



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

Bill Dudley, Publisher

Michael Rothfeld, Editor

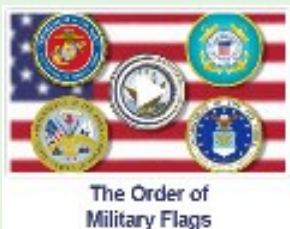
Volume 12, Issue 4

From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

April 2023

Inside this Edition

- Veterans Council's Upcoming Speakers
- Chairman Dudley Appointed Chairman
- Receives DAR Award
- VA Free Suicide Help
- Veterans Council February Minutes
- V4V merges onto Veterans Council
- Stories of Service
- Mission: POW-MIA
- American Hero Passes
- First Coast News Honors Vietnam Veterans
- Capt. Giles Norrington, USN ret.
- Women Veterans Recognition Week
- Ft Mose Historical Society
- Atlantic Beach Merchant Marine Memorial
- From VC Treasurer: Voting Law Changes
- Important Veterans Information
- USS Lenah S. Higbee
- The Star Spangled Banner Story
- Baseball Player SPY
- Terry Allan, Vietnam Veteran
- First Coast Honor Flight April 22
- Military Service Plaque
- Tax Filing for Veterans
- The PACT Act
- Veterans Property Tax Benefits
- Korean War Veterans Association



Fellow Veterans, This week around the Nation, veterans and communities have been celebrating the 50th anniversary of the truce and cease fire of hostilities in Vietnam. To honor all the men and women who served in this unpopular war, ceremonies were held in cities and towns to pay respect to all service members who served during this period. No matter if you fought in country or in some other area of the world, if you served from 1955 - 1975 you were considered a Vietnam veteran. Here in the local area, many veterans organizations including VVA Chapters, DAR Ladies, Veterans Councils, County governments, local TV networks, and others conducted celebrations to honor our

Vietnam veterans. These organizations are to be commended as they expressed the appreciation and gratitude of a grateful nation that so many did not receive when they returned from this terrible war. For everyone who served their country during this period, we salute you. The Memorial Day committee has about completed the planning for this years Memorial Day ceremony to be held at St. Augustine National Cemetery. Our guest speaker will be BG Sean Boyette . Volunteers are needed to help place flags at each of the gravesites on Friday, 26 May at 1 PM at the St. Augustine National Cemetery. Depending on the number of volunteers, the entire task should take no more than one hour.



On March 15, I was honored at a ceremony to be recognized by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution with the Excellence in Community Service Award. This award is given each year to those individuals who the DAR ladies feel has made major contributions to the community in helping and serving their fellow citizens. I was very honored and humble to receive this recognition by such an esteemed and respected organization.

Bill Dudley
Chairman
Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County meets on the last Thursday of the month, all are invited to attend. We meet at the County Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View, at 7 pm in the Muscovy room.



Upcoming Speakers

March 30

Robert Covert, St Augustine Historic Society
Veterans Oral History Project
Jeanette McMahon, Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation
(ZOOM)

April 27

Zach Peyton, President West Point Society of N FL

May 25

DeAndrea Fuller, Outreach Director
Steven A Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone
Ryan Bauman, First Coast Honor Flight Board member

June 29

Michael Dionian, Volunteering at the Jax Naval Museum,
USS Orleck

July 27

Roseann Vernon, Atlantic Coast Young Marines

From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley
I am honored to have been appointed to the council
for the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame.



The Florida House of Representatives
Office of the Speaker

Paul Renner
Speaker

February 17, 2023

LtCol., William Dudley, USAF, Ret.
P.O. Box 2117
St. Augustine, FL 32085

Dear Colonel Dudley:

It is my pleasure to appoint you to serve as a member of the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council. Your appointment is effective immediately and will expire on February 17, 2025.

By copy of this letter, I am advising Jeff Obos with the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs of your appointment.

Respectfully,

Paul Renner

cc: The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor
The Honorable Kathleen Passidomo, Senate President
Jeff Obos, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley, was also given an award by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution



THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE

Daughters of the American Revolution

Certificate of Award

presented to

WILLIAM DUDLEY

for

Excellence in Community Service

MARCH 15, 2023

Date


Lynne R. Casor
Chapter Regent / State Regent
NSDAR


Michelle Cousins Wherry
National Chair
Community Service Awards Committee

Starting Jan. 17, Veterans in suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for free emergency health care



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

WASHINGTON – Starting Jan. 17, Veterans in acute suicidal crisis will be able to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or

crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit.

This expansion of care will help prevent Veteran suicide by guaranteeing no cost, world-class care to Veterans in times of crisis. It will also increase access to acute suicide care for up to 9 million Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA.

Preventing Veteran suicide is VA’s top clinical priority and a top priority of the Biden-Harris Administration. This effort is a key part of VA’s 10-year National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide and the Biden-Harris administration’s plan for Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide. In September, VA released the 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, which showed that Veteran suicides decreased in 2020 for the second year in a row, and that fewer Veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006.

“Veterans in suicidal crisis can now receive the free, world-class emergency health care they deserve – no matter where they need it, when they need it, or whether they’re enrolled in VA care,” said VA Secretary for Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough. “This expansion of care will save Veterans’ lives, and there’s nothing more important than that.”

VA has submitted an interim final rule to the federal register to establish this authority under section 201 of the Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment (COMPACT) Act of 2020. The final policy, which takes effect on Jan. 17, will allow VA to:

Provide, pay for, or reimburse for treatment of eligible individuals’ emergency suicide care, transportation costs, and follow-up care at a VA or non-VA facility for up to 30 days of inpatient care and 90 days of outpatient care.

Make appropriate referrals for care following the period of emergency suicide care.

Determine eligibility for other VA services and benefits.

Refer eligible individuals for appropriate VA programs and benefits following the period of emergency suicide care.

Eligible individuals, regardless of VA enrollment status, are:

Veterans who were discharged or released from active duty after more than 24 months of active service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Former members of the armed forces, including reserve service members, who served more than 100 days under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operation either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Former members of the armed forces who were the victim of a physical assault of a sexual nature, a battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment while serving in the armed forces.

Over the past year, VA has announced or continued several additional efforts to end Veteran suicide, including establishing 988 (then press 1) as a way for Veterans to quickly connect with caring, qualified crisis support 24/7; proposing a new rule that would reduce or eliminate copayments for Veterans at risk of suicide; conducting an ongoing public outreach effort on firearm suicide prevention and lethal means safety; and leveraging a national Veteran suicide prevention awareness campaign, “Don’t Wait. Reach Out.”

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If you’re a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, Dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text 838255.

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
FEBURARY 23, 2023



CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS: Chairman Dudley

PLEDGE: Chairman Dudley

INVOCATION: Ray Quinn

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKERS/GUESTS: Chairman Dudley

There were several new attendees (and some members that had not attended in a while) at this month's meeting that introduced themselves.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Minutes of last meeting conducted January 26, 2023, were presented by Chairman Dudley. Copies of Minutes and Agenda are available on the sign-in table and were sent to members electronically by the Secretary. The minutes were approved by voice vote with no changes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer John Mountcastle was not in attendance and Chairman Dudley provided a detailed report that as of January 25, 2023, there was a balance of \$118,844.72 and as of date of meeting there is balance of \$148,926.99. The income increase was due to combining the Vets for Vets account with the Veterans Council. There were \$3,000 worth of checks deposited last week. Chairman Dudley and David Shoar recently met with a group of financially stable men in Ponte Vedra and they have all pledged to help the Veterans Council in some financial way. Chairman Dudley left that meeting with a couple of checks totaling \$12,500.00. Congressman John Rutherford was also in attendance at this meeting and agreed to support the Veterans Council at the Congressional level. A copy of the Treasurer's Report with all expenses was provided. The Treasurer's Report was approved by voice vote with no changes.

SPEAKERS:

DR. GEORGE CRESSMAN, HISTORIAN, CAMP BLANDING MILITARY MUSEUM

Dr. Cressman spoke of highlighting some of the history of Camp Blanding. He expressed he would talk about how Camp Blanding came to be and then a little bit about what they are doing today. Camp Blanding was the successor to Camp Johnson and Camp Foster. That post was open in the early 20th century and in 1939 the Navy was looking for a new site and that portion that was Camp Foster became Naval Air Station Jacksonville. The Florida National Guard went looking for a new home and settled on an area adjacent to Kingsley Lake and purchased about 30,000 acres of land and began construction on what was to be a two regiment training facility. He then went into great detail on the history of Camp Blanding and what it is today. Dr. Cressman invited all to come and tour the Camp Blanding Military Museum. Dr. Cressman opened up the floor for questions and answers.

JAMES BULLOCK, THE BATTLE OF FORT MOSE

Mr. Bullock spoke of the history of Fort Mose and its significance to the City of St. Augustine. The history of Fort Mose goes back over 263 years, the Battle at Fort Mose happened 35 years before the American Revolution. Mr. Bullock provided a timeline and a detailed talk of the history of Fort Mose. Mr. Bullock also provided a handout on the upcoming events to be held at Fort Mose. Mr. Bullock took questions and answers to finish his presentation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE UPDATE, JOSEPH MCDERMOTT

Mr. McDermott discussed how the VA has now gone to an automation procession of claims. Mr. McDermott discussed how the automation process had already errored on a burial benefits claim so we will just have to see if this new processing of claims will be successful or not. Letters are going out to many

veterans from the VA that have served about the PAC ACT and what it entails. Toxic exposure was discussed and who and what may be covered by that through the PAC ACT. Mr. McDermott asked that if someone is in need of filing a claim, please don't try to do it yourself send them to the Veterans Service Office for assistance.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT, JOHN LESLIE

Mr. Leslie introduced himself, he is the mentor coordinator for the Veterans Treatment Court here in St. Johns and Putnam County. The Veterans Treatment Court has brought 122 veterans into the program in the last 6 years and 2 months. There have been 69 graduates and there are 35 currently in-flow. Court is held every 2 weeks and the next Court will be held on March 3rd beginning at 10:00am in Room 355. All are invited to attend and observe. There is a need for new mentors in the Treatment Court. There is also a need for those that already in the Court for treatment for community service hours and opportunities are needed to help the participants serve their 50 required hours. Floor was then opened for questions and comments regarding the Veterans Treatment Court.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Dudley asked to bring a few things to the Council's attention. First, a Memorial Day Service is planned for May 29th at the St. Augustine National Cemetery at 10:00 am. Chairman invited everyone to attend for a large turnout and the new Brigadier General from the National Guard will be the speaker.

The second thing, was the effort that the Veterans Council is working on for hopefully building a homeless shelter in St. Johns County for our homeless veterans in the near future. The Council is working with the City, County, State and Federal Government to help with this process of obtaining a veterans' homeless shelter. There are hopes that within the next year to have a veterans'

homeless shelter, if not complete then at least started.

