



VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

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TREASURER JOHN MOUNTCASTLE

Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld

Volume 4, Issue 7

Newsletter Date: July 2015

Message from the Chairman



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Fellow Veterans,

This past week was certainly filled with lots of events concerning our Veterans in St. Johns County.

On Thursday, June 25 Governor Rick Scott was in St. Augustine to recognize veterans for their service. The Florida National Guard Armory on CR 207 was the venue where over 600 veterans and guests assembled to hear the Governor recognize our Veterans for their service. He used this opportunity to especially thank our Korean War Veterans as June 25th was Korean War Remembrance Day. Governor Scott honored 342 veterans with a Governor Veterans Service Medal. This was one of the largest turnouts of Veterans in the State of Florida since the inception of this program and the culmination of over a year's efforts by SJC VSO Joseph McDermott's and VCSJC Chairman Bill Dudley to get the Governor to St. Johns County for this award.

The veterans of St. Johns County would like to extend their appreciation to Jerry Cameron for representing us before the Congressional subcommittee in Washington on Thursday. Mr. Cameron along with representatives from the VA and GAO appeared before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform chaired by Congressman Ron DeSantis over the long battle St. Johns County veterans have endured over our Community Based Outpatient Clinic. For those who followed the hearing on CSPAN, it was obvious the VA has made major mistakes during this long painful process. Admitting before the Congressional hearing that the VA was slow to act and were not good stewards of the taxpayer's money, Mrs. Stella Fiotes, Exec. Director of Construction and Facilities for VA testified that errors were made upfront. Blaming the GAO for their problems, this did not sit well with Chair

man DeSantis as he continued his direct questioning of Mrs. Fiotes as to why the VA did not bring these issues to the attention of Congress.

St. Johns County is still offering to build a facility to house the CBOC adjacent to the new HHS Building on San Sebastian View. I would encourage our veterans to write letters or send emails to our elected Congressional representatives encouraging them to pressure the VA into accepting the County's offer. Your Chairman wrote a letter that was hand carried by Mr. Cameron to the subcommittee and was entered into the Congressional record. I would encourage all our veterans to do the same.

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

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Post Office Box 2117
St. Augustine, FL 32085

CHAIRMAN Bill Dudley

VICE CHAIRMAN Ray Quinn



TREASURER John Mountcastle

SECRETARY Michael Rothfeld

JUNE 21, 2015

The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security of the
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeSantis:

The veterans of Northeast Florida are deeply concerned over the gross mismanagement exhibited by the Northeast Florida – Southeast Georgia Regional Office of the Veterans Administration (VA). A glaring example of this is the total mismanagement of the building of the new Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in St. Johns County.

The VA has, for almost four years, made one poor decision after another. The local county government and local veterans' associations have made every effort to seek solutions to this alarming situation at the regional level of the VA. Our concerns have been met with calloused indifference, and our complaints over this indifference have been met with absolute condescending arrogance. After years of being either ignored or being presented with outright misrepresentations, we, the veterans of our armed services, can find no other recourse than to appeal to you, the holders of the highest offices in our land. We do so with full faith that you will not hesitate to serve the needs of those who have faithfully served this country.

In order to prevent further damage and waste to taxpayer dollars immediate action is required. We ask that no further action be taken by the VA to locate a permanent clinic until they have engaged the local veteran's population and the county government in a meaningful and productive dialogue. It is destructive and unacceptable to allow the VA to continue along the course they have travelled thus far. Had the VA listened to the concerns of St. Johns County veterans and accepted the generous offer made by the St. Johns County government, they would now be operating out of a state-of-the-art facility at the same site as other services heavily utilized by our veterans. In addition, millions of taxpayer dollars would not have been wasted. The VA will not set this right without intervention by Congress.

The veterans of Northeast Florida, trust you will take action to prevent further consequences to our community caused by an agency that has shown little concern over the damage it has done and has given every indication it intends to continue its present destructive path.

May God bless The United States of America and your efforts on our behalf.

William E. Dudley, Chairman
Veterans Council of St. Johns County

Gov. Rick Scott awards 342 medals to St. Johns County veterans

By [JAKE MARTIN](#) jake.martin@staugustine.com

This article re-printed with permission of the author and the St. Augustine Record

Hundreds of veterans and their families lined up Thursday at St. Augustine's Robert F. Ensslin Jr. National Guard Armory for a moment, handshake and photo with Gov. Rick Scott as he distributed Governor's Veterans Service Award medals during a ceremony.

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and Veterans Council of St. Johns County invited all military veterans residing in the county, retired or honorably discharged, to participate in the ceremony.

"Thank you for standing up to those guys," Scott told Frederick Avery, a retired U.S. Navy Chief Warrant Officer 4, as he gave him a medal.

