

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

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Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld



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Message from the Chairman



Inside this Issue

	page
New VSO Location	2
Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home	3
Memorial Day at Jax National Cemetery	4
Memorial Day at Jax National Cemetery	4
The "Thank You Lady"	6
Nam Vets speak to High School students	7
Seeking WW II Airmen from European theater	10
St Aug VVA renames Chapter	11
First Militia/ AUSA Chapter	12
St. Francis Barracks thru History	15
Battle of Midway Dinner	18
Missing in America Project postpones	19
DAV Ch. 6 Installs new officers	19
From Steve Murray, FDVA	20
Vilano Beach VFW's new Ladies Aux.	22
Leo C Chase plaque	23
USS Indianapolis Re-Union	24
Vets 4 Vets Gathering	25
Vilano Beach VFW 12142	30

Fellow Veterans, Our Memorial Day services on May 23 at Jacksonville National Cemetery and May 25 at St. Augustine National Cemetery were both well attended. Jacksonville moved their ceremony forward 2 days to deconflict the event with the ceremony at the Veterans Wall on Monday in downtown Jacksonville which has been a problem for the past several years. It proved to be a correct decision as the turnout on Saturday was very large.

On Monday, May 25, the turnout for the St. Augustine Memorial Day service was in the hundreds. I would like to thank all the Veterans organizations who were there to carry the colors for their Veterans groups.

Following the Memorial Day services at the St. Augustine National Cemetery, a ceremony was held downtown in the Plaza honoring our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with the placing of a plaque on the Plaza War Memorial. This was a very touching ceremony as 4 of our local deceased veterans were honored who gave their life in defense of our nation.

A salute to our local MOAA An-

cient City Chapter for their very successful 2015 MOAA Convention held recently at the Renaissance Resort Hotel. By all reports, it was well attended and highly successful. Well done, MOAA members.

On Wednesday, May 27, a Veterans Celebration honoring our Vietnam veterans was held at Ponte Vedra High School. This program had been in the planning stages for many months and was the culmination of a desire our editor of the Patriot Reader, Michael Rothfeld has had of bringing Veterans stories to the students in our local schools. By any measure, this program was a huge success. Students from 4 local high schools were given the video and documentary that was produced a couple of years ago by Michael's organization, FVPPI and the Veterans Council. Wednesday's program consisted of a panel of 5 Vietnam Veterans who shared their experiences during tours in Vietnam and answered the student's questions they had prepared from viewing the Vietnam video. The panel consisted of Tom Waskovich, US Army, Jay Morris, US Army Aviation, Blair Craig, US Army, Fred Dupont,

USMC, and Joseph Mc Dermott, US Army and our keynote speaker, BGen Richard Capps. The questions were well thought out by the students and the responses by the panelists were very touching as they recalled their personal experiences. A big Bravo Zulu to the veterans and students who participated in Wednesday's program. They did an outstanding job of highlighting this period in our nation's history that has been so factually misreported over the years. I especially want to thank Travis Brown and Michael Rothfeld for producing this program and to Dr. Joe Joyner and the St. Johns County School District for hosting the program at one of the local high schools.

Don't forget our upcoming Battle of Midway Commemorative Dinner on June 13 at the Renaissance Resort Hotel at World Golf Village. There are still tickets available.

Bill Dudley
Chairman
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County





***Veterans Service Office
200 San Sebastian View, Suite 1400
St. Augustine, FL 32084***

(Physical location)

The VSO Office is located in the new St. Johns County Health and Human Services Building.

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

Closed for Lunch daily from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Service is by appointment only.

Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161

Joseph McDermott, CVSO

Rick Rees, Assistant VSO

Tammy Shirley, Assistant VSO

Lashonda Burns, Office Specialist

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Patriotism is our Motto



Thank you to the Vietnam Vets of America for a GREAT cook out!



Memorial Day Ceremony-Which also included the dedication of the library in memory of Colonel Ed Taylor.



Playing Wheel of Fortune

Lunch at Woodpecker's Backyard BBQ

Turning Point at Calvary's Clown Ministry performance



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 **to be announced**. The meeting will be at 7:00pm. The meeting will take place at Community Hospice, 4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257 in Conference Room A.

JNC SC Chairman,
Ray Quinn

Memorial Day Ceremony at Jacksonville National Cemetery



Photos by Kathy Church

Crowds honor veterans as Memorial Day ceremonies begin

By **Steve Patterson** Sat, May 23, 2015 @ 8:58 pm | updated Sat, May 23, 2015 @ 10:38 pm

Reprinted in its entirety from an article in the FL Times Union



Fred.Dye@jacksonville.com

Seven-year-old Annie Conyers places flags at the foot of grave markers at Jacksonville National Cemetery during its Memorial Day Observance on Saturday, May 23, 2015. Annie was among hundreds of volunteers, including her twin sister, Sabie, who placed flags prior to the Memorial Day ceremony at the cemetery.

While people made plans for beach trips and cookouts, Joe Covella spread the word about his plans for the Memorial Day weekend, and waited Saturday to see how many people would answer.

By 8:30 a.m., at least 200 had gathered at Jacksonville National Cemetery on Lannie Road.

Hundreds more came soon after, helping to plant the 7,000-some flags that Covella told volunteers to position a foot from each headstone erected since the cemetery's opening in 2009.

"There are a lot of men and women out here who have given the ultimate price," said the retired Marine staff sergeant, whose father was a Marine gunnery sergeant killed during the Vietnam War.

A range of groups — Scout troops, bank employees, football officials — answered invitations from a support committee including Covella that organized the commemoration. Some came for personal reasons.

Tim Rife, a Navy petty officer in the 1980s, dropped to one knee and bowed his head at each grave where he left a flag.

