florida. VTC is an innovative program that attempts to replace retribution and punishment with rehabilitation and treatment for justice involved veterans. It is not a free pass for a veteran. The St. Johns County Veterans Council has been working to develop a similar program in our county.

VTC had its origin in Buffalo New York. After the commencement of hostilities in our current Gulf conflicts, Judge Robert Russell recognized that he was starting to see veterans come to his court there were suffering from physical and psychological injuries sustained in combat. Notably, justice involved veterans were experiencing symptoms and problems related to posttraumatic stress disorder, dramatic brain injury and other psychological and physiological problems. These are manifesting themselves in justice involved veterans committing acts of domestic violence, social disobedience, substance abuse crimes, and similar relatively small level crimes. Judge Russell recognized that these veterans might benefit from treatment rather than traditional punishment.

VTC is related to two other programs that are currently being run in our state and elsewhere in the nation - drug treatment courts and teen courts. The focus of these alternative court programs is on treatment and rehabilitation rather than retribution and punishment. However, it has to be emphasized that none of these programs amount to a free pass for the offender. All of these programs require that the offender admit culpability for the wrongdoing. In return for this admission of culpability, and in recognition of the justice involved veteran's commitment to participate in treatment modalities with the VA and other medical providers, and to work towards rehabilitation and self-improvement, the programs is made available as an alternative to traditional adjudication for sentencing.

VTC is, in many ways, a more difficult program to navigate than either drug court or teen court. As it exists currently in Volusia County, VTC is a rigorous program of supervised activity by the veteran. These activities include, but are certainly not limited to, active participation in medical and psychological treatment administered by the US Department of Veterans Affairs and other social welfare agencies, frequent check-in's with a probation officer, active participation in community or

veteran service, substance abuse testing and other conditions. In addition, the participants in veterans treatment court are expected to attend regular court sessions of the VTC. The purpose of these court sessions is to have a review of their case and an opportunity to fine tune their treatment program

The session of VTC that I observed in Volusia County involved offenders whose offenses ranged from driving under the influence to disorderly conduct and minor level domestic violence. In order to be considered for VTC, each of the offenders had to both volunteer to participate in the VTC program and had to be accepted into the program by the judge, the state attorney and the defense counsel representing them. In addition to those participants, VTC also included active participation by veterans groups, community service agencies, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, and the probation and post trial services office of the court. Finally, the participation and active engagement by the clerk of court and the Sheriff's office were also critical portions of the team involved in the veterans treatment court.

A typical session of VTC begins with a pre-coordinating meeting that is open to all participants, except for the justice involved veteran. This meeting includes the presiding judge, representatives of the Sheriff's office, US Department of Veterans Affairs, the pre-and post trial services office, the state attorney's office, the public defender or private defense counsel, and the veterans service organizations. This pre-meeting was a candid and open discussion of the justice involved veteran's participation in the program, the projected sentence or pretrial diversion program that they were engaged in, and a candid assessment of whether the veteran was going to be successful in the program. Since this is a court annexed meeting, all parties need to be present to engage in this discussion and avoid the problem of ex parte communication with the court. To that end, the public defender, state attorney and members of the private defense bar were invited to attend the meeting. While this is not a formal hearing, and no transcript is recorded, it is a necessary and critical adjunct to the veterans treatment court program.

The actual session of VTC presided over by Judge David Beck, proceeded much as a normal court session with several significant exceptions. The first obvious exception was the Judge Beck asked everyone to introduce themselves at the beginning of court. It was gratifying to see how many of the participants in the veterans court, were either veterans themselves, such as members of the probation staff, the Sheriff's office and court clerk staff and Judge Beck himself, or had family members who were veterans. After introductions the judge gave a brief discussion to all the participants of the anticipated plan for the day.

In order to minimize the cost to veterans, the first cases heard were those in-

volving private (paid) defense counsel. Since, as Abe Lincoln observed, "a lawyer's time is his stock in trade," the judge handled cases involving private counsel first so that the veteran would not bear any extraordinary cost of having his or her lawyer in the court for a long time waiting to be heard on their case.

The judge then handled cases involving incarcerated veterans. These veterans, who were "guests of honor of the Volusia County's Sheriff" were brought to the front of the court. Their cases were heard and in appropriate cases they were either admitted to the VTC program, were readmitted to the program, or their adjudication was handled as in a standard court session. One of the reasons for having incarcerated members present, was partially as an object lesson for the other members participating in the court. While the judge in the VTC model engages in a more positive discussion with some participants, to encourage them to continue their active participation in the court, the judge also represents the hand of justice. In some cases, the object lesson was necessary both the offender in question and for the general public.

