



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

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Message from the Chairman

Newsletter Date: April, 2017

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Fellow Veterans:

Your Veterans Council is working with MOAA, Ancient City Chapter for this year's Memorial Day ceremony at St. Augustine National Cemetery. This year's key note speaker will be Brigadier General Brian Simpler, Asst. Adjutant General, Air, Florida National Guard. The date of the Memorial Day Ceremony is Monday, 29 May 2017 at 10 AM. Please plan to have your veteran's organization recognized by participating in the massing of the colors.

The Veterans Council and MOAA are again planning for a Veterans Day Parade this year that promises to be even larger than the past two years. There is the probability that the Army, Navy, and Coast Guard will participate this year with a marching band. Several other military marching units have expressed interest in participating as has several

local high school bands. We also have reached out to several JROTC units in the area and have received positive responses.

For this year's Veterans Day Parade we intend to honor several of our local heroes. The emphasis will be on these heroes and their service to our nation. It is also important that all of our veteran's organizations be represented in some way in the parade. To do this, it is important that your organization have a representative on the committee and assist in the planning and fund raising to make the parade a huge success. Please let me know if your veteran's organization is interested in being a part of the planning committee. There is much work to be done.

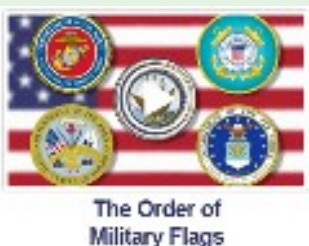
I am very pleased to report that our Veterans Treatment Court is now fully functional. We have five veterans entered in the program with another



five that were in court on Thursday, 23 March to decide if they wanted to accept the program. The program is very dynamic at this point and changing frequently as members of the VTC Team complete training, new mentors are added, and the Policy Manual is updated. The Veterans Council is extremely pleased with the progress to date.

Until further notice, we will continue to conduct our Veterans Council meetings at the St. Johns Health and Human Services Building at 200 San Sebastian View, Muscovy Room. We do not have any confirmation as to when the Elks Lodge will be back on a full operating schedule.

Bill Dudley
Chairman Veterans Council
of St. Johns County



Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



This video was arranged by Bob Adelhelm of Jacksonville's Vets 4 Vets. Please view it and get behind this just cause.

Thanks to our friend Jorge Rivera of FirstCoast.tv for helping spread the word about this injustice.

About two decades ago, the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial was built to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. So, Fred Blaz came to First Coast.TV to speak about the issues many veterans have concerning the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Wall's criteria, especially dealing with bringing a veteran's name to be on the wall. He also spoke about Sergeant Randall Hansen and his efforts to get his name on the wall.

<http://www.firstcoast.tv/veteran-memorial-wall-issues/>





**The Jacksonville National Cemetery
Greetings from the Support
Committee at the Jacksonville
National Cemetery!**



The Support Committee invites everyone to attend its **next scheduled meeting, on Monday, April 3, 2017**. 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**.

+++++2015/2016 Officers of the SCJNC+++++

Chairman: Steve Spickelmier

Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley, Treasurer: John Mountcastle

Assistant Treasurer: Michael Rothfeld, Secretary: Kathy Church

Chaplain: Michael Halyard, Master-At-Arms: Joe McDermott

Historian: Kathy Cayton

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Florida, through a collaboration with the Rotary Club of Palatka, presented to all five public libraries in Putnam County,

Florida, complete DVD sets from their documentary series of interviews of local veterans; the documentaries are regular features on PBS and presented annually as part of Veterans Day services at the University of North Florida.



Pictured are Rotarian Dr. Dianne Taylor and Putnam County library representatives, Shlonqueia Clark and VonShell Offord.

SUPPORT COMMITTEE AT JACKSONVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY

4083 Lannie Road, Jacksonville, FL 32218

March 23, 2017

Pictured are two aerial pictures of the Jacksonville National Cemetery taken by Michael W. Smith, ALR 283 & PGR.



The SCJNC with the lead of Chairman, Steve Spickelmier, is working with JNC Director, Al Richburg, and employees to resolve parking issues during events that take place at the JNC.

Per a staff member of JNC as of 3/22/17 the number of interments since the opening in January 2009 is above 12,000. JNC serves north Florida and south Georgia.

The Support Committee is currently working with JNC on several memorial events to be held at the JNC. These include the 50th Anniversary to honor Vietnam veterans, 100th Anniversary to honor WWI veterans and Memorial Day to honor those who died in active duty service.

Dates for these memorials are:

Vietnam – TBA, we are waiting on a date to be determined by the VA Administration.

WWI – April 6, 2017 @ 12noon, details TBA
Memorial Day – Saturday, May 27, 2017 @ 10:00am, details TBA

The next quarterly meeting of the Support Committee will be on Monday, April 3, 2017 at 7:00pm at Community Hospice, located at 4266 Sunbeam Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257.

**Veterans may now pre-register to be interred in a National Cemetery. The first step is to fax your DD214 to (866) 900-6417, then call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at (800) 535-1117.

NCSO is open 7 days a week from

7:00am – 6:30pm. They can also answer any questions you may have.

All veterans and delegated family members should have a copy of the DD214 on hand. Copies may be obtained by requesting military service records online, by mail, or by fax. (Includes DD 214/Separation Documents, Personnel Records, Replacement Medals, and/or Medical Records). The website to use is www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs. Below is the information that you will need to request a DD214 or other info.

The veteran's complete name used while in service *

Service number*

Social security number*

Branch of service*

Dates of service

Date and place of birth (especially if the service number is not known).

If you suspect your records may have been involved in the 1973 fire, also include:

Place of discharge

Last unit of assignment

Place of entry into the service, if known.

All requests must be signed and dated by the veteran or next-of-kin.

If you are the next of kin of a deceased veteran, you must provide proof of death of the veteran such as a copy of death certificate, letter from funeral home, or published obituary.

Archives must have at least the info starred above*.

If you have not yet visited the JNC or any of the other 8 national cemeteries in Florida, please take the time to do so. Many people do not even know that there is a national cemetery in their area or that a veteran, spouse of a veteran and a dependent child can be interred in a national cemetery (if the veteran was honorably discharged).

See next page for a listing of all 9 Florida National Cemeteries. What a good subject for a middle or high school student to do a report on.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions on this report

Kathy Church

SCJNC, Secretary

Florida National Cemeteries

CITY	FLORIDA NATIONAL CEMETERIES	ACRES	NOTABLE COMMENTS
Bushnell	Florida National Cemetery – interments started Has a Carrillon Bell donated by AMVETS	1988	512.9 located n the Withlacoochee State Forest
Jacksonville	Jacksonville National Cemetery – Jan 2009	526	Has a Carrillon Bell donated by AMVETS
Lake Worth	South Florida National Cemetery – 2007	313	5th NC in FL, 125 in National System
Mims	Cape Canaveral National Cemetery - 1,12, 2016	318	Still under construction
Pensacola	Barrancas National Cemetery - 1838_	UNK	Located on Naval Air Station Pensacola
Sarasota	Sarasota National Cemetery - Jan 09, 2009	295	Has a 2,800 seat amphitheatre-Patterson Foundation
St. Augustine	St. Augustine National Cemetery - 1828 Located on St Francis Barracks, FL headquarters, FLNG	1.4	VA list 1828 & 1839 as first burials
St. Petersburg	Bay Pines National Cemetery - April 25, 1933 Has a Carrillon Bell donated by AMVETS	27.3	Located on grounds of VAC, Pinellas County
Tallahassee	Tallahassee National Cemetery - Oct 16, 2016	250	Still under construction

There are 135 National Cemeteriers in 40 states

The end of an era, the beginning of a new one. Shari Duval the founder and legend behind K9s For Warriors is stepping down, leaving K9s in very capable hands.



This is from **Shari:**

Brett my Son, Todd Galley (son-in-law) and I officially opened K9s for Warriors for non-profit business. Bob and I leveraged our money, bought a small house, with one acre. We had huge dreams and unbelievable challenges. How are we going to fund this? Where are we going to get warriors suffering from PTS, where are we getting the dogs we need for Brett to train? It took me over a year to get our 501 3c , before this month 6 years ago. Brett and I went to the shelters looking for dogs, Todd helped set up our office. Friends helped create a logo, a web site, "Google"...LOL. Friends believed, Admiral Kevin Delaney Believed, family believed. Orland Wolford TBC retail believed, securing us our first "large chunk of money" to help us survive. I cleaned, cooked for the warriors, our first was "Daniel " (I know you are reading buddy), Brett trained the dogs, and the warriors.

Our concept then , as is now, give them a real home for three weeks, respect honor, serve them, turn their lives around. Give them a reason to live after war. I spoke at every Rotary Club from here to Miami, Sandi Capra joined us, (thank you Sandi), she helped in Marketing our organization getting new donors. Slowly we grew, I do not even know how, yes I do.....By The Grace of God. Then came the volunteers , first from the American Legion Post 233, then , Catharina (thank GOD for C), then my savior, OSCAR, still one of my best friends to this day. Without the volunteers, and Oscar , I was working 20 hours a day taking care of the Warriors, speeches, raising money, cooking, cleaning, the dogs...and No pay. LOL, I would do it all over again.

I have seen Miracles, how many people can say that? True MIRACLES. TODAY, after 7 years of hard work, loving every minute, over 300 warrior/dog graduates, I will step down, and RETIRE. K9s is in good hands, I made sure of that. Unbelievable team. The mission remains the same, respect, honor, serve, and save lives. Yes, we have , and K9s will continue to do so. I remain on my Board, will still do many events, call on our major donors that are NOW DEAR FRIENDS, and say goodbye to "MY dream And passion". Now the dream AND MISSION lives on with Rory, Brett, Jason, and our wonderful team. DON'T SCREW IT UP Guys....LOL. Mom is watching.

Thank you God for allowing me this amazing journey, I am humbled. Warrior Grads, you have my number, always here for you, ALWAYS. MOM

115th CONGRESS 1st Session H. RES. 214 Expressing support for designation of a
Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 21, 2017

Ms. Sánchez (for herself, Mr. Cook, Mr. Ryan of Ohio, Mr. Bishop of Georgia, Mrs. Napolitano, Ms. Clarke of New York, Mr. Ellison, Mr. Rush, and Mr. Gallagher) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs



RESOLUTION

Expressing support for designation of a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

Whereas the Vietnam War was fought in Vietnam from 1961 to 1975, and involved North Vietnam and the Viet Cong in conflict with the United States Armed Forces and South Vietnam;

Whereas the United States became involved in Vietnam because policymakers in the United States believed that if South Vietnam fell to a Communist government then Communism would spread throughout the rest of Southeast Asia;

Whereas members of the United States Armed Forces began serving in an advisory role to the South Vietnamese in 1961;

Whereas as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents on August 2, 1964, and August 4, 1964, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, on August 7, 1964, which effectively handed over war-making powers to President Johnson until such time as “peace and security” had returned to Vietnam;

Whereas in 1965, United States Armed Forces ground combat units arrived in Vietnam;

Whereas by the end of 1965, there were 80,000 United States troops in Vietnam, and by 1969 a peak of approximately 543,000 troops was reached;

Whereas, on January 27, 1973, the Treaty of Paris was signed, which required the release of all United States prisoners-of-war held in North Vietnam and the withdrawal of all United States Armed Forces from South Vietnam;

Whereas, on March 29, 1973, the United States Armed Forces completed the withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam;

Whereas March 30, 1973, was the first day that combat troops were no longer present in Vietnam;

Whereas more than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces lost their lives in Vietnam and

more than 300,000 members of the Armed Forces were wounded;

Whereas in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in the District of Columbia to commemorate those members of the United States Armed Forces who died or were declared missing-in-action in Vietnam;

Whereas the Vietnam War was an extremely divisive issue among the people of the United States;

Whereas members of the United States Armed Forces who served bravely and faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War were caught upon their return home in the crossfire of public debate about the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War;

Whereas the establishment of a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day would be an appropriate way to honor those members of the United States Armed Forces who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War; and

Whereas the last Saturday of March 2017 would be an appropriate day to establish as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the designation of Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day;

(2) honors and recognizes the contributions of veterans of the Armed Forces who served in Vietnam; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the contributions of veterans who served in Vietnam and the importance of helping Vietnam era veterans re-adjust to civilian life.