"Once you get a group of veterans together it's just a good feeling because we know what everyone went through over there," said Avery, one of 342 veterans who attended the event. "You never meet a stranger because we're all friends."

Avery, a Gulf War veteran, joined the military in the 1980s during the Iranian Hostage Crisis and retired in 2007. He is now a specialist for CareerSource Northeast Florida's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program in St. Augustine.

Maria Maddox, originally from Seville, Fla., served in the U.S. Army in Germany from 1980 to 1983.

She had five brothers who served, three in Vietnam. Her father served in World War II.

"We're a military family, so we support fellow veterans 100 percent," she said.

A.J. Sartin, a Vilano Beach resident, is a Vietnam War veteran, having served there between 1968 and 1969.

"I was very impressed," he said of the ceremony. "They just never thanked the Vietnam vets, and I'm sure proud they're taking care of it now and welcoming the vets home."

Scott had also designated Thursday as Korean War Remembrance Day. The Korean War was fought from June 25, 1950, through July 27, 1953.

"It's interesting because everybody has a story," said Scott, who served in the U.S. Navy.

Clinical trials

continued on next page



*-PETER.WILLOTT@STAUGUSTINE.COM
Vilano Beach resident A.J. Sartin shakes hands with Florida Gov. Rick Scott before Scott presents him with the Governor's Veterans Service Award at a ceremony at the Robert F. Ensslin Jr. Armory in St. Augustine on Thursday, June 25, 2015. Gov. Scott presented the award to hundreds of active duty, retired or honorably discharged military members during the event.*

Scott's visit on Thursday coincided with a congressional hearing on Capitol Hill concerning how the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs goes about replacing or building new medical facilities.

Lawmakers are expected to review procurement issues that have cost taxpayers nationwide thousands of dollars while creating delays for veterans needing health care.

The VA failed to meet a two-year deadline to move its St. Augustine Community Based Outpatient Clinic. St. Johns County notified the VA in 2011 it would likely have to move the clinic from its current location on U.S. 1, where a new Lowe's is scheduled to be built.

Lease extension payments to Lowe's are now costing taxpayers more than \$64,000 per month. Unable to build a permanent location before its March 31 deadline, the VA decided to build a temporary facility at the Ponce de Leon Mall, about a half-mile from its current facility.

If the VA does not meet an Oct. 1 deadline to get a temporary facility up and running, the cost to taxpayers will nearly double.

Bill Dudley, chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, said overall he was pleased with the continued support for county veterans.

He said the St. Augustine clinic move is really a federal VA issue rather than a state issue, adding Scott has always been receptive to his concerns.

"When I've spoken with him about it, he's said, 'I'll do whatever I can,'" Dudley said. "He's at least shown a willingness to help in any way he can."

Costs of health

Scott said he had sued the federal government in 2014 for information regarding treatment of veterans in Florida's veterans hospitals.

"Florida is clearly the most veteran-friendly state in the country," he said. "I'm going to continue to focus and fight for our veterans and make sure they get the health care they want."

"St. Johns County has become the classic example of the overall problems plaguing the VA"

By [Clifford Davis](#)

clifford.davis@jacksonville.com

This article re-printed with permission of its author and the FI Times Union

WASHINGTON — Nearly four years after St. Johns County notified the VA that the land on which its clinic sat would likely be sold, the Department of Veterans Affairs still has not found a permanent home for the county's clinic.

That's why U.S. Rep. Ron DeSantis, R-Fla., called the county's lead liaison with the VA to testify Thursday in Washington before his subcommittee of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

"St. Johns County has become the classic example of the overall problems plaguing the VA throughout the country," the county's assistant administrator Jerry Cameron said in his opening statement.

The way the VA acquires property has become a major focal point for those who oversee the department, after dozens of projects ran long overdue and grossly over budget.

"We want to have this process streamlined and reformed so things are being done on time — and they're not being done on time," DeSantis told the Times-Union in an interview just before the hearing. "There are habitual delays that leave communities like ours in limbo.

"It's been very difficult for some of the local officials, for our veterans. And our office has worked on this issue tirelessly; yet you always run into more bureaucracy, more red tape."

St. Augustine isn't the only community facing long delays in establishing a facility.

David Wise, a director at the Government Accountability Office, testified alongside Cameron on Thursday.

"As of January 2014, GAO found that 39 of the 41 projects reviewed — with a contract value of about \$2.5 billion — experienced schedule delays, ranging from six months to 13.3 years," Wise said.

Which project took 13.3 years longer than expected? Jacksonville's outpatient clinic.

The average delay beyond a scheduled opening for the 39 projects was 3.3 years.

The situation in St. Augustine also reared its head at the House Committee on Veterans Affairs chaired by Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., and on which Rep. Corrine Brown, D-Fla., is the ranking member.