Chairman Dudley was contacted by the Veterans Service Office that we have a local veteran coming up on his 100th birthday on March 23, 2023. Chairman Dudley approached the County Administrator and Commission and asked that the Veteran be recognized at the next County Commission meeting and they agreed wholeheartedly to recognize him. On April 4th at the Commission Meeting, we will be recognizing the 100th birthday for Mr. John Patton. An invitation was extended to everyone to attend and help us honor Mr. Patton. It was agreed that any Veteran in the future reaching the 100th birthday will be recognized by St. Johns County.

Chairman Dudley has been appointed by the State House Speaker to the Council for the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame. Chairman Dudley accepted the appointment for a 2-year term.

Floor was opened to questions and answers or any new information that anyone may wish to share.

An unfortunate announcement was made that our Vice Chairman Ray Quinn is having to resign from the Council due to personal and health reasons. Chairman Dudley expressed what a valuable asset Vice Chairman Quinn has been to the Veterans Council since 2001. He has supported our Veterans in so many ways. He will be greatly missed at our meetings.

Next Veterans Council meeting will be held on Thursday, March 30th beginning at 7:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Dudley, Chairman

6 February 2023

Dear Loyal Supporters,

After almost 15 years of service to the veterans of St. Johns County, we have closed business and merged with the Veterans Council. The Veterans Council is the first stop for a veteran in need. As the primary point of contact, their ability to provide more services will be enhanced by our merger. Our board members unanimously agreed that we did not need to compete to provide assistance. It is the consensus that together we should be able to assist even more of our veterans.

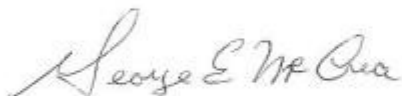
George will continue to loan out durable medical equipment- walkers, roll-a-lators, manual & power wheelchairs, potty chairs, shower chairs, etc. In this way, we continue to support our veterans and the Vets Council. Any financial help you would like to make, please make checks to:

St. Johns Veterans Council
PO Box 2117
St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117

For questions:
Call Vets Service Office
(904) 209-6160

The needs of our veterans increase daily! The Vets 4 Vets board would like to thank you for all your support over the years. We encourage you to continue your support of our veterans through the Vets Council. I, we, thank you for all the years of your generosity and trust. Together we put a smile on many of the faces of our veterans. Our appreciation of you is without enough words. God bless you!

Sincerely,



George E. McCrea, President
Cheryl Williams, Secretary/Treasurer



WE WANT YOU!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

**WE ARE GETTING SO EXCITED FOR
OUR UPCOMING FLIGHT IN APRIL!**



Help needed for Saturday, April 1, 9a-1p.
5755 Ramona Blvd. Jacksonville

Other Volunteer opportunities coming for flight
day April 22 and reunion May 13.

Please email millerfchf@gmail.com to volunteer.



Stories of Service

St. Johns County Veterans Oral History Project



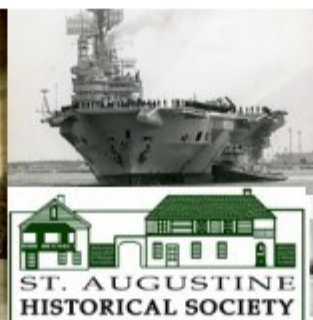
Stories of Service is an oral history project that aims to collect, document, and preserve the stories of local veterans for future generations by conducting audio interviews with them.



If you'd like to learn more about this project, contact Robert Covert:



904-825-2333 ext 203
 robert@sahs1883.com



Rayonier supports county veterans

For the News Leader

Vets4Vets is a movement under the Semper Fidelis Society, a Jacksonville-based nonprofit (501)(c)(19) with a mission to inform veterans about policy changes and to connect them with a support network. Veterans4VeteransNassau, sponsored by the veterans council, is devoted to Nassau County veterans. It has organized this gathering as a networking opportunity that will run from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the high school.

Information tables staffed by veterans organizations and sup-

port personnel within the county, such as Nassau County Veterans Service officer and Veterans Treatment Court, will provide information and guidance.

Lunch will be at no cost and will be catered by Callahan Barbecue. The keynote speaker will be Callahan native Nassau County Judge Jennifer Higginbotham.

For more information about this event or to reserve an information table, contact Blaz at FredBlazV4V@gmail.com or go to the Veterans Council of Nassau County Florida Facebook page.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mike Doran, chairman of the Veterans Council of Nassau County, left, and Fred Blaz, chairman of Veterans4VeteransNassau, proudly display a check from Rayonier. The money is earmarked for the Veterans4VeteransNassau gathering scheduled for April 22 at West Nassau High School in Callahan.

WELCOME TO THE SUNNY TROPICS OF SOUTH VIETNAM

- LIVE ENTERTAINMENT NIGHTLY
- HIGHLAND RETREATS
- MEET STRANGE AND INTERESTING PEOPLE
- FINE OPEN AIR DINING
- FIREWORKS DISPLAYS
- OVERNIGHT TENT ACCOMODATIONS
- SAFE SANDY BEACHES
- MILES & MILES OF HIKING TRAILS
- LEECH THERAPY SPAS & SAUNAS
- FREE HELICOPTER RIDES

COURTESY OF UNCLE SAM

From Pam Cain

I invite you to read the attached press release and visit our website at www.missionpowmia.org. This is a 501(c)3 organization that is focused on expediting the fullest possible accounting for those who are still missing and unaccounted for. We welcome all family members, patriots, the general public and all who support our nation's promise to account for and bring home as many as possible. Mission: POW-MIA will be recognized for its transparency, determination and dedication to end the uncertainty faced by generations of America's POW/MIA families.

I'm happy to answer any questions and we hope you will join us!

Best regards to all, Pam

Pam Cain, Vice President, Mission: POW-MIA

Daughter, Col Oscar Mauterer, MIA Laos

2/15/66,

c: 703-798-8550



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Families and Supporters Launch Mission: POW-MIA March 23, 2023

Chesapeake, VA – Today, the Board of Directors announces the launch of Mission: POW-MIA, a national non-profit (501c3 status pending) organization dedicated to supporting the families of the 81,467 American prisoners of war and missing in action (POW/MIA) in their pursuit of the fullest possible accounting and repatriation of the remains of their loved ones who died serving our nation in past conflicts. Mission: POW-MIA's membership includes both POW/MIA family members from all generations as well as Veterans, active military, and the public at-large who share the common goal of seeking to increase government and private efforts to either bring these men and women home or account for their loss.

The objectives of Mission: POW-MIA are:

- S – seeking the fullest possible accounting for our missing and unaccounted-for Americans
- E – engaging with partner organizations
- A – advocating for the families of our missing
- R – researching and investigating for case resolution
- C – conducting outreach and education
- H – honoring the service and sacrifices of our missing and their families

"It is our firm belief that our nation owes a debt of honor to America's POW/MIA and their families," said retired U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Jon Kreitz, President of Mission: POW-MIA. "The mission to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all of our POW/MIAs and to return the remains of as many of them as possible is a uniquely American task that defines us as a nation. We will support U.S. Government and private efforts, and we will assist them where possible while encouraging them to do more. We are united in our resolve that bringing our missing home and providing their families with the answers they have been seeking is an essential component of America's keeping faith with her citizens, now and in the future."

Mission: POW-MIA was founded by POW/MIA family members and retired military officers to be the unified voice and advocate for the families, friends, and supporters of all missing and unaccounted for Americans from past conflicts. We are actively seeking family members of our POW/MIAs from past conflicts as well as all interested supporters of this honorable mission to join us. Membership information can be found at <https://www.missionpowmia.org>.

For more information, please contact Mission: POW-MIA at info@missionpowmia.org or (757) 404-0315.

P.O. Box 153469, 1100 Battlefield Blvd. S.
Chesapeake, VA 23322 / (757) 404-0315

Mission Driven, Family Focused



www.missionpowmia.org

From Jerry Domask

The Passing of an American Hero

Greetings All,

It is with a heavy heart and great grief that I forward you this email. Ted is an American Warrior & Hero that served his Country and our Nation with unconditional love and sacrifice, and asked for nothing in return. While serving in the Pentagon, I was asked to help Ted acclimate back into the Army after being held a POW for 5+ years, 4.5 of these years he was held in solitary confinement in a foot print of 8' X 5'.

God bless you and may you find peace and tranquility that has eluded you most of your life! Ted will always be remembered in my heart and soul as "Mother Theresa Incarnated"! Love you Brother and will always have your back covered!

Your Foxhole Buddy for half a century,

Jerome (Jerry) Domask

Vietnam Veteran, Army (RET)





You've made our country
A BETTER PLACE.

Enjoy your well-earned retirement at Silver Creek.

Thank you veterans for your service and sacrifice! At Silver Creek, you can live life as you choose with greater freedom, comfort and independence through the unique living options at our community - including independent concierge living, assisted living, enhanced assisted living and memory care.

Discover first-class amenities, holistic wellness programming, gourmet all-day dining and vibrant activities while enjoying camaraderie and friendship at our close-knit community.

Call **800-821-8170** to schedule a tour and learn more.



165 Silver Lane | St. Augustine, FL 32084 | SilverCreekRetirement.com



Independent Concierge Living – Assisted Living
Memory Care – Short-Term Stays

Assisted Living Facility #12928



VIETNAM VETERANS COME LET US HONOR YOU

MEET ON THE USS ORLECK SATURDAY, MARCH 25TH AT 3PM
FIRST COAST NEWS ON YOUR SIDE IS GATHERING VIETNAM
VETERANS TO STAND TOGETHER ON THE DECK WITH ANCHORS
JEANNIE BLAYLOCK AND LEW TURNER FOR A GROUP PICTURE
FOR OUR DOCUMENTARY.

FREE BBQ DINNER

TOURS OF THE USS ORLECK DD-886

DO YOU PLAN TO COME? EMAIL NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO:
EVENTS@JAXNAVALMUSEUM.ORG

JEANNIE AND LEW WILL PAY TRIBUTE TO OUR LOCAL
VIETNAM VETERANS AND THEIR STORIES AT **6PM EVERY**
NIGHT ON FIRST COAST NEWS ON YOUR SIDE FROM
MARCH 27 - APRIL 13TH.

THEN ON **THURSDAY, APRIL 13TH** ON **WJXX - ABC 25** FROM 7-8PM
WATCH THE DOCUMENTARY "**VOICES OF BRAVERY - HONORING**
THE VETERANS OF VIETNAM."

COME TO THE USS ORLECK. LET'S HAVE A STRONG SHOWING!