NE FL Vets4Vets



Some Admin notes for our Gatherings and Movement:

1. As our movement continues to grow, we face limited time and space for tabling at our gatherings.
2. To be a guest speaker, you need to put in a request with us well in advance. We are already working on 3rd Quarter Speaker Schedule now.
3. To have a table you must put in a request with us in advance not the day of. We have limited space for tabling and many organizations that want to table.
4. Preference for table requests will be given precedence in this order:
 - Guest Speakers
 - Organizations who regularly attend and help grow the movement
 - New Comers
5. Vets4Vets is not about any individual Veteran or Individual Veteran Organization. As such, we are open to suggestions and ideas to help our movement grow.
6. If your organization has any big events coming up, send us the information and we can share it on our Facebook Page so we can inform more Veterans.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County
“Record, Preserve and Educate”

The Veterans Council believes strongly in educating students about the sacrifices veterans have made for all of us so that we all may enjoy the many freedoms we enjoy often take for granted. For the past 10 year's the Council has worked with students in the Flagler College Communications Dept. and students at the Art Institute of Jacksonville's Film Dept., in producing five documentaries featuring the stories of local veterans.

These documentaries have been broadcast many times on WJCT TV, the PBS affiliate in Jacksonville and on the Pentagon Channel which is beamed to over 20 million people world wide.

The Veterans Council is proud to have its documentaries at the following Museums, Libraries, Colleges and Schools: The Library of Congress, The National World War 2 Museum in New Orleans, Andersonville National Park and Cemetery, Flagler College, University of North Florida, University of Florida, Amelia Island Museum of History, Museum of Science and History in Jacksonville, the Orange County Regional History Center in Orlando, the Vietnam Museums in New Jersey and Texas, and the Lincolnvile Museum in St. Augustine.

The Veterans Council has also provided copies of its documentaries to High Schools in St. Johns, Duval, Clay, Putnam and Flagler Counties and to public libraries in St. Johns, Duval, Clay and Putnam counties.

The Veterans Council provides copies of its WW II, Korea, Vietnam. Prisoners of War, and its K9s For Warriors documentaries, at no cost, to High Schools in St. Johns County, public libraries in St. Johns and Duval County, veteran's groups, local colleges and museums, the Library of Congress, the WW II Museum in New Orleans, the POW Museum in Andersonville, the Pentagon, the Museum of Military History in Kissimmee and the Vietnam Museums in New Jersey and Texas.

To further the Council's Mission of instilling Patriotism in today's youth, the Veterans Council hosted an auditorium program in 2016 to discuss the Vietnam War. The Council paid for and bussed in 11th grade students from 5 local St. Johns County High Schools. The students interacted with local Vietnam veterans and learned a lot about their service. By all accounts the program was hugely successful. The Council has hosted similar programs at the University of N. FL., Flagler College, The Maritime Heritage Center and at Valley Ridge Academy.

All of the Veteran Councils documentaries are located online on the Florida PBS website as well as on the new University of Florida's online digital military website.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is a 501 c3 corporation. It has as its Mission Statement: The objective of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Florida is to be of assistance to all veterans who have served in any of the military branches of service of the United States of America.

The Veterans Council is comprised of members from the more than 28 County veteran's organizations and meets the last Thursday of every month at the Elks Lodge 829, 1420 A1A S., at 7:00 pm. All veterans are welcome to attend.

Bill Dudley, Chairman, Veterans Council St. Johns County
Michael Rothfeld, Secretary

MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT – FLORIDA

CALL TO HONOR #11

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2017

11:00AM

MISSION STATEMENT



The purpose of the Missing in America Project (MIAP) is to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of American veterans through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations, and to provide honor, respect and dignity to those who have served this country by securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes.

“IT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO”

On Saturday, April 1, 2017, at 11:00am, MIAP – Florida, in cooperation with the Boynton Memorial Chapel, Boynton Beach, FL, will be interring the cremains of 15 veterans and 8 spouses of veterans with full military honors at the South Florida National Cemetery located at 6501 Florida State Road 7, Lake Worth, FL 33449.

The veterans being interred served in the US Army, Marine Corps., Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard, during World Wars I and II, and Korea. The spouses sacrificed in the absence of their husbands during World Wars I and II. The longest that any of these being interred has been unclaimed is since 1956.

An escort led by the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office (PBCSO) will leave from the Southeast parking area (the Lantana Road side) of the Target Store at 5900 Florida State Road 7 (Rt. 441), Wellington, FL, on the Northeast corner of State Road 7 and Lantana Road. Any and all motorcycle organizations, riders, and vehicles are welcome to participate. Meeting time is 9:30AM for a safety briefing with the PBCSO, and the escort will depart (KSU) to the cemetery at 10:15AM.

You are cordially invited to attend this service. This service is open to all residents of our area communities.

Kathy Church
MIAP – FL State Coordinator
(904) 219-3035
miapjax@yahoo.com
www.miap.us

MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT 3/22/2017

Our National Progress to Date as of 3/17/2107

**Total Funeral Homes Visited - 2,036
Cremains Found - 14,724
Veterans Cremains Identified - 3,371
Veterans Interred - 3,092**



Our Florida Progress to Date As of 3/22/2017

**Total Funeral Homes Visited – 119
Cremains Identified – 896
Veterans Interred – 122
Spouses Interred – 56
Dependent Child Interred – 1
Missions Scheduled – 23 (18 veterans & 5 spouses)
Missions Pending – 29**

**MIAP-FL will hold it's 11th CTH (Call to Honor) on
Saturday, April 01, 2017 @ 11:00am at the
South Florida National Cemetery, Lake Worth, FL**

For more info on MIAP please go to our website

www.miap.us

Kathy Church, FL State Coordinator

miapjax@yahoo.com (904)219-3035

Flagler College receives grant to research K9s for Warriors program

Service dogs save lives and with the help of a \$10,000 grant, Flagler College faculty and students are proving it. K9s for Warriors, the nation's largest provider of service dogs to military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress, recently awarded the college a grant to continue its research of the program's efficacy that it began in the fall of 2015. The money will go towards funding students' presentations of the research at conferences and to incentivizing survey participation (by giving gift cards for completed surveys).



Professors Dr. Tina Jaeckle and Dr. Angelenia Semegon, co-principals of the grant, were notified in December of the award.

“The longitudinal implications of examining efficacy can give additional validity to the use of service dogs for veterans,” Jaeckle said. “While there are a number of treatment options available, this appears to holistically approach the mitigation of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. Additionally, the inclusion of Flagler College students in the research process benefits them as well as the college.

The service dogs for the K9s for Warriors program help veterans manage acute symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome, including suicidal thoughts, flashbacks, depression and panic attacks. The animals, mostly mixed breeds that have either been donated or rescued, are trained to detect when their owners experience initial post-traumatic stress symptoms and are taught to disrupt those symptoms from emerging, by pawing, making eye contact and physically blocking them from dangerous behavior. Since the non-profit organization began in 2011, 550 dogs and 278 warriors have been rescued (as of January 2017).

Flagler College's connection to K9s for Warriors began with Jaeckle's involvement — first as a volunteer, then as a member of the organization's Board of Directors and now as an advisor. The Social Sciences professor, also director of the college's Criminology program, specializes in emergency crisis management and trauma. She knew the K9s for Warriors program was working by witnessing the impact of veterans paired with

service dogs. But, as she discussed with other Board members, those amazing stories didn't have research to back up what she and others knew. That's when she contacted Psychology Professor Semegon, a fellow colleague with a strong background in research methods.

Together, Semegon and Jaeckle created a questionnaire to assess warriors' overall health. Specifically, they wanted to know about changes in participants' quality of life before and then three, six and 12 months after receiving a service dog. Semegon isn't ready to fully disclose questionnaire results but said the initial findings, based on approximately 100 respondents, are "showing big drops in the number of reported health issues and significant positive outcomes."

Flagler students have also played a role in the research process. Connor Spangenberg, an alumnus who graduated last year, was one of them. He helped out by putting into practice what he was learning in the classroom.

He input data into a statistical software program, and then analyzed the data for its significance in attaining a "target behavior," or in the case of the K9s for Warriors research, an overall improvement in self-reported health. Last year, he and students Lauren Rodriguez and Sadie Owens presented their initial findings at the Southeastern Psychological Association conference in Atlanta.

"I really learned how to do research with the project and use it now in my work," he said. "When you understand data, you can see what's working and what's not." Spangenberg, a registered behavior technician with The Arc of St. Johns, a local organization that provides services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, secured his job four days prior to graduation. He believes his research experience at Flagler helped set him apart from others. Semegon, Spangenberg's former professor, agrees.

"It truly makes them stand head and shoulders above others when they can say they engaged in research," she said. "It's making a difference, it matters and it's a beautiful thing to be involved in."

Rory Diamond, the executive director of K9s for Warriors, also attests to the value of the college's research. He recently shared it with the U.S. Congress for funding and advocacy purposes.

Military Frauds Are Being Exposed, Prosecuted Under Stolen Valor Act

By The Veterans Site

Although it may seem unthinkable in the United States, people try to take advantage of the sacrifices made by our country's military veterans. One way crooks do this is by impersonating service members and claiming to be decorated heroes. Thankfully, one law makes it a federal crime to impersonate a soldier or claim to have earned medals for financial gain. The law also has two ardent backers making it their next mission to expose those frauds.



Two men, Don Shipley and Ryan Berk, both American heroes with decorations and years of service, take it upon themselves to find people posing as vets and then have them arrested. Berk, a former infantryman and Purple Heart recipient, confronted Sean Yetman at a shopping mall near Philadelphia. Yetman claimed to be an Army Ranger, but Berk called out his sloppy uniform and lack of patches on his sleeves. Yetman even admitted on camera that Berk caught him.

In the case of Jonathan Wade Short, he claimed to be a soldier stationed at Fort Knox in Kentucky. He swindled a woman out of thousands of dollars using a fake Army uniform and medals as a cover story. He admitted to impersonating an Army officer in July 2013 before spending a year in federal prison. Short went to prison because of a revised federal law called the Stolen Valor Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Barack Obama in the summer of 2013. Unfortunately, this problem occurs all over the country, which necessitates this law.

Shipley, a former Navy SEAL, takes his crusade the Internet and to YouTube, where he posts videos of frauds wearing uniforms. The man in this video tries to pass off dress blues from the Marines, but his getup is so sloppy, it's obvious he's faking it. A Marine's father confronted the poser after a high school graduation. The father even tells the impostor he's going to be a YouTube star with more than 1 million views. It turns out, the Marine's father was right.

The Rossen Report from "Today" investigated how easy it is for someone to impersonate a decorated service member. The journalistic team bought a replica uniform, and it arrived in the mail within days. The team also bought military medals online. Even though buying uniforms and medals is easy, the Stolen Valor Act states no one has the right to take away from someone's genuine sacrifice.

Thanks to heroes Shipley and Berk, impostors wearing fake uniforms don't stand a chance, as others have joined in the fight against stolen valor. These brave men and women have enough to worry about when returning to civilian life.

Congratulations to Mike Cassata, President Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. a 501 c3 on receiving a letter of support from FL Senator Marco Rubio

MARCO RUBIO
FLORIDA

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

March 23, 2017

Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc.
P.O. Box 440625
Jacksonville, FL 32222

Dear Board Members:

According to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, there are currently more than 83,000 Americans listed as missing and unaccounted for from our nation's wars, going back to World War II. These men and women gave everything for our country, and I have the utmost respect for their service and sacrifice. For this reason, I am offering my support for your organization's mission to preserve the Cecil Field Prisoners of War and Missing in Action Memorial and honor the POW/MIA pilots and service members lost in the Vietnam and Desert Storm conflicts.

The proposal to build the Cecil Field Prisoners of War and Missing in Action Museum is a great opportunity to honor the service members who did not return home from war. Displays of the 16 POW/MIA pilots will be a wonderful tribute to these exceptional individuals and their families. Interactive, educational exhibits and programs will help remind our fellow Americans of the price of freedom.

As you know, Florida is home to more than 1.5 million veterans, and completing this project will strengthen the ties between our veterans and communities, and truly honor the great sacrifice that POW/MIA service members have made. With Northeast Florida being home to over 150,000 veterans, Jacksonville is a perfect location for this memorial and museum.