Continued on next page



Jerry Cameron, foreground, stands to take the oath with others called to testify before the Ron DeSantis' subcommittee on national security Thursday. Photo by Cliff Davis

“We’ve discussed St. Augustine and its clinic,” Miller told VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson. “How can VA continue to justify paying thousands and thousands of dollars in fines and penalties each month to retain a facility that they knew a long time ago that they were going to have to relocate from that facility?”

“How does that happen?”

Gibson said it happens when the VA fails to forecast the move soon enough.

To some, including the St. Johns County Veterans Council, the failure to complete a permanent clinic with nearly four-years’ notice was grounds for dismissing Gainesville VA leadership who oversee all clinics in the North Florida/South Georgia area.

DeSantis took a more measured approach Thursday.

“We wanted to focus it on the people in Washington,” he said. “There’s been a lot of frustration — understandably — with some of the local folks. ... I think a lot of people have discussed that and in the papers and wherever.

“I think there should be accountability there, too.”

However, he said major problems lie in Washington.

“We wanted to keep the bridges up and running and not burn bridges if we think we can move the ball forward,” DeSantis said. “But obviously, we’ve come to this point, and if we were satisfied we wouldn’t be having this hearing right now.”

None of the Gainesville leadership was present at the hearing. Stella Fiotes, executive director of the VA’s office of construction and facilities management, represented the department.

She acknowledged the VA lagged in beginning its lengthy lease process. “We were late in starting what we knew was the required competitive lease process required to lease space,” Fiotes said. “For that, we are sorry and accept responsibility.”

Fiotes said the VA believes changes in the regulations that govern medical facilities are a must if the lease process is to be streamlined in the future.

However, the VA was first notified of the possible impending sale of its current property in October 2011. After 3½ years, tens of thousands of dollars in fines and a multi-million dollar replacement facility still in the works, DeSantis asked Fiotes if the VA had selected a site for a new, permanent clinic.

“We have not yet selected a site,” Fiotes said.

Clifford Davis: (904) 359-4103

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home *Where Patriotism is our Motto*



We brought in the summer heat with our annual Summer Blast Off Party...includes water balloons, squirt guns, buckets of water and the ice cream truck.



Father's Day Photo booth



Receiving the Governor's Service Awards at the National Guard Armory 6/25/2015.



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



VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

P.O. BOX 2117

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA 32085-2117

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DRIVE LAUNCHED!

St. Augustine and St. Johns County residents will be pleased to learn that the Veterans Council of St. Johns County has launched the annual Wreaths Across America program.

Each year the council participates in the nationwide program to ensure every grave site is adorned with a holiday wreath. The Council has accepted the responsibility to ensure the St. Augustine National Cemetery, 104 Marine Street, St. Augustine is no exception.

Your tax deductible gift of \$15.00 will purchase one beautiful fresh holiday wreath to be placed by one of our dedicated volunteers. A donation of \$30.00 purchases two wreaths and a bonus wreath as well (3 for the purchase of 2).

The wreaths will be placed in a ceremony to be conducted at St. Augustine National Cemetery on Saturday, December 12, 2015 at 12:00 p.m. The public is cordially invited to the ceremony and to assist with placing of the wreaths. Each branch of our military will be honored including the Merchant Marine.

To purchase wreaths please send your tax deductible check to: Veterans Council of St. Johns County, P. O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, Florida 32085-2117. Checks should be made payable to Wreaths Across America TM.

For further information please contact: SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn at 904.540.1630 or SFC (Ret) Judy Davis at 904.814.4284.

Veterans are gearing up for future events.

By Michael Isam St. Augustine, Fla (June 22, 2015)

Disabled Veteran's Chapter continues quest.

"If we do not do it, then it will most probably never get done" are the watch-words for St. Augustine Chapter 6, Florida Department of Disabled American Veterans.

"We have been the vanguard of providing transportation for veterans to their appointments at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville, FL since 2005," said current commander Judy Davis. "Luckily," she continued, "We have support from other veteran organizations to pay for the van, but none of us are 'rich beyond the dreams of avarice'"

In the past, during the heights of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, donations came from many sources. Today, now that the wars are virtually over, the focus goes to other things. Even holding fundraisers in a local restaurant met with surprising resistance from management. "You can be here, but you can't talk to anyone."

The van is made available for purchase through a special trust of Disabled American Veterans National offices.

"We do not own the van," said Davis. "Upon delivery to us, the title is signed over to the VA transportation service. They provide the insurance, fuel, and maintenance for all vehicles transporting veterans."

While the vans cost less than one purchased off the showroom floor, we still have to pay for them and the costs rise every year.

The current van has just over 100,000 miles on it and will more than likely be scheduled for replacement soon.

Tax deductible donations can be made to "Van Fund, DAV Chapter 6, P. O. Box 3991, St. Augustine, FL 32085

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Is a semi-permanent veteran healthcare facility a step closer?