FIRSTCOAST
 **NEWS**
— ON YOUR SIDE —



VOICES OF BRAVERY
HONORING THE VETERANS OF VIETNAM

WHEN TO WATCH
6 PM **NOV 12** **@ 25**
MARCH 27 - APRIL 13

Mayor Lenny Curry and the City of Jacksonville Military Affairs and Veterans Department invite you to the 6th Annual

PRESENTING SPONSOR



VyStar
Credit Union

MILITARY SPOUSES NIGHT OUT

JUNE 15, 2023 | 5 - 8 PM

**VYSTAR VETERANS
MEMORIAL ARENA**

300 A PHILIP RANDOLPH BLVD. | JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202

PLEASE VISIT [TINYURL.COM/SPOUSES NIGHT OUT 2023](https://tinyurl.com/spousesnightout2023) TO REGISTER.

FREE PARKING IN LOT Z



Open to U.S. and allied military spouses of active-duty, guard, reserve, and retired service members. Valid ID required. No childcare provided. For more information, call Tiffany Morales at (904) 255-5524 or email tmorales@coj.net.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. PLEASE CONTACT DISABLED SERVICES AT VM 255-5466, TTY 255-5475, OR EMAIL YOUR REQUEST TO KARAT@COJ.NET.

**EXTRACTIONS
AND FILLINGS
ONLY**

1ST VETERAN MOBILE DENTAL EVENT

APRIL 4-8



THE MOBILE DENTAL UNIT WILL BE STATIONED AT THE CORNER OF PAULSONAGH STREET
AND BLANDING BOULEVARD IN MIDDLEBURG (ACROSS THE STREET FROM PUBLIX).
2646 BLANDING BLVD MIDDLEBURG, FL 32068



First Baptist Middleburg
REAL PEOPLE.



Veterans Council Clay
County Florida Inc.



Florida Baptist
Convention

have partnered to provide **FREE** dental care for **Veterans and their Families** in need.

Registration Extended to April 2!!!

- Step 1: Register at www.vcccf.org/dental (registration open from Feb 15 - Apr 2)
- Step 2: Receive contact from coordinators with information about next step
- Step 3: Attend **MANDATORY** screening(s) as directed by coordinator
- Step 4: Receive appointment date and time for care during 4 - 8 April
- Step 5: Attend appointment for care



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Patients must be 18 years or older to be seen.
- Bring a list of all your medications with you to screening(s).
- No cleanings, oral surgeries, or denture work.
- Screenings are **MANDATORY** to get an appointment with the dental unit.
- Some restrictions apply:
 1. No Dental Insurance
 2. No Medicaid Dental and
 3. Make income 200% below poverty line:
 - For a family of 2 = \$3,052 or less last four weeks
 - For a family of 3 = \$3,838 or less last four weeks
 - For a family of 4 = \$4,625 or less last four weeks
 4. Some medical conditions may need primary care doctor authorization prior to treatment

Income does not include:

- Capital gains or losses
- Noncash benefits (e.g. food stamps and housing subsidies)
- Tax credits

Questions?

Email veterans.council.clay.county@gmail.com

or call (904) 406-1258 (leave a message or text if no answer)

April 22, 2023

Poker Run for Veterans Center

– All types of vehicles welcome!

Registration starts at 9:00 am - Kick Stands Up at 10:00 am

Costs: \$20 rider \$10 Passenger (both include a poker hand)

Extra poker hand \$5

50/50 tickets available

Route: (stops subject to change)

SP – VFW Post 8255, Middleburg

S1 – VFW Post 5968, Orange Park

S2 – VFW Post 1988, Green Cove Springs

S3 – Watering Hole at Smith Lake, CR 214, Keystone Heights

S4 – AMVETS Post 86, Keystone Heights

FP - VFW Post 8255, Middleburg



Poker run to benefit the future
Clay County Veterans
Community Center championed
by Veteran Council Clay County
Florida Inc.

Poker Run contact:
info@vcccf.org



Veterans Council Clay
County Florida Inc.



VFW Post 8255
Riders Group

You are Cordially Invited to a Massing of Colors Ceremony


on May 6, 2023, 10 AM at

Ridgeview High School Cafetorium

466 Madison Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32065

Please RSVP soonest to Chapter Commander, CWO David McCuistion via email at davidmcc44@outlook.com, or by telephone at 423-402-1643.

The Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW)
Northeast Florida MOWW #250
Massing of Colors – 6 May 2023
Invitation to Participate and/or Attend




Massing of Colors Ceremony

You are Cordially Invited to a Massing of Colors Ceremony
on May 6, 2023, 10 AM at
Ridgeview High School Cafetorium
466 Madison Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32065

The Massing of the Colors is a patriotic ceremony to rededicate our faith in the Colors of the United States, to honor those servicemembers who serve our country, and to memorialize those who sacrificed their lives to preserve our country's freedom.

Massing of Colors (MOC) is an inspiring ceremony and parade of the National and Organizational Colors by various color guard units from the Jacksonville area. It combines the colors and color guards of Active and Reserve Component military units, veterans' organizations, civic and patriotic organizations. Additional information is available at <https://moww.org/outreach-programs/>.

The Massing of Colors (MOC) Ceremony is hosted by the **Northeast Florida Chapter #250** of The Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW), a Veterans Service Organization serving ROTC/JROTC Units, Scouting, Public Service and Law & Order, Youth Leadership Conferences and Seminars, National Security and Homeland Security. See www.neflmo250.com for more information.



Our guest speaker will be Honorable Thomas Hall, former Asst. Secretary of Defense for Reserve Forces, and a graduate of The United States Naval Academy.

Color Guards can be a regular 4-Person Unit w/U.S. Flag and Organizational Flag, a 3-Person Unit w/U.S. Flag, and if necessary just one person representing an organization carrying a U. S. Flag. Contact me for other options. Guests without a Color Guard are encouraged to attend this patriotic event.

Uniform: Military Dress Uniform; Organizational Uniform; Coat and Tie or business casual. Call if you have questions.

Please RSVP soonest to Chapter Commander, CWO David McCuistion via email at davidmcc44@outlook.com, or by telephone at 423-402-1643.

From the Editor: as we get older we think back to memorable days that stand out from the others, days that you can't forget.

This happened 10 years ago this month.

Woman flies to St. Augustine, surprises POW with bracelet she wore for him as a child

By William Browning Mon, Mar 18, 2013

Peggy Cornacchio of Massachusetts surprised former POW Giles Norrington with this bracelet in his name that she wore as a child to honor him 40 years ago.

Woman flies to St. Augustine, surprises POW with bracelet she wore for him as a child

This story ends in the exchange of a bracelet between two weeping adults who before Saturday night had never met.

It begins in 1971, when Peggy Cornacchio was 11, and her parents mailed off for a metal bracelet bearing the name of a U.S. prisoner of war. Many similar bracelets were worn during the intense years of the Vietnam War.

The name on the bracelet Peggy got was "LCDR Giles Norrington," a Navy pilot who had been shot down over North Vietnam on May 5, 1968.

Peggy didn't know Norrington or anything about his life. That didn't matter. On most school days for two years Peggy wore his name around her wrist. By wearing it she honored his service and sometimes, sitting in class at Nathaniel Bowditch School in Salem, Mass., the place where she grew up, she thought of Norrington and what happened to him.

Two years after she began wearing it, her parents read in the Boston Globe newspaper that Norrington had been released from captivity. Peggy felt relieved, but still wore the bracelet here and there for the other Americans left in Vietnam.

Then the war drew down, the bracelet was packed away, Peggy went to college, grew up and 40 years passed.

Last Christmas, rummaging through a box of forgotten keepsakes, Peggy came across the bracelet. Holding it for the first time in decades, she wondered.



Photo by Michael Isam

Giles Norrington and Peggy Cornacchio meet for the first time Saturday in St. Augustine. Cornacchio, who lives in Salem, Mass., flew to Jacksonville to give Norrington a POW-MIA bracelet she wore for him 40 years ago when he was a prisoner of war at the Hanoi Hilton.

What happened to Norrington? Where had he gone? Was he still alive?

She searched the Internet and found he was alive, living in Florida and scheduled to speak Saturday night in St. Augustine at the annual awards dinner for the Chase-Rescorla Scholarship. She felt like she needed to give him the bracelet.

“I thought he’s got to be getting up there,” she said. “If I don’t do this now, it’s not going to happen.”

She bought a \$400 plane ticket and took some time off from work. Saturday morning she and a friend flew to Jacksonville from Boston.

She didn’t tell Norrington she was coming.

5 YEARS CONFINED

An infamous place of torture and brutal confinement, the Hanoi Hilton was a prisoner of war camp in North Vietnam. Giles Norrington spent 1,775 days there.

He was from Ohio and joined the Marine Corps as an enlisted man out of high school in 1954. In 1965 he switched to the Navy. Three years later the plane he was piloting was shot down and he was captured.

He was tortured at first and then, he said, the hardships of isolation set in.

“The biggest enemy was boredom,” he said. “What I mean by that is, we had no intellectual stimulation.”

Norrington said the conversations he had with his fellow American POWs were “precious.” They would tell each other the stories of their lives.

“When you were listening to those, it was a time away from your problems,” he said.

The prisoners didn’t know what would happen to them. They certainly had no idea people back home were wearing bracelets bearing their names.

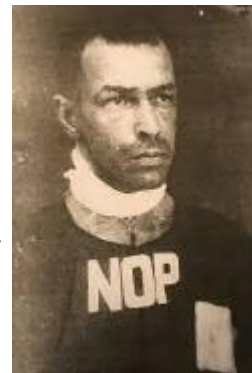
On March 14, 1973, he was released.

When he got home he learned about the POW-MIA bracelets, which tens of thousands of Americans had begun wearing to remember the captured servicemen. Talking about what they meant to him recently, he got emotional saying that they represented the military men “who gave all.”

He retired from the Navy in 1988, married and moved all across the country before he and his wife settled in Titusville, where they live today.

Over the years Norrington, 77, received more than 100 of the POW-MIA bracelets bearing his name.

Most arrived in the mail.



NOT FORGOTTEN

When Cornacchio, 52, pulled the bracelet out of the bottom of that box on Christmas, it was broken. She took it to a jeweler in Salem who, after learning why she wanted it fixed, repaired it for free.

Cornacchio, the intact bracelet and her friend from Salem, Beth Ross, flew into the First Coast Saturday morning. They stayed at the home of Athena Tickner, a childhood friend and Air Force veteran who lives in Jacksonville.

Getting ready to go to St. Augustine Saturday night, Cornacchio chose to not wear mascara. She was sure she was going to cry. And she did. "I can tell you that tears were streaming down my face and hers," Norrington said when describing their embrace.

He said when the stranger from Massachusetts handed him the bracelet at the dinner, he felt, "Joy and relief and just the kind of pleasure that you can't explain in words. I can't get over it."

