



# The Patriot Reader Newsletter

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St. Augustine, FL 32085

Bill Dudley, Publisher

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From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

August 2024

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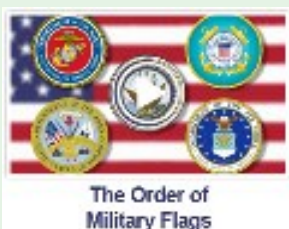
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Fellow Veterans,  
On June 16, 2024, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners honored our Veterans Treatment Court team with a proclamation. The purpose of the proclamation was to recognize the recent graduation of the 100th graduate from the program since inception on Jan. 19, 2017. This is a major milestone for the VTC program. Many lives have been changed since this program was stood up over 7 ½ years ago. Many veterans have entered the program by choice after being incarcerated in the judicial system. It's not an easy program as one might surmise, but the treatment has proven beneficial for those whose lifestyle needed to be altered. As a part of the treatment, they receive from the VA or other care giving organizations, each participant receives a mentor or "battle buddy" that is with them through the entire program. There have been so many success stories as an outcome from those who have graduated

from this program and the Veterans Council is proud to have been a part of making this program a reality in St. Johns County. Our Veterans Village is progressing very well with 19 veterans now registered and living full time at the Village. We are experiencing some unforeseen issues with plumbing and electrical repairs not contemplated at the time we purchased the motel, but with the help of volunteers and quick reaction time from local contractors, we are able to keep the rooms functional for the veteran occupant. You will soon see some exterior changes taking place when our new lighted sign is changed at the entrance bearing our new Veterans Village logo. Also, at the front of the Village entrance area near the street our American flag will be displayed along with the Florida State flag and our Veterans Village logo flag. Each of the service branch flags will be displayed from the columns on the building. Recently, two veterans from Northrop Grumman decided



to do a 24 hour Walk-A-Thon to support veterans. The goal was to raise \$5000 dollars with the money to go to help veterans at Veterans Village. The walk took place on the morning of July 19th starting at 7 am from the parking lot of Veterans Village and culminated 24 hours later at the same spot. Vinny Kuchinsky and Jon Bryant walked 100,000 steps and covered 50 miles in 24 hours and raised nearly \$10,000 for our veterans. This is the spirit of veterans helping veterans we have come to expect in our community as well as our elected officials, law enforcement, and our community partners. This really helps to lighten the burden. Thank you for your service. 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**

**August 29**

**Kim Simon, Director of Programs, Yoga 4 Change  
Shea Vela, Suicide Prevention, N FL/ S GA Veterans Health System**

**September 26**

**Ashley Semerenko, Gratitude America  
Rick McAllister, VFW 2391, Flag Retirement Ceremony**

**October 31**

**Susan Nist, Location Coordinator, Support Committee  
Jackson National Cemetery and  
Melissa Bergman, SJC Communications Director for the Clerk of the Court**

**November 21**

**Michael Mitchell, Director of Military & Veterans Resource Center,  
Jacksonville University and  
Steve Muskett, Special Forces Assoc. 88 Jax**

**December 19**

**Stephen Hudson, Founder, Exec Director, AI Ready Veteran  
Robert Speta, US Navy Veteran, First Coast News Meteorologist**

**January 30, 2025**

**Katie Eller, Director of Development, HorsePlay Therapy Center  
Alison Simpson, Historian · State of Florida, Department of Military Affairs**

**February 27, 2025**

**Maggie Beckerman, VP/Trainer, K9Line, Inc.**

**VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY  
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
JUNE 27, 2024**



**CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley**

**WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS: Chairman Dudley-**

**PLEDGE: Chairman Dudley**

**INVOCATION: Reverend Albert Kaidor**

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Minutes of last meeting conducted May 30, 2024, presented by Chairman Dudley. Copies of the Minutes 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 Mountcastle presented the Treasurer's Report to the Council. As of May 29, 2024, the cash balance was \$155,123.61. Cash balance as of June 26, 2024, was \$163,705.37. Treasure Mountcastle went over the Treasurer's Report, explaining funds for the Dudley Foundation and Money Market accounts and amounts spent during the month to assist our Veterans. The Treasurer asked if there were any questions regarding the Treasurer's Report. The Report was approved by voice vote.**

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW GUESTS: New attendees introduced themselves and who they represent.**