I wish you and your organization nothing but the best for this project, and I appreciate all that you do for the state of Florida.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator

Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial and Center

Overview and Phasing Plan



MISSION STATEMENT:

Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial's mission is to preserve the memorial, honor the POW/MIA pilots and service members that were lost over the Vietnam and Desert Storm conflicts, and distinguish the history of NAS Cecil Field as a base, and the major support and combat roles it provided throughout the years.

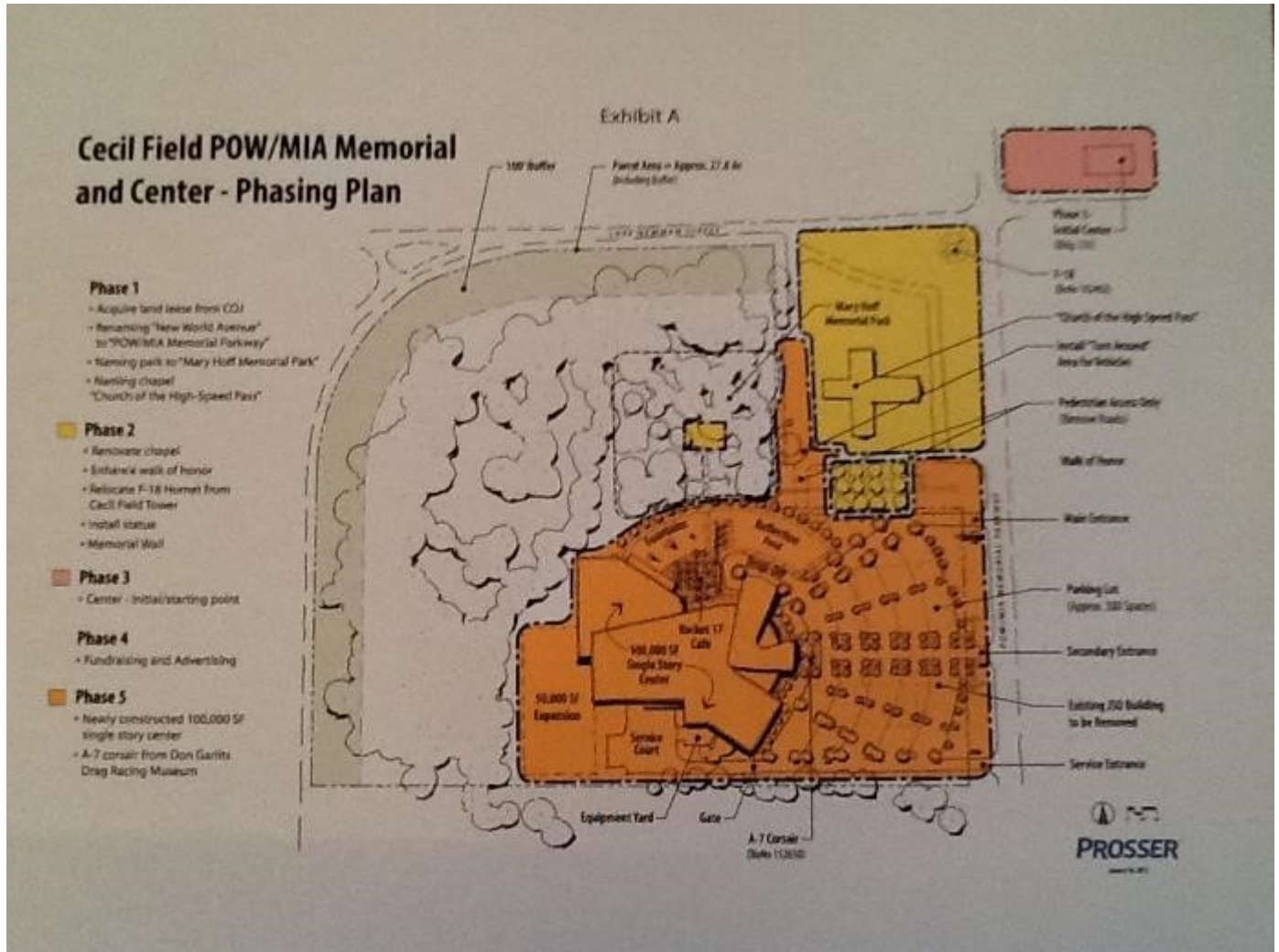
BACKGROUND:

The only known POW/MIA Memorial in Jacksonville, Florida is located at the former NAS Cecil Field (now Cecil Commerce Center). The memorial is dedicated to those Naval Aviators stationed at NAS Cecil Field during the Vietnam and Desert Storm War eras. The site consists of markers and associated planted trees for each of the 16 POW/MIA pilots (known as Hero's Walk and Freedom Trees), pavilion, stage area, starburst (metal display of aircraft), and a granite base seal of NAS Cecil Field. The Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial was dedicated in 1974 by the families and service members who wanted to ensure these brave men would never be forgotten. A driving force behind the Memorial was Mary Hoff, the wife of MIA LCDR Michael G. Hoff. Mary was also very instrumental in the creation of the POW/MIA Flag, making her the "Betsy Ross" of the POW/MIA flag. This flag has become an important symbol for the POW/MIAs, and the enduring cause that they will never be forgotten. The existing memorial is owned by the City of Jacksonville (herein the "City"). An existing adjacent historic chapel is also owned by the City as well as an existing theatre (Building 333) across the street.

POW/MIA MEMORIAL AND POW/MIA MEMORIAL CENTER:

The Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. organization is proposing to acquire acreage for this area in a long-term land lease with the City. The vision is to preserve and enhance the existing memorial areas; renovate the Chapel back to use for ceremonies, weddings, and memorial services; initiate a memorial center in the existing theatre (Building 333) with related artifacts and memorabilia; fundraise for design and construction of a new memorial center; and construct a proposed 100,000 SF POW/MIA Memorial Center (reference *Exhibit A* for conceptual phasing plan). The organization is also proposing to relocate, restore, and repaint the F/A-18 Hornet (BuNo162462) located at Cecil Tower, A-7 Corsair (BuNo152650) located at Don Garlits Drag Racing Museum (same aircraft on display at front gate), along with other various aircraft stationed at Cecil for display at the Center. The Center will serve as a memorial for POW/MIAs and veterans with a memorial wall or high relief panels, provide educational programs (including American civics and STEM), and educate the public about POW/MIAs and the history of NAS Cecil Field.

This proposed Center will also provide the ability for veterans to connect with other fellow veterans, organizations and associations making this a premier military venue for Northeast Florida.



Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc.

PO Box 440625

Jacksonville, FL 32222

cecilfieldpowmia@gmail.com

From the History students at Matanzas High School in Palm Coast

The Veterans Council received this letter from the history students from Matanzas High School in Palm Coast after the Council donated its Military documentary series to the County High Schools. The letter signed by the students in the class makes it very meaningful to the Council and we are happy to hear that we have enlightened them in a small way about the personal sacrifices of local veterans who served their country with honor and dignity.



Matanzas High School
3535 Old Kings Rd N, Palm Coast, FL 32137
(386) 447-1575

March 2, 2017

To the Veterans Council:

We enjoyed the opportunity to hear the veterans' real life stories from WWII. The textbook we read and the videos we watch do not have any of the stories we heard from the Veterans Council. We were able to see a side of the military that nobody, even our teacher could show us. Our teacher told us there are more videos from the Veterans Council that we will watch. We are excited to hear new stories from different soldiers throughout America's military history.

Sincerely,

Coach Goren's 10th grade World History class (period 3)

Alyssa Green *Nicholas Fuentes*
Jasmine Vogt
Yury Pastukhov *Brianna Jackson* *Annie Percid* *Dean Lewis*
Dylan Adams *Laveta Forsyth*
Zachary Chenoweth *Joshua Iglesias*
- Thank you for your service
Ashley James *Share Beneshill*
James Dym *Anthony Goren*
Justin Jones *Devon Pletcher*
Bryce Taylor

About the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial stands as a symbol of America's honor and recognition of the men and women who served and sacrificed their lives in the Vietnam War. Inscribed on the black granite walls are the names of more than 58,000 men and women who gave their lives or remain missing. The Memorial is dedicated to honor the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country of all who answered the call to serve during one of the most divisive wars in U.S. history.



The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Fund, Inc. is the nonprofit organization authorized by Congress in 1980 to fund and build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The organization sought a tangible symbol of recognition from the American people for those who served in the war. By separating the issue of individuals serving in the military during the Vietnam era and U.S. policy carried out there, VVMF began a process of national healing. The Memorial was dedicated on Nov. 13, 1982 and attracts more than 5.6 million visitors each year.

The Inspiration behind the Wall

On January 21, 1970, Jan Scruggs was having his morning cup of coffee, but he was far from his kitchen table at home. He was in Vietnam, serving in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade.

In the nine months since he'd been in-country, Scruggs had already seen a lot of action and had been wounded in a battle near Xuan Loc. He had spent three months recovering in a hospital before being sent back to fight with rocket-propelled grenade fragments permanently embedded in his body.

On that January day, "There was a big explosion," Scruggs recalled. "I ran over to see a truck on fire and a dozen of my friends dying." They had been unloading an ammunition truck when the explosion occurred. Scruggs would never forget the awful scene. He would never forget those friends.

In fact, he would spend a lifetime trying to honor their memory.

The man with the vision

Scruggs was raised in a rural Maryland town between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. His mother was a waitress; his father a milkman. "We're all the result of our upbringing. My background was relatively modest," he said.





“But I was always impressed with the example my parents set.”

When the 18-year-old Scruggs volunteered to enlist in the Army in 1968, debate surrounding Vietnam was escalating. The war’s length and the growing number of casualties were fueling tensions. Within months after he recovered from his wounds and returned to his unit, the American public was learning the details of the events at My Lai. By the time he returned home, three months after the explosion, the country was even further divided.

Over the next few years, as the war came to a close and more and more troops returned home, the media began to paint a picture of the stereotypical Vietnam veteran: drug addicted, bitter, discontented, and unable to adjust to life back home. Like all stereotypes, this one was unfair.

The truth was, veterans were no more likely to be addicted to drugs than those who did not serve. And if they were bitter, who could blame them? When they returned home from serving their country, there was no national show of gratitude. They were either ignored or shouted at and called vicious names. Veterans frequently found themselves denying their time in Vietnam, never mentioning their service to new friends and acquaintances for fear of the reactions it might elicit.

By June 1977, Scruggs was attending graduate school at American University in Washington, D.C. and had embarked on a research study exploring the social and psychological consequences of Vietnam military duties. He found that returning veterans were finding it hard to trust people. They were feeling alienated from the nation’s leaders, and they had low self-esteem. He also found that those veterans whose units experienced high casualty rates were experiencing higher divorce rates and a greater frequency of combat-related dreams. Using his findings, he testified at the Senate hearing on the Veteran's Health Care Amendments Act of 1977, with the hope that he could help veterans gain access to the services and support they needed.

He also wanted to find a way to help them heal and suggested that the country build a national memorial as a symbol that the country cared about them.

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. Minutes of February 23, 2017

Officers present: Chairman Bill Dudley; Vice Chairman Ray Quinn, Treasurer John Mountcastle
Chairman Dudley called the meeting to order at 1900 hours

Chairman Dudley led the Pledge to the Flag

Vice Chairman 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



Speakers: Brian Jacobson, Coordinator - Veterans Treatment Court, St. Johns County

Brian gave a short bio of himself. He was in the US Navy for 28 ½ years and retired as a Lt Commander. He stated he was a “troubled youth without much help”. He joined the ROTC at First Coast High School which is on the Northside of Jacksonville, FL. Brian now serves as the Coordinator of the Veterans Court to serve our veterans that have gone the wrong way.

Today, February 23, 2017 was the first court session for St. Johns County and it went very well. Brian gave a detailed report of how the session went, what it takes for the troubled veteran to get into the “treatment court”, what it entails, etc. Today in court were all the key components and support groups. Twelve veterans were reviewed and 5 were accepted and are now participants. These five have now started their path to recovery. Judge Howard McGillin was in court today and was very fair.

When a person is arrested during the booking process the booking officer is now asking the arrestee “have you ever served in the armed forces.”? Charlotte (not sure of her last name) runs a check on all of the ones arrested and this gets them reviewed faster.