"All these people out here are brothers and sisters," said Rife, who came with his wife, Kim, also a Navy veteran.

"Although I never met them personally, we all share one thing in common," he said. "... They served our country. They served with pride, integrity and honor. For that, I love each one of them like my own family because, in a way, they really are."

There were other ceremonies around Northeast Florida, and more to come before the weekend is done. At most of them, the point is the same.

"America's greatness is drawn from the blood and sacrifice of the brave men and women who have gone before us," U.S. Rep. Ander Crenshaw, R-Fla., told crowds later that morning from a platform shared by other politicians and dignitaries.

"Each deserves to be front and center in our thoughts on Memorial Day," Crenshaw said.

Ceremonies at various places will continue through Monday. And on Tuesday, people will be back at the ceremony, collecting the flags.

Steve Patterson: (904) 359-4263

The "Thank You" lady takes time at every single gravesite

Jessica Clark, First Coast News, from their website

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. -- There was a touching scene at the **National Cemetery in St. Augustine on Memorial Day.**



Long after the crowd had dispersed from the Memorial Day Ceremony, a lone woman was walking in the cemetery.

She was walking slowly down every row.

She was looking at every single grave site.

First Coast News reporter Jessica Clark spotted the woman walking. She asked the woman what she was doing.

Her answer... looking at every single name and saying "thank you."

She said, "that's what we're supposed to do."

She made the names on the tombstones personal, by thanking each person individually who is buried in the cemetery.

When asked to do an interview, she politely declined and pointed to the sky, saying "this is His work."





Vietnam veterans share stories of service, sacrifice with St. Johns County students

By [JAKE MARTIN](#) Reprinted in its entirety with permission of the author and the St. Augustine Record
jake.martin@staugustine.com



It's been 50 years since a generation of high school graduates was welcomed to adulthood with the call of duty. Vietnam was underway, and it was overwhelming and often misperceived.

High school students from across the St. Johns County School District met Wednesday with local veterans to hear their experiences during this historic time.

The Q&A session marked the district's 2015 Veterans Honors Celebration, which was a collaborative effort with the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.

The program was dedicated to all veterans of foreign wars, including Pfc. Leo Curtis Chase Jr. Chase was the first resident of St. Johns County to be killed in Vietnam.

His mother and siblings were in attendance, recognized by retired Lt. Col. Bill Dudley, chairman of the Veterans Council.

The war was nothing if not memorable for those who lived through it.

"The draft ended on Jan. 27 and I graduated high school in June of 1973," Superintendent Joe Joyner told students.

He said he had a particularly deep respect for Vietnam veterans because of having watched the conflict unfold day by day. *(continued on next two pages)*



Nease High School JROTC



Supt. Joyner



General Capps



Chairman Dudley 7



Vietnam Panelists

“I remember it very vividly,” school board chair Bev Slough said. “I had many friends who participated in the Vietnam conflict and some of them did not come home.” She said the panel was also a chance for her to hear about what many of her friends who returned didn’t want to talk about.

School board member Kelly Barrera said she would often try to pull the stories out of her father, who also served in Vietnam.

“All he would say is: ‘Kelly, I’m a lover, not a fighter.’” Barrera said it takes another level of bravery, beyond what they’ve already given, for veterans to share their stories.

Retired Brig. Gen. Richard G. Capps delivered the keynote address.

“Vietnam made me a better person,” he said, having served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969. He later became assistant adjutant general for the Florida Army National Guard.

Capps said soldiers battled not just the enemy in the jungle, but misconceptions when they came home. He cited a common belief that the majority of soldiers were drafted, but two-thirds of the 2.7 million who served were actually volunteers.

He encouraged students to reach out to veterans in their community.

“Take a minute and say: ‘Hey, thank you,’ and shake their hand,” Capps said. “You’d be surprised how proud it will make the both of you.”

Answering the call

One student asked what the panelists first thought when they realized they were headed for combat. All five had volunteered.

“There was no doubt where we were going to go,” said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph McDermott, Army.

He served in Vietnam from May 1968 to May 1969. When McDermott’s plane landed in Vietnam, a fellow soldier waiting to board asked him what took him so long to get there.

“So, that’s how I got there,” he added.

McDermott said he spent most of his Army career in training and taking on various leadership roles.

“It’s a proud profession,” he told students. “Don’t look at the military as a last resort, look at it as a first resort.”

Retired Cpl. Fred DuPont, Marine Corps, who graduated from St. Augustine High School, was in Vietnam from August 1969 to March 1970. He had brothers in the Air Force and Navy serving at the same time.

“We didn’t realize at the time what pain that was causing our mother,” he said. DuPont was a heavy equipment operator who helped build and maintain roads. His duties included providing cover while others searched those roads for mines. “Sometimes they found out the hard way,” he said.

Retired Capt. Blair Craig, Army, served in Vietnam from May 1969 to November 1970. He had enlisted right out of college and went on to build a 22-year career in the military.

He said he couldn't imagine going the route many of his friends took — responsible only for a desk and telephone.

“The men that I served with were the finest people I knew,” he said. “They became everything that kept me going from one day to the other.”

Seeing combat

Retired Capt. Jay Morris, Air Army Transportation Corps, spent much of his service in Vietnam between June 1966 and July 1967 about 10-20 feet above the trees.

“We were affectionately known as ‘The Target,’” he said. “If there was a battle, we were there.”

Morris, a St. Johns County commissioner, was a forward air controller. This entailed flying a small plane over enemy lines to help pinpoint U.S. artillery or air strikes.

In the meantime, Craig and retired 1st Lt. Tom Waskovich, Army, spent a lot of time on the ground and on the front lines.

“They were fighting for their life every day,” DuPont said.

