

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. Minutes of July 27, 2017

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

Chairman Dudley called the meeting to order at 1855 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 presented at the meeting

Introduction of Guests:

Dr Thomas McKenzie, CMO St Augustine CBOC

Sara Slettebo, Women in Defense First Coast Chapter

Jeff Robertson, VP Veterans Training of Finding the Uniform

April Hayden, Program Manager, Finding the Uniform

Nick English

Speakers:

Dr. McKenzie, Dr. McKenzie meets quarterly with Chairman Dudley and Randy Stapleford of Cong. DeSantis' office to discuss any problems. There is no date or location yet on the new CBOC, it is a long process. The new building will be 15,000 sq. ft.

Sara Slettebo, Women in Defense, is the Executive Director of the 501 c3 which helps vets by educating and empowering them. In St Augustine Women in Defense consists 65% women, 35% men. Her organization gives back to the community by helping veterans network with those that can help them.

Jeff Robertson, a USMC veteran who served in Afghanistan from 2000 to 2005, told his personal story of how Operation Uniform helped him transition from military to civilian life. They are now turning away 40 veterans a month and are looking for a larger facility. A recent study shows 92% of their graduates benefit with a good job after taking their transitional program.

John Leslie, VVA 1084 hosted a Mental Health and First Aid Program for veterans and their families. 18 attended the class. They will host another program on Aug. 15, 1 pm at the SJC Health & Human Services building, topic is Suicide Prevention. John displayed the new VVA 1084 memorial display with a map of Vietnam and plaques with the names of the 16 military who died in Vietnam defending their country.

Committee Reports:

Mac: spoke about the Homeless Veterans Stand Down on Saturday Sept. 30 at the St Augustine Elks Lodge with a 9am set up on Sept. 28. Mental Health is now available for former service members even if not honorably discharged.

Michael: Michael announced the Veteran Council's preview event of Ken Burns Vietnam documentary on Saturday Sept. 16, from 7 to 9:30 [pm at the Corazon Cinema, 36 Granada St. more info to follow

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. VVA donated \$ 150. for wreaths. Jerry Cameron donated \$ 100.

Mike Cassatta, Pres. Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial. They are moving forward every day after the Jax City Council unanimously voted to lease them 26 acres at Cecil Field. They will be hosting an Open House on National POW/MIA Day on Sept. 15.

Chairman Dudley, The VTC is doing well, with 12 to 15 vets in the program. There are currently 7 mentors and they are looking for more.

The Third Annual Veterans Day Parade committee has been meeting every month and is proud to announce that this years will be the biggest and best. Already committed to appear: military and school marching bands, helicopters and fly overs. Trolleys will be available to transport veterans and their care takers.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14 pm.

The next meeting of the Veterans Council will be on **Thursday, August 31**, 7 pm in the Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View.

Our speakers will be Kimberly Gibbons, Atlantic Coast Young Marines and Derek Boyd Hankerson, Author, Lecturer, Producer, speaking about the Military History of Ft. Mose

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, Review of Veterans' Day Parade activities