They are in need of mentors who are themselves veterans. Jim Crutchfield is in charge of the Mentor Program for this. Brian stated that the mentors are the veterans “battle buddies” and they are to provide a good role model. The mentors take a 2 ½ day formal training. Mentors and the networks are the key to all of this.

Bill Dudley and others are looking into some kind of Incentive items, such as gift cards, challenge coins, etc. to give to the veterans when they get to certain stages in the program and when they complete the program. They are currently looking for sponsors for these incentives.

Jim Crutchfield, Mentor Program Coordinator

Jim introduced three mentors that were in the room tonight and also in the Treatment Court room today, Blair Craig, US Army, John Lewis, US Navy, Bob Richmond, US Navy. There is currently a need for female mentors. Anyone interested in becoming a mentor needs to get with Jim.

Eric West – Military Deal\$ USA

Eric stated he will be adding stories in each issue and also a restaurant and job sections. He has a friend who will be starting with his magazine in the Tampa area in the very near future.

Committee Reports:

Joe McDermott, SJC VSO:

VA has been strict on forms being submitted for certain claims. There are 15 new forms to be used.

They are in the last stage and will finish scanning records for file retention in the office. Newer veterans to the office, their records are being scanned as they come in.

Appeals process – there are about 550,000 appeals out there in the appeals management center. There will be a training session in May for the VSOs to learn what is changing in the appeal process. Joe stated that the people that are hired to do appeals are only to work on appeals and should not be working on anything else.

Joe wanted to give a KUDOS to all who participated in the Veterans Treatment Court today, he was in the courtroom. He stated everyone worked very hard and things went smoothly.

Claims for compensation are running basically a year behind. One of the toughest Offices for hearing loss is the St. Petersburg Claim Office. Joe does not know why this is.

There are now 8 presumptive diagnosis for the veterans that were stationed at Camp LeJuene. These diagnosis should start getting approved March 14, 2017.

Ray Quinn:

Ray noted that nominations are need for our next meeting for the Colonel Ed Taylor Award. This award recognizes outstanding veterans or veteran organizations.

Chairman Dudley:

March 9th will be a CBOC meeting.

Bill spoke at the AUSA meeting last month. The bid package has been presented by the County to the VA. Damon Douglas

Is getting the RGQ ready to be reviewed by the County by March 7th. Changes are to be completed and submitted to the VA Washington by March 17th.

THE SOCK MAN: Herb spoke of his history in the service and all the programs, AL, VFW, ELKS, etc. he has been involved in over the years. He has collected and handed out MANY socks over the years of doing his sock program. He himself has medical issues and he is currently taking care of his wife. He wanted to THANK EVERYONE for all the help he has always gotten. We all stood and gave Herb a standing ovation. Chairman Dudley, thanked Herb in return for all he has done over the years.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 30, 7:00 pm at the St Johns County Health and Human Services building, 200 San Sebastian View, in the Muscovy room on the first floor.

Army veteran graduates from PTSD program with service dog named Harbaugh

Donald Zuzula graduates from K9s for Warriors

U.S. Army veteran Donald Zuzula recently graduated from a nonprofit organization that pairs service dogs with veterans suffering from the invisible wounds of war, and he did so with the help of his friend Harbaugh.

K9s for Warriors in Ponte Vedra, Florida, serves warriors who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or military sexual trauma. Zuzula stayed at Camp K9 for three weeks, receiving 120 hours of training with his new service dog, Harbaugh, who was named after the University of Michigan's head football coach by the K9s for Warriors organization.

As part of the program, Zuzula was also provided with housing, home-cooked meals, equipment, vet care, and legal instruction - at no cost to him.

Since graduating from K9s For Warriors in February, Zuzula has returned home and is looking forward to his future and new life with Harbaugh.

"I applied to this program because I heard that a service dog could be life-changing," Zuzula said. "When I found out my dog was named Harbaugh, I knew this was meant to be, because I live Michigan. My biggest hope is that my service dog will take the strain off my mobility issues, so I can do normal things with my family again."

The organization said 29 percent of post-9/11 veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress. Shari Duval founded the nonprofit in 2011 to combat the PTSD crisis and to aid warriors in their recovery from trauma as a result of post-9/11 military service.

Duval learned firsthand about the struggles U.S. military veterans face after her son returned home from two tours in Iraq as a contractor.

"Our program has been so successful, with documented recovery from the debilitating horrors of war," Duval said. "The need to help these veterans is critical and overwhelming. We must do more. Our plans are to expand our current program to continue serving our nation's greatest asset, military men and women."





The City of Jacksonville's Military Affairs and Veterans Department
& WJCT Public Broadcasting invite you to honor Vietnam Veterans



THE WALL THAT HEALS

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL REPLICA & MOBILE EDUCATION CENTER



A PROGRAM OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND
FOUNDERS OF THE WALL

APRIL 13 - 16, 2017

METROPOLITAN PARK

24 hours a day, rain or shine, free to the public

• *Escort Arrival* • *Opening Ceremonies* • *Information Booths* •

The Wall That Heals honors the more than three million Americans who served in the US Armed forces in the Vietnam War and it bears the names of the more than 58,000 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.

To volunteer & to find out more information visit:

★ wjct.org/storiesofservice ★

Email storiesofservice@wjct.org, or leave a message at (904) 358-6392.

Presented by:



Sponsored by:



United States Coast Guard Special Forces:

An Untold Story by Dan Doyle

Special Forces? The U.S. Coast Guard? Yes. There is such a thing and this video is based on the work of this group during the decades of the 60s, 70s, and 80s in the drug wars. They did what they did out of sight and out of mind, carrying out a dangerous mission in a determined effort to stop the flow of drugs into this country at their source.



When you watch this film, especially if you are old enough to have grown up with daily news reports out of Vietnam, you will get an eerie kind of déjà vu feeling. So much of what you will see, looks like it could have been film shot in the jungles and rivers of Vietnam. And the fact of the matter is that what these Coast Guard Special Forces were doing in the jungles of Peru and Bolivia was just as dangerous as what was happening in Vietnam.

They were up against well armed drug cartels and their minions who were willing to fight and die to protect their incredible money making crops and their cocaine production facilities.

The Coast Guard Special Forces engaged in these efforts were well trained and were very skilled operators in the often under-the-radar operations that they undertook in these efforts. They were called upon to carry out these operations because of the massive flow of drugs coming into our country during those decades. There was so much of it moving by way of ocean born routes at the time that the U.S. Coast Guard, even though it was seizing large quantities on the high seas, was unable to staunch the flow of the massive amounts of cocaine heading for our country.

It was decided that it might be more effective to try to stop the flow by taking it out at the growing and producing levels before they even left South America.

I visited Peru in the early 1990s. One of the places I went to was a city on the east side of the Andes called Moyobamba. It was in mountainous jungle country in the Amazon area of Peru. On one occasion I was being shown around the town and at one point I was on a high bluff at the edge of the town looking out over the heavily forested, rolling hills below. I could see smoke coming up out of the valleys off in the distance. I asked about it and was told, rather matter-of-factly, that the smoke was from the coca farmers, clearing land to plant their crops.

Coca is the source of cocaine. I could see as many as six to eight smoke plumes going up into the clear blue sky just from that one viewpoint.

What those U. S. Coast Guard Special Forces and the local police and army forces were up against in this fight was truly massive and incredibly elusive. Those jungles and remote valleys were just as thick and hard to penetrate as any of the terrain we saw in Vietnam. And those grow operations and production sites were heavily guarded by the cartels.

These U.S. Coast Guard Special Forces teams were engaged in some seriously dangerous operations in this effort. And they conducted themselves with courage and great skill. What they did is truly an untold story.

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National POW/MIA Recognition Day The RIDE HOME 2017



Did you know that there are only two (2) days on our Julian Calendar that we set aside to recognize all Americans, civilian and military, who have been held against their will by enemies of the United States?

The first date is 9 April, Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. Why 9 April you ask, because that is the day the largest number of American Military were taken captive by an enemy during combat operations. After a three-month heroic battle in the Philippines, Major General King, Jr. surrendered all troops under his command to Colonel Mootoo Nakayama of the 14th Imperial Japanese Army. The total number varies by reporting source but it is safe to say the total exceeded sixty thousand (60,000) combat troops, at least, were taken as Prisoners of War. The second date, The Third Friday of September, came about more as a compromise than any historical significance to the date. It was Commander in Chief Jimmy Carter who initially requested a Joint Resolution from Congress annually to which he provided a Presidential Proclamation. The Recognition Day was held in April, to the liking of the American Ex-POW organization, or in July from 1978 through 1985. The debating parties, American Ex-POW and the Vietnam POW/MIA Families reached a compromise and starting in 1986 the day has been the Third Friday of September in which we recognize all former Prisoners of War (POW) as well as those who are still classified as Missing in Action (MIA).

For well over a decade a small group of POW/MIA advocates from across the country have been extending an invitation to Former Prisoners of War, civilian & military, and to the Families of those who are still classified as Missing in Action with the goal of fulfilling the Commander in Chief's proclamation, which notes:

"I call upon the people of the United States to join me in honoring and remembering all former American prisoners of war and those missing in action who valiantly served our great country. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities."

In their effort to meet the President's request this group, appropriately named "*The RIDE*

HOME” will be working in conjunction with; The National Prisoner of War Museum, located on the grounds of Andersonville Historical Site, Andersonville Georgia, Central Georgia Technical College, Warner Robins Campus, corporations, private organizations as well as individual patriots from the communities of Warner Robins, Perry, Georgia, and Andersonville Georgia.

The Itinerary for this national event begins on Thursday, 14 September 2017, with honored guest checking in early afternoon followed by a Recognition Day Service, open to the public, at the Museum of Aviation located at Warner Robins Air Force Base. Friday morning, 15 September, following a Law Enforcement escorted ride, service at the National Prisoner of War Museum, open to the public, also. Friday evening the Hero’s Banquet on the Central Georgia Technical College campus. (Dinner requires pre-paid reservation for everyone except the Honored guest.) KEEPING the PROMISE and Candlelight Services follow the dinner and are open to the public. Saturday, 16 September, Recognition Service followed by the FLY-BOY – GROUND-POUNDER Lunch, open to the public, followed by open socials at participating hotels/motels in the Perry/Warner Robins market.

For all the former Prisoner of War Honoree’s, the Next of Kin of our Missing in Action Honorees who wish to attend the RIDE HOME 2017, below we have included an invitation Letter as well as the registration form for this year’s event. Due to the fact this is a National event all registration applications will be vetted prior to acceptance. If you mail your application to the RIDE HOME Corporate address noted at the top of the form, we will start the process and you’ll be contacted acknowledging your participation at this year’s event. Due to popularity of the event all applications will be addressed on a first come first served basis. If you wish to have some of your family or friends join you at the event the RIDE HOME Team will be happy to help you obtain/arrange room accommodations as well as reservations for the two meals for your guest/friends.

We look forward to saying ‘Thank YOU!’ face to face, for not just your service to this great Republic, but for the sacrifices you have made and continue to make on our behalf.

For Questions or Concerns feel free to contact; moe – 407 448 1181 or moehog@verizon.net

Until they all come 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 2017**. This weekend event, **14-16 September 2017**, takes place in and around the cities of Warner Robins and Andersonville, Georgia, home of the *National Prisoner of War Museum*. **The RIDE HOME 2017** 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 2017 event will include former *Prisoners of War* and families of our *Missing in Action* from World War II, Korea, Cold War, Vietnam, USS Pueblo, 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), 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 2017 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 you help sponsor.

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 2017** 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.

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 2017**
_____ Tribute Package \$375. _____ Other

Includes 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

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The RIDE HOME, Inc. is an IRS 501 c 3, public charity. ID# 31954. Contributions are deductible.



MOE

Good Day Patriots and Veterans!

Special 'Thanks' to Crissy Churwell (our newest Team Member) for locking down our 'Line-Up' spots for the police escorted rides for the 2017 event. As you know, we have moved our base of operations over to Warner Robins/Perry Georgia this year. Crissy's efforts with the Warner Robins Police and Houston County Sherriff has resulted in us using the Georgia State Fair Grounds, in Perry, for our early Friday morning ride to Andersonville for opening services. Friday afternoon and Saturday morning's escorted rides will depart from the HARBOR FREIGHT parking lot, in Warner Robins.

We'll be posting specific times and addresses after we get passed Memorial Day.

On 27 February, John Butts, posted on this Facebook site, the list of hotels/motels that are currently working with The RIDE HOME 2017.