With the delivery of a port-a-potty, many St. Johns County veterans considered phase one of the building of the temporary VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) complete.

The extremely long-awaited CBOC relocation is finally underway. For Real!!!!



l-r Dee Tucker DAV Auxiliary ,
an unknown driver, Michael
Isam, Tom Waskovich

The Department of Veterans Affairs has been quiet about the process, but many veterans have been keeping a sharp eye on the chosen property located at the intersection of Health Park Boulevard and Old Moultrie Road.

That first sign of movement, the delivery of a portable toilet which sat by itself for quite some time, began to spark hopes of many veterans.

Early in the week of June 8, 2015 a person carrying a large sheaf of blueprints was seen apparently pacing off distances.

A day later a man carrying a host of Day-Glo colors mounted on a special adapter followed and marked underground utilities.

Next to appear on the property was a survey crew, followed quickly by the installation of the silk environmental protection cloth.

Out of nowhere it seemed, large motorized “implements of destruction,” (circa “Alice’s Restaurant”) appeared in the middle of the field. Did they sprout from the ground?

Thus began the official destruction of all living beings within the confines of the silk barriers. Cutting, ripping and scraping were the order of the day as the few trees in the middle of the property were felled and piled. This was quickly followed by a giant backhoe scraping the groundcover and digging down nearly one foot to bare dirt.

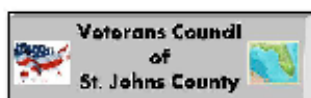
When queried about the completion date, none of the veterans were taking any side bets it will be complete by October 1, 2015 when the fines elevate to \$100,000 per month plus \$35,000 per month operating expenses.

photos by Michael Isam



CBOC Phase 4





HONORING OUR VETERANS

Please join us on Sunday November 8th, 1:00 pm,
for a patriotic afternoon 'Honoring Our Veterans'
Anastasia Baptist Church - 1650 A1A S. St. Augustine

Highlights

St. Augustine High School Chorus

Iraq/Afghanistan Memorial will be on display

**Local veterans organizations will be in the Atrium
from 1:00 to 2:30pm displaying their activities**

**As broadcast on PBS, See the very moving story of
the Warriors at 'K9s for Warriors' and how rescued
K9s are trained to assist these warriors with PTSD
adjust to life back home**

PROUD SUPPORTER OF



**Open To The Public
No Admission
Charge**



Hosted by the Veterans Council, Inc. of St. Johns County and Anastasia Baptist Church

From General Capps

On Friday June 5th I had the opportunity to meet the ole gunny Sgt from TV . I'm at the dedication of the CMP Talladega Marksmanship range in Anniston AL. Notice I'm wearing my AUSA shirt !!! Tomorrow, June 6th, I fire in the 71 st Anniversary of D-Day M1 Grand match !! Hooha !!



Your Military History Wanted

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.



1967 Danang Vietnam

Byron E. "Mac" McDaniel

Enlisted in 1964. Retired in 1987 as a Chief Warrant Officer.

Served 22+ years in the Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) field.

ASA 1964 – 76 then INSCOM 77 – 87.

Member of the American Legion, Military Officers Association of America, and Life Time Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

VA rating 100% Service-Related and Combat Related

Mac has two very informative websites that are worth a look:

<http://veteraninformationlinksasa.com/>

<http://thearmysecurityagency.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**







"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity.

I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was a part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades . . . Such good men."

George J. Marrett, from his book *Cheating Death: Combat Air Rescues in Vietnam and Laos*

Still Waiting to Come Home

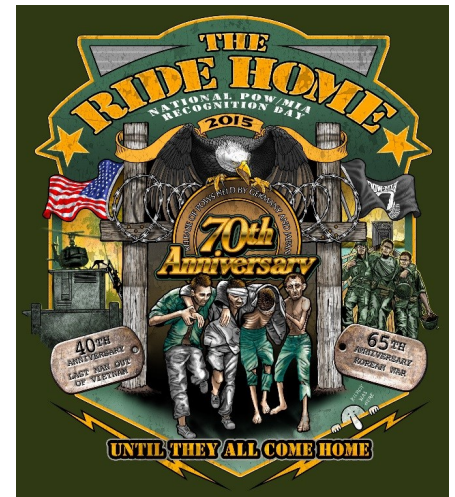


WWI 3,349	Cold War 126
WWII 73,515	Korea 7,852
Vietnam 1627	
Iraq & Afghanistan 6	

Every Soldier Deserves To Come Home!



The Ride Home 2015



70th Anniversary WW II
62nd Anniversary Korea
42nd Anniversary Vietnam
12th Anniversary Iraq
150th Anniversary Civil War

WELCOME HOME!



The RIDE HOME, Inc.

