

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. Minutes of August 31, 2017

Officers present: Chairman Bill Dudley; Secretary Michael Rothfeld, John Mountcastle, Treas. Vice Chairman Ray Quinn

Chairman Dudley called the meeting to order at 1900 hours

Chairman Dudley led the Pledge to the Flag, Vice Chairman Ray Quinn gave the Invocation
Last month's Minutes were approved as presented at the meeting.
The Treasurer's Report was approved as amended at the meeting

Introduction of Guests:

Kimberly Gibbons, Atlantic Coast Young Marines
Milk Klim American Legion Post 233
Jeremiah Blocker & Jason Odom of N FL Lawyers

Speakers:

Kimberly Gibbons, Atlantic Coast Young Marines: Their Mission is to positively impact America's future by providing quality youth development for all children nurturing them into responsible citizens who enjoy & promote a healthy, drug free lifestyle. Open to all children 8 thru High School.

Committee Reports:

Mac: The appeals process has been over hauled. The VSO does not have all the info yet. Mac discussed the new GI "Forever Bill", educational benefits available without a time frame. As of Nov. 11 military exchanges will be online. The VSO saw over 1000 new clients in 2016.

Michael: There are still a few seats available for the Sept. 16th Ken Burns Vietnam War preview, contact Michael if you want to attend.

John Leslie: FL VVA wants to be prepared for any reaction to the Vietnam documentary. He will be meeting with PBS on Sept. 13 to discuss how to get the word out via PBS about Veterans Crisis Call Centers.

John presented Michael with an Honorary Life Membership to the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Judy Davis/Ray Quinn, funds are needed for Wreaths Across America to cover ALL headstones at St Augustine National Cemetery. It is \$ 15 a wreath. Donation forms distributed and all asked to circulate.

Kathy: Kathy gave a to date summary of MIAP's, 3177 interred veterans so far. She is now meeting with Craig in St. Augustine. All invited to Amer. Legion 233 on 9/16 for a VA Burial Benefits presentation, from 9 to 11am.

Chairman Dudley spoke at length on the new developments regarding the St Augustine CBOC. The VA has changed its path for the third time. SJC still committed to working with the VA and seeing this project through to the end. The VA says the center of the veterans population is Dupont Center in southern St Johns County. Capt. USN (Ret) Randy Stapleford of Cong. DeSantis's office was part of the meeting with the VA via phone as was Chairman Dudley and SJC VSO Joe McDermott.

The monument issue was briefly discussed, Chairman Dudley said St Augustine monuments are to veterans and should be respected and not moved, The north and south soldiers were only obeying orders. The Council's policy is don't desecrate monuments to veterans.

New Business: Eric West, publisher of Military Deals magazine spoke about how veterans can get free tickets to the Tax Slayer Bowl by going to milsaver.com

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

The next meeting of the Veterans Council will be on **Thursday, September 28**, 7 pm in the Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View.

Future speakers:

September 28, Bob Buehn, Capt USN (Ret), Coordinator of the UNF Veterans Resource Center

Andrew Coughlan, from the Wounded Warrior Project

October 26, Mike Mitchell, Jacksonville University Veteran Students Coordinator

Scott Grant, speaking about the German U Boat attack in Jacksonville Beach

November 30, Cynthia Thompson, Veterans treatment Court Coordinator

Eric Heineman, Executive Director K9s United