He included the prices they quoted us as well as the local contact for each unit. Don't forget to book your room early! The primary location for services this year will be the Central Georgia Technical College, 80 Cohen Walker Drive, Warner Robins, Georgia 31008.

The majority of the hotel/motels are with-in a few miles of line-up and destination site.

From the FLTimes Union, February 2, 2017

Terry Dickson:Vets look to honor loss of nearly 5,000 helicopter crewmembers in Vietnam



ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GA. | I love the sound of bluegrass, a child's laughter, water tumbling over rocks and the wind in the trees on a quiet mountain.

But nothing ever sounded as good as the first faint thumps of Huey helicopters coming to lift me and my fellow infantry soldiers off a mountaintop or out of the rice paddies in Vietnam. They always got us back to cold showers, hot meals in the mess hall rather than straight from olive drab cans and a few nights of mattress sleep. Thin, stinking mattresses, but mattresses still.

They didn't always make it back themselves. Two thousand and two pilots and 2,704 crew chiefs and gunners were killed in the "helicopter war." They account for a disproportionate 7 percent of the names etched in black granite on the Vietnam memorial wall.

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, or VHPA, wants five square feet of ground at Arlington National Cemetery for a granite monument. The Army runs Arlington and has refused, saying the cemetery honors individuals, not groups, and the monument would take up a grave site.

My friend Doug Grabowski flew Hueys in Vietnam, and he wants a monument. If you visit the war exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., you'll see Huey helicopter, No. 091 with a Robin Hood hat insignia on the nose. He flew that helicopter in Vietnam.

Grabowski went down a few times himself.

"Once or twice, I was boots on the ground. That wasn't by choice. That's when the rotor stopped," he said.

"I saw a couple go down 50 feet up coming out of a landing zone. They got shot up and the engine went out," but everyone survived, he said.

"One of my copilots got killed," he said. "What are you going to do?"

He kept flying. That's what they all did.

Bob Hesselbein kept flying. He flew gunships in Vietnam as a 19-year-old warrant officer, then joined the Air Force and flew A-10 Warthogs and F-16 fighters. A retired commercial airline pilot, Hesselbein now pilots a Huey without pay for the Air-One Emergency Response Coalition in Rockford, Ill.

As chairman of the VHPA's Legacy Committee, Hesselbein is in Washington, D.C., this week talking to U.S. House and Senate members asking them to support for the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Monument Act.

The act would compel the Army to allow the association to erect a monument at Arlington honoring the 4,706 who died flying medivacs, air assault missions, pulling troops out of hot LZ's and rescuing downed pilots.

"Arlington has an incredible cluster of helicopter casualties," and the association wants to put the monument with them at no cost to the government, Hesselbein said during a phone interview Tuesday.

The VHPA has planted a memorial tree at Arlington but has not acted on an offer to place a marker with it.

"They want to give us a tiny, little tree marker," Hesselbein said, "with 1½ square feet of space."

A tree, Hesselbein said in a letter, "is an inappropriate tribute to the sizable casualties incurred during 13 years of helicopter combat."

He's right. I don't remember my last lift on a Huey, sitting with my feet dangling above the skids as the pilot flew as calmly – perhaps more so – than a dad driving the kids to grandma's in a van. Dads typically don't have door gunners firing M60s or an escort gunship firing rockets toward the surrounding hills.

Just before Christmas in 1971, my outfit, Co. A, 3 / 21st Infantry, was working Charlie Ridge when one of my men, Spc. Richard Graham, took four rounds in his legs. As the medics worked on him beside a huge boulder where he fell, we heard the thump of a Huey medivac coming through the thick fog. With no place to land in the steep mountainside jungle, they lowered a basket and winched Graham up through the fog swirling in the prop wash.

I'll always be grateful that a pilot had the skill to find us in that fog. They saved Richard Graham's life, and I hope their last flight in Vietnam was aboard an eastbound commercial jet.

For those who were flown home in the 1960s and 1970s lying underneath an American flag and for those whose remains are still being found, there should be a monument.

As Hesselbein put it, "Arlington National Cemetery can't just be a warehouse for the dead."

terry.dickson@jacksonville.com; (912) 264-0405

In Memory honors those who died as a result of the Vietnam War but whose deaths did not fit the Department of Defense parameters for inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial stands as a symbol of America's honor and recognition of the men and women who served and sacrificed their lives in the Vietnam War. The Memorial is dedicated to honor the "courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country" of all who answered the call to serve during the most divisive war in U.S. history.



VVMF continues to lead the way in paying tribute to our nation's Vietnam veterans and their families. VVMF works to honor, preserve, and educate to ensure that current and future generations never forget the service and sacrifice of those who came before them.

IN MEMORY APPLICATION 2017

The 2017 deadline for submission has been **EXTENDED** to April 14th, 2017. In Memory honors those who died as a result of the Vietnam War but whose deaths did not fit the Department of Defense parameters for inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Please understand that, while your loved one's memory and service will be honored; his/her name will **not** be inscribed on The Wall.

To have a loved one considered for the In Memory program in 2017, you must submit your application to VVMF by April 14th, 2017. Please fill out the information below.

- Along with the application we require:
- Death Certificate

DD214 showing in Vietnam Service (You can request the DD214 form online: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/>)

Two (different) clear photographs. If possible please provide a 4 x 6 photograph, this is for quality purposes.

An optional biography may also be submitted. The biography should be **no more than 300 words**. Please avoid handwritten bios, if possible. If the biography is longer than 300 words, VVMF may edit for length. The biography may include any information which you are comfortable with sharing.

If you have any questions please email: InMemory@vvmf.org



1 IN 10 VIETNAM VETS HAS HEPATITIS C AND MANY DON'T EVEN KNOW IT



LEARN ABOUT YOUR RISK FOR HEP C AT AN IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL EVENT

Vietnam Veterans, especially those born 1945-1965, are at high risk for having Hep C. That's why **you and your spouse or partner are encouraged to attend this free educational event**, co-hosted by Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #1059.



DATE: Saturday, May 6, 2017

TIME: 11:00 AM

LOCATION: Orange Park Medical Center

2001 Kingsley Ave, Orange Park, FL 32073

RSVP: Gary Newman at agnjustice@yahoo.com

THE HEP C FACTS

- Hepatitis C (Hep C) is a serious virus that infects the liver. It is the #1 cause of liver cancer and liver transplants in the U.S.
- Vietnam Veterans, especially those born 1945-1965, are at high risk for having Hep C
- Vietnam Veterans could have been exposed to Hep C due to unsterile vaccination procedures, or by coming into contact with contaminated blood during combat
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recommends all veterans born 1945-1965 get tested for Hep C
- **If you have Hep C, it can be cured**

For more information, talk to your **healthcare provider**, visit HEPCHOPE.COM, or call **844-9-HEPCHOPE**

Veterans Health Council
improving veterans health through information and education
Free Educational Program



PROUD PARTNER
IN HEPATITIS C EDUCATION



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THE INSTITUTE ON WORLD WAR II AND THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL

I WANT TO SAVE YOUR MEMORIES OF THE WAR THAT SAVED THE WORLD

The focus of the **Institute on World War II and the Human Experience** is collecting and preserving the memories of the men and women who participated in all the military branches, service with the Merchant Marine, Red Cross, USO, workers and volunteers on the Home Front (e.g., ship-building yards, defense plants, YMCA and other clubs) during the WWII era and the immediate post-war period (i.e., 1939 - 1949). With over 6,000 collections and growing, The Institute on WWII has items from individuals and units presenting all states and a few from other nations. The Institute is one of the nation's largest repositories on World War II. In 2001, Tom Brokaw donated countless items sent to him while writing his three books on "The Greatest Generation."



The Institute's collections are used in exhibits, papers and dissertations from college students from Florida and other states, documentaries (The History Channel), news articles, books, genealogy research, History Fair projects, public school classrooms, displays and for other research (e.g., Army Medical Department Regiment).

To find out more about the variety of items we collect, go to donations. If you would like to donate WWII memorabilia, please go to our Information Packet page that contains our Brochure, Deed of Gift, and a Veteran/Home Front Questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact us at 850-644-9033 or email: Institute on WWII.

Mission Statement

"Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." General of the Army Douglas MacArthur

Though something of a cliché by now, this phrase of General MacArthur's reinforces a singular fact of current history. The generation that fought World War II is gradually dying off and, unfortunately, much of the history they represent is not being systematically and professionally preserved. As we enter the new millennium it is of prime importance that not merely the artifacts and official histories be maintained, but that the experiences of the millions of men and women who fought in this "Good War" be kept alive for future generations.

One of the major sources of materials relating to World War II that has not been fully and methodically preserved and developed are the personal papers, letters, diaries, and memorabilia collected by the veterans. All too frequently these items are undervalued not only by the families to which they are left, but even by the veterans themselves. Between their modesty relating to their personal achievements and a diffidence in asserting the worth of their memorabilia these irreplaceable historical materials are being misplaced or discarded.

Despite the enormous literature on the campaigns of World War II, its impact on the individual participant has not been thoroughly investigated. The daily life, the physical and emotional suffering, the experience in the field, in short the personal experiences that bring History to life are all too often overlooked or downplayed. The major focus of the Institute on World War II and the Human Experience is research on and preservation of materials relating to the molding and survival of the individual in World War II. The emphasis is on the experiences of ordinary men and women, military and civilian alike, amid the pressures of wartime life.

The Institute on World War II and the Human Experience has as its goals the following:

the collection and preservation of diaries, letters, memorabilia, and comparable materials relating to the everyday experiences of the participants in World War II;

the archiving and preservation of those materials;

the collecting of oral histories to enhance the archival collection;

the indexing and presentation on the Internet of the Institute's collections;

research by students and faculty and others;

visits by the general public and especially families who have donated items;

exchanges both within the United States and with the foremost institutions of this sort in the countries of the major World War II participants;

talks offered by the director and staff to civic groups and WWII reunions.

ORGANIZATION

The Institute is supervised by Dr. Kurt Piehler a specialist on U.S. History with a emphasis on the Twentieth Century. As director Dr. Piehler has the responsibility of coordinating the Institute's various activities with archives, museums and research centers throughout the world as well as participating in the FSU Foundation's fund raising activities. The Institute's archive is housed in Bellamy, adjacent to the University Library.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2017

VA's Rule Establishes a Presumption of Service Connection for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune

VA to provide disability benefits for related diseases

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C. are effective as of today.



“Establishing these presumptions is a demonstration of our commitment to care for those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Dr. David J. Shulkin. “The Camp Lejeune presumptions will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned.”

The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- adult leukemia
- aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- bladder cancer
- kidney cancer
- liver cancer
- multiple myeloma
- non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma
- Parkinson’s disease

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

This presumption complements the health care already provided for 15 illnesses or conditions as part of the Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012. The Camp Lejeune Act requires VA to provide health care to Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune, and to reimburse family members, or pay providers, for medical expenses for those who resided there for not fewer than 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987.

VA, DOD study a major breakthrough for understanding PTSD

WASHINGTON – Researchers from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DOD) recently released findings of a new study called Prospective Post-Traumatic Stress disorder Symptom Trajectories in Active Duty and Separated Military Personnel, which examines Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms in Veterans, compared with active-duty populations.

This is the first known study comparing PTSD symptom trajectories of current service members with those of Veterans, and is the product of a collaborative effort from VA and DOD researchers analyzing data from the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), the largest prospective health study of military service members.

According to VA's National Center for PTSD, the PTSD rate among Vietnam Veterans was 30.9 percent for men and 26.9 percent for women. For Gulf War Veterans, the PTSD rate was 12.1 percent. Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans had a PTSD rate of 13.8 percent.

“Knowing there are similarities in how PTSD affects service members and Veterans makes it easier to pinpoint which treatments are the best to control the condition,” said Dr. Edward Boyko, an epidemiologist and internist at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System in Washington state, and VA's lead researcher on the Millennium Cohort Study.

Officials involved with the project said they are hoping the collaboration will improve the understanding of Veterans' health needs, relative to their experiences in service.

“The data that MCS researchers have been collecting since 2001 is incredibly valuable for both the DOD and VA,” said Dr. Dennis Faix, director of the Millennium Cohort Study and preventive medicine physician. “Going forward, working with VA will allow both agencies to make sure we are getting the best information to develop a comprehensive understanding of the continuum of health in current and former service members.”