I was also fortunate to be present in this court on the day of the first graduation from VTC. The veteran in question had been arrested for a substance abuse related offense. However in the six months that he had participated in the veterans treatment court, he had become a model citizen. In addition to attending all of the treatment prescribed by the US Department of Veterans Affairs, he had also engaged in substantial community service. This particular veteran served much of his community service performing acts of charity and service to other veterans. In fact he exceeded the court mandated number of hours and was now a member of the local Veterans' Honor Guard. He appeared in court in uniform looking very STRAC! The judge publically reviewed his treatment record, obtained recommendations from probation, the state attorney, the Department of Veterans Affairs and heard the statement of the veteran. At the end of the session, the judge came down from the bench and presented the veteran with a coin as a token of graduation from the VTC.

One essential component of VTC in other jurisdictions currently missing from Volusia that we will be looking to add in St. Johns County is the addition of Veteran mentors. The concept is to provide a fellow veteran to serve as a mentor to the justice involved veteran. Their responsibility will be like that of a battle buddy. We will be looking for volunteers and will be providing training to these mentors when the program commences in St. Johns.

Conceptually, we have had meetings with the Sheriff, the State Attorney, the Public Defender, the US Department of Veterans Affairs and the judiciary to get this program underway. We are working to formalize the procedures and make this available in St. Johns in appropriate cases. We will provide updates to the Council as this initiative progresses.



FIVE STAR VETERANS CENTER

ARMY * MARINES * NAVY * COAST GUARD * AIR FORCE

The St. Johns County Veterans Council invites all to attend our next meeting. It will be on Thursday August 28th. 7 pm at the St. Augustine Elks Lodge 829, 1420 A1A S. St. Augustine.

The Veterans Council is pleased to have as its guest, Len Loving, COL, USMC, ret. and CEO tor of the 5 Star Veterans Center.

Colonel Francis L. “Len” Loving, USMC (Ret)

A native of Richmond, Virginia, Colonel Loving was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1960. Attaining the rank of Colonel of Marines, following 30 years of service with distinction as a Marine Infantry Officer. Colonel Loving served several tours of duty in the Republic of Vietnam during that war and the recipient of several military decorations for valor to include the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star of Valor.



Len Loving, COL, USMC, Ret.

Prior to retirement in 1989 Colonel Loving established in 1986 the Marine Corps Blount Island Command which has become a major economic engine of over two billion dollars in the Northeast Florida Region. The Command employs over 800 high skilled salary positions and the source of many large and small contracts for goods and services within the Region.

Colonel Loving accomplished several industry high lights following release from active duty to include serving as the Northeast Regional Director for the State of Florida’s Office of the Comptroller, Department of Banking and Finance with regulatory responsibility for all licenses in 18 counties for 8 years. Late, he served as the Advisor to The President of The Florida

Senate on military issues for a statewide project to assess the vulnerabilities of the all of the national military organizations, activities, commands and locations to the impending round of Base Realignment and Closure.



Since 2011 Col. Loving continues to serve our military and veterans as the Chief Executive Officer of the Five STAR Veterans Center, a transitional center for homeless veterans suffering from PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury.



Greater Jacksonville Area USO

Bob Ross will be at the September 25th Veterans Council meeting to speak about the USO, please join us in greeting him

Mr. Bob Ross is the Development Director for Greater Jacksonville Florida Area USO. Bob is a retired 30-year Navy Command Master Chief Petty Officer who has deployed during his career aboard seven different Aircraft Carriers, a Guided Missile Cruiser and various Staffs to most every part of the globe in support of our country's numerous conflicts in Lebanon, Bosnia and throughout the Middle East in support of the War on Terrorism. Bob joined the Navy immediately out of High School in 1976 and retired as mandated by Congress 30 years later in 2006.

Bob has been married to his high school sweetheart, Kim, for over 35 years. They are the proud parents of four children, the two youngest currently serving on active duty in our Armed Forces; his youngest and only daughter a LT, U.S. Navy Dental Corps and third son a Captain in the U.S. Air Force. Bob's other two sons; number 2 an 8 year Navy Veteran and current Jacksonville Florida Sheriff and his oldest son a General Manager in Arlington, TX. They are also the proud grandparents of four granddaughters: Kathryn, Paisley, Olive and Mya.

Bob is honored and privileged to continue serving our troops in his capacity with the Greater Jacksonville Area USO.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

ST. AUGUSTINE NATIONAL CEMETERY CAMPAIGN

All Veterans & Veterans Organizations



The St. Johns County Veterans Council is proud to announce that the campaign to fill “our” St. Augustine National Cemetery with holiday wreaths is underway. We are dedicated to placing a wreath at each gravesite.