Waskovich, in Vietnam from January-December 1969, recalled going into neighboring Laos and being instructed not to carry any form of identification.

“It made you very aware, very quickly that this is real,” he said.

He warned students that there must always be people brave enough to fight against what is wrong.

“There's evil in this world,” Waskovich said. “Real, real evil.”

All panelists said they never regretted serving and that they would do it again if called upon.

“If they wanted me in the Army today, I'd go back into the Army today,” McDermott said. “It made me a better person, there is no doubt.”

Craig said there is now a very small part of the population doing a big job — defending the country.

“Life is not a free ride,” he said. “Each of you, individually, have to ask yourselves: ‘I've gotten so much, what can I do to give back to somebody else?’”

More than 45 years after leaving Vietnam, Vietnam has not left DuPont.

“It affected my entire life,” he said. “It's part of my soul — I can't get rid of it — and I've enjoyed it.”

A comment from an invited guest: Thank you again for the invitation to today's celebration. It was an amazing, beautiful and inspiring event. You guys did a great job putting it together. I was impressed at the depth of the questions asked by the students. I can tell you that my life was touched today. I just got off the phone with our Director of Programs and was telling him that in the past 5 ½ months of working for JFI, my life has been touched and I have been inspired by working with our Veterans and hearing their stories. What an amazing group of people!! The panel did an excellent job! Thank you again for inviting me to attend as it is an experience that I will personally treasure! Audrey R. Mazzotta, Southeast Regional Coordinator, The Joe Foss Institute, Email: amazotta@joefossinstitute.org

Jennifer Jolley, a World History Teacher at Palm Bay Magnet High School in Melbourne, FL is researching **WWII airmen who fought in the European arena**. She will travel to the Cambridge, England this summer to learn



about American airmen during the Second War. Northrop Grumman and the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in Duxford, England sponsor a summer residency educational program for teachers from the USA and UK. IWM Duxford, one of the best aviation museums in Europe, hosts the American Air Museum. <http://www.americanairmuseum.com>

The American Air Museum website records the stories of the men and women of the US Army Air Forces (USAAF) who served their country from the UK in the Second World War. Ms. Jolley will research documents as part of the Roger Freeman Collection at the museum. She welcomes any stories from WWII airmen or their descendants to assist her with this project. **You may contact her at jolley.jennifer@BrevardSchools.org or (954) 881-1369.**

Ms. Jolley is a proud 1991 graduate of Flagler College and was referred to our newsletter by Audrey R. Mazzotta, the Southeast Regional Coordinator with The Joe Foss Institute.

During the regularly scheduled meeting of **Vietnam Veterans Chapter 1084**, President Robert Dinkins set aside the regular order of business following the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to make an important announcement.



“We have applied to our national organization to permanently change our name to Leo C. Chase Chapter 1084, Vietnam Veterans of America” said Dinkins, “and it has been approved.”

“I am excited to have two coinciding announcements,” said Dinkins. “Our chapter now has a permanent meeting location thanks to the generosity of the members of the Saint Augustine South Improvement Association.” “Our meetings will be held at 7 p.m. on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 709 Royal Road, St. Augustine, FL 32086.”

Immediately following the announcements Chapter President Robert Dinkins presented a plaque to Chase’s mother, Pauline C. Chase, of Jacksonville in honor of the event. Standing with her were William Jefferson and Carla Chase, Chase’s brother and daughter, respectively.

Chase was the first St. Johns County resident to be killed in the Vietnam War. Chase and over 300 fellow servicemen gave their lives for their country in the Ia Drang Valley during the Pleiku campaign on November 15, 1965. The Ia Drang battle was dramatized in the book and film, "We Were Soldiers". The 23-year-old Army Pfc. was killed five days before he was to have rotated home.

For more information about the chapter and its activities, visit their website at <http://www.vva1084.org/>

Media Contact:, Michael Isam, mtisam@comcast.net, 904-687-8777

Photo credits: Michael Isam



(l-r) John McGinty, William Jefferson, Carla Chase, Pauline Chase (holding plaque), Robert Dinkins



First Militia Chapter Quarterly Meeting

Under the historical backdrop of the Saint Francis Barracks Officers' Club in Saint Augustine, nearly 100 men and women gathered on Thursday, May 14, for the First Militia Chapter (FMC), Association of the United States Army (AUSA), general membership meeting and its Vietnam War Commemoration program.

After a social hour beginning at 6 p.m., SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn, master of ceremonies, asked the audience to take their seats. All were welcomed, distinguished guests were recognized, and special recognition made to the family members of PFC Leo C. Chase, Jr., first resident of St. Johns County to be killed in the Vietnam War. Also recognized were Vietnam Veterans from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines in attendance this evening, as well as Zach Brown, a 2011 FMC AUSA Scholarship recipient.

All in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by an invocation by the Chapter's new Chaplain, Chaplain Halyard of the 146 Signal Battalion. Next, each table lined up, one-by-one, to enjoy a wonderful dinner consisting of BBQ pulled pork, smoked turkey, beef brisket, green beans, smoked yellow corn, salad, assorted breads, coffee, tea, and banana pudding for dessert. While people were eating, Chapter reports were given by respective FMC representatives with the following noted:

LTC Torres reported that current Chapter membership is at 451 and Corporate membership at 25.

CPT Kennedy reported that the Scholarship committee will evaluate applications in July and present awards during the August meeting.

CPT Roberge reported the completion of JROTC/ROTC Awards for this school year and announced that the Chapter presented to 48 cadets from 13 different schools this year. Roberge thanked "all volunteers who presented on behalf of FMC AUSA."

SGM (Ret) Quinn presented the Veterans Update and announce that the Jacksonville National Cemetery has 7,000 interred there now.