The results of the joint VA DOD study will appear in the Journal of Psychiatric Research's June 2017 issue. It is the first of many joint future publications expected to result from the collaboration between VA and MCS.

You can learn more about the study here: <http://millenniumcohort.org>

Enjoy a ride that few ever get to see shot in Seattle at Seafair.....

Footage courtesy of the U.S. Navy & the Blue Angels

Ever wonder what "Pure Awesome" looks like? Wonder No More.

This may be one of the best...



Video runs 3:44. For Sure Go Full Screen....

Guys...this footage is of the "slot man" in the Diamond formation...toughest flying due to wingtip vortices, etc...when he "smiles", he is pulling some serious positive/ negative "g" forces.

WOW! What a ride! Notice the rest of the formation in the Pilot's reflective goggles!

Sound up, open video link and click 'Play' arrow:

Note that the pilot is chewing gum through the whole flight. When you are changing altitude rapidly, it helps clear your ears.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/u4D0yx4DvBk?rel=0>

A correction to the April issue of the Patriot Reader

Michael, Always a great read, however, you need to update the list of Medal of Honor winners from Florida.

SFC Melvin Morris, USA Retired, was presented his medal for Vietnam that he earned on 17 Sep 69, on 18 Mar. 2014 by Pres. Obama. SFC Morris lives in Port St. John, FL and was one of our early Special Forces NCO's.

Sincerely, Bill Franklin

Hotwire 3/6 Co. C 1/7th , LZ Xray Vietnam 1965

National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day



April 8, 2017

*Hillsborough County Veterans Park & Museum
3602 Hwy. 301 N., Tampa, FL*

10:00 AM - Meet & Greet

*Join Us In Welcoming Former Prisoners of War and Family
Members of Those Still Missing In Action*

11:00 AM - Recognition & Remembrance

*Featured Guest - Vietnam War Former Prisoner of War
Captain William Y. Arcuri - USAF
Heroism during Linebacker II earned him
Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor
B-52 Shot down 20 December 1972*

*Candlelight Ceremony
Honoring those who can not be with us today*





**23RD ANNUAL FIRST MILITIA CHAPTER
AUSA GOLF TOURNAMENT
APRIL 24TH 2017**



Time: 7:30 AM Registration 8:30 AM Shotgun Start
Location: The Golf Club at South Hampton (CR-210)
Format: 4 Person Captain's Choice
Field: First 36 Teams

Entry Fee: \$75.00 (Includes Green Fees, Cart, Luncheon & Prizes)

Prizes For: 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Place

Hole Prizes Include: Longest Drive, Closest to Pin and Longest Putt
Chipping & Putting Contests (During the Tournament)

Golf Shoes Must Be Soft Spikes Only



The Luncheon & Awards Ceremony will be held on-site after the Tournament

TEAM CAPTAIN: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____
PLAYER #2: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____
PLAYER #3: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____
PLAYER #4: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____

MAIL ENTRY FORMS (whether paying by check or credit card) TO:

MRS. REBECCA GIBSON, C/O AUSA GOLF TOURNAMENT,

P.O BOX 3883, ST. AUGUSTINE, FL 32085-3883. Phone (904) 682-4436.

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AUSA is an exempt organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the US Internal Revenue Code.

From Modern Cities

The Ghosts of Green Cove Springs

What do treasure hunting trips, hovercrafts, ferries, space exploration, and vintage rail cars have to do with one another? All are forgotten relics that combine to make up the afterlife of an abandoned World War II era air base. *Bullet of Abandoned Florida* shares imagery of one of the state's most interesting spots for storytelling: NAAS Green Cove Springs.

The Life and Death of Naval Air Station Lee Field

During the 1940s, the primary occupation of Florida was war. In fact, there were more people in Florida engaged in naval aviation training in WWII, than are employed today by the Florida State University System. As in most communities, this was also the case in Green Cove Springs. As early as 1938, the U.S. Navy had considered Green Cove Springs as a potential naval base location.



On September 11, 1940, the U.S. Navy made it official, opening Naval Air Station Lee Field, just south of Green Cove Springs. The Air Station was named in honor of Ensign Benjamin Lee who had lost his life in a crash at Killinghome, England, during World War I on October 28, 1918. Benjamin Lee Field was designed to train pilots for landing operations on aircraft carriers during WWII. By March 1941, the U.S. Navy had spent \$1.8 million on the base, which consisted of four (4) 5,000-foot runways, aircraft maintenance and support services, and housing for military personnel. The facility was renamed Naval Air Station Green Cove Springs in August 1943. By 1944, the naval station's garrison strength included 518 officers and 1,471 enlisted. On December 15, 1945, NAS Green Cove Springs was downgraded in status to a Naval Auxiliary Air Station (NAAS) and transferred to NAS Jacksonville as an outlying field for limited training operations.

In 1946, thirteen (13) 1,500 foot concrete piers were built into the St. Johns River, at the cost of \$10 million, to securely house the U.S. Naval Atlantic Reserve or "Mothball Fleet" of WWII U.S. Navy ships. At its height, over 600 vessels, primarily destroyers, destroyer escorts and fleet auxiliaries, were stationed at Green Cove Springs, along with more than 5,000 naval personnel and 1,000 civilian employees. Unfortunately, under his first executive order, President Lyndon B. Johnson decommissioned the facility and relocated the fleet to Texas, his home state. Soon, after the 1960 decommissioning of NAAS Green Cove Springs, the City of Green Cove Springs purchased and sold the former military installation

to Julian Louis Reynolds, of Reynolds Metal Company, for the development of a multi-modal 1,700-acre industrial park served by rail, highway, water, and a private airport. Reynolds established the Reynolds Industrial Park in 1965.



Despite 1960s grand visions of redevelopment and massive job creation, the former military base has become the final resting home of broken dreams and failed ambition. For example, an abandoned unfinished hovercraft lies on the former base's airport apron. The large hovercraft was the center of transportation news in 2006. At the time, ATLAS Hovercrafts had intentions of bringing hovercrafts into the mainstream, envisioning a hovercraft ferry system carrying commuters between Downtown Jacksonville and Clay County. That plan proved to be unrealistic and so did plans for its first partially constructed hovercraft to be used for dinner cruises at Chicago's Navy Pier.

While seeing an unfinished hovercraft on an airport apron seems strange, the former base also has a piece of the country's space program history. Apparently too large to move, a 154-foot-long NASA Space Shuttle external fuel tank has found a final resting place at Green Cove Springs. Known as the Structural Test Article (STA), the external tank was built in 1977 and used for loading and stress analysis tests. In 2013, it was moved by barge to Green Cove Springs, in anticipation of being delivery that never materialized, to the Wings of Dreams museum in Keystone Heights.

If that's not enough strange folklore, not many are aware that one of the previous rusting relics at the Green Cove docks was once a treasure hunting ship called The Arctic Ranger. The Arctic Ranger was christened as a Canadian fishing vessel in 1987. In 1988, Tommy Thompson and the Columbus-America Discovery Group transformed the vessel into the treasure hunting ship called Arctic Discoverer. With this ship and Nemo, their underwater remotely operated vehicle, the crew successfully rediscovered gold from the 1857 wreck of the S.S. Central America. At the time of its sinking, due to a hurricane off the coast of the Carolinas, Central America carried gold then valued at approximately \$2 million USD. The loss shook public confidence in the economy, and contributed to the Panic of 1857. The total value of the recovered gold was estimated at \$100–150 million.

Littered with a large collection of rusting relics, scattered World War II era buildings and infrastructure, there's little doubt that the former naval base would benefit from an extreme makeover. In 2012, a redevelopment plan focusing on transforming the former base into a mixed use activity center adjacent to the First Coast Expressway, was created and adopted. Only time will tell if new dreams for the former navel base will successfully materialize. In the meantime, the stories behind the hovercrafts, treasure hunting ships, ferries, and space shuttle parts lying quietly in the remains of the former naval base easily make Reynolds Industrial Park and Clay County Port, one of the most interesting places in Florida.



SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 16TH 2017
1PM TEE-OFF
Bent Creek Golf Club
10440 Tournament Lane
Jacksonville, FL 32222

PRESENTS
THE FLORIDA FALLEN HEROES
GOLF CLASSIC

PLEASE HELP SUPPORT THIS GREAT ORGANIZATION THAT IS DETERMINED NOT TO FORGET THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE FOR OUR FREEDOM.
ALL PROCEEDS GO TO PLACING MONUMENTS AT HIGH SCHOOLS OF FLORIDA FALLEN SOLDIERS.

Individual Golfer - \$110 Team of 4 Golfers - \$400
Includes golf, lunch, prizes, 2 Mulligans & all you can drink Frozen Margarita

Golfer #1: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone _____

Golfer #2: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone _____

Golfer #3: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone _____

Golfer #4: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone _____

To register please fill out this form and email to ffhslunger@yahoo.com Please provide each players name, address, phone # and email. Please make checks payable to : FLORIDA FALLEN HEROES and mail to P.O. Box 11293, Jacksonville, FL 32239-1293 or bring payment with you on day of event. Please make sure you register to save your team a place.

FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT SHARON LYNN UNGER
(904) 680-8115 (CALL OR TEXT) OR FFHSLUNGER@YAHOO.COM

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 graduates 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 (# CH34311) 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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DoD to Open Online Exchange Shopping to Veterans

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13, 2017 — The Defense Department announced today that veterans will soon be able to shop online at military exchanges.

The policy change will extend limited online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans of the military, DoD officials said in a [news release](#).

The shopping benefit will be effective this Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2017.

While shopping privileges exclude the purchase of uniforms, alcohol and tobacco products, it includes the Exchange Services' dynamic online retail environment known so well to service members and their families, the release said. The change follows careful analysis, coordination and strong public support, officials said in the release.

"We are excited to provide these benefits to honorably discharged veterans to recognize their service and welcome them home to their military family," said Peter Levine, performing the duties for the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

"In addition, this initiative represents a low-risk, low-cost opportunity to help fund morale, welfare and recreation programs in support of service members' and their families' quality of life. And it's just the right thing to do," Levine added.

The online benefit will also strengthen the exchanges' online businesses to better serve current patrons. Inclusion of honorably discharged veterans would conservatively double the exchanges' online presence, according to DoD officials, thereby improving the experience for all patrons through improved vendor terms, more competitive merchandise assortments and improved efficiencies.

"As a nation, we are grateful for the contributions of our service members," Levine said. "Offering this lifetime online benefit is one small, tangible way the nation can say, 'Thank you' to those who served with honor."

US News and World Report

WWII Veteran's Remains to Return to Florida, 73 Years Later **AP**



ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — A World War II veteran's remains will be returned to his family in Florida, some 73 years after he was shot down by German fighters.

The Tampa Bay Times reports (<http://bit.ly/2n9cb0O>) the remains of Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. John Donald Mumford were found in a field in what is now Ukraine. The remains will arrive in St. Petersburg on Thursday.

For years, Mumford was the subject of family stories, known through fading photos and failing memories as a dashing young man with a desire to fly. But it had been years since his surviving nephews had even thought about their uncle, who died before they were born.

In January, the U.S. Department of Defense called to tell the family that after 10-year search, their uncle had been found.

On the morning of June 6, 1944, as history was being made off the coast of Normandy, Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. John Donald Mumford was flying his P-51 Mustang fighter through the skies over Romania. He was escorting a squadron of B-17 Flying Fortress bombers to an air raid on a German airfield.

The mission was successful. But after the raid, German ground control radioed to its fighters: "Contact the enemy. Close in on the enemy."

In minutes, Mumford, 22, of St. Petersburg found himself attacked by 10 German fighters. He was never seen alive again.

It never occurred to Mumford's nephews that anyone was looking for their uncle, let alone that they would actually find him after so many decades. "I thought it was a scam," said Lynn Woolums, 67, who like his brother still lives in St. Petersburg. "I was like, 'Really?' It was too good to be true."

But it was true. And thanks to the Defense MIA/POW Accounting Agency, or DPAA, a unit of the military dedicated to finding missing troops, Ronald and Lynn Woolums are preparing for an unexpected visitor.

Mumford's remains are scheduled to arrive at Tampa International Airport. Now the brothers' heads are filled with thoughts of their uncle and his last frantic moments zooming through the skies of Eastern Europe, chased by machine-gun blasting Nazi warplanes.