YOUR HELP is needed. We ask that your organization begin immediately to collect donations to purchase wreaths.

Wreaths are \$15.00 each. If you purchase two (2) wreaths we receive and additional wreath free (3 for 2).

Checks can be written in any amount (\$100, \$200 etc.)

Please contact your friends and neighbors as well as your organizations and ask them to participate as well.

HOW:

Make checks payable to: Wreaths Across America

Send to: St. Johns County Veterans Council, P.O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, Florida 32085-2117

Contacts: Co-chair: Ray Quinn, 904.540.1630 Co-Chair Judy Davis, 904.797.2686



From the Sonny's Fundraiser

September 21, 2014

Time 2:00 to 5:00

***The Friends of Washington Oaks "Music in the Park Series"
Concert "Honoring America's Military Hero's"
Washington Oaks Gardens State Park.***



On September 21st 2014 the Friends of Washington Oaks Gardens are honoring our military heroes with a Music in the Park event.

The Friends of Washington Oaks are inviting active duty, veterans, retirees, their family members or friends to share their experiences with the community, by submitting their stories and if possible a photo of their time in the military.

We will be choosing an individual representing each service branch to come up on the stage and tell their story to all those attending.

Concert performance by the Navy Band Southeast "Brass Band"

Presentations by our Military Heroes

Exhibit of essays and images of our Military Heroes

Exhibit of United States Coast Guard 25' Defender Boat

Presentation of Colors by JROTC or Sea Cadets

Kid friendly activities

Hamburgers, Hotdogs, Snacks, water and soda will be available for purchase, from the United States Coast Guard Northeast Florida Chief Petty Officers Association. 100% of all proceeds from these sales benefits the NEFLCPOA

Regular park entrance fees will apply the day of the show. Reservations are not required

For submissions or questions contact Friends of Washington Oaks Gardens representative Karen Turowski at 386-569-8412 or email WashOaksEvents@att.net

Helping Women Veterans Find the Help They Need

by Hans Petersen, VA Staff Writer

Thursday, August 14, 2014

“I think the benefit of having a call center that focuses on women Veterans is that we are letting the women who served our country know we recognize that they are out there and we are here to serve them now,” according to Tamatha Lee, Women Veterans Call Center telephone agent.

VA’s Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC) has greatly expanded VA’s outreach to women Veterans since it first began making calls to women Veterans by adding an incoming line in April of 2013. The incoming Women Veterans Call Center line—1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)— receives and responds to questions about available VA services and resources from women Veterans, their families and caregivers across the nation.

Since its launch in April of 2013, the WVCC has received more than 11,000 incoming calls and made nearly 130,000 outbound calls, successfully reaching 76,000 women Veterans. In addition, the WVCC mailed over 10,000 packets of information to women Veterans at their request.

[Here’s one more example of the formidable effectiveness of the service](#)

“A few weeks into making calls, I spoke with a woman Veteran who was ecstatic to hear from someone from the VA. She told us she was about to become homeless and did not know where to turn. I got her connected to the Homeless hotline and I also sent a referral to the Women Veteran Program Manager (WVPM) located at the VA closest to her. Within a few hours I heard back from the WVPM. “She had already made contact with the woman Veteran and had her connected with homeless services at the facility. In addition, the woman Veteran was given an appointment for the next day with a primary care physician. It is so nice to see the entire VA coming together to assist the Veteran” as recounted by Samantha Williams, telephone agent.

[Nearly 400,000 women Veterans receive VA health care](#)

The number of [women using VA health care](#) has more than doubled, from nearly 160,000 in 2000 to more than 390,000 in 2013. Women now make up 15 percent of active duty and 18 percent of Guard/Reserve service members. The population of women Veterans using VA benefits including health care is growing rapidly and is expected to double again in the next decade.

Despite this rapid growth, women constitute only six percent of VA’s total patient population. VA has also found that women Veterans underutilize VA care, largely due to a lack of knowledge about VA benefits and available services. In response, an outbound Call Center was established in 2011 to contact women Veterans and to let them know about the services they have earned and are entitled



Call Center was established in 2011 to let women Veterans know about the services they are entitled to.

to.

VA wants to encourage more women Veterans to try VA health care and let them know that they are welcome in VA centers around the country.

Jill Garrison, a telephone agent, shares a call she had.

“Last evening, a woman Veteran returned a voice message left for her from earlier in the day. We had called her to follow-up on a call we had made to her last month. The Veteran reported that she had indeed received the package of information we had mailed her and the information was very informative.