BG (Ret) Capps, President, Chapter Board of Advisors, provided a golf tournament update stating "what a success" the 21st Annual tournament was, and also thanked "all who assisted."

COL Matt Johnson, FMC AUSA President thanked all VIPs, and guests for supporting this evening's event and presented several recognitions including special corporate support by the St. Augustine Officers Clubs and Herbie Wiles Insurance. Also recognized by Johnson were volunteers LTC Torres, with an Award of Excellence, Mrs. Rebecca Gibson, because "she does so much for us," BG (Ret) Capps and his

staff, for the extremely successful golf tournament, and MG (Ret) Titshaw for his outstanding support to Soldiers. Concluding, Johnson gave a big “HOOAH” for a great job done by all!

Chapter business concluded, and meals completed, the audience was treated to a partial viewing of the documentary, “Viet Nam: Service, Sacrifice and Courage,” produced by St. Augustine resident Michael Rothfeld, and dedicated to PFC Leo C. Chase, Jr., first St. Johns County resident to die in the war. Chase died with only five days remaining of his tour.

The entire hall was silent as the movie played, everyone watching intently. When the movie was stopped, everyone gave a standing ovation to Mrs. Pauline Chase, PFC Chase’s mother, and the other family members in attendance. You could tell that everyone wanted to see more and hear more, and that they would from the evening’s two guest speakers.

As the first guest speaker, BG (Ret) Richard Capps first welcomed and thanked everyone, especially the family of PFC Chase, “who gave the ultimate sacrifice to this country.” Capps stated that his comments would be general in nature about the Vietnam war but that we “still cherish the friendship and very well remember their faces and names and give praise and thanks to all who gave and those we lost.” Capps continued by reminding all that the 50th Anniversary Vietnam Commemoration will continue through November of 2025. Over the next ten plus years, ceremonies will honor and give thanks to a generation of proud Americans who saw our country through one of its most challenging missions.



During our time in Vietnam, Capps continued, we all took part in many battles, some we remember well, and some we would like to forget, but there is one battle we all remember that had a significant impact on the outcome of the Vietnam war – The Tet offensive of 1968. With specifics provided, and historical details, Capps explained how the Tet offensive succeeded on only one front and that was the News front and political arena. It was reported at the time, as an overwhelming success for the Communist forces. Nothing could be further from the truth, Capps went on to say that the Tet Offensive resulted in “total defeat of Communist forces on all fronts.” Next, Capps presented several facts to include:

2.7 million Americans served in Vietnam

58,148 were killed in Vietnam, of those killed, 61% were younger than 21

As of April 7, 2014, 1642 Americans still unaccounted for

85% of Vietnam Veterans made successful transition to civilian life

Additionally, Capps clarified some myths relating to Vietnam:

Myth: Common belief is that most Vietnam Veterans were drafted.

FACT: 2/3 of the men who served in Vietnam were volunteers, approximately 70% of those killed in Vietnam were volunteers.

Myth: Kim Phuc, the little nine year old girl running naked from the napalm strike near Trang Bang on June 8, 1972 (shown millions of time on American television) was burned by an airstrike.

FACT: No American had any involvement with this airstrike. It was conducted entirely by the South Vietnamese Air Force and the South Vietnamese Ground Troops.

Bringing the Vietnam War statistics closer to home, Capps stated that there are approximately 22,000 veterans in St. Johns County of which 6662 are Vietnam Veterans. 16 Service members from St. Johns County paid the ultimate sacrifice in support of the Vietnam War and Capps said, "We must continue to remember these men in our thoughts and prayers and support those families that still experience the loss of a loved one from many tears ago." In closing, Capps expressed a heartfelt "Welcome Home," and concluded with a paraphrase he attributes to former President George H. Bush, "Read my lips, we won that damn war." After the crowd's applause stopped, Capps introduced the second guest speaker, Tom Waskovich.

During the Vietnam War, Waskovich was an Army 1st Lieutenant who reported to 5th Special Forces Group Headquarters. There, he and a friend volunteered for an extremely hazardous duty and were assigned to Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observation Group (MACVSOG). Waskovich, and others, were to conduct activities and operations along the Ho Chi Minh trail, and within the countries of Laos and Cambodia. "We did ambushes and raids," Waskovich explained, "every mission had a prisoner snatch component to it." He continued by describing that the things he did, the "the general public does not have any idea about. "SOG teams did HALO (High Altitude Low Opening) jumps into Laos and Cambodia," Waskovich continued to explain, and further detailed activities where he stopped truck traffic on the Ho Chi Minh trail. In concluding his comments, Waskovich described the general concept of Command and Control Central (CCC) and informed the group that, "of the 300 men [of the CCC], had five Medal of Honor recipients." It was clear and easy for all who were listening to have deep admiration and great appreciation for the duties and responsibilities of Waskovich and the others with whom he served during the Vietnam War.



Immediately upon conclusion of both guest speaker presentations, COL Matt Johnson, FMC AUSA President took to the podium and expressed how honored he and others are to be "serving with heroes and legends" such as the ones we've heard from this evening. Johnson presented a FMC AUSA coin to Tom Waskovich as a symbol of appreciation for his time and service. Johnson ended the evening's event by again thanking all in attendance.

Anyone interested in becoming an individual or corporate member of the First Militia Chapter, Association of the United States Army, please go to www.ausa.org and go to "membership." Our chapter number is C3205. For additional information you may call (904) 806-1985.

Centuries worth of history at St. Francis Barracks

Posted: May 24, 2015

BY KIMEKO MCCOY

kimeko.mccoy@staugustine.com , reprinted in its entirety from an article in the St. Augustine Record



The primary reserve military force in the United States is the National Guard. Although available for federal use, each state maintains its own National Guard. Florida's National Guard is headquartered in St. Augustine.