**SPEAKERS:**

**CAREY PICKLESMIER, CORPS STRENGTH**

**Cary Picklesmier introduced herself and CorpsStrength, a 501(c)3 she represents. CorpsStrength is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help veterans and their families find the services that can help them thrive in life after injuries sustained in their military capacity. She provided handouts that give the background information on CorpsStrength and how to access their assistance. The motto of CorpsStrength is "More Good Days Together."**

**The floor was open for questions and answers.**

**ANGALA RENNER, SUPV. VA SUICIDE PREVENTION**

Angala Renner works for the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Administration with the Suicide Prevention Team. Ms. Renner spoke of the 11-member Suicide Prevention Team and the mission of their job and making all aware of how to talk with a Veteran in crisis. She discussed that suicide prevention can be a difficult topic to express and experience, but “a lot of us in attendance had probably dealt with it at some point.” She provided a handout for VA S.A.V.E. Training different things to look for in a Veteran in crisis and how to help them. The acronym S.A.V.E. helps remember the important steps involved in suicide prevention. The flyer also provided the additional resources available and contact information.

The floor was open for questions and answers.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### **VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE UPDATE, JOSEPH McDERMOTT**

Mr. McDermott spoke of the increases in service-connected disabilities and Veterans coming into the Veterans Service Office and asking for an increase in their disability. Mr. McDermott spoke of how the VSO meets with them to discuss what their disability may be, where they are at with the percentage in their disability and then discussing what medical evidence they may need to take them to the next level in their disability. When the claims are submitted, the VA is moving quickly on resolving the disability issue. Regular first submitted claims are still taking four to six months from the beginning to the end. There are many claims being submitted due to the PACT Act.

The Veterans Service Office is estimated to be meeting with close to five hundred Veterans each month, including both new and existing clients. According to VA statistics, the St. Johns County VSO provides services for 23,000 to 24,000 Veterans. The numbers can be staggering for St. Johns County with the amount of money that comes to the Veterans with disabilities that live in the county. The Veterans Service Office is highly successful in their accomplishments in assisting our Veterans.

The floor was open to questions and answers.

##### **VETERANS TREATMENT COURT, JOHN LESLIE**

John Leslie, Mentor Coordinator for the Veterans Treatment Court, introduced

himself and the VTC for St. Johns and Putnam Counties. The VTC has processed 157 participants across the 7-year timespan the VTC has been operating. In May, the 100th participant graduated through the program, three more have graduated since that time. There are currently 33 participants in-flow and 21 that did not make through the program and the varied reasons for the non-participation. All were encouraged to attend the next Treatment Court taking place on June 28, 2024.

The floor was open to questions and answers.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairman Dudley spoke of the Veterans Day Program Committee Meeting that will be held next Tuesday, July 2, 2024. The Committee is in the process of starting to plan for Veterans Day on November 11, 2024.

Chairman Dudley spoke of graduating the 100th participant in the Veterans Treatment Court program. County Commissioner Arnold suggested that the County Commission would recognize the success of the VTC and on July 16, 2024, the BCC will issue a Proclamation recognizing the 100th graduate, having the graduate speak on that day on how the VTC changed his life. On August 5, 2024, the St. Augustine Beach City Council will also present a Proclamation to VTC.

All are invited to attend both meetings. Chairman Dudley also spoke of how the VTC was founded over seven years ago by himself and the organizations that are involved, including the Judge, to successfully start the VTC.

Mike Davis, President, Home Again St. Johns, spoke of the success and progress of The Veterans Village. Mr. Davis spoke of the need for help and volunteers to help assist the participating Veterans accomplish their needs. He provided a sign-up sheet for those wishing to participate.

The floor was open to any new business to be addressed and any questions and answers.

Next Veterans Council meeting will be held on Thursday, July 25th beginning at 7:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.,

Respectfully submitted, William Dudley, Chairman



**St. Johns County Recognizes the Veterans Treatment Court of St. Johns and Putnam Counties Graduating Their 100th Veteran**



**Dear Judge McGillin, Cynthia Thompson, and Bill Dudley,  
I hope this message finds you well.**

**We want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your invaluable service and dedication to the Veterans Treatment Court. Your commitment has made a significant impact on our community, and we are proud to recognize your accomplishments.**

**We are pleased to inform you that the web story highlighting the recent proclamation has been published. You can view it here: <https://www.sjcfl.us/veterans-treatment-court-graduates.../>**