“She also shared that during the initial call we made to her, we walked her through how to complete the 10-10EZ form. She said she completed the form and is now receiving care from the VA. She stated that she had her first medical appointment at the VA last week. She thanked us. I said you are welcome and that is why we are here.”

[A single avenue for women Veterans to find the help they need](#)

“The Women Veterans Call Center is aimed at increasing women Veterans’ knowledge of VA services and benefits. Many women Veterans do not know that they may indeed be eligible for VA benefits. The Call Center provides a single avenue for women Veterans to find the help they need,” said Krista Stephenson, Army Veteran and Women Veterans Call Center Director.

The Women Veterans Call Center is staffed by knowledgeable VA employees who provide information about benefits, eligibility, and services, including health care services for women Veterans. Women Veteran callers are linked to information about claims, education and health care, VA cemeteries and survivors’ benefits.

The Call Center staff is trained to answer basic questions and provide referrals to the appropriate people to answer the women’s questions. If there is an urgent matter, the Women Veterans Call Center connects the caller with the crisis line or homeless call center.

In addition to linking women Veterans to information, the Call Center makes direct referrals to WVPM located at [every VA medical center](#). The Women Veteran Program Manager helps the woman Veteran navigate services.

- See more at: <http://www.va.gov/health/newsfeatures/2014/August/Helping-Women-Veterans-Find-the-Help-They-Need.asp#sthash.bGq5YWNA.dpuf>





ALL ABOARD THE USS NEW YORK!

Fourteen members of the St Augustine- Palm Coast Council of the Navy League of the United States (SAPCNL) toured USS NEW YORK (LPD-21) on July 30 at Naval Station Mayport.

The visit was part of the Navy League’s ongoing mission to expose as its members to Navy activities here in Northeast Florida. For most participants, it was their first time onboard a ship of this type.

“The SAN ANTONIO class represents a generational leap forward for the Navy in terms of amphibious capability,” said CAPT (Ret) Ian Pollitt, a former Surface Warfare Officer and current member of the SANC Navy League. “To get the chance to go aboard, meet with some of her crew, and see how these revolutionary new technologies are being fielded at sea was a real treat.”



USS NEW YORK carries 7.5 tons of World Trade Center steel in her bows.

“This is a great way to carry forward the memory of all those who lost their lives on that day,” noted the ship’s Commanding Officer, CAPT Chris Brunett.

USS NEW YORK recently shifted her homeport to Mayport, and is completing a maintenance period this summer in preparation for her second overseas deployment, later this year.

For more information on the St. Augustine-Palm Coast Council of the Navy League of the United States contact President Mike Zollar by email MIKZOL8671@att.net or call 904-460-1251. Also visit www.staugustinenavyleague.org

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Mission Statement: *The St. Augustine- Palm Coast Council of the Navy League of the United States is a civilian organization whose mission is to: Support the objectives of the National navy League of the United States and selected active duty Maritime Military units within our reach in the St. Augustine area and to support local High School JROTC programs.*

A Sailor Once submitted by Gene Toffolo, USN, ret.

*** I liked standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe. The ship beneath me feeling like a living thing as her engines drove her swiftly through the sea.



*** I liked the sounds of the Navy - the piercing thrill of the boatswains pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, the harsh squawk of the 1MC, and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

*** I liked Navy vessels -- nervous darting destroyers, plodding fleet auxiliaries and amphibs, sleek submarines and steady solid aircraft carriers.

*** I liked the proud names of Navy ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea, Antietam, Valley Forge - memorials of great battles won and tribulations overcome.

*** I liked the lean angular names of Navy "tin-cans" and escorts - Barney, Dahlgren, Mullinix, McCloy, Damato, Leftwich, Mills - mementos of heroes who went before us and the others - San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles, St. Paul, Chicago - named for our cities.

*** My ships Washoe County, Windham County, Terrell County, Saratoga, Dale, and Richmond K Turner. Also don't forget Porter and William D Porter.

*** I liked the tempo of a Navy band blaring through the topside speakers as we pulled away from the oiler after refueling at sea.

*** I liked Liberty Call and the spicy scent of a foreign port.

*** I even liked the never-ending paperwork and all-hands working parties as my ship filled herself with the multitude of supplies, both critical and mundane in order to cut ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there was water to float her.

*** I liked sailors, officers and enlisted men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trusted and depended on them as they trusted and depended on me - for professional competence, for comradeship, for strength and courage. In a word, they were "shipmates"; then and forever.

*** I liked the surge of adventure in my heart, when the word was passed: "Now set the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port," and I liked the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pier side.