Alongside the famous forts, the St. Francis Barracks stand as yet another example of the city's long military presence.

Franciscan missionaries

When Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrived in St. Augustine in 1565, with him were representatives of the Jesuits (or Society of Jesus), a Roman Catholic religious order. They were selected to travel with Menéndez during the exploration to bring their religion to the natives.

As part of this effort, a building was erected in St. Augustine in 1588 to act as a friary for the Franciscan missionaries who came to Florida with the intention of Christianizing the native people.

“For 175 years, this was the headquarters for the Franciscan mission system. They effectively Christianized an estimated 40,000 natives,” St. Francis Barracks historian Alison Simpson said.

During their stay in Florida, the Franciscans built some of the first churches and made the first dictionaries based on Indian languages.

Franciscans pledged themselves to poverty and remnants of the friar cells can still be found at the barracks today.

“They probably had a desk and a hard bed,” Simpson said.

Friars had an allowance from the Spanish king but heavily relied on Native American ways of life.

Many remnants were discovered in 1989 when the National Guard was putting in underground utilities and paving its open compound.

Archaeologist Kathy Deagan said she and her team found a number of things, including a portion of the early 17th century chapel and some posts that she suspects supported the walkway of the original building used by the friars.

“I think for one thing to confirm the use of the space and the property has pretty much remained consistent since it was first used. That’s one thing. We got a lot of artifacts and food remains that kind of gave a better insight into the life of the monks there,” she said.



In 1599, a fire destroyed the chapel and all of the friary’s buildings.

A new friary was built from 1724 to 1750.

Becoming barracks

In 1763, the use of the friary changed dramatically. Florida was ceded to England and English officers moved in.

Four years later, work began to turn what was a chapel into a two-story barracks for a company of soldiers and by May of 1771, the friary served as space for all of the troops. This is when it became known as the St. Francis Barracks.

In 1771, the barracks were designated as headquarters of the Southern Brigade, which meant additional barracks would be necessary.

What was known as pile barracks were built just south of the old friary and meant to hold 600 people. It was made of brick and stone on the first floor, while the top two floors were wooden.

The barracks, which stood 270 feet long and three stories tall, was destroyed by a fire in May 1792.

Only the first floor remained.

“That would be just a spectacular building to have here in St. Augustine,” Simpson said. “But it’s just one of the ones that didn’t make it.”

In 1821, Florida became part of the United States and over the years, additional buildings came and went.

Burials

The historic National Cemetery is just south of the post.

It is where some of the local military's most important figures are buried under three coquina stone pyramids and pristine headstones.

She said burials there continue today.

“There are still on average two burials per year because of spouses being buried here,” she said.

Apparently, burials go far beyond the cemetery, as archaeologists have discovered people buried in areas surrounding the post.

One of the interesting things, Simpson said, is that there are no Confederate soldier burials in the cemetery.

The burials Deagan and her archaeology team found were behind the barracks, where St. Francis Street meets the gate.

“We don't know what that was about because that wasn't the sacred part of the site,” she said.

As always, archaeology answers and produces questions, Deagan said.

“To me one of the really interesting things was we found just a whole array of Native American pottery that was not really from this area,” she said.

Deagan suspects that because the friary served as headquarters for Catholic missions in Florida, there may have been a lot of important people who came there.

“When chiefs visited St. Augustine, they apparently sometimes stayed at the St. Francis monastery,” Deagan said.

National Guard

Today the St. Francis Barracks serve as the headquarters for the Florida National Guard. Simpson said there's a courtyard in the back where weddings, community events and work functions are hosted.

“Almost every weekend, there's something,” she said.

The Guard's next big event will be a re-enactment in September of the First Muster to honor the first mustering of America's original citizen-soldiers.

Ticket Information

Ticket costs are:
Active Duty E-6 and below, \$25;
E-7 to O3, \$40,
O4 to O5, \$50,
O6 and above,
civilians, and retirees, \$65.
Ticket sales cut off on June 7th

Tickets available from the following:

NAVY LEAGUE MAYPORT

POC Bob Price
Phone (904)246-9982
E-mail - bpricex4@comcast.net

NAVY LEAGUE ST AUGUSTINE

POC Bill Dudley
Phone (904)806-4712
E-mail - anuday00@aol.com

Make Checks payable to
NAVY LEAGUE MIDWAY DINNER
P.O. Box 331944
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233-1944

Tickets also available thru our WEB SITE
www.mayportnlius.org

Uniform will be O4 and above -
dinner dress white jacket;
O3 and below - dinner dress white/dinner
dress white jacket optional
and civilian is black tie or business attire.

Special Hotel Rates for Battle of Midway

Rooms are available from the hotel -
The Renaissance World Golf
Village Resort
Special Room Rate - \$120
(includes 2 breakfast vouchers)
This special rate good until May 30th only
Suites also available for \$170.00

YOU MUST INCLUDE
"2015 Battle of Midway"
to receive this discounted rate

Hotel reservations must be made
by calling
Phone 1-888-789-3090
Monday thru Friday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.



Battle of Midway Commemorative Dinner

Keynote Speaker

General John F. Kelly, USMC
Commander, U.S. Southern Command

Event will be held at
The Renaissance World Golf
Village Resort .
Cocktails begin at 6 PM
Dinner at 7 PM.
Reserved seating.
Hosted by
The Mayport Council
Navy League
of the United States
June 13, 2015

And you are invited!
Tickets are now on sale

The Battle of Midway was a crucial and decisive naval battle in the Pacific Theatre of World War II. Between 4 and 7 June 1942, only six months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, and one month after the Battle of the Coral Sea, the United States Navy under Admirals Chester Nimitz, Frank Jack Fletcher, and Raymond A. Spruance decisively defeated an attacking fleet of the Imperial Japanese Navy under Admirals Isoroku Yamamoto, Chuichi Nagumo, and Nobutake Kondo on Midway Atoll, inflicting devastating and irreparable damage on the Japanese fleet. Military historian John Keegan called it "the most stunning and decisive blow in the history of naval warfare." It was Japan's first naval defeat since the Battle of Shimonoseki Straits in 1863.