3818 Litchfield Loop
Lake Wales, FL 33859
theridehome.com

On National POW/MIA Recognition Day we will be hosting **The RIDE HOME 2015**. This weekend event, **17-20 September**, takes place in and around the cities of Americus and Andersonville, Georgia, home of the *National Prisoner of War Museum*. **The RIDE HOME 2015** complies with the Presidential Proclamation by paying tribute to Former American Prisoners of War who have returned home and the families of those Americans still Missing in Action.

Honorees for the 2015 event will include former *Prisoners of War* and families of our *Missing in Action* from World War II, Korea, Cold War, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. As part of the tribute package to these true American Heroes, **The RIDE HOME** with the help and generosity of American Patriots, like you, will provide a room (3 nights) in Americus, Heroes Dinner, Ground-Pounder & Fly-Boy Lunch, entertainment, Awards Ceremony as well as transportation to and from the events for the Honored Guest. This complete Tribute package is valued at \$375.00. For all they endured as Prisoners of War and the emotional torture the Missing In Action families struggle with every day, we hope you agree this is worthy of your participation. Remember, a full Tribute Package or a portion of one, either choice is greatly appreciated and will help to reach the goal of 175 Honored Guest for the 2015 event.

The RIDE HOME is open to the public and we encourage everyone to attend so that they may meet and spend time with the POW or MIA family member sponsored and you can have the honor of placing the Medallion on a Hero during the Recognition Service.

Please complete the form below and mail it with your contribution to **The RIDE HOME**. Contributions of \$375 or more will receive **The Ride Home 2015** t-shirt, patch, sponsor bar, and pin. If you would prefer to use your Debit or Credit Card, you can go to our website, www.theridehome.com, click on *DONATE* and follow the instructions for PAY PAL.

On behalf of **The RIDE HOME, Inc.** Board of Directors,

Thank You!

Respectfully,

Jim 'moe' Moyer

Chairman

-

I wish to help sponsor a former POW and/or a MIA Family member to **The RIDE HOME 2015**

_____ Complete Tribute Package \$375. _____ Other

Include a t-shirt for donations of \$375.00 or more: _____ size

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City _____

State & Zipcode _____

Phone/email: _____

Mail check to: **The RIDE HOME, Inc.** 3818 Litchfield Loop, Lake Wales, FL 33859

THE RIDE HOME, INC. IS A NON PROFIT CORPORATION – REGISTRATION NUMBER: CH38670 A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL 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.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

**Commemoration Parade and Ceremony
Saturday, 15 August 2015, St. Augustine.**



Brigadier Gaines and officers survey the largely unmolested remains of Major Francis L. Dade's column, two months after its annihilation by Seminole Indians on 28 December, 1835. (Photo credit: State Archives of Florida, *Florida Memory*.)

For the past seven years, the West Point Society of North Florida has commemorated the sacrifice and service of those, including many of its graduates, who perished in the 2nd Seminole War, 1835 - 1842. That war, though largely forgotten and little understood, was a hallmark of Florida's territorial years, and the growth of the young American republic which had acquired it.



The commemoration's focus is the three pyramids in St. Augustine's National Cemetery. On 15 August 1842, a stirring parade escorted, to what was then a garden plot, the remains of hundreds officers and soldiers, including those of Dade's entire column, who perished in the war. They were interred there under the pyramids with a solemn ceremony marking the cessation of "hostilities." The commemoration has grown over the years, and now involves numerous veterans and civic organizations interested in

bringing the story of this long, difficult struggle out of the shadows and mists of time. These include the Seminole Wars Foundation, the Dade Battlefield Society, the 450th Military Commemoration Committee, as well MOAA's Ancient City Chapter, and the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.

Given St. Augustine's 450th anniversary celebration, this year's commemoration will be very special. The parade Saturday morning will include about 70 re-enactors, and the keynote speaker for the National Cemetery ceremony will be the West Point Command Historian, Sherman Fleek. The event will begin Friday PM with special era displays at the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum. At 6PM in the Florida National Guard Officers Club, Dr. Michelle Sivilich will present the results of her dissertation which examined how well a West Point education prepared graduates for the war. Saturday afternoon, following the ceremony in the National Cemetery, there will be a lunch for re-enactors and a convocation of historians in nearby Trinity Hall, Trinity Parish.



Please note that while the parade and ceremony Saturday morning are free and open to the public at large, **PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED for admission to the lunch and ceremony in Trinity hall, and the officers club Friday evening.**

The complete event schedule and **pre-registration form** are below. Our whole team is looking forward to seeing you at what promises to be memorable event. If you have questions or wish more information, please contact:

Joe Naftzinger at: jnatnc@aol.com.