*** The work was hard and dangerous; the going rough at times; the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of the sea was ever present.

*** I liked the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flitted across the wave tops and sunset gave way to night.

*** I liked the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead and range lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and joined with the mirror of stars overhead. And I liked drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that told me that my ship was alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch would keep me safe.

*** I liked quiet mid watches with the aroma of strong coffee – the lifeblood of the Navy permeating everywhere.

*** And I liked hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed kept all hands on a razor edge of alertness.

*** I liked the sudden electricity of "General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations," followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transformed herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war - ready for anything.

*** And I liked the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

*** I liked the traditions of the Navy and the men and women who made them. I liked the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones and Burke. A sailor could find much in the Navy: Comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent could find adulthood.

*** In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods – the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and Chief's quarters and mess decks.

*** Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their Navy days, when the seas belonged to them and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

*** Remembering this, they will stand taller and say, **"I WAS A SAILOR ONCE. I WAS A PART OF THE NAVY, AND THE NAVY WILL ALWAYS BE A PART OF ME."**

I have stood on the bridge many times or on the wing just outside the bridge watching gunnery practice or at General Quarters. Once during gunnery operations, I recall, the mail helicopter coming in and landing. In his Captains Chair on the bridge he observed all of this. He jumped out of his Chair and ordered the OD to get that pilot up to the bridge immediately. The Captain really laid into that pilot for coming in and landing during gunnery practice. Next he directed his attention to flight operations. Needless to say, that incident never occurred again!

The ships' primary defense system was a series of Vietnam era gun tubs housing dual, radar controlled 3"/50s. This was a long respected and proven weapons system in Naval gunnery. We were told that for air defense the guns were good for a closing target of up to 550 knots and that the radar system would not function for an opening target, that would be manual sighting if used. Depending on the type of ammunition fired we could fire anti-aircraft, surface, or ship to shore. Anti-aircraft was the primary function.



The ammunition looked almost like a giant bullet. Anti-aircraft could be armed with expanding rod, or radar proximity fuses. Our gun crews were generally quite effective with their AA firing. However, I would not have wanted to be in the crew of the aircraft towing the sleeves or targets! On surface to surface they were also good. Often the targets would be on barges towed by another Naval ship. Ship to shore bombardment armed with high explosive was another story. More than once I would observe them firing for the land based target and fire too high missing the whole damn island!

The above photo shows the ammunition very well. The mount is very similar to the one that I trained on, however it does not appear to be a radar controlled system as I do not see the radar dish mounted immediately above the weapon.

The Gunners Mates always kept the weapons systems "shipshape" and ready to go at a moment's notice should General Quarters sound. Probably the best cared for metal on the ship was the gun barrels. I would watch them remove old coatings right down to bare steel on the gun barrels. The Gunners Mates would run chains around the gun barrel back and forth until all previous coatings was completely removed and new applications would start from the bare steel up. The Navy has several rates for which their skills and training has little or no use in the civilian world. Although these Gun-

ners Mates are highly skilled and respected as essential on all Navy Combat Ships throughout all of America's conflicts they must realize this is strictly a military rate. This is not the case with the newer rates involving missile technologies.

It is shipboard Navy tradition to cross train for combat conditions. In case someone is injured or killed, you may have to step in and fill that job, especially in the event of fire. My time finally came for gunnery training. I reported to the forward gun tub as ordered. The Gunners Mates give you one of those "fresh meat" looks as they begin to go over the system and respective duties involved. I look up at the radar disk, it is about the size of a very large trash can lid. In the middle the transducer is moving around looking for a target. I had always liked to watch this from the safety of the bridge. The radar would really search, and you could tell the instant it locked onto something. The transducer would "boing" and lock on, no longer target searching.

The gun barrels above my head were constantly moving, but usually just slightly. The radar, sync/servo system was constantly adjusting target lock-on for its closing course, and the rocking of the ship due to the ever changing ship speed and sea state. I was asked if I wanted ear protection, sure I replied. Like everyone else of that time I was given cotton to roll up and stuff into my ears. (Is that why my ears are ringing today?) We were going to fire AA, so I knew to expect the gun to fire about every 6 seconds or faster.

I looked up again as the fixed ammunition loading was in progress. Closing target locked on. The end of the gun barrels seemed to be constantly adjusting with movement of about two inches. After firing the large empty brass shell would kick out of the gun at the bottom of the weapon and into the gun tub so everyone was clear. Everyone was briefed and at their station and the long anticipated order came to commence firing. I am here to write this account now because being naïve, I did not have a heart attack from what was about to happen.