"This is rather overwhelming," said Lynn Woolums, a retired advertising agency owner.

"This is unbelievable, really," said Ronald Woolums, 68, a retired teacher.

The Woolums brothers know very little else about their uncle, who grew to be nearly 6 feet tall and 150 pounds, with brown hair and blue eyes, according to military records. So they were both amazed and grateful to read the details compiled by the DPAA in an 80-page, plastic-bound report about the incident and the search for his remains.

They welded pipes. They drew blueprints. And, of course, they fastened munitions and machine parts together with rivets.



Now, seven decades after World War Two ended, a surviving handful of the women who marched into factories and shipyards, redefining workplace gender roles to help keep America's military assembly lines running, will be honored on Tuesday as part of a National Rosie the Riveter Day celebration.

"Well it's about time," said Marian Sousa, 91, of El Sobrante, California, who worked as a "draftsman" creating blueprints for warships at the Kaiser Shipyard during the 1940s.

"It shows that women are not only capable now, but they were capable then. Yes, the recognition will be nice."

Sousa and a half a dozen other Rosies, all now in their 80s and 90s, will be feted for the first time with speeches and a U.S. Senate resolution at the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park, which opened in 2000 just north of San Francisco in Richmond, California.

Sousa's sister, Phyllis Gould, 95, and fellow Rosie worker Anna "Mae" Krier, 91, of Levittown, Pennsylvania, were the two women who pushed for a national day of recognition for the last few years.

"This is big," Gould said in an interview on Monday. "Really big."

Gould was among the first six women to work as Navy-certified journeyman welders at the Kaiser-Richmond shipyards in the 1940s. It irks her that her slice of history is often overlooked.

"The work that the women did during the war is totally forgotten," Gould said, "and it shouldn't be."

Krier flew to Washington for a separate but related event to be attended by Senator Bob Casey, of Pennsylvania, a chief sponsor of the Rosie resolution, and other members of Congress.

Facing a labour shortage as many able-bodied males joined the Armed Forces between 1940 and 1945, America's industrial arsenal turned to women to help fill jobs previously reserved strictly for men to produce ships, planes, munitions and other war supplies.

The share of U.S. jobs occupied by women grew from 27 percent to 37 percent during the war years, with nearly one in four married women working outside the home by 1945, according to the National Park Service.

The Senate resolution pays tribute to 16 million women it says worked or volunteered for the U.S. war effort, including many who toiled for the American Red Cross, hospitals, rationing boards and other non-factory settings.

The phenomenon was captured in the iconic "We Can Do It!" posters from the era, picturing a determined-looking woman in blue factory togs, her hair swept back in a red scarf, rolling up a sleeve to show off her biceps.

"The 'Rosies' helped our nation win World War II, and inspired generations who continue to follow in their footsteps," U.S. Representative Jared Huffman, of California, said in a statement.

Marian Wynn, 91, a former welder now living in Fairfield, California, agreed the honor was long overdue.

"We wouldn't have won the war without the women," she said. "I think we deserve it."

(Editing by Steve Gorman and Leslie Adler)

Al Richburg, director of St. Augustine and Jacksonville national cemeteries, and **Arlene Rand, president of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs,** unveil a new Blue Star Memorial marker at the St. Augustine National Cemetery on Saturday. Sponsored by District IV of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in partnership with the Florida State Elks Association, the marker honors men and women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and is part of a nationwide memorial program supported by the National Garden Club.



From the VA



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) finalized a new rule on 13 January 2017 to consider eight diseases as presumptive for service connection. This presumptive service connection provides VA disability benefits for veterans who have one of eight diseases and have served for 30 days or longer (consecutive or nonconsecutive) on permanent or temporary duty at Camp Lejeune, NC between 1 August 1953 and 31 December 1987. The eight diseases covered under the new rule are: adult leukemia; aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes; bladder cancer; kidney cancer; liver cancer; multiple myeloma; non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; and Parkinson's disease.

The rule became effective 14 March 2017 following Congressional review. In accordance, the Marine Corps will mail registrants pertinent information and updates about the VA's new rule.

Congress granted the VA the authority to prescribe all rules and regulations presumptively connecting a disease to service. We appreciate efforts by the VA and Congress to support our Marines and their families.

To contact the Department of Veterans Affairs to learn more about health care benefits, please visit <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/>, or call (877) 222-8387 (Healthcare), or (800) 827-1000 (Benefits).

The health and welfare of our Marines, Sailors, their families and our civilian workers are top priorities for the Marine Corps. We continue to work diligently to identify and notify individuals who may have been exposed to the chemicals in drinking water at Camp Lejeune. For more information about these efforts, or to update your contact information, please see: <http://www.marines.mil/clwater/> or contact the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Call Center at (877) 261-9782, or e-mail clwater@usmc.mil. Please share this information with anyone that may have been at Camp Lejeune between the dates noted and encourage them to register with us.

Sincerely, The Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Program

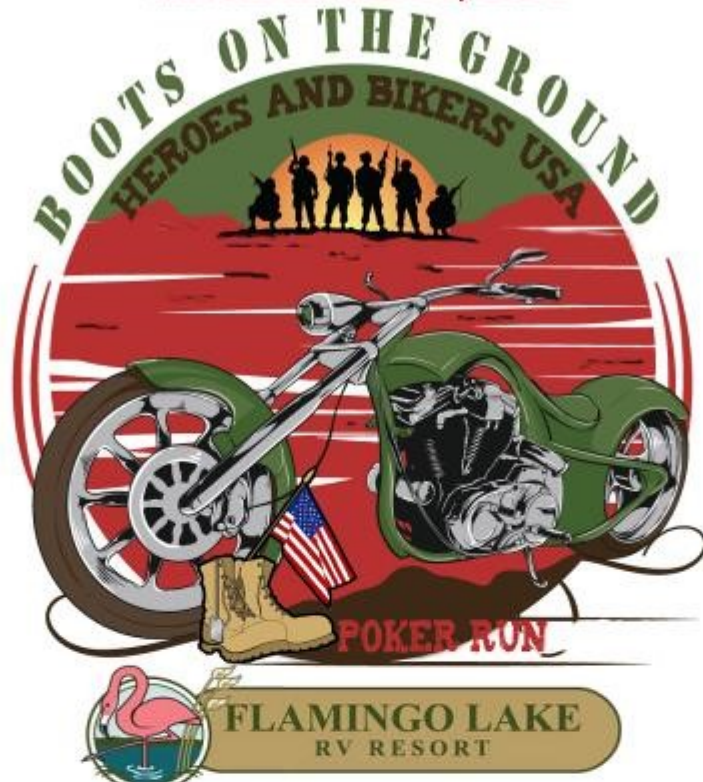
K9S FOR WARRIORS

A Look Back @

2016



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS CHAPTER 9
5TH ANNUAL BOOTS ON THE GROUND POKER RUN AND CONCERT
SATURDAY MAY 13, 2017



Hosted by American Legion Riders Chapter 9 and Flamingo Lake RV Resort 3640 Newcomb Road, Jacksonville FL 32218. To support K9s For Warriors, The Florida Fallen Hero Memorial Fund and The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. Come out and honor and support this Nations Veterans, their families and memorialize your Fallen Heroes while supporting this great cause. Military Vehicle Display by American Military Historical Society. Registration at Flamingo Lake: 8:30 KSU at 11:00, Over 20 Poker stops to choose from. Live Music By: Curt Towne Band at 8:30AM, No Saints Band at 4PM and Blistur at 7PM until 10PM. Join us!!!

- POKER STOPS**
- AMERICAN LEGION POST 283
 - THE ROOSTER
 - AMERICAN LEGION POST 54
 - DICK'S WINGS BAR AND GRILL
 - VFW POST 4351
 - KNUCKLEHEADS TAVERN
 - VFW POST 10095
 - THE BULL TAVERN
 - AMERICAN LEGION POST 401
 - GREYBEARDS
 - AMERICAN LEGION POST 137
 - RUSTY'S PUB
 - AMERICAN LEGION POST 316

\$20/Bike \$5/Passenger
 Minimum of 5 Poker Stops required
\$300 Best Hand /\$25 Worst Hand
50/50, Auction and Raffle Items
\$5 at the Gate for Non Riders
Many Great Vendors
 Flyover by the Dreamland Squadron

- POKER STOPS**
- AMERICAN LEGION POST 129
 - WILD BILL'S SALOON
 - AMERICAN LEGION POST 88
 - RED EYE SALOON
 - AMERICAN LEGION POST 233
 - STEEL PONY
 - AMERICAN LEGION POST 9
 - THE LEATHER LADY
 - DAMES POINT MARINA
 - ADAMEC HD BAYMEADOWS
 - FAT BOYZ ROADSIDE BAR
 - THE SHACK
 - PARTY AT FLAMINGO LAKE





THE
HONOR CENTER
 FOR VETERANS

**1st Annual AMVETS 444
 Charity Golf Tournament
 April 1st, 2017**



\$75 Per Player

Registration begins 8:00 AM

Shotgun start at 9:00 AM

<http://www.tournevents.com/Amvetscharity>



Prizes Awarded for

- Closest to the pin front and back
- Longest drive Longest Putt
- First, Second and Third Place Teams
- 50/50 Drawing Door Prizes

Provided with registration:

- Continental Breakfast
- Lunch: Burger, Chips,
1 Draft Beer
- Water all day

- * The course will provide beverage carts on front and back, for additional purchases.
- * Mulligans available for purchase

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is proud to announce that it has modernized its website and created a new Facebook page.



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:

NEW <http://www.veteranscouncilsjc.org>

The Veterans Council will post items of interest to all veterans, post pictures, articles, flyers, events, etc. We will post our meetings dates and keep you informed about events at the Jacksonville and St. Augustine National Cemeteries.

Please join our group on Facebook at:
VeteransCouncilofStJohnsCounty,FL

Please select **Join the Group** to become a member

Once you have joined the Veterans Council Facebook group you will be able to post your meetings, pictures, articles, fund raisers, etc. It will be your common site to go to and see what's happening.

The website and Facebook page were updated and created so that there would be a central place to list all veterans activities in NE FL.

You may have noticed the Veterans Council's new logo, it was created by Roy Havekost and his web design company PageAuthors. The VC strongly recommends that you contact Roy, 904-287-6909, if you or your vet group wants to create a website or Facebook page.

Record, Preserve, Educate

Presenting Putnam County School Board with 4 sets of the Veteran Council's Military DVDs for their High School Libraries.

Pictured from left: two High School principals, the Superintendent of Schools, *Michael Rothfeld*, *William Dudley* (documentary producers) and Dr. Dianne Taylor of the Rotary Club of Palatka who arranged the presentation. Following the presentation, Dr. Taylor gave the also documentaries to the counties 4 Public Libraries and to the Haven Hospice Library.



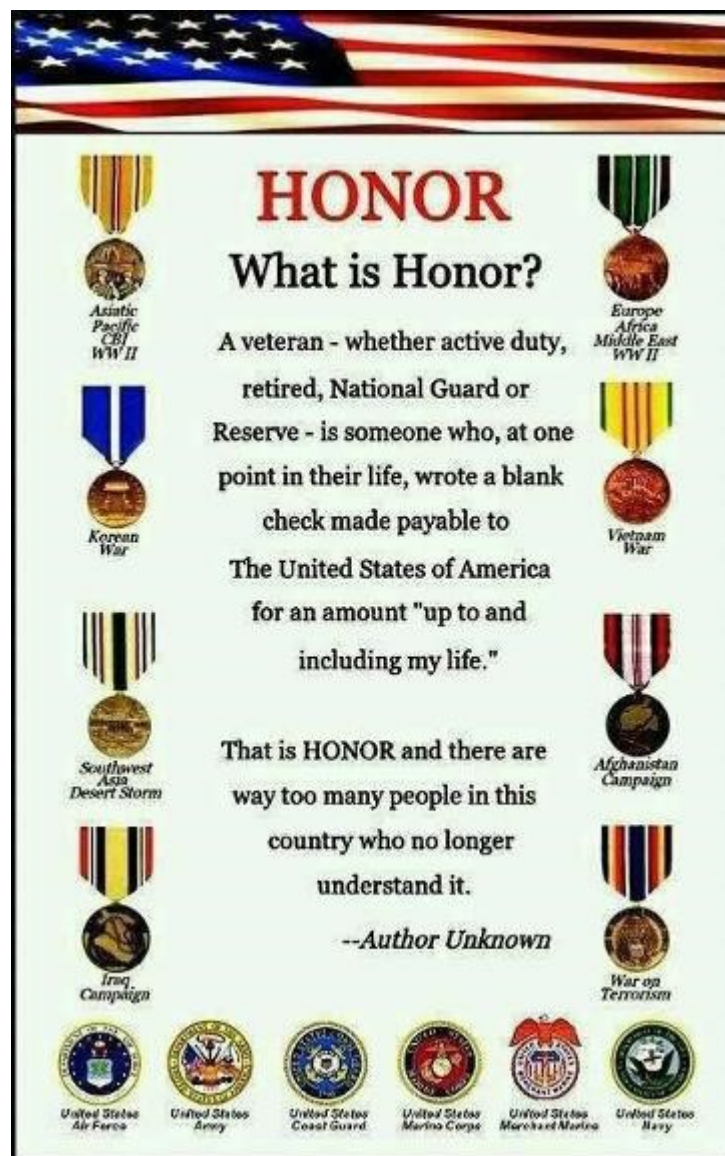
On January 31 I delivered 5 sets of the Veterans Council's documentaries to Lynn Pinilla, Administrator, Clay County Libraries for distribution to the Clay County Libraries. "Record, Preserve and Educate" is the Council's motto.