Missing In America Project



PLEASE NOTE - PLEASE NOTE - PLEASE NOTE
MIAP - FL, June 19 service will be postponed until the fall.

Due to the already hi temps and humidity and safety issues and after discussing this with Charlie Warthling, Steven Spickelmier, Janis Diamond, Roger Delaney and a representative of the Jacksonville National Cemetery we are going to post pone our June 19, 2015 service until late September or October.

Last year the service in June was extremely hot and we were very fortunate that no one (especially all the uniformed participants) passed out.

I will keep everyone posted on the new date. Thanking everyone in advance, we are very fortunate that no one (especially all the uniformed participants) passed out.

DAV Chapter 6 Installs New Officers

On May 19, 2015 the new slate of Officers were installed by Past Commander Michael Isam at their monthly meeting. Serving for the upcoming year 2015-2016 are Commander – Judy Davis, Senior Vice – John McGinty, Junior Vice - Shawn Prentiss, Treasurer – Tammy Shirley, Chaplain – Shawn Prentiss, Adjutant – Art DuBois, Officer of the Day – Joe McDermott.



Photo Left to Right: J.D. Jones standing in for John McGinty, Judy Davis, Shawn Prentiss, Tammy Shirley and Art Dubois. Front: Michael Isam

From Steve Murray, FDVA Legislation



The 2015 Florida Legislative Session ended last week without the pomp and circumstance of previous years, and the legislature is headed to a special session to deal with the state budget. As a result, a majority of bills this year did not make it through to the end.

However, several veteran-related bills were passed by the House and Senate and will be placed before Governor Scott for signature. If signed, most will take effect July 1, 2015. Among the highlights:

- HB 27 & SB 1398 -- Authorizes word "Veteran" to be exhibited on driver license or identification card of veteran. Replaces the "V" for Veteran option currently available.
- HB 35 & SB 7028 -- Out-of-State Fee Waivers for Veterans & Dependents: Revises last year's Congressman C.W. "Bill" Young Veteran Tuition Waiver to include spouses and children using sponsor's GI Bill benefits.
- HB 51 & SB 132 -- Authorizes veterans to provide the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles alternative documentation for renewal or replacement of disabled parking permits.
- HB 329 & SB 112 -- Authorizes the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to issue Combat Action Ribbon, Air Force Combat Action Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross license plates. Adds Woman Veteran, World War II Veteran and Navy Submariner plates.
- HB 0185 & SB 647 -- Provides an exemption from public records requirements for certain personal identifying information of current or former service members of military special operations units and the spouses and children of such service members.
- HB 801 & SB 0876 -- Adds a memorial to the Capitol in remembrance of the 241 members of the U.S. Armed Forces who lost their lives on October 23, 1983, in Beirut, Lebanon.

For more information, please contact FDVA Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director Colleen Krepstekies at KrepstekiesC@fdva.state.fl.us or FDVA Legislative Analyst Jessica Kraynak at KraynakJ2@fdva.state.fl.us.

Upcoming Events

Victory Florida

The Florida Department of State and Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs will begin a summer of activities to highlight the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. A kick-off press conference regarding the *Victory Florida* campaign will be held Monday, May 11 at 10 a.m. on the 22nd floor of the Florida Capitol. For more information on the campaign, visit <http://vivaflorida.org/Explore/Victory-Florida>

Orlando VA Medical Center

The Orlando VA Medical Center will host a Veterans Open House on its Lake Nona campus on Saturday, May 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Participants are asked to bring proof of veteran or active duty status for admission. Location: 13800 Veterans Way, Orlando, FL 32827.

Following the open house, the Orlando VA Medical Center will dedicate its Lake Nona Campus on Tuesday, May 26 at 10 a.m. Location: 13800 Veterans Way, Orlando, FL 32827. The public is invited to attend.

Governor's Veterans Service Awards

The governor will award the Governor's Veterans Service Award to honorably discharged veterans at the Florida National Guard Armory, 2809 South Ferncreek Avenue, in Orlando on Wednesday, May 27 at 9:30 a.m. To RSVP or for more information, visit the FDVA website at <http://floridavets.org/gvsa/>. The governor visited Melbourne in January, Panama City in February, The Villages in March and West Palm Beach in April. Monthly ceremonies in other Florida cities are planned, but the schedule for the remainder of the year has not been released. Point of contact is Steve Murray at murrayr@fdva.state.fl.us

National Cemeteries

The Tallahassee National Cemetery (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) will host a public dedication ceremony on Friday, May 22 at 1 p.m. VA Secretary Bob McDonald is expected to attend.

The Cape Canaveral National Cemetery is scheduled to conduct its dedication ceremony later in the year.

Other

The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council is currently accepting nominations for the third annual class of inductees into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. The nomination period is open until May 30. Anyone is permitted to nominate a military veteran. For more information, visit <http://www.floridaveteranshalloffame.org>.