On rare occasions the fixed ammunition, like a hand gun, will misfire or not detonate. That was the case with the very first round of my gunnery training. The round failed to detonate and the live round kicked out into the gun tub. Before I could even comprehend what had happened, a Gunners Mate was screaming "Live Round" grabbed it up and heaved the round overboard. It fell harmlessly into the deep blue, and never ignited.

When I fully comprehended what had just occurred it was too late to even soil my pants. Gunnery training ended early that session, but it is one of those events that you never will forget, even fifty years later.

Sponsor 2014

The Ride Home, Inc.

3818 Litchfield Loop
Lake Wales, FL 33859



TheRideHome.com

Phone: 863-324-7268

email: info@theridehome.com

The RIDE HOME, a National POW/MIA Recognition Day event, takes place in conjunction with the Presidential Proclamation for National POW/MIA Recognition Day. This is traditionally held on the third Friday of every September. The Ride Home weekend pays tribute to former Prisoners of War and to the family representatives of our Missing in Action.

We are offering you the opportunity to be an important part of this weekend, to sponsor a former Prisoner of War and/or MIA family member. Invited honorees include former Prisoners of War and Family representatives of those still Missing in Action from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War I & II and including Iraq and Afghanistan. A sponsorship of \$350 will pay for one POW and guest or one representative and guest of a MIA family's lodging, meals and on-location transportation. To bring this opportunity to its emotional peak, we encourage you to attend. By joining us in Americus/Andersonville Georgia, you will have the honor of meeting these true American Hero's, hearing their amazing stories of survival first hand, laugh out loud and even break bread with them.

Please, complete the form below and mail it with your check payable to The Ride Home, Inc. or go to our website—www.theridehome.com and click on the Pay Pal button to use your credit or debit card. Sponsors giving \$350 or more will receive a commemorative Ride Home t-shirt, patch, sponsor bar and pin.

Thank you for your support and we hope to see you in Americus/Andersonville in September.

Until they all come home.....

Detach and send to: "The Ride Home"

Enclosed is my check for; _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ \$350 _____ Other

Include t-shirt size here for donations of \$350 or more _____

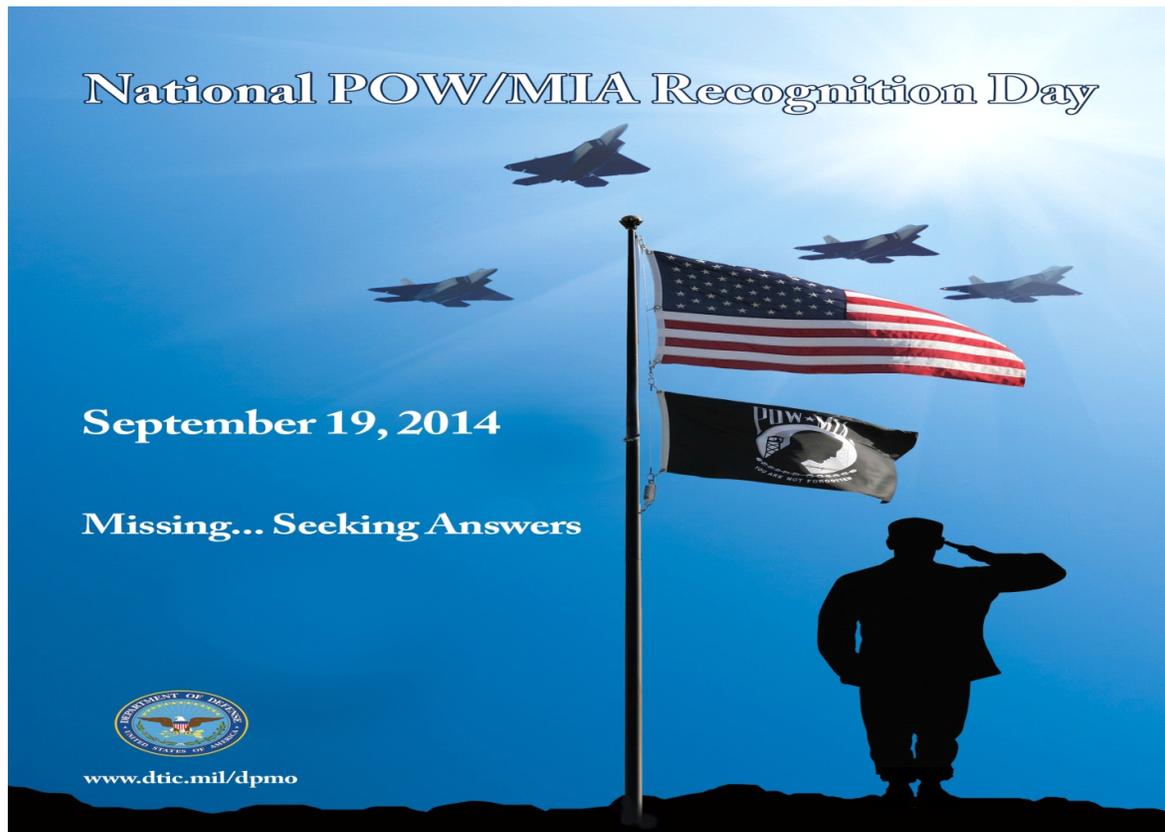
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Make Check to: The Ride Home, Inc., 3818 Litchfield Loop, Lake Wales, FL 33859