**Additionally, we will be sharing this story on the County's Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), NextDoor, and LinkedIn later today to further celebrate. Please feel free to like and share.**

**Attached to this email is a photo from the commission meeting.**

**Thank you once again for your exceptional service and for attending the commission meeting to receive this well-deserved recognition.**

**Sincerely,**

**Tyler Jarnagin**

**Public Affairs Manager**

**Office of Public Affairs**

**St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners**

At the regular St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, June 16, Sarah Arnold, Chair, District 2, issued a certificate of recognition in honor of the Veterans Treatment Court of St. Johns and Putnam Counties graduating their 100th veteran on May 31, 2024. Judge Howard McGillin, Cynthia Thompson, Veterans Treatment Court coordinator, and Bill Dudley, Chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, attended the meeting to receive the proclamation.

On January 19, 2017, the Seventh Judicial Circuit established a Veterans Treatment Court in St. Johns County to serve the distinctive needs of veterans involved in the justice system. This specialized court provides substance abuse and mental health services to veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and other eligible individuals, offering an alternative to traditional judicial outcomes.

The Veterans Treatment Court, a dedicated interdisciplinary team, working with other agencies, focuses on breaking the cycle of addiction and self-destructive behavior that leads to an individual's involvement in the criminal justice system. With over 21,000 veterans living in St. Johns County, one of the highest concentrations of veterans in Florida and the United States, this program plays a crucial role in the community.

The Veterans Treatment Court helps participants return to a healthy and productive way of life and serves the community by significantly reducing participants' criminal recidivism rates.



## BG Coffey was the Memorial Day Keynote speaker at St Augustine National Cemetery



Mr Dudley

I just wanted to thank you again for the opportunity to address the Memorial Day event here in St. Augustine. My family and I all thoroughly enjoyed the event. It was incredibly well done and an outstanding tribute to the men and women we honored that day. Thanks for all you do to continue to support the military and our veterans. Please let me know if there is anything I can do in the future to help out. Thanks, and God Bless!

BG Rich Coffey



## St. Johns Housing Partnership

Despite the heat and gnats, the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association-reg TM Chapter 20-2 volunteered Saturday to assemble a gazebo for our veterans living at **Patriot Place**.

It was a great group with a real Can-do attitude when it came to sorting through 40 packets of hardware and fasteners along with all the parts and pieces. A big thanks to all who showed up!

Patriot Place has six apartment homes in St. Augustine for the at-risk and homeless. Veterans receive individualized case management from their UF Health St. Johns Care Connect caseworker.



## VyStar Foundation divvies about \$200,000 for nonprofit military, veterans programs

Beth Reese Cravey, Jacksonville Florida Times

The Jacksonville-based VyStar Foundation recently awarded grants totaling a little more than \$200,000 to 12 Florida and Georgia nonprofits that provide military and veterans services.



The nonprofits were selected "for their innovative and impactful approaches to addressing homelessness, basic needs, mental health services and workforce development," according to VyStar Credit Union's philanthropic arm.

Since its inception in 2023, the foundation has given about \$1 million in grants. Here are the 2024 recipients:

Veterans Affairs:New Jacksonville clinic to care for 42,000 additional vets

Clay County Rescue Mission, Orange Park — \$20,000

Hart Felt Ministries, Jacksonville — \$20,000

Heart of Florida United Way, Orlando— \$20,000

Here Tomorrow, Jacksonville — \$20,000

Hope4Veterans, Orange Park — \$20,000

MOACC Good Deeds Foundation, Patrick Space Force Base — \$20,000

Navy League of the U.S. Mayport Council — \$20,000

Thomas University, Thomasville, Ga. — \$19,965

Golden Isles Veterans Village, Brunswick, Ga. — \$15,786

American Red Cross North Florida Region, Jacksonville — \$10,800

Marion County Veterans Helping Veterans, Ocala — \$10,000

Operation Lifeline, St. Augustine — \$5,000.



## The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

*Don't forget to download the FDVA Mobile App! Using the app is a simple way to apply for VA benefits, search for available jobs and stay updated on the latest FDVA news! To download, click here: <https://app.floridavets.org/> [#FDVA](#) [#FLVets](#)*

**GET OUR FREE  
UPGRADED  
APP.**

It won't take  
up space on  
your phone.