Shown above is the proof of this year's coin. The face, designed by Mr. Ted Pappas based on the painting "Do Your Best," by Mr. Jackson Walker. It depicts Captain G. W. Gardiner, West Point class of 1814, and the Academy's 1st Commandant of Cadets. He is giving desperate encouragement to his men during the fateful final hours of their engagement with the Seminoles, December, 1835. Also prevalent on the coin is the "6 pounder" canon that accompanied Dade's column, an exact replica of which will be fired during this year's parade and ceremony.



West Point Society of North Florida
Seminole Wars Foundation

Dade Battlefield Society
450th Military Commemoration Center

present:

The 8th Annual Seminole War Commemoration

Saint Augustine, August 15th, 2015

Prelude, Friday, August 14

- 1 to 5 pm. **Period exhibits, living history presentations.**
Ximinez-Fatio House Museum, 20 Aviles Street.
Public Invited.
- 5 to 7 pm. *Re-enactor's organizational meeting.
***Presentation**, "The Role of A West Point Military Academy
Education During the 2nd Seminole War." Michelle Sivilich, PhD.
Officers Club, St. Francis Barracks, 82 Marine St.

Saturday, August 15

- 10 am. Assembly at Reviewing Stand, St. Francis Barracks, 82 Marine St.**
Welcome, Florida National Guard. LTC Betsy Evans, FLARNG.
The Historical Context, Christopher Kimball, Seminole Wars Foundation.
- 10:30 am. Parade Enters Marine Street.**
Parade narration by Steven Rinck, portraying a Corporal, 4th U.S. Infantry.
- 1100 to 11:30 am. Commemoration Ceremony, St. Augustine National Cemetery.**
Key Note remarks, Mr. Sherman L. Fleek, Command Historian,
United States Military Academy, West Point.
Wreath laying, Cadet Prayer, volley fire, taps.
Public Invited.
- 1200 to 2:30 pm. *Lunch, re-enactor's reception, convocation of historians at,**
Trinity Hall, Trinity Parish, 215 St. George St.
Presentation of challenge coins.
Debut of the *Florida Seminole Wars Heritage Trail Guide*, (published under a
grant from the Division of Historical Resources). John Missall, Seminole Wars
Foundation.

*** Pre-registration required . Contact Jerry Casale at: FITZGERARD@aol.com**

The Commemoration emphasizes the following themes:

- * The 2nd Seminole War ended without a final treaty. The United States unilaterally "announced" the end of hostilities, and the re-interment parade was a solemn commemoration, not a victorious march.
- * The war was an important proving ground for the U. S. Army and its West Point trained leadership.
- * Military conflict and sacrifice were omnipresent features of life during Florida's territorial years.
- * Living history re-enactors are crucial to fostering awareness of life during the period -- especially since the Seminole Wars reside in the shadows of America's military memory.

2015 SEMINOLE WAR COMMEMORATION REGISTRATION

The Parade and Ceremony on Saturday morning are open to the public at large, but **pre-registration is required** to attend the re-enactor's lunch and historians convocation in Trinity Hall, Saturday afternoon, and entrance to the St. Francis Barracks Officers Club, Friday evening. The registration fee is \$15 per adult,* and includes free admission to the Ximinez-Fatio House Museum displays and living history Friday afternoon as well. To register, please fill out the form below and mail with an accompanying check before 1 August.

(* Fee is waived for re-enactors (and one guest) who participate in the parade and register through the Dade Battlefield Society with Steve Rinck at: stevenrinck@gmail.com.)

REGISTRATION FORM

Please register me for the Seminole War Commemoration event, 14-15 August, 2015.

Name _____, I will bring _____ guests.

Enclosed is check # _____ in amount of \$ _____. (Total fee is \$15 x adults in party.)

Please make check out to: Treasurer, W.P.S.N.F. (annotated "August registration"), and mail together with this form to: W.P.S.N.F.

c/o J. E. Naftzinger
512 North Legacy Trail
St. Augustine, FL 32092



SUPPORT BRIGADE -- JOIN NOW

The sponsoring organizations and individual re-enactors contribute significant personal time, effort, and expense to present this event, but we depend on individual donations to defray the considerable costs associated with it. You can help by joining the "Support Brigade" at one of two levels. Your generosity will go far to keeping this important chapter of Florida's history alive in the public consciousness.

All those joining the Support Brigade will receive the unique challenge coin and be identified on its rolls in the official program. Those at the Commander level are invited to include an icon or logo, with a short salutation.

YES, ENROLL ME IN THE SUPPORT BRIGADE!

___ As a "Loyal Trooper" (\$50-\$99):
Name as you wish it printed in program _____

___ As a "Commander" (\$100 and higher):
Name as you wish it printed in program _____

+ send Logo/Icon, and/or short salutation to jnatnc@aol.com. (tel. 904-940-0932)

Please make your check out to Treasurer, W.P.S.N.F. (annotated "Support Brigade") and mail together with this form to: W.P.S.N.F.

c/o J. E. Naftzinger
512 North Legacy Trail
St. Augustine, FL 32092



INVITATION

VETERAN TEAM MEETING/ORIENTATION

Through our “*Veterans Inspiring Patriotism*” program, the Joe Foss Institute has recruited and prepared hundreds of Veteran Volunteer speakers to present educational programs and bring their personal stories to school classrooms and youth groups nationwide. We want to recognize you, show our appreciation for your support, provide you an update on JFI operations and welcome other Veterans interested in joining our Team..