THE CORPORATION'S FLORIDA CHARITABLE SOLICITATION REGISTRATION NUMBER IS CH38670. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL STATE REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800 435 7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. THE CORPORATION DOES NOT HAVE A PROFESSIONAL SOLICITOR.



It takes many people and organizations pulling together to make **The Ride Home** a success and we need your HELP! We ask you reach out to all your business friends and acquaintances asking for an advertising trinket that they may use for promotional purposes for their business. Explain that you want to give their promo product to true American heroes at The Ride Home Recognition tribute. They have the opportunity to put their name/product into the hands of some of the bravest military men and women that have ever served.

What are we looking for – quantity 225

Patriotic pins, travel size first-aid kits, manicure sets, hand sanitizer, pocket calendars, USB drives, paper pads, key chains, bottle openers, do-rags, pocket sewing kits, nuts, mini-flashlights, small flags, cookies, crackers, nuts, mints and individually wrapped hard candies - please no chocolate or gum.

Cash donations welcomed to purchase items not donated. No amount too small.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. I appreciate your time and thank you in advance for your continued support Thanks Kat :)

Go to www.theridehome.com to see prior year's testimonials and photos

Kat Mc, Board Member

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Until they all come home....

THE CORPORATION'S FLORIDA CHARITABLE SOLICITATION REGISTRATION NUMBER IS CH38670. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL STATE REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800 435 7352

A Public Service Announcement

-

Class Action Against USAA Relating To Failure To Pay Sales Tax On Covered Claims

A class action has been filed against USAA automobile insurance companies alleging that USAA has improperly withheld sales tax from military men and women who have made auto insurance claims for their totaled vehicles. The lawsuit alleges that USAA improperly withheld up to 6% of the insured vehicle cost, which on a \$10,000 vehicle can be as high as \$600 per person. Documents filed with the federal court show that USAA withheld sales tax from as much as 75% of policy holders who made claims for totaled vehicles in a one year period. The same documents show that the withheld sales tax at issue in the lawsuit may total over \$17 million. The lawsuit is in federal court and styled *Chantal Bastian v. United Services Automobile Association, USAA Casualty Insurance Company, Garrison Property and Casualty Insurance Company, and USAA General Indemnity Company*, No. 3:13-cv-01454, Middle District of Florida, Jacksonville Division. The federal court denied without prejudice USAA's motion to dismiss the lawsuit and the lawsuit is proceeding. **For information, you can contact attorney Tracy Markham at 904-794-7005 or tmarkhamlaw@gmail.com.**

For several years, D.A.V. FI Chapter 6 has furnished the passenger vans for the delivery of Veterans between the St. Augustine Clinic and the Gainesville, V.A. Hospital, and back, Monday – Friday. The Van departs the Clinic every weekday at 0600. Phone (904) 209-3710 to schedule a ride.

Drivers furnished by the COA are:

**Monday – Lonnie Woodard;
Tuesday – Jack LaLonde
Wednesday – Floyd Bubba;
Thursday – Bob Garlander
Friday – Robert “Butch” Harrison**





"We take care of each other, but we know when to find help, too."

Attend our free workshop for tips and advice to help you better care for your loved one and yourself.

ARE YOU A VETERAN'S CAREGIVER? YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

As more Northeast Florida veterans require full-time care, family caregivers should understand their special needs, and where they can find help—for themselves and their loved ones.

At our workshop, you'll hear from professional speakers on a variety of caregiving topics. You'll also meet fellow caregivers, share stories and build friendships.