## **More than 100 people attend Jacksonville funeral for a man they never met**

### **Family members of U.S. Coast Guard member Franklin Burke, Jr. could not be found. "We're his family today," said Tom Rowley with the Patriot Guard Riders.**

First Coast News: Author: Renata Di Gregorio

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Well over one hundred people turned out Thursday to say a final goodbye at Jacksonville National Cemetery... to a man they had never met.



Family members of U.S. Coast Guard member Franklin Burke, Jr. could not be found, according to the Coast Guard command master chief. Those who attended the service said it was one of the largest turnouts they'd ever seen for a fallen service member with no family.

"It's such an honor to be out here today," said Tom Rowley, ride captain with the Patriot Guard Riders. "Especially for this fallen member who doesn't have any family. So we're his family today."

Some of the only people in attendance who knew Burke were his coworkers from Ecolab in Jacksonville. Joshua Minton made a Facebook post about the service.

"I was hoping for maybe 30-50 people to add into our Ecolab family," Minton said. "Seeing this, it brought me to tears just to see how many people came together."

He and two other men call themselves Burke's "work family."

"He's like a dad to me and he always supported me," said Mitch Garcia, another coworker.

They and CMDCM William Klein with the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville say they worked hard to find any of Burke's family members, but could not.

They said this show of support for a service member with no known family shows the heart of what Jacksonville is.

"We want to support each other the best we can and sometimes it's not seen, right?" said Klein. "Sometimes you don't feel it, but on days like this when people realize someone like this has no family, they want to be a part of that regardless of if they knew the person or not."

Klein said the community needs to honor Burke just as much as he honored the country with his service.



*Flagler County celebrates WWII veteran Ray Rice's 100th birthday*  
*A procession of vehicles drove by Rice's Flagler Beach home to honor*  
*the Marine veteran who fought at*  
*Guadalcanal.*

*Palm Coast Observer, By Brent Woronoff*



*Ray Rice, a member of the “Greatest Generation,” never talked to his family about his World War II experience until he was 93 or 94 years old, his daughter Cheryl Clark said.*

*On Saturday, June 22, Rice celebrated his 100th birthday with his family and friends. Dozens of vehicles drove by his Flagler Beach home to pay respects to the United States Marine veteran. The procession began at Maria del Mar Catholic Church and was organized by the Marine Corps League 1st Sgt. Burdett W. Loucks, Jr. Detachment 876.*

*Drivers and passengers waved to Rice as they slowly drove by. Rice sat in his wheelchair under a Marine Corps tent and waved back.*

*Flagler County Sheriff’s Office vehicles led the motorcade with motorcycle deputies from the Motors Unit doing riding circles in front of the home on South Daytona Avenue where Clark and Rice live. Rice was given a ride in an FCSO SWAT vehicle before the party moved inside.*

*“Today was extremely special,” Clark said. “He teared up. He had a lot of fun for the first time in a long time.”*

*Rice enlisted in the Marines in 1942 when he was 17, his family members said.*



*His Aunt Helen provided written permission to allow the under-aged Rice to join up, said Lana Romeo, Rice's other daughter.*



*He went in to fight the Germans. The next thing he knew, he was dropped off by the Seabees at Guadalcanal. He swam into Guadalcanal and almost drowned. He had to take off all his equipment and swim to shore with guns shooting at him.”*

*“He went in to fight the Germans,” Clark said. “The next thing he knew, he was dropped off by the Seabees at Guadalcanal. He swam into Guadalcanal and almost drowned. He had to take off all his equipment and swim to shore with guns shooting at him.”*

*The Guadalcanal campaign was the Allied forces' first major offensive against Japan in the South Pacific during World War II. The Allies, predominantly the U.S. Marines, landed in the eastern Solomon Islands, capturing an airfield on Guadalcanal that was under construction. The campaign was fought between Aug. 7, 1942 and Feb. 9, 1943. Rice lost most of his hearing during the Japanese's daily aerial bombardment, Clark said.*

*It took years for Rice to put his harrowing memories into words. He witnessed women and children jumping off cliffs, Clark said.*

*As he was eating his birthday lunch with friends and family — including his daughters, his grandchildren and their spouses and his great-grandchildren — Rice recounted some of his memories.*

*“We had a good group of guys,” he said. “They really watched out for me, being a*

*little short guy like I am. And they favored me.”*

*Over 80 years later, in his mind’s eye he can still see the horrific image of a dead soldier who appeared to be looking up at him.*