Of all the bracelets he has received through the years, he called Cornacchio's the most important. She gave it to him two days after the 40th anniversary of his release from the Hanoi Hilton.

Cornacchio and her friend are flying back to Salem Tuesday. Cornacchio will be back to work Wednesday and when she goes she will carry a sense of relief.

"For me, it was so important that he knew there was a person out there who didn't forget about him," she said of Norrington.

He is back home in Titusville. Through the years, as he and his wife moved across the country, he donated a lot of the bracelets he received to military museums and historical societies. The one Cornacchio gave him is sitting on his kitchen table as he decides where to keep it.


He has no plans to give it away.

"There are some things in life that you just don't let go," he said. "And that's one of them."

ADDENDUM by Michael Rothfeld: *A few years after this bracelet exchange local Vietnam veteran and historian, Terry Allan, was on a vacation in the New England area and came across two women standing in front of a Traveling Vietnam Wall. Terry offered to take their pictures and the women accepted his offer. The women thanked Terry and told him why they were at the Vietnam Wall, it was because Peggy Cornacchio had always worn the bracelet of ex POW Giles Norrington. Terry immediately realized what had just taken place. A one chance in a million encounter with the women he had met at the dinner in St. Augustine a few years back. They all embraced, a few tears were shed and they all remembered Giles Norrington, Capt. US Navy, retired and American Hero.*



We invite you to join us for a "Women Veterans Recognition Week" celebration. Attached is a tentative schedule of events and the sponsorship letter. As we draw closer, we will send an updated flyer for the week of events. I hope you will participate!



2023 Women Veterans Week of Recognition
"Continuing the Legacy"
Schedule of Events:

Sunday, June 4, 2023
Honoring Women on the Wall
Candlelight Vigil
Veteran's Memorial Wall
Time: 7:30pm
Also view them at:
[\(68\) 2021 Week of Recognition - Women on the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Wall - YouTube](#)

Monday, June 5, 2023
Opening Ceremony/Proclamation
City Hall, 117 West Duval Street
TBD

Paint N Sip N Fun
TBD

Tuesday, June 6, 2023
Lunch & Learn "Breaking the Ceilings"
Hosted by Women in Defense
3130 Hartley Road
Time: 11:00am - 1:00pm
Cost: \$25.00
<https://bit.ly/3hA9iW>


Wednesday, June 7, 2023
Women, Wealth & Wine
TBD

Thursday, June 8, 2023
Mental Health Conference
TBD

Friday, June 9, 2023
HerVOICE
TBD

Saturday, June 10, 2023
Women Veterans Recognition Gala
"Continuing the Legacy:"
Guest Speaker: TBD
Time" 6:00 PM, Cost: \$100.00
(Tickets \$120.00 at the door)
Southbank Hotel at Jacksonville Riverwalk
1515 Prudential Dr
Purchase tickets at:
Also, visit the Women Veterans Documentary Display in City Hall, 7-11 June 2021

www.forwomenvets.org



Fort Mose Historical Society

Do You Know Your Fort Mose Historical Timeline?

- 1687 The first group of freedom seekers arrives in St. Augustine.
- 1693, King Charles II of Spain issued a royal proclamation granting liberty to all freedom seekers who would accept the Catholic religion. S
- 1738 Fort Mose is established on St. Augustine's northern border.
- 1740 British troops launch a month-long siege of St. Augustine. Allied Spanish and Native forces and Fort Mose free Black militia win the Battle of Bloody Mose, although, during the battle, the fort is destroyed. St. Augustine remains under Spanish control.
- 1740 Fort Mose citizens move into town, living peaceably among local Spanish and Native residents.
- 1752 Fort Mose is rebuilt, close to the original site.
- 1763 England gains control of Spanish St. Augustine, upon conclusion of the Seven Years War. Most citizens of Fort Mose and St. Augustine evacuate to Cuba.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 8, 2023

Contact: Beth Heath, 904-705-6439, Beth@WeCanBeHeroesFoundation.org

Beaches Park Home of Merchant Marine Memorial

Memorial to the Merchant Marine Placed at Atlantic Beach, FL

(JACKSONVILLE) –Tuesday morning at the Veterans Memorial Park in Atlantic Beach, Florida, “A Memorial To All Who Served in the US Merchant Marine and the Navy Armed Guard” was placed at the Beaches Veterans Memorial Park. The Memorial Park is at the corner of Atlantic Blvd. and Mayport Rd, adjacent to the American Legion Post 316.

The Merchant Marines suffered 6,839 lost lives, and the Armed Guard suffered 1,810 lost lives. 731 ships were sunk between 1941 - 1945. Their motto is "We aim to deliver, and we did."

Among those present to observe the placement of the beautiful two-sided memorial and thank Merchant Mariners was Commander General of the Naval Order of the United States Bob Whitkop, Clarence Hill, Past National Commander of the American Legion, Stephen Snyder of American Merchant Marine Veterans, Merchant Mariner Charlie Sellers, Former Atlantic Beach Town Council Member Jimmy Hill, Atlantic Beach Public Works Director Scott William and We Can Be Heroes Foundation President Beth Heath.

This beautiful two-sided memorial is a reminder to all Americans of the Merchant Marine valor, dedication and heroic history.” said We Can Be Heroes Foundation President Beth Heath.

#

Photo 1: Veterans Memorial Park

Photo 2: l to r Bob Whitkop, Scott Williams, Charlie Sellers, Stephen Snyder

Photo 3: l to r Honorable Jimmy Hill, Charlie Sellers

Photo 4: Memorial Backside



From the Treasurer

This year, there are many changes to laws, only a few of which are more advantageous to the Veteran than in prior years.

Vote-By-Mail

One of the little-known requirements is that Florida Voters' Vote-By-Mail requests expire at the end of the calendar year in which there is a general election **which was a recent change in the law**. In 2022, there was a general election, voting for Federal and State elected officials (remember those annoying ads?), **so all requests from the 2022 elections have now expired**.

If you prefer to Vote-By-Mail, now would be a good time to request mail ballots be sent to your St. Johns County residence, another address, or, if deployed, request an Overseas or Military Ballot, by going to <https://www.votesjc.gov/vote-by-mail>. Your Vote-By-Mail request will be valid for all local and state elections, and for the federal (general) elections in 2024.

You may choose an "All Elections Request" (valid through 2024) or request a mail ballot for a specific Individual Election (though I believe it makes life easier to submit an "All Elections Request"). **If you have questions, or need assistance, please reach out to the Elections Office at (904) 823-2238.**

Exempt Organization 2023 Filing Deadlines and Reminders

January 31, 2023: Provide 1099-MISC and 1099-NEC to recipients, and file 1099-NEC with the IRS with 1096

February 28, 2023: File IRS copies of 1099-MISC together with 1096

May 1, 2023: File Florida Secretary of State Annual Report

May 15, 2023 (for calendar-year exempt organizations): File Form 990 family (990, 990-EZ or 990-N) electronically (this is the second year that only electronic filings are accepted). For exempt organizations with other fiscal years, due date is the fifteenth of the fifth month after the fiscal year-end.

Various dates (for charities, not Veterans' organizations recognized under §IRS 501(c)(19)), renew registration under the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs. To check your renewal date, go to [Florida Charity Check](#).

Personal Federal Income Tax Deadline

The IRS's Free File program, **available only at IRS.gov**, allows taxpayers who made \$73,000 or less in 2022 to file their taxes electronically for free using brand-name software provided by commercial tax filing companies. Free File Fillable forms, a part of this effort, is available to any income level and provides free electronic forms that people fill out and file themselves also at no cost.

Tuesday, April 18, 2023, for most taxpayers, instead of April 15, because of the weekend and the District of Columbia's Emancipation Day holiday, which falls on Monday, April 17. The IRS will commence accepting 2022 individual federal income tax returns on January 23.

RESERVE COMPONENT TRANSITION ASSISTANCE ADVISORS



Are you a member of a Reserve Component? Have you served 180 or more consecutive days on Title 10? Do you have a service-related injury or health care issue? Perhaps you're about to retire from service and need someone to show you how to get back into the swing of civilian life. Getting to know your Reserve Component Transition Assistance Advisor (RCTAA) means you'll have reliable, professional support when you need it.

I am here to help with the following benefits:

- State and Local Benefits
- VA Assistance for Physical and Mental Health
- Disabled Veterans Program Assistance
- Education and Training Assistance
- Employment Assistance
- Health and Life Insurance
- Financial Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Relocation Assistance
- Effects of a Career Change

Since 2005, RCTAAs have assisted Reserve Component service members with 180 days or more T-10 AD service obtain their federal benefits and entitlements. You could save an average of:

- Employment Counseling (\$75/hour)
- Health Insurance (\$1430/Service Member)
- Legal Assistance (\$255/hour)
- VHA DAV Benefit Received (\$15,034/Service Member)
- VA Benefit Received (\$5786/Service Member)
- Education Benefits Received (\$15,285/Service Member)

Average benefit per eligible Reserve Component service member across all benefits areas=\$11,970.

If you or someone you know needs assistance with federal benefits and entitlements, don't hesitate to contact me. You can either scan this QR code and fill out the attached form or contact me directly using the information below.



Thank you for serving, now let me serve you.

According to the National Defense Authorization Act 2013, [Reserve Component] transition assistance advisors "serve as points of contact to assist eligible members of the reserve components in accessing benefits and health care furnished under laws administered by the Secretary of Defense and benefits and health care furnished under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs" (Sec. 513).



David "Dave" Kennett

Reserve Component
Transition Assistance Advisor
Federal Contractor
202-987-3864
DKennett@gapsi.com

DIRECTION | BENEFITS | COMPASSION



RESERVE COMPONENT SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS

Do you need direction to your benefits?

RCTAAs provide **DIRECTION** through the maze of programs available to the Reserve Component and connection to earned **BENEFITS** with the **COMPASSION** of someone who knows what it's like to transition.



*Ask your Reserve Component
Transition Assistance Advisor (RCTAA)
to show you the way!*



BENEFITS:

- » State and Local Benefits
- » VA Assistance for Physical and Mental Health
- » Disabled Veterans Program Assistance
- » Education and Training Assistance
- » Employment Assistance
- » Health and Life Insurance
- » Financial Assistance
- » Legal Assistance
- » Relocation Assistance
- » Effects of a Career Change



*This picture might be worth
\$1000 or more in federal
benefits and entitlements!
Enter your contact
information to receive a call
from a RCTAA.*



*Locate your
closest RCTAA
here!*



By law, Transition Assistance Advisors "serve as points of contact to assist eligible members of the Reserve Components in accessing benefits and health care furnished under laws administered by the Secretary of Defense and benefits and health care furnished in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs" (NDAA, 2013, Sec. 513).