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs has released the 2015 edition of the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide. The 28-page guide, sponsored by the Florida Veterans Foundation, provides information about earned federal and state benefits and how to obtain them. Bulk copies of the guide are being distributed to county veteran service offices, VA medical centers and outpatient clinics, and state colleges and universities. An interactive online version is now available on the FDVA website at www.FloridaVets.org. You may order bulk copies by e-mailing a name, street address, telephone number and the number requested to murrayr@fdva.state.fl.us. Individual copies may be requested by sending an e-mail to Sferrazza-RiosL@fdva.state.fl.us

Regards, Steve Murray, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (Ret), Communications Director

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, The Capitol, Suite 2105 , 400 South Monroe

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001, Office (850) 487-1533, Ext. 7714, Cell (850) 491-1092

Visit www.FloridaVets.org, Facebook www.facebook.com/floridaveterans

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/fdva



PRESENTS THE FALLEN HEROES GOLF CLASSIC
Friday September 11th, 2015 1pm T-Off
Eagle Landing Golf and Country Club at Oakleaf Plantation
3989 Eagle Landing Parkway, Orange Park, FL 32065

Please help support this great organization that is determined not to forget those that have given the ultimate sacrifice for our Freedom.

~ **Individual Golfer**
 (\$75.00)
 (\$65.00 Military)
 *Includes golf, lunch & prizes

RAISING FUNDS FOR MONUMENTS AT St Augustine High School for Sgt. Bryan J. Tutten & Allen D. Nease High School for Cpl. Joshua Watkins

All Proceeds go to Placing Monuments at the high schools of Florida Fallen Soldiers

<u>Contact Information</u>	
Company:	_____
Golfer 1:	_____
Address:	_____
email:	_____ phone# _____
Golfer 2:	_____
Address:	_____
email:	_____ phone# _____
Golfer 3:	_____
Address:	_____
email:	_____ phone# _____
Golfer 4:	_____
Address:	_____
email:	_____ phone# _____

To register please send this form either by email: ffhslunger@yahoo.com fax to (904)328-3751. Please provide the name, address, email and phone number of each player.
 Please make checks payable to: *Florida Fallen Heroes*
 P.O. BOX 11293 Jacksonville, FL 32239-1293

PLEASE RETURN THIS FOR REGISTRATION ASAP TO SAVE YOUR SPOT

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
DAVE SEAMANS 904-535-0747 OR
SHARON UNGER 904-680-8115

send registration form to ffhslunger@yahoo.com or fax to 904-328-3751

The Timothy J. Seamans Memorial Foundation is based in the beautiful city of Jacksonville, Florida and was founded by the family of Jacksonville fallen soldier, Timothy J. Seamans, in August 2006. The purpose and mission of this foundation is to create, establish, and help maintain the Fallen Soldier Monument at each hometown high school of a Florida graduate who have lost their lives defending the United States of America in our war against terrorism. The Timothy J. Seamans Memorial Foundation, (Doing Business as Florida Fallen Heroes) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit exempt organization, registered (# CH4311) with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Contributions are deductible from federal income as charitable donations under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code. Bequests, devises, transfers and gifts made in accordance with section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Internal Revenue Code are also tax deductible.

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PRESENTS THE FALLEN HEROES GOLF CLASSIC
Friday September 11th, 2015 1pm T-Off
Eagle Landing Golf and Country Club at Oakleaf Plantation
3989 Eagle Landing Parkway, Orange Park, FL 32065

Please help support this great organization that is determined not to forget those that have given the ultimate sacrifice for our Freedom.

- * **Bronze Sponsorship:** \$150.00
Includes: sign and tent at a hole.
- * **Silver Sponsorship :** \$250.00
Includes: sign, plaque and tent at a hole.
- * **Gold Sponsorship:** \$ 400.00
Includes: foursome, sign and tent at a hole.
- * **Platinum Sponsorship:** \$ 500.00
Includes: name on monument, banner and tent at a hole.

Company Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Raising funds for monuments to be placed at:
 St. Augustine High School for Sgt. Bryan J. Tutten and
 Allen D. Nease High School for Cpl Joshua Watkins.

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
DAVE SEAMANS 904-595-0747 OR SHARON UNGER 904-680-8115
send sponsorship forms to ffhslunger@yahoo.com or fax to 904-328-3751

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Ladies Auxiliary President, Gloria Sartin and Quartermaster Marcia Smith at Vilano Beach Publix for the Buddy Poppy Drive.

PRESENTED TO THE CHASE FAMILY

April 28, 2015



“WELCOME HOME”

Jun 30, 1942 - Nov 15, 1965

*A Life Given to everything there is a season, and a time to every
purpose under the heaven; A time to be born and a time to die;
A time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*

Eccles. 3: 1-2

In recognition of service to his country, serving with Courage, Sacrifice, and Honor. PFC Leo C. Chase USA, represents the absolute best virtue and dignity in a man. VVA Chapter 1084 of St. Johns County, FL is proud to name our chapter the,

“Leo C. Chase Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans
of America, #1084



John McGinty
Director

Robert D. Dinkins
Chapter 1084, President

USS Indianapolis Survivors Organization Reunion 2015



As the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis draws near, please take a moment to reflect on the crew of almost 1200 men who served their country proudly and especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Only 317 men survived to tell

the story of this historic ship--32 are living today. Please join these World War II veterans as they remember and honor their shipmates, those who perished in 1945 and those who have passed since the sinking.

The reunion will take place July 23-26, 2015 at the Hyatt Regency, Indianapolis. For your convenience, we have created a website for the USS Indianapolis Survivors Organization reunion.

www.ussindyreunion.com

Special features of the website:

* **REUNION DETAILS:** A copy of the reunion mailing can be downloaded, including the newsletter, registration form, and preliminary program.

* **ONLINE REGISTRATION:** To join the USS Indianapolis Survivors at their banquet on Saturday, July 25, 2015, you may register and pay for your ticket online. Seating at the banquet is limited; pre-registration and a \$75 fee is required.

* **DONATIONS:** If you would like to make a donation to the USS Indianapolis Survivors Organization, please click the **Donate** link at the top of the home page.