- WHAT:** Meet Veteran Team Members
Overview of JFI Strategy for the Future
New Veteran Orientation
- WHEN:** Saturday, August 29, 2015 1030-1230 hrs
**Continental Breakfast will be provided*
- WHERE:** St. Johns County Main Library
1960 N. Ponce De Leon Blvd
St. Augustine, FL 32084
- RSVP:** Audrey Mazzotta
321-652-8848
amazzotta@joefossinstitute.org

The Joe Foss Institute (JFI) was founded in 2001 by Veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Joe and his wife Donna “Didi” Foss. The organization works to educate our youth on the importance of America’s unique freedoms and to promote patriotism and public service.

www.Joefossinstitute.org



The 2015 Florida Legislative Special Session is about to enter its third and final week. Budget negotiations are continuing.

Most of the veteran-related bills coming from the regular 2015 legislative session have been signed into law by Governor Scott. Here's a quick summary as of June 11.

Legislation

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. Authorizes the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to accept a military personnel identification card as proof of a Social Security number when applying for a Florida driver's license or identification card. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 6/2/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

SB 7028 & HB 35 -- 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. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 5/21/15. Effective immediately.)*

SB 132 & HB 51 -- Authorizes veterans to provide the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles alternative documentation for renewal or replacement of disabled parking permits. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 5/14/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

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. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 6/2/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

HB 185 & SB 674 -- Creates a public records exemption for the identification and location information of current or former active duty servicemembers of the United States Armed Forces, their reserve components, or the National Guard who served after September 11, 2001, and their spouses and dependents. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 6/2/15. Effective immediately.)*

HB 801 & SB 876 -- 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. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 6/11/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

HB 277 & SB 394 -- Provides that a public lodging establishment classified as a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast inn is required to waive any minimum age policy it may have that restricts accommodations to individuals based on age for individuals who are currently on active duty as a member of the United States Armed Forces, the National Guard, Reserve Forces, or Coast Guard and who present a valid military identification card. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 6/11/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

SB 184 & HB 109 -- Authorizes absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters to use the federal write-in absentee ballot in any state or local election. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 5/21/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

HB 71 & SB 414 – Updates laws affecting the use of service animals by people with disabilities. Florida law provides that an individual with a disability, defined as a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or otherwise physically disabled, is entitled to equal access to public accommodations, public employment and housing accommodations. The individual may be accompanied by a trained service animal in all areas of public accommodations that the public is normally allowed to occupy. Any person who denies or interferes with the right of a person with a disability or a service animal trainer to access a place of public accommodation commits a second degree misdemeanor. The bill revises the definition of the term “individual with a disability” to add an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The bill requires a public accommodation to modify its policies to permit the use of a service animal by an individual with a disability. The bill further specifies that a public accommodation may not ask about the nature or extent of an individual’s disability in order to determine if an animal is a service animal or pet. Finally, the bill provides that knowingly and willfully misrepresenting oneself as being qualified to use a service animal or being a trainer of a service animal is a second degree misdemeanor. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 6/11/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

SB 686 & HB 361-- Florida law provides an exemption from ad valorem taxation for property owned by the United States. Federal law also recognizes the immunity of property of the United States from ad valorem taxation. The bill recognizes in statute that leaseholds and improvements constructed and used to provide housing pursuant to the federal Military Housing Privatization Initiative (Housing Initiative) on land owned by the federal government are exempt from Florida ad valorem taxation. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 5/21/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

HB 225 & SB 590 -- Requires all United States and state flags purchased by the state, a county, or a municipality for public use, after January 1, 2016, to be made in the United States entirely from domestically grown, produced, and manufactured ma-

terials. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 6/11/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

HB 1069 & SB 1170 -- Relating to Defendants in Specialized Courts -- requires a trial court to transfer certain criminal cases involving participants in specified programs to another jurisdiction having such program under certain conditions. *(Sent to governor for signature on June 1; deadline for signing is June 16.)*

HB 471 & SB 788 -- Allows a vehicle displaying a Disabled Veteran "DV" license plate to park for free in a local facility or lot that provides timed parking spaces. Restrictions apply. *(Signed into law by Governor Scott on 6/10/15. Effective July 1, 2015.)*

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. Note: Captain Krepstekies will be on Florida National Guard training from June 5 to June 22.