Presenting all Veterans Council documentaries to the Flagler County School Board to be used in the county high schools. All 5 of the documentaries feature local veterans from NE FL. We believe in "Recording, Preserving and Educating" all students the values and sacrifices our veterans have made for all of us so that we can enjoy our freedoms that we often take for granted.



Find your service **AFTER ACTION** Reports here

If you want to see the After Action Reports from your time in the Military (Vietnam) go to the following site "Records of War" click on it, then if you were in the Army or Marines you will see where to click on, click on that, and then start scrolling down for both or either your Division or your Unit. Remember if you need some info for a VA Claim you just might find it here. Just go to your search engine and type in Records of War.



SUPPORT COMMITTEE AT JACKSONVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY

January 23, 2017

The Support Committee at Jacksonville National Cemetery meets quarterly at Community Hospice located at 4266 Sunbeam Rd, Jacksonville, FL. Our first meeting for 2017 was held on Monday, January 8th @ 7:00pm. We held our elections of Officers for 2017-2019 with the following being voted in:



Chairman – Steven Spickelmier

Vice Chair – William Dudley

Treasurer – John Mountcastle, Assist Treasurer – Michael Rothfeld

Secretary – Kathy Church

Chaplain – Michael Halyard

Master-At-Arms – Joe McDermott

Historian – Kathy Cayton

The SCJNC is a registered 501©3 non-profit organization that supports the Jacksonville National Cemetery. The SCJNC assists the JNC Director, Mr. Alphaeus Richburg and the staff with special events and ceremonies held at the cemetery. We invite members of veteran organizations, funeral homes, etc. to join this committee.

The 526-acre national cemetery in Jacksonville, Florida will serve veterans' needs for more than 100 years. The cemetery is located north of the Jacksonville International Airport and approximately five miles from Interstate 295.

Per Mr. Richburg: The JNC is rated #25 out of 135 National Cemeteries in the US, by the Dept. of Veteran Affairs. This is very noteworthy.

As of 12/31/2016 the cemetery has interred 11,756 veterans, spouses and dependents of veterans since its first interment on January 07, 2009. Currently there is an average of 55 burials per week.

The JNC is fortunate to have the Jacksonville Ladies. The JL is made up of volunteers with their #1 Mission to be there for those who have no family or friends present. We are their “final witness”; to say a prayer and to give the respect and thanks they so deserve. . . . From the 1st burial on January 07, 2009 there has been a JL present at every burial.

If you would like to become a volunteer with the JL please go to their website at <http://www.jacksonvilleladies.org/>.

If you are interested in joining the SCJNC please contact me at my info below. Our next regular meeting will be on Monday, April 3, 2017 at 7pm.

Please check out our Facebook page at Support Committee at Jacksonville National Cemetery.

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Church, CJNC - Secretary

Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard Presents:
Florida's 30th Annual
Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion

The Nation's Largest Veterans Reunion
Supported by the Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida, Inc. - VVOF.org

May 4th – May 7th

Additionally, come visit The Vietnam Traveling Memorial WALL April 30- May 7

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Wall Escort April 30, 2017 Leave at 10am
Eastern Florida State College Cocoa Campus
Also visit the Reunion Web Page at:
floridaveteransreunion.com

Wickham Park
321-255-4307 - Melbourne, FL
Take I-95 to Exit 191 or old Exit 73
No Coolers, Glass or Pets allowed
in the Reunion Area
Per Wickham Park; Golf Carts Permitted
For the Handicapped Only And Must
Abide By FL Highway Laws
Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall
<http://travelingwall.us>
Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc
PO Box 237225

Cocoa, FL 32923-7225



Call For Info
321-408-2698
321-652-4185
Vendor call 321-652-4185
Vet_reunion_vendor@gmail.com
RaRusso1982@gmail.com
Candy1540@yahoo.com
Club Escort Lineup Info.
reunionescort@aol.com

If you or someone you know are one of the 48 million Americans who suffer from hearing loss, I have Great News to share with you!!!



ClearCaptions is a federally funded telecommunications company. The FCC has commissioned ClearCaptions to inform those experiencing any hearing loss of the federal program available to them based on Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act (mandated since 1990). Those with any hearing loss are entitled to our new technology **caption phone absolutely FREE, including installation, training and on-going service.** Those needing our phones need to have:

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- 2.** Internet access (wired or wireless).

There is no income requirement. To schedule your installation or for more information, **please contact your North Florida Territory Manager Anas Benjelloun at (904) 568-4562 or anas.benjelloun@clearcaptions.com**

Sign-up, self-certify, and be using your Free ClearCaptions phone



Did you know 22 veterans will commit suicide every day?

Join the "Stop 22" movement to raise awareness and stand with K9s for Warriors as they help veterans with PTSD and brain injuries.

On the 22nd of every month, use the hashtag #Stop22 on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and show your support. Watch below how people are "outdoing 22's" all over social media.

Learn more by visiting the Stop 22 website: <http://www.stop22.org/>

And check out K9s for Warriors for regular updates on their mission: <http://www.k9sforwarriors.org/>

NEW INFO: Ride in comfort to your appointments at the VA Medical Center in Gainesville.



The van is provided by the Disabled Veterans Chapter 6, and leaves no later than 6AM from the new VA Clinic location at 195 Southpark Blvd. The corner of Southpark and Old Moultrie Road.

To schedule your seat please contact the VA Clinic at 904-823-2954 and ask for Veteran Van Scheduling.



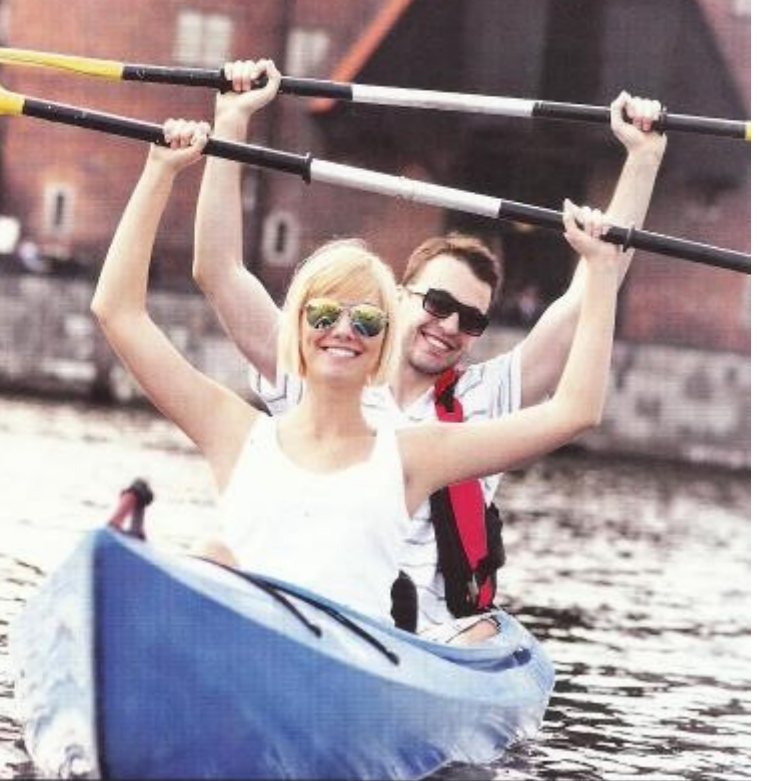
**SURVIVOR
OUTREACH SERVICES**

Survivor Outreach Offers Free Services to
Surviving Spouses and Family Members of Military Retirees

Contact Keith Ham

Survivor Outreach Services Support Coordinator, HRCI Contractor
310 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084
Office: 904-823-0157 Cell: 904-472-7689
Email: keith.e.ham.ctr@mail.mil

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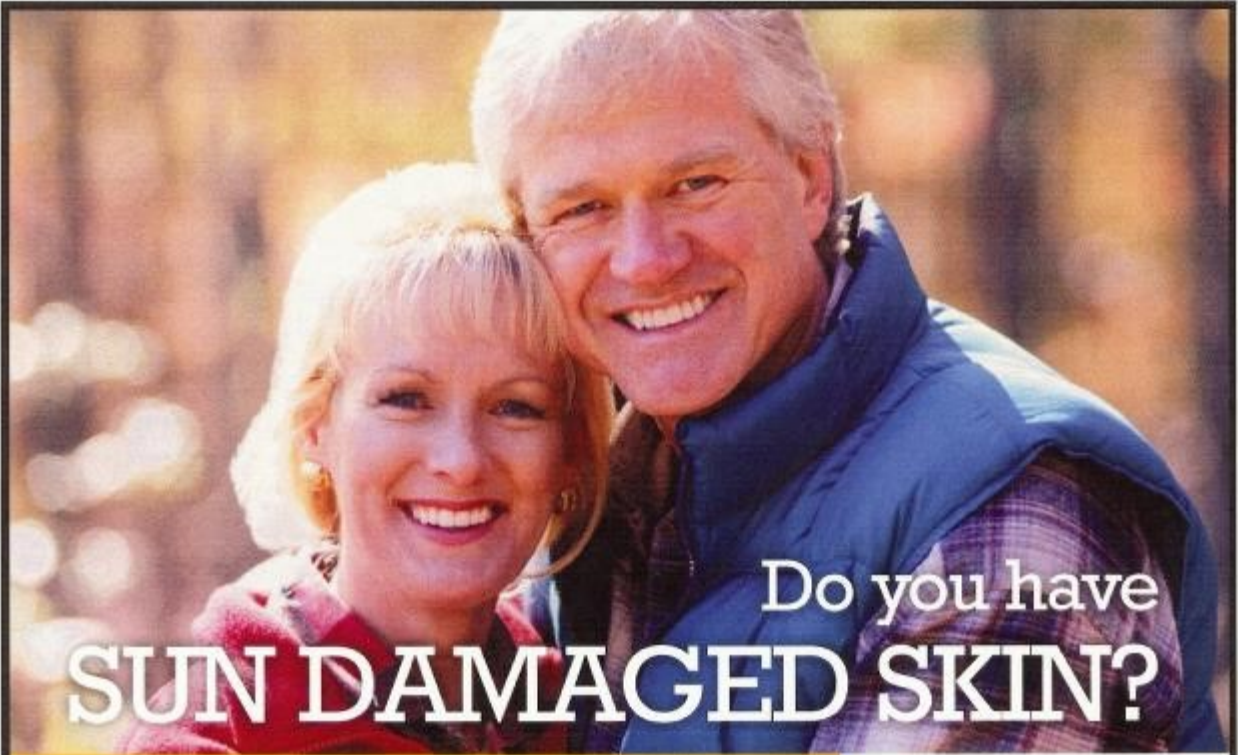
Lisa Thomas, BS, CCRC
President

Telephone (904) 619-8157
Facsimile (904) 683-4916
Mobile (904) 755-1374

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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

Please send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org



**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.**

***The Veterans Council will meet at the St.
Johns County Health & Human Services
Building, 200 San Sebastian View
Muscovy Room, 1st floor***

**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.