Along with a complimentary light breakfast and lunch, you'll hear presentations covering topics such as:

- Wounded Warriors: Their Last Battle
- Resources Through the VA
- The VA Caregiver Support Program
- Caring for the Caregiver
- Loving and Honoring our Warriors

**FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 12, 2014**

Caring for the Veteran Caregiver
Community Hospice of Northeast Florida
Charles M. Neviasser Educational Institute
Building 100
4266 Sunbeam Road • Jacksonville, FL 32257

**Registration at 8:30 a.m.
Program 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

Registration is free. To register, call **904.407.6572**.
To request complimentary respite care for your loved one, call Shannon Vasko from Aging True at **904.807.1318** by Friday, August 29.

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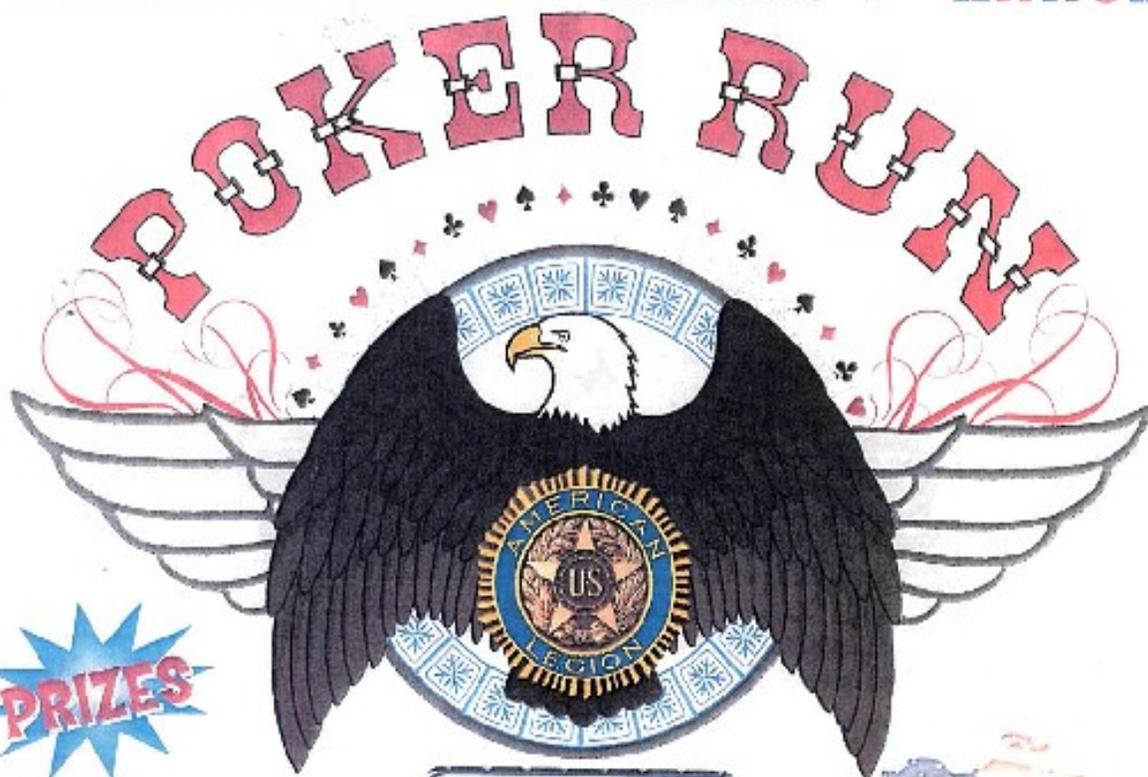
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*** SEPTEMBER 27TH 2014 ***
AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS 7TH ANNUAL



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LIABILITY: In consideration of the acceptance of the right to participate, entrants and participants, by execution of this entry form, release and discharge The American Legion, Department of Florida, Inc., The American Legion Posts, The American Legion Riders, Five S.T.A.R. Veterans Center and anyone else connected with the management of presentation of the 7th Annual Fundraising Event Poker Run from any causes whatsoever that may be suffered by any entrant to his/her person or property.

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- \$20.00 Non-Active Duty Driver**..... + \$ _____
- \$10.00 x Number of Passengers #** _____ + \$ _____
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- = TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED**..... \$ _____

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 Colonel, US Army (Retired)
 Attorney and Civil Mediator

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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



Ray Quinn, SGM, USA, ret. at COA
Memorial Day Ceremony

5starveteranscenter.org

*"The Five STAR Veterans Center believes it is now our turn for the ultimate call to duty... that of giving back to this great nation by serving veterans in need, and by defending the promise that is America."
Jacksonville, FL*

**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

**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, Assistant VSO*

The locally produced *Vietnam documentary, Service, Sacrifice and Courage* has received **296,528** views to date on YouTube.

You can view part of it at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8Cs6Th7Vnc>



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.

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.