From American Legion 5th District FL

IMPORTANT VETERAN INFORMATION

Every spouse of a veteran should have in his/her personal file the following:

Veteran's Birth Certificate - 3 copies
Spouse's Birth Certificate - 3 copies
Children's Birth Certificate - 3 copies
Certificate of Marriage - 3 copies
Wills (for veteran & spouse) - 2 copies
Spouse's Social Security number
Veteran's Social Security number
Discharge papers - 2 copies
Separation records - 2 copies
V.A. "C" number
G.I. Insurance Policy Number
All Insurance Policies with addresses and numbers. (Originals needed)
Cemetery plot or vault locations and numbers
Death Certificates and divorce decree of all prior marriages (if applicable)

Copies of the following are needed to file a Claim for Death Benefit:

Certificate of Marriage
Birth Certificate of minor children
Death Certificates or divorce decrees of all prior marriages on either side
Service discharge papers
Service separation papers
V.A. "C" number
Social Security number of both parties
V.A. insurance papers
Proof of Death Certificate (minimum 4 copies)
Bills from Funeral Home

ALL originals should be kept in a safety deposit box or equivalent.

NEVER release an ORIGINAL copy.

APPOINT an administrator for minor children.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE: contact your County Veterans' Service Officer

Military News

Navy Ship Named in Honor of One of Service's First Nurses

USS Lenah S. Higbee is dressed for the ceremony in 2021. (Michael Duhe/U.S. Navy)



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution | By Hunter Boyce

The USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee, a guided-missile destroyer, was recently launched by the United States Navy. The ship, christened in 2021, is named after one of the U.S. Navy's first ever nurses. Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee entered service in 1908 as part of the "Sacred Twenty," the U.S. Navy's first nurses. Within three years, she had gained leadership of the corps as the forerunner of today's Director of Nurse Corps.

Rear Admiral Cynthia Kuehner served as the representative of the Chief of Naval Operations at the ship's christening, where he spoke about what Higbee means to the Nurse Corps and Navy Medicine.

"As the 26th Director of the Navy Nurse Corps I recognize that I am here in no small part because of the vision, initiative and conspicuous achievements of this great war-ship's namesake," Kuehner said. "As the second Superintendent she led the Navy Nurse Corps with awe inspiring distinction. In this evening's ceremony we celebrate her legacy. We honor her service. And we ensure that the permanence of her indomitable spirit is enshrined and revered by all who behold her."

Higbee's care for thousands of casualties in World War I and during the so-called Spanish Flu epidemic that followed ultimately earned her a Navy Cross.

"Lenah Higbee understood in the context of World War I and the influenza pandemic of 1918 that nursing's presence on the front and in the fight is as essential to victory as any other element of modern warfare," Kuehner added. "With uncommon vision and valor Superintendent Higbee pursued credible standing for the all-female Navy Nurse Corps, fighting within the institution against overt discrimination and for the common basic features of military service including pay, rank, uniforms and even housing."

The Star-Spangled Banner

The story behind the song

If you have ever been to a U.S. sporting event—professional, college, or high school—you know the routine. People stand, some place right hands over their hearts, men take off their hats, soldiers salute, maybe fighter jets roar overhead. Then, six of the most recognizable musical notes in American culture are played, and the crowd belts out the first five words: “O say can you see ...”



Most people then mumble through the rest of the song. A recent poll reports that two-thirds of Americans do not know all the words to the first verse of their own national anthem. Perhaps if people know the amazing history of how this song came to be, they might find it easier to remember. Here is the story behind the “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Did You Know?

The commander of Fort McHenry, George Armistead, ordered “a flag so large that the British would have no difficulty seeing it from a distance.” The giant 42-foot by 30-foot banner was sewn by Mary Pickersgill. This 15-star flag, the Star-Spangled Banner that inspired Francis Scott Key’s poem, has been carefully preserved. Today it hangs in the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

Francis Scott Key penned four verses to “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Only the first verse is sung at most occasions. Occasionally, though, a performance will include the fourth verse, too.

Key—the man who described the U.S. as “the land of the free”—owned slaves, an ugly truth of the time. History is often weirder than fiction.

“The Star-Spangled Banner” has its critics. Some Americans complain that it celebrates war and should be reserved for military ceremonies. Others simply grumble that it is too hard to sing with a range that is out of reach for the average vocalist. Suggested replacements have included “America the Beautiful,” “God Bless America,” and “This Land is Your Land.”

During World War II, Major League Baseball began the tradition of performing the “The Star-Spangled Banner” before games. Other sports soon followed suit.

The National Anthem Project promotes the learning of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Every year, it encourages schools to celebrate National Anthem Day on September 14th. For more information, check out their web page.

**EXTRACTIONS
AND FILLINGS
ONLY**

1ST VETERAN MOBILE DENTAL EVENT

APRIL 4 - 8



**THE MOBILE DENTAL UNIT WILL BE STATIONED AT THE CORNER OF PARSONAGE STREET
AND BLANDING BOULEVARD IN MIDDLEBURG (ACROSS THE STREET FROM PUBLIX).
2646 BLANDING BLVD MIDDLEBURG, FL 32068**



First Baptist Middleburg
REAL FAMILY.



Veterans Council Clay
County Florida Inc.



Florida Baptist
Convention
Right Where You

have partnered to provide **FREE** dental care for **Veterans and their Families** in need.

Step 1: Register at www.vcccf.org/dental (registration open from Feb 15 - Mar 15)

Step 2: Receive contact from coordinators with information about next step

Step 3: Attend **MANDATORY** screening(s) as directed by coordinator

Step 4: Receive appointment date and time for care during 4 - 8 April

Step 5: Attend appointment for care



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Patients must be 18 years or older to be seen.
- Bring a list of all your medications with you to screening(s).
- No cleanings, oral surgeries, or denture work.
- Screenings are **MANDATORY** to get an appointment with the dental unit.
- Some restrictions apply:
 1. No Dental Insurance
 2. No Medicaid Dental and
 3. Make income 200% below poverty line:
 - For a family of 2 = \$3,052 or less last four weeks
 - For a family of 3 = \$3,838 or less last four weeks
 - For a family of 4 = \$4,625 or less last four weeks
 4. Some medical conditions may need primary care doctor authorization prior to treatment

Income does not include:

- Capital gains or losses
- Noncash benefits (e.g. food stamps and housing subsidies)
- Tax credits

Questions?

Email veterans.council.clay.county@gmail.com

or call (904) 406-1258 (leave a message or text if no answer)

A Baseball Player SPY

Born on Sunday, March 02, 1902 in New York, NY , Among the most scholarly professional athletes ever, Moe Berg was an alumnus of three universities, lawyer, mathematician, linguist, and poor hitter, eliciting the comment: “He can speak 12 languages but can’t hit in any of them.” His ability to handle young pitchers and his reputation as a bullpen mystic kept him in the majors, where his roommates wondered at his sacrosanct clutter of books and newspapers stacked in dozens of piles. He professed belief that his newspapers were “alive” and could “die” from being looked at by someone else. On occasion he braved snowstorms to purchase replacements for “deceased” newspapers.



Casey Stengel called him “the strangest man ever to play baseball” even before it was known he had served America as a spy. Some may have wondered why a third-string catcher like Berg went to Japan in the early 1930s with the likes of Ruth and Gehrig on an all-star traveling team. In fact, Berg was assigned to take espionage photos. During WWII, he became one of America’s most important atomic spies, gathering vital information on top German scientists and even performing some missions that might have required assassination. He declined the Medal of Merit for his wartime service and never wrote his memoirs after being angered by an assigned co-author who confused him with “Moe” of the Three Stooges.

Berg fit the classic spy image: dark, heavy-featured, mysterious, sybaritic, courageous, and impeccably mannered. Women were attracted to the cultured, lifelong bachelor. When he was criticized for “wasting” his intellectual talent on the sport he loved, Berg replied: “I’d rather be a ballplayer than a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.”

“He [Moe Berg] bluffs his way up onto the roof of the hospital, the tallest building in Tokyo at the time. And from underneath his kimono he pulls out a movie camera. He proceeds to take a series of photos panning the whole setting before him, which includes the harbor, the industrial sections of Tokyo, possibly munitions factories and things like that. Then he puts the camera back under his kimono and leaves the hospital with these films,” says Nicholas Dawidoff, a Berg biographer.

From a few years ago but well worth revisiting

Terry Allan, esteemed Vietnam War Veteran speaks before 1,000's of St. Augustine, FL attendees at the world premier of Vietnam: Service, Sacrifice & Courage held November 7, 2010 at Flagler College. The documentary produced by media moguls Michael Rothfeld and Bill Dudley includes some of America's bravest men who served in Vietnam telling their personal stories. The event was also a chance for Congressmen, dignitaries and others to finally express Welcome Home to Vietnam Veterans.

Terry made an emotional presentation discussing the Differences Between Fairy Tales and War Stories. He vividly articulated how 50,000,000 men who reportedly served in combat during the Vietnam era tell War stories today about their brave deeds. Mr. Allan pointed out that only 5,000,000 men actually served in Vietnam, but who's counting when you're dealing with some Fairy Tales.

<https://youtu.be/5Xd6xbvAkvY>





WE WANT YOU!
ON OUR "CHEER" TEAM!!

FLIGHT DAY-APRIL 22

at the Jacksonville Airport

--Come Join Us--

To Send Off and Welcome Home our
Veterans!

Saturday, April 22

send off: 6a-7a **or**

Welcome Home: 8p-9p

★ ACTIVE DUTY ★ VETERANS ★ NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVE ★

MILITARY SUPPORT RETREATS

RETREATS FOR COMBAT VETERANS AND THEIR PRIMARY SUPPORT PERSON



Marineland
Florida



MAY 4-7



Helen
Georgia



JUNE 1-4



Amelia Island
Florida



JULY 6-9



Helen
Georgia



AUG. 17-20

From Thursday at 5:00pm – Sunday at 2:00pm



★ **RESTORATION** ★ **RECREATION** ★ **RELAXATION** ★

Strengthen and restore connections, enjoy the natural beauty of each location, be inspired by fun outdoor activities, learn about available support resources, and relax while exploring the stress coping concepts of Post Traumatic Growth.

★ Small, friendly group setting ★

★ All accommodations, food, and activities are provided free of charge ★

★ Facilitated by Vets, Licensed Clinicians, and Community Nonprofit Support Organizations ★

Please note: Must be 18 to attend and no childcare is provided. Participants are responsible for travel.

TO LEARN MORE AND TO APPLY VISIT: GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG/RETREATS



CHRISTOPHER DUKE
770-298-7654
DUKE@GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG



Pioneer Florida Museum *presents*



World War II Living History Event



**Saturday, April 22
10 am until 4 pm**

BATTLE REENACTMENT
at 2 pm, Saturday

SPECIAL FIELD TRIP DAY
Friday, April 21, 9 am - 1 pm only

(Public, private and home-school students welcome).