Regards, Steve

R. Steven Murray, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (Ret)

Communications Director, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Office (850) 487-1533, Ext. 7714 Cell (850) 491-1092

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.

CONGRATULATIONS, NEASE!

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. -

The Navy League of the United States presented Nease NJROTC with the Most Outstanding Unit in the Nation trophy during a recognition ceremony on June 3 at Nease High School -- an award which recognizes the top unit of 587 Navy JROTC units worldwide.

This is the first time Nease has received the prestigious award. Southold High School from Long Island, New York finished second in the nation.

"The entire unit should feel proud of this achievement," said cadet battalion commander Michaela Heinrich. "All 237 cadets contributed to our unit's success."

The Navy League sponsors the national award. St. Augustine council president Bill Dudley presented the honor to Cadet Heinrich. The award criteria includes level of academic achievements, field meet performance, orientation activities, school service projects, community service activities, extracurricular activities, annual formal inspection report and summer training activities.

"I could not be more proud of these extraordinary young men and women," said Capt. Scott LaRochelle, Nease senior naval science instructor. "Our senior class leadership was exceptional, and their legacy of commitment and service will be remembered for years to come."

Among Nease's noteworthy achievements this year -- more than 5,200 hours of community service; 1st place finishes in Mandarin Drill Meet, Terry Parker Drill Meet, Area 12 Drill Meet Championships, Middleburg Pentathlon, Lithonia Ironman, Bartram Raider Challenge, Lee Ultimate Frisbee Championship and Navarre Academic Postal. Internally, the unit sponsors its own mentoring and tutoring program to ensure the military and academic development of all cadets in the program.

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**Bill Dudley, President
St. Augustine-Palm Coast Council
Navy League of the United States presents trophy**





Missing In America Project

SAVE THE DATE -SAVE THE DATE - SAVE THE DATE

Friday, Sept 25, 2015 - 1:00pm @ the Jacksonville National Cemetery.
CALL TO HONOR #6 - MIAP-FL will be interring 20 veterans/spouses that were located at Hardage-Giddens Funeral Home, Jacksonville, FL.

Our numbers keep increasing on a daily basis. As of 6/03/2015 here is our Nation-wide Progress to Date

Total Funeral Homes Visited - 1,777
Cremains Found - 11,269
Veterans Cremains Identified - 2,597
Veterans Interred - 2,360.

If you want more info on MIAP go to www.miap.us. Please feel free to also contact me @ miapjax@yahoo.com. There are many ways you can become involved with our Project.

MIAP - FL will be holding the following services on the dates listed.
Details will be published as it gets closer to the date.

September 25, 2015 @ 1:00pm (Friday)
Jacksonville National Cemetery

November 05, 2015 @ 1:00pm (Thursday)
Sarasota National Cemetery

December 05, 2015 @ 10:00am (Saturday)
South Florida National Cemetery

Navy League Honors Battle of Midway Veterans

Story Number: NNS150616-17Release Date: 6/16/2015 11:23:00 AM
By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Stacy D. Laseter

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. (NNS) -- Seventy-three years after the Battle of Midway, hundreds of guests honored veterans at the Battle of Midway Memorial Dinner held at the World Golf Village Renaissance Resort in St. Augustine, Florida, June 13.

The Battle of Midway, is regarded as one of the most important naval battles in U.S. history and was fought six months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The dinner, sponsored by the U.S. Navy League, was planned as a way to pay tribute to veterans who fought so heroically at the Battle of Midway. According to Navy League Region President John Vargo, the event is for current and former military members.

"It's to honor Midway vets and celebrate their accomplishments," Vargo said. "Midway was a key accomplishment in the Navy's history; it was the event that put the United States Navy on the map as a naval superpower in 1942. The memorial dinner is for all Sailors, to make them proud of themselves and their country."

The guest speaker for the 18th annual event was Marine Corps Gen. John Kelly, Commander, United States Southern Command. He spoke of the importance of not only paying tribute to the battle, but the men who fought it.



"We are really here not just to remember that battle," Kelly said, "but we are gathered here to remember the incredible courage of the men who faced an incredible enemy. We are gathered here not just to honor a turning point in the Second World War, but to remember the bravery of the men who didn't blink in the face of adversity."

Additional highlights of the evening were a special full-service color guard presentation by members of all six services that included a tribute to the POW/MIA table.

Gen. Kelly administered the oath of enlistment to 10 new Marine Corps recruits, and the evening also included readings of Robert Ingram's Medal of Honor citation, as well as short biographies of the Midway veterans and former prisoners of war in attendance.

A reading of "Old Glory" was followed by special recognition of the Wounded Warriors from Iraq and Afghanistan who were in attendance. The whole audience gave several standing ovations, and the event finished with the 654-person audience singing Lee Greenwood's song "God Bless the USA."



Nomination Deadline:
July 24, 2015

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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

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

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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.