*“We were pulling out and going to another island, and I got lost,” he said. “I crossed a path and there was a GI on the ground with his eyes wide open, staring at me deader than a doornail. He was stretched full length. His eyes were staring right smack at me. And I said, ‘I’ll never forget this.’ And I didn’t.”*

*After the war, Rice worked as an insurance adjuster for Allstate in New Jersey. His hobby was rebuilding totaled cars by hand.*

*“When I was getting my driver’s license he told me he had a car for me,” Clark said. “It was a ’65 Chevy. He took me to see it, and it was totaled. By the time it was done, it looked like it came out of a showroom.”*

*Rice suffered a heart attack when he was in his 50s. Doctors wanted him to undergo open-heart surgery, but he would have nothing to do with that, Clark said.*

*“Daddy is not only a Marine, but he’s an Irish Marine, so he is really stubborn,” she said.*

*But he changed his lifestyle, she said. He started eating healthy and began taking long walks.*

*“He’s very religious. He would walk to Santa Maria del Mar every day for Mass,” Clark said.*

*And on his 100th birthday, he enjoyed the company of his family, friends and fellow Marines from the Marine Corps League detachment.*



## Important changes to Online Social Security services

### ATTN Veterans! Social Security Announces Upcoming Changes to Accessing Online Services

The Social Security Administration announced that customers who created an online account (e.g., my Social Security account) before September 18, 2021, will soon be required to transition to a [Login.gov](https://www.login.gov) account to continue access to their online services. Over five million of these account holders have already transitioned to [Login.gov](https://www.login.gov).

Account holders are encouraged to sign-in now. When the user logs in, they will be presented with an option to easily transition to [Login.gov](https://www.login.gov). Once their account is successfully linked, a confirmation screen will appear, and they will have immediate access to their personal my Social Security services or other service that they were attempting to access.

Existing [Login.gov](https://www.login.gov) or ID.me account holders do NOT need to create a new account or take any action.

my Social Security accounts are free, secure, and provide personalized tools for everyone, whether receiving benefits or not. People can use their account to request a replacement Social Security card, check the status of an application, estimate future benefits, or manage the benefits they already receive. For more information visit [Create an Account | my Social Security | SSA](#) .

For more information about [Login.gov](https://www.login.gov), including their 24/7 customer phone and chat support, visit [Help | Login.gov](#) .

## Jacksonville World War II vet turns 100 on Fourth of July

*First Coast News, Author: Andrew Willis, First Coast News Staff*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A World War II veteran and current Jacksonville resident will be celebrating his 100th birthday on Fourth of July Thursday.

VFW Post 5968 in Orange Park will be holding the special celebration for Fred A. Long Jr., a 30-year highly decorated veteran of the U.S. Navy.

The VFW says Long enlisted in the Navy on March 9, 1943 at NAS Jacksonville as a Seaman 2nd Class. After completing a 16-week Class "B" School in Chicago, the VFW says Long qualified on every aircraft built by the Navy.

In addition to NAS Jacksonville, Long served at NAS Daytona Beach, Camp Elliot Training Center San Diego, CA, NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, NAS Columbus, OH, Attack Squadron 35 (VA-35) out of Sanford, FL, NAS Cecil Field, Quonset Point, RI and Argentia, Newfoundland.

Long earned many medals while in the Navy, including the World War II Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Medal (European Clasp), China Service Medal, UN Service Medal, National Defense Korean Service Medal, Antarctic Service Medal, Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal w/Bronze Star and Nine (9) Good Conduct Medals.

Long earned the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon for "Outstanding heroism in action against the enemy or extremely meritorious service (non-combat) in support of military operations," the VFW says.

Long retired from the Navy in January of 1973 and obtained the highest rate available to a non-commissioned officer, E-9 Master Chief. He has been a VFW Life Member of Post 5968 in Orange Park since December, 1993.



## Flagler County Veteran of the Week: Ralph Williams

**Williams and his father Dock Williams served in Vietnam at the same time.**

By David Lydon, Flagler County Veterans Services Officer

Branch of Military: U.S. Army

Dates of Service: 1966-1969 Active Duty, 1982-1992 New Jersey Army National Guard

Rank / Occupation: Sergeant / Vehicle Maintenance and Supply

Hometown: Pemberton, New Jersey

Ralph Williams is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8696 in Palm Coast. Courtesy photo