Pre-registration required at www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org,
not open to public, \$5 for students and chaperone's.

- Living history displays, civilian home front and much more....
- Live Audio/Visual presentations on World War II history, including a presentation on the German POW Camp in Dade City
- 1940s radio show vignettes
- Great food at the museum concessions

Outdoor Event
All museum buildings will be open

**\$10 ADULTS
\$5 STUDENTS
UNDER 5 FREE**

- Free Parking
- No Coolers, outside food or beverages allowed
- Lawn Chairs Permitted
- No Pets, service dogs only



1 mile north of downtown Dade City off US Hwy 301 at 15602 Pioneer Museum Road 33523

Masks required while inside buildings or where you cannot socially distance.

For more info, lesson plans, or a schedule of events:

www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org or 352-567-0262



Tax Tips for Survivors



The Primary Next of Kin is responsible for the deceased Sailor's last tax return. Know your rights and benefits as a Surviving taxpayer.



What is my tax filing status as a Survivor?

- Year 1**
If you were married at the time your spouse died, you may still file a joint return for the year of your service member's death. This gets you the best tax rate (and the largest standard deduction, if you do not itemize).
Survivors filing a joint return may claim the full exemption amount for the decedent regardless of the date during the year when the death occurred.
- Years 2-3**
If you have one or more children, you may file as a "qualifying widow or widower" for the next two tax years, so long as you do not remarry. This status lets you use joint-return tax rates.
- Year 4**
Starting in year four, if you have dependent children, you may file your tax return as a "head-of-household." Tax rates are less favorable than those for joint returns but better than the rates for single taxpayers.

Which of my benefits are taxable?

TAXABLE	Salary income (including the "pay" portion of an unpaid compensation claim).	Life insurance benefits (including Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI)).	TAX EXEMPT
	Income from Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments.	Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments.	
	Social Security Survivor benefits (up to 85%).	Death Gratuity.	

Are there any special tax provisions for Survivors?

Yes. In certain cases, widows and widowers get a tax break on individual retirement accounts (IRAs) inherited from a spouse and on proceeds from the sale of a home.

If the service member died as a result of active service in a combat zone (according to the definitions provided in the benefit laws), the member's Federal income tax liability may be forgiven. Any taxes paid for the year of death will be refunded, and any tax liability at the date of death will be forgiven.

Parents of an unmarried deceased service member must file a tax return on behalf of their child for the year of the death. See https://www.irs.gov/publications/p3/ar02.html#en_US_2016_publink1000176324 or consult a tax professional.

When will I get my service member's W-2?

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) issues a W-2 for deceased service members who had income during the tax year. The W-2 will be sent to the address on record for the service member after January 1 of the year following the member's death.



How do I replace a lost W-2?

If the address on record is incorrect and the W-2 cannot be delivered, or if the document is lost, you can request a reprint by calling DFAS (Cleveland) at 1-888-332-7411. Phone tree prompts are 4, 2, 4, then select the branch of service, then 1 and 1.



What about state taxes?

Don't overlook the possibility that your state may offer its own tax benefits. See, for example, https://dor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Docs/pubs/prop_tax/widowwidowersgrantprog.pdf.

Most states also have income tax forgiveness policies in place for veterans who serve in combat zones; check with your state's revenue department to find out if you qualify.

For more information on the Navy Gold Star Program...



www.NavyGoldStar.com
www.facebook.com/NavyGoldStar
 1-888-509-8759



Vets Freedom Fest

2023

HONORING OUR VETERANS



Date: APRIL 29th

Time: 10 AM to 4 PM

Place: Putnam County Fairgrounds

118 Fairground Road, East Palatka, FL 32131

Hosted by Hillcrest Baptist Church

MUSIC, BARBECUE, GAMES, PRIZES,

KIDS' BOUNCE HOUSE,

ANTIQUE CAR/TRUCK CRUISE-IN

INFORMATION BOOTHS

(About benefits for Veterans)

FREE MEAL FOR VETERANS

& THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY

PUBLIC INVITED

NON-VETERAN ADULTS - \$8.00 per Meal

Children 12-18 \$4 and under 12 eat free

Proceeds benefit veterans

For information see VetsFreedomFest.org or call (386) 546-9126

AMERICAN LEGION POST 250 CHILDREN'S EASTER CARNIVAL



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

WHEN

April 8th, 2023
12:00—4:00 pm

HONORING THE
MONTH OF THE
MILITARY CHILD

WHERE

American Legion Post 250
2608 Black Creek Dr.
Middleburg, FL



FEATURING • Carnival Games • Prizes • Bounce House
Magician • Hamburgers & Hotdogs "Free for Kids"



Balloon Animals 12:00—1:30
Magic Show 2:00—3:00

Photos with
The Easter Bunny



1:00—3:00



Egg & Spoon Race
3:00—3:30



Free Fingerprint
service provided
by the Free and
Accepted Masons
of Florida

All Children Must be accompanied by an adult at all times



APRIL IS THE
MONTH OF THE
MILITARY CHILD
we celebrate the military child!



WEAR PURPLE to support our military children



www.purpleup.org

SPONSORS

Law Offices of Michael Quimby
JAX Wholesale & Liquidation
Mission BBQ
Auxiliary Post 250
American Legion Riders CH 250

BENEFITING



Inflatables provided by

PALATKA'S BEST

PARTY RENTALS



CLAIM YOUR FREE MILITARY SERVICE PLAQUE FROM TOGETHER WE SERVED

Hot off the press is Together We Served's brand new, high resolution, Military Service Plaque, featuring key service information and period-accurate graphics from your military service in a distinctive and attractive layout. Specially sized at 11" x 6.5" to download and print out on a home printer or nearby print shop, your FREE Personal Military Service Plaque can be easily framed for proud display on any den wall!

These Plaques are being made available, completely free of charge on the Together We Served website, to every Stars and Stripes reader who served in the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force or U.S. Coast Guard.

Claim Your Free Plaque Today!

Togetherweserved.com/





FREE TAX FILING FOR VETERANS

Monday—Thursday

9:30 am—1:30 pm

117 West Duval Street

Suite 175

PH: (904) 255-5551

Please call to make an
Appointment.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Social Security/Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) card for each family members and working adult
- 1095-A if you received a tax credit from the healthcare.gov marketplace
- Childcare provider name, address and tax ID, if applicable
- Bank routing and account numbers for checking or savings account (if you qualify for refund via secure direct deposit)
- Last year's tax return, if you have it
- A valid email address
- Income statements (W-2, 1099-INT, 1099-Div, 1099-MISC, etc.)

The City of Jacksonville's Military Affairs and Veterans Department, in Partnership with the IRS and United Way, offers free tax preparation services to Veterans.



RealSense





How the PACT Act is Already Helping Veterans

Veterans are applying for benefits and VA is expediting delivery

The PACT Act is a historic new law that will help VA provide health care and benefits to millions of toxic-exposed Veterans and their survivors. Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law on August 10, VA has been hard at work implementing this landmark bipartisan legislation—and Veterans have already begun to apply for the benefits they've earned and deserve.

Here's an update on what's happened since August 10th:

Veterans are applying for the PACT Act benefits they deserve

The day after the PACT Act was signed into law (August 11), Veterans set an all-time record for filing online disability compensation claims. Since the PACT Act was signed, Veterans have filed more than 200,000 total claims—an increase of more than 21% over the same period last year. And to date, VA has already received more than 70,000 PACT Act-related claims from Veterans since August 10.

Thousands of Veterans participated in toxic exposure screening pilot

As a part of the PACT Act, VA will begin providing 5-minute toxic exposure screenings to all Veterans enrolled in VA health care. On September 6, VA began a pilot of this program—screening 13,380 Veterans across 12 medical centers over a 2-week period, and finding a 37.4% concern of exposure among those Veterans. These results will help VA make toxic exposure screenings available to all Veterans in early November, and more importantly, make sure that VA provides all toxic-exposed Veterans with the care they need and the benefits they deserve.

VA expedited the timeline to deliver benefits to Veterans as soon as possible

Instead of phasing-in conditions over the coming years (as outlined in the legislation), the Biden Administration decided to make all conditions in the PACT Act presumptive for benefits as of August 10, the day the bill was signed into law. We will begin processing these benefits on the earliest date possible, which is January 1.

VA will expand health care eligibility in October

On October 1, VA will expand and extend eligibility for VA health care for certain Veterans of the Gulf Wars and post-9/11 era. This expansion will increase health care eligibility for hundreds of thousands of toxic-exposed Veterans. Additionally, VA has already expanded health care eligibility for certain Veterans of the Vietnam War. More detailed information about this expansion can be found on [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).

Meeting Veterans where they are

Within minutes of the PACT Act passing the Senate, VA launched [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT)—a one-stop-shop website where Veterans and their families can learn about the PACT Act and apply for health care or benefits. This website, which is available in English and Spanish, has garnered nearly 2.5 million views to date.

Apply now. VA encourages Veterans and survivors to apply now for the PACT Act-related benefits and care they deserve. All Veterans and survivors can go to [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT) or call us at 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more about what this legislation means for them.

★ ACTIVE DUTY ★ VETERANS ★ NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVE ★

MILITARY SUPPORT RETREATS

RETREATS FOR COMBAT VETERANS AND THEIR PRIMARY SUPPORT PERSON



Amelia Island
Florida

~~FULL JAN. 12-15~~

Marineland
Florida

★ FEB. 2-5

Sarasota
Florida

★ MAR. 23-26

Hiawassee
Georgia

★ APR. 13-16

From Thursday at 5:00pm – Sunday at 2:00pm



★ RESTORATION ★ RECREATION ★ RELAXATION ★

Strengthen and restore connections, enjoy the natural beauty of each location, be inspired by fun outdoor activities, learn about available support resources, and relax while exploring the stress coping concepts of Post Traumatic Growth.

★ Small, friendly group setting ★

★ All accommodations, food, and activities are provided free of charge ★

★ Facilitated by Vets, Licensed Clinicians, and Community Nonprofit Support Organizations ★

Please note: Must be 18 to attend and no childcare is provided. Participants are responsible for travel.

TO LEARN MORE AND TO APPLY VISIT: [GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG/RETREATS](https://www.gratitudeamerica.org/retreats)



CHRISTOPHER DUKE
770-298-7654
DUKE@GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG





Hello First Coast Honor Flight Supporters:

Our mission at First Coast Honor Flight (FCHF) is to provide a unique experience for our local Veterans in Washington D.C. to visit the memorials dedicated to honoring those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

We consider it our honor to give our Veterans the opportunity to remember, celebrate, grieve, and gain closure for the time they sacrificed for our country.