* **HOTEL:** Please note that our room block at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis is filling up fast. If you don't find rooms available at the Hyatt, we recommend that you contact other hotels in the downtown area. Survivors and their families who need assistance with lodging may contact Peggy McCall Campo or Elko Perchyshyn.

* **PLEASE CHECK BACK OCCASIONALLY:** New information will be posted as it becomes available.



Dr. Giles McCoy, a USS Indianapolis survivor, of Palm Coast, FL before he passed

Vets 4 Vets



Mark your calendars for June 20th Veterans Memorial Arena the second 2015 Gathering of Veterans 1100 to 1300. We had a great turnout the last gathering and hope to do as good or even better this time. Some of you had other commitments and didn't make it, hope you can make this one. Important that Veterans and the organizations they represent coordinate on issues affecting Veterans and their families in this community. The current VA issue and the impact on local Veterans is only one of many issues affecting Veterans that needs attention. Fixes to these issues start with Veterans uniting....SEE YOU ON THE 20th OF JUNE.

More to follow as we approach the gathering date...Stay motivated and united.

Pass the word to other Veterans and organizations...

JUNE 20th 1100 to 1300 VETERANS MEMORIAL

United we stand, Divided we fall

The City of Jacksonville and Department of Veterans Affairs - Florida Veterans Foundation is putting on a three day Stand Down for it's Homeless Veterans. The event will be held at the Jacksonville Fair Grounds on Aug 13 - 15, 2015. We are expecting over 600 homeless veterans to be present. We need St. Johns County veterans support. Our goal is to end veteran homelessness in 2015. Please consider giving us your support through voluntary services or monetary contribution. Either one would be very appreciated.

For more information please contact Daniel Hughes at:

jamiedhughes@msn.com or 386-446-3830.



Do you or someone you know suffer with *Psoriasis?*

We need your help, we are conducting a clinical trial with an investigational topical medication for those with moderate to severe **Plaque Psoriasis.**

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www.jaxadvresearch.com

#1001820718 (1/6 PG HORIZON(5in x 7in)) 10/06/2014 00:59 EST



Nease High School JROTC honored as best in nation



May 19: Nease NJROTC is #1 in the nation 2015 !

Rear Admiral Richard A. Brown, Commander of Naval Service Training Command announced that Nease NJROTC was selected as the Most Outstanding (Best) Unit in the nation for 2015.

<http://www.news4jax.com/news/nease-jrotc-honored-as-nations-top-program/33101570>



Quarterly Gathering of Veterans

Veterans Memorial Arena

June 20th 1100 -1300



SPECIAL GUEST
K9 for WARRIORS



Join us and get an update on Veterans happenings in the NE Florida community and share your organizations events with your fellow Veterans.

Buffet Lunch will be available.

Parking in Lot Z signage will direct you to the meeting room
(same room on first floors as the last meeting)

With all that is happening to Veterans it is time we unite to make sure things start happening FOR Veterans. To quote a Napoleon Maxim: Move dispersed and fight concentrated. It is time Veterans heed this advice and unite to save ourselves from being used and abused. No more broken promises, no more kabuki show and tells, it is time for those who say thank you your service to put something more behind that thank you. It is time we make them stick to their promises or it is time we promote one of our own to lead us into the future.

Vets 4 Vets
June 20th,2015
VETERANS MEMORIAL ARENA





On December 1 the Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142 became official and all of our officers were sworn in!

“Honoring the Dead by Helping the Living”

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



Offered by the Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142, VilanoBeachVFW@att.net
**Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142 collects Walkers, Wheel Chairs, and Power
Wheel Chairs for distribution to other Veterans in need.**
VETERANS HELPING VETERANS

The P320 Travel-Ease Regal has an 18"W x 16"D swivel seat, flip up armrests, headrest and flip-up footboard. The Travel-Ease comes with batteries and runs up to 4.5 mph.

The small footprint is perfect for getting around indoors, but don't be fooled, it's outdoor performance is second to none. The P320 has an excellent torque-range for consistent pulling no matter what the terrain does.



The Merits P320 Travel-Ease Regal is stylish and compact. Its low center of gravity, tight turning radius of 23" and excellent maneuverability makes it extra stable and gives you a high level of freedom.

The P320's 9" Foam-Filled Drive wheels and 8" front casters can take you just about anywhere. Work great indoors and outdoors. The P320 has a maximum speed of 4.5 mph and a range of about 15 miles.

Go-Go Elite Traveller 3-Wheel

by Pride , Model No. SC40E

Lightweight, agile, the Elite Traveller.

18AH battery option for extended drive range

Comes with blue, and red shroud covers

Front frame-mounted seat post offers maximum stability

Key Specs

Top Speed: 4.25 mph

Drive Range: 10.00 miles (this may vary, depending on charge and life of battery)

Heaviest Piece: 28 lbs., Rider Weight capacity: 300 lbs., Weight: 96 lbs.



**Wheelchair Walker Folding Combination, without basket
(pictured on left)**



Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142 Commander, A.J. Sartin and Vilano Beach Post Ladies Auxiliary President, Gloria Sartin, delivered an electric wheelchair to the residence of Veteran Ed Watson at Coquina Crossing.

Also pictured is Jeff Haluch, Matt Haluch, Marvin Mott, and Wally Greis, who were building a ramp into the house. Ed will be arriving home soon from the hospital.



Commander Sartin's Diabetic Service Dog, Gidget was also on duty.

The Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142, 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

For several years, D.A.V. Fl 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**



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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



The new Veterans Service Office is now open and ready to serve you.



**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
200 San Sebastian View, Suite 1400
St. Augustine, FL 32084**

(physical location)

*The VSO Office is located in the new St. Johns County
Health and Human Services Building.*

*The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily,
Monday through Friday excluding holidays.
Closed for lunch daily from 11:30 am 12:30 pm*

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

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.