Unfortunately, the current limited commercial airline schedule from our Jacksonville Airport is not sufficient to provide our Veterans the experience they deserve in Washington D.C. Therefore, we have decided to postpone our planned October 2022 flight to April 2023.

We're making great progress towards an April 2023 flight which will allow us to bring more Veterans and allow more time for the true experience that we want to be able to give our Veterans.

Stay tuned for more information.

We would welcome any connections you may have and will be creating some fundraising opportunities for you to help us make our April 2023 flight a reality!

Your First Coast Honor Flight Team

Candace Mabry, Fundraising Director, First Coast Honor Flight

904-708-2445, cmabryfchf@gmail.com, www.firstcoasthonorflight.org

"We can't all be heroes, because somebody has to sit on the curb and applaud as they go by"

-Will Rogers



PROPERTY TAX BENEFITS FOR ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY AND VETERANS

Certain property tax benefits are available to members of the Armed Forces.

Property Tax Oversight

Filing and Keeping Your Homestead Exemption

When a person serving in the Armed Forces owns and uses property as a homestead, the servicemember may rent the homestead property without abandoning the claim to the homestead exemption (see section 196.061, Florida Statutes).

A servicemember's next of kin or any other person who has written authorization may file a homestead exemption claim on behalf of a servicemember who cannot file in person because of a service obligation (see s. 196.071, F.S.).

Property Tax Exemptions and Discounts

Eligibility for property tax exemptions depends on satisfying certain requirements. Information is available from the property appraiser's office in the county where the veteran or surviving spouse owns a homestead or other property.

- An ex-servicemember who was honorably discharged, is a resident of Florida, and who is disabled to a degree of 10% or more because of misfortune or while serving during wartime may be entitled to a \$5,000 reduction in his or her property's assessed value. This exemption is not limited to homestead property. Under certain circumstances, the veteran's surviving spouse may be entitled to carry over the exemption. See Form [DR-501](#). (see s. 196.24, F.S.)
- Veterans who are Florida residents and were honorably discharged with a service-related total and permanent disability may be eligible for a total exemption from ad valorem taxes on property they own and use as their homesteads. A similar exemption is available to disabled veterans confined to wheelchairs. Under certain circumstances, the veteran's surviving spouse may be entitled to carry over the exemption. See Form [DR-501](#). (see ss. 196.081 and 196.091, F.S.)
- If they meet certain requirements, veterans 65 or older who are partially or totally permanently disabled may receive a discount on the assessed value of property that they own and use as homesteads. This discount carries over to the veteran's surviving spouse if the spouse holds the legal or beneficial title to the homestead, permanently resides there and has not remarried. The discount is a percentage equal to the percentage of the veteran's permanent, service-connected disability as determined by the United States Department of Veteran's Affairs. See Form [DR-501](#). (see s. 196.082, F.S.)



Eligible veterans who want to apply for these exemptions may apply before they receive the necessary documentation from the United States government or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its predecessor. After the property appraiser receives the documentation, the exemption will be effective as of the date of the original application. Please see the [How to Apply for a Refund](#) brochure for information about refunds.

- A member or former member of any branch of the United States military or military reserves, the United States Coast Guard or its reserves, or the Florida National Guard may receive an exemption if he or she was deployed during the previous calendar year outside the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii in support of a designated operation (the Florida Legislature designates operations for this exemption). The percent of the taxable value that is exempt for the current year corresponds to the percent of time during the previous year when the service member was deployed on a designated operation. See Form [DR-501M](#). (see s. 196.173, F.S.)

You should file all required forms and applications for these exemptions with your county property appraiser. If the property appraiser denies your application, you may file a petition with the county's value adjustment board. For more information, see [Petitions to the Value Adjustment Board](#).

The Department of Revenue's website has more information about property tax benefits for active duty military and veterans and contact information for county officials.

<http://floridarevenue.com/property/Pages/Home.aspx>

KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION



CALLING ALL KOREAN WAR AND KOREAN DEFENSE VETERANS

We invite you to join the KWVA Brotherhood. There are KWVA Chapters throughout America. Go to our KWVA Facebook Page, our KWVA Website at kwva.us or call the KWVA National Office to join the KWVA at **217-345-4414**

Blue Angels Show Schedule 2023

Jacksonville in October

Blue Angels

► 2023 | SHOW SCHEDULE

MARCH

11 | NAF El Centro, CA | NAF El Centro Annual Air Show
18 · 19 | NAS Point Mugu, CA | Point Mugu Air Show
25 · 26 | Barksdale AFB, LA | Defenders of Liberty Air Show

APRIL

1 · 2 | Lakeland, FL | Sun 'n Fun Aerospace Expo
15 · 16 | NAS Key West, FL | Southernmost Air Spectacular
22 · 23 | MCAS Beaufort, SC | MCAS Beaufort Air Show
29 · 30 | Fort Lauderdale, FL | Fort Lauderdale Air Show

MAY

6 · 7 | Corpus Christi, TX | Wings Over South Texas Air Show
13 · 14 | Scott AFB, IL | Scott AFB Air Show
20 · 21 | Seymour Johnson AFB, NC | Wings Over Wayne Air Show
24 | USNA, Annapolis, MD | U.S. Naval Academy Air Show
26 | USNA, Annapolis, MD | U.S. Naval Academy Fly Over
27 · 28 | Long Pond, PA | The Great Pocono Raceway Air Show

JUNE

10 · 11 | Smyrna, TN | The Great Tennessee Air Show
17 · 18 | Columbus, OH | Columbus Air Show

JULY

1 · 2 | Oklahoma City, OK | Tinker AFB Star Spangled Salute
8 | Pensacola Beach, FL | Pensacola Beach Air Show
15 · 16 | Duluth, MN | Duluth Air and Aviation Expo
22 · 23 | Milwaukee, WI | Milwaukee Air and Water Show

AUGUST

5 · 6 | Seattle, WA | Boeing SeaFair Air Show
12 · 13 | Billings, MT | Yellowstone International Air Show
19 · 20 | New Century, KS | KC Air Show
26 · 27 | Lincoln, NE | Guardians of Freedom Air Show

SEPTEMBER

2 · 4 | Toronto, ON, Canada | Canadian International Air Show
16 · 17 | NAS Oceana, VA | NAS Oceana Air Show
23 · 24 | MCAS Miramar, CA | MCAS Miramar Air Show
30 | McMinnville, OR | Oregon International Air Show

OCTOBER

1 | McMinnville, OR | Oregon International Air Show
7 · 8 | San Francisco, CA | San Francisco Fleet Week
14 · 15 | Grand Junction, CO | Grand Junction Air Show
21 · 22 | Jacksonville Beach, FL | Sea and Sky Air Show
28 · 29 | Greenfield, IN | Crossroads Air Show

NOVEMBER

3 · 4 | NAS Pensacola, FL | NAS Pensacola Homecoming Air Show

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Our App got an upgrade! The free App is a quick and easy way to access benefit information, look for available jobs, and connect to the latest news regarding Veterans' issues. Get it now!

<https://app.floridavets.org/>

#FDVA #FLVets

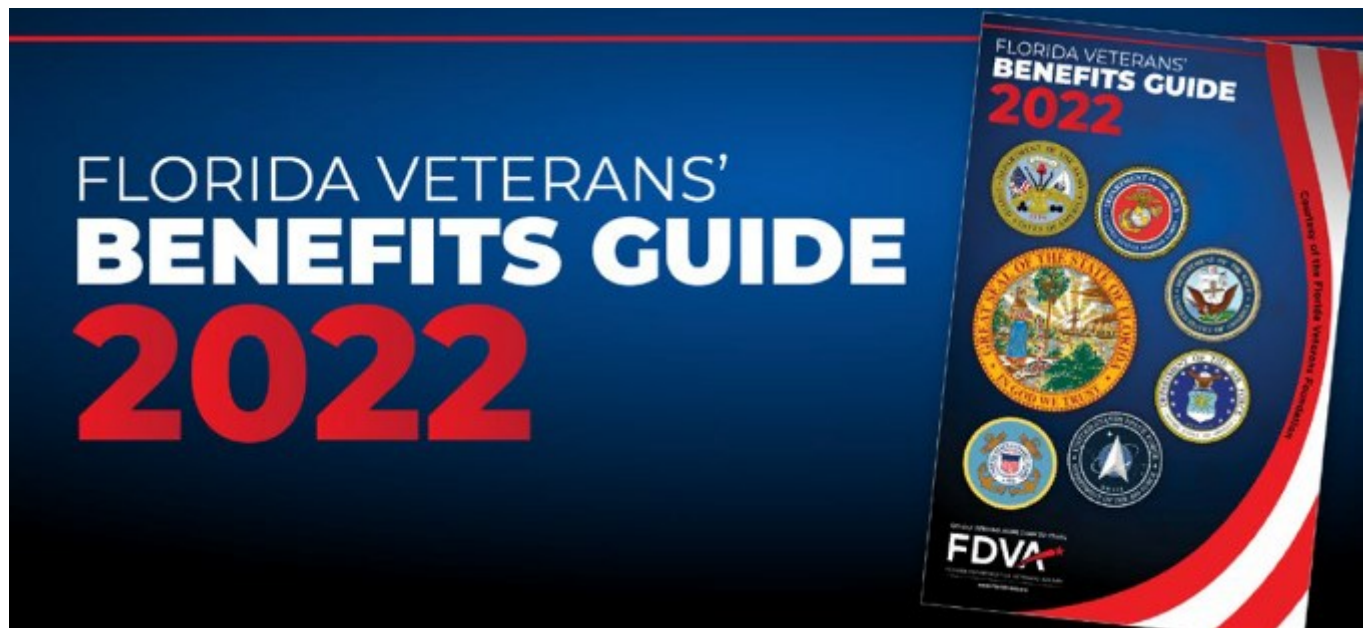
**GET OUR FREE
UPGRADED
APP.**

It won't take
up space on
your phone.



The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Have you checked out the new 2022 Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide? It is now available for download. The annual guide helps connect Florida's Veterans and their families with earned federal and state benefits, services and support. It also contains helpful phone numbers and website addresses for additional information. To view online, click here: <https://bit.ly/3BovveB>. To download a copy for your records, click here: <https://bit.ly/3HYgTF0>.





VA SURVIVOR BENEFITS & THE PACT ACT

ESGR4U

You may be eligible for VA benefits and services after your loved one has passed.



The PACT Act makes it easier for many survivors to receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

VA will be contacting survivors who were previously denied DIC benefits and may be newly eligible under the PACT Act. You do not need to wait for VA to contact you to submit a claim.

How to Apply for DIC and/or Accrued Benefits

Surviving family members may apply for these benefits using the appropriate VA form on va.gov/family-member-benefits.



Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Monthly payment for the eligible surviving spouse, dependent children or parent(s) of the Veteran or service member IF Veteran or service member died in the line of duty or due to a service-related injury or illness.



Accrued Benefits

A one-time payment to a surviving spouse, dependent child(ren) or dependent parent(s) of a deceased Veteran based on relationship when the record shows additional benefits (such as VA compensation or pension) due to the Veteran prior to passing.

Additional Survivor Benefits Available:



Burials and Burial Allowance

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of our National cemeteries with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone, marker, or medallion, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost. Some survivors may also be eligible for a plot allowance, transportation allowance, and burial allowances based on the service connected disability status of the deceased Veteran.



Final Monthly Payment

If a Veteran who is receiving VA compensation or pension benefits passes away, their last month of benefits can be paid to their surviving spouse.



Home Loan Guaranty

Certificate of Eligibility is available for surviving spouses receiving DIC.



Education and Training

Chapter 35 benefits and Fry Scholarship are the two main GI Bill programs offering educational assistance to survivors and dependents of Veterans who died in the line of duty or as a result of service-related disabilities.



Health Care

Survivors and dependents of Veterans may qualify for health care benefits, such as CHAMPVA.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT)
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/)



LIVE ASSISTANCE
General information, directory assistance and technical support for VA.gov

VA HEALTH CARE
Eligibility, enrollment, locations and COVID-19

COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE
MISSION Act eligibility, copayments

NATIONAL CEMETERIES
Burial benefits, interment scheduling and headstone/Veteran marker

VETERANS CRISIS LINE
Immediate connection to caring, qualified responders

DEBT MANAGEMENT
Debt details, payment options and debtor rights

FACILITY LOCATOR
Locations of medical centers, benefits offices or cemeteries

BENEFITS ASSISTANCE
Information about a variety of VA benefits

HOMELESS VETERANS LINE
Information and support for homeless and at-risk callers

COVID-19 INFORMATION
Frequently asked questions and live assistance for COVID-related questions

FLORIDA SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY



Are You eligible to file for benefits based on Presumptive Exposure?

Were you exposed to hazardous materials while serving in the military, such as from Agent Orange or burn pits? Did you serve in Vietnam, Thailand or Southwest Asia? If so, you may be eligible to file for service-connected benefits based on presumptive exposure.

Over the course of the last six months, VA has begun processing service-connected disability claims for six new presumptive conditions related to exposure to hazardous materials.

In May 2021, VA started implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA), adding bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the list of medical conditions presumptively associated with exposure to Agent Orange. A few months later, VA added asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis (to include rhinosinusitis) on a presumptive basis based on particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas.

Any Veteran who was previously denied service-connection for any of these six conditions but had symptoms manifest within 10 years of military service would need to file another claim. Be sure to use VA Form 20-0995, "Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim" when filing. The claim form should include the name of the medical condition and also specify that the medical condition is being claimed due to in-service exposure to environmental hazards.

VA is committed to assisting Veterans who may have been exposed to hazardous materials during their military service.

Be sure to stay plugged in to www.va.gov for the most recent developments around environmental hazards; VA is constantly conducting research and surveillance, as well as reviewing scientific literature for conditions that may be related to exposure during military service.

If you feel you have a chronic condition attributed to an in-service exposure, we highly encourage you to file a claim. For more information about VA benefits and eligibility, or how to file a claim, Veterans and survivors can visit VA's website at www.va.gov or call toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.



The **Fire Watch** is Northeast Florida's fight to end veteran suicide. Over 6,000 U.S. military veterans die by suicide each year, including 500 annually here in Florida. But suicide is preventable. And everyone can help. **Join us as a Watch Stander today.** Learn how to identify the risk signs of veterans in crisis and to direct them to the help they need.

3 minutes to enroll. 30 minutes to train. A lifetime of saving lives.

Visit: www.thefirewatch.org/watch-standers to learn more.

Thanks!

Nick Howland

Executive Director, The Fire Watch

www.thefirewatch.org

904.525.1761



From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

Subject: VA Transportation Assistance

I received the email below from Dr. McKenzie. If any of our veterans require transportation assistance to any VA medical centers, have them call our CBOC at 904- 829-0814 and ask for the primary social worker for help with transportation.

We recently found that we are able to assist with patients who have significant issues with transportation to VA medical centers. Our primary care social worker can assist with this problem. Patient can call here and ask that she be notified of problem. She will be able to contact them and attempt to provide assistance.

From Michael Isam

The DAV van is now operating 5 days /week!

It will now transport a full capacity of riders.

Schedule your seat on the DAV Chapter 6 van.

It departs from the large parking lot of the clinic at 0600!!!

Contact the VA Clinic at 904-823-2954





Legal Aid for Veterans

The Florida Veterans Legal Helpline is a project of the Major General Ernest A. and Marilyn Bedke Veterans Law Center at Bay Area Legal Services, Inc. The helpline is a free service for eligible Florida veterans and their family members.

When you call, you will speak to a screener who will determine your eligibility and set your appointment with an attorney.

1.866.486.6161

Call Today!

Hours: Monday – Friday
9 AM to 4:30 PM



We Can Help With

- Landlord-Tenant Matters
- Consumer Credit Issues
- Foreclosure
- Divorce + Child Support
- Drivers Licenses/ID cards
- Social Security + Public Benefits
- Discharge Upgrades
- VA Benefits
- And Other Civil Legal Matters
(No Criminal or Traffic Matters)

Supported by the:



Become a Watch Stander with The Fire Watch

Vietnam Veterans of America



If you are a Vietnam Era Veteran and live in one of these counties, please contact the President for information as to how to join

Chapter/President/email/Location

1046	Albert White		Duval
1048	Bob Adkins	adk123robert@outlook.com	
1059	David Treffinger	dtreffinger433@msn.com;	Clay
1084	Ron Howard	ronehoward@gmail.com	
1088	Roy (Corky) Rudd	corkstopper50@yahoo.com;	Nassau
1092	Forest Hope	foresthope@usa.net;	Gainesville
1134	Marvin Lagle	mdlagle@gmail.com;	Baker



REMEMBER WHAT OUR MEDAL STANDS FOR:

- RED:** REPRESENTS THE THREE ANCIENT VIETNAMESE EMPIRES OF TONKIN, ANNAM AND COCHIN.
- YELLOW:** THE IMPERIAL COLOR OF VIET NAM.
- GREEN:** SURROUNDED BY EXPANSIVE JUNGLE.
- TED PIECKO, The NAM.



PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET VETERANS' UNIQUE NEEDS

Advance Care Planning

Community Hospice & Palliative Care offers Honoring Choices® Florida, a program to help you document your health care wishes in advance, so that, in the event you become ill and cannot speak for yourself, your wishes are known and can be followed.

Palliative Care

Our palliative care services can help people with serious illnesses get relief from physical, emotional, and spiritual pain, symptoms, and stress while seeking curative treatment.

Hospice Care

We also provide support during the final phase of advanced illness, with a focus on comfort and quality of life.

- ★ **Team Approach:** Trained clinicians identify and address the psychological, physical, spiritual and emotional needs of veterans and their caregivers.
- ★ **Pinning Ceremony:** We provide a veteran-to-veteran pinning ceremony to honor the service of our nation's bravest.
- ★ **Service Branch Flags:** For veterans who receive care at our inpatient centers, we fly the flag of their service branch outside their room and entrust the flag to the family following death.
- ★ **Veterans History Project:** Members of our Community Hospice Veterans Partnership (CHVP) record veterans' stories and share them online and with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.
- ★ **Community Hospice Veterans Partnership:** A select group of veteran leaders serving as brand ambassadors throughout Northeast and North Central Florida bringing awareness to, and providing access for, veterans and their caregivers facing advanced illness and end-of-life care.

Complementary Therapies

In addition to routine home care, respite care, continuous care and inpatient hospice, we also provide the following services to patients and their families:

- ★ **Grief and Loss Support**
- ★ **Certified Music Therapy**
- ★ **Certified Pet Therapy**
- ★ **Pet Promises**

We Need Volunteers

Whether you offer companionship and a listening ear or assist at fundraising events, there's a volunteer role for everyone. Opportunities include pinning ceremonies, Veterans History Project recordings, CHVP membership and other special programs.

WE HONOR VETERANS
Partner

Community Hospice & Palliative Care participates in We Honor Veterans, a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization program that honors veterans for their service and sacrifices.

For more information or to volunteer, call toll free **866.253.6681** or visit **CommunityHospice.com**.



Along with traditional reimbursement for hospice services, we offer payment options to veterans with TRICARE. As with all Community Hospice & Palliative Care patients, we provide care and support to all who need it, regardless of their ability to pay.

VET 007 5/20

Mission Statement:

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. is a 501 C3 Not-For-Profit Florida Corporation.



The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is comprised of representatives from various veterans' organizations that work with city and county governments and organizations to assist with matters concerning veterans and veterans' activities.

What the Council has done:

- The Veterans Treatment Court
 - Wreaths Across America
 - Homeless Veterans Standdown
 - Veterans Day Parade
 - Vets 4 Vets
- And so much more...

SA-0003147064-01

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

STAND BY THEM
Confidential help for Veterans and their families

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8256)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

..... Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

Military/Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

Confidential chat at MilitaryCrisisLine.net or text 838255

Veterans Councils of Northeast Florida



BAKER COUNTY

President: Larry Porterfield

Meetings:

Second Thursday of each month

Location:

MacClenny Primitive Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall on North Boulevard

Time : 1800 (6pm)

CLAY COUNTY

President: Harry Silvers

Meetings:

First Wednesday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 250
3939 County Rd 218
Middleburg, FL 32068

Time: 1400 (2pm)

DUVAL COUNTY

President

Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 37
Main Building
San Juan Avenue

Time: 1900 (7 pm)

NASSAU COUNTY

President: Mike Doran

Meetings:

First Thursday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 54
626 South 3rd St
Fernandina Beach fit 32034

Time: 1900 (7pm)

St. Johns County

President: Bill Dudley

Meetings:

Last Thursday of each month

Location:

Health & Human Services building
Muscovy room, 1st floor
200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine

Time: 1900 (7pm)

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

<http://veteranscouncilsjc.org>

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.

He can be contacted at webmaster@veteranscouncilsjc.org

*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: rothfeldm@gmail.com



**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 County
Health & Human Services Building,
200 San Sebastian View
Auditorium, 1st floor***

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

(physical location)

*The VSO Office is located in the 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.*

*Service is by appointment.
Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161
Joseph McDermott, VSO
Travis Neidig, Assistant VSO
Angela McKenzie, Assistant VSO
Lori Chapman, Assistant VSO
Anna Marie Scott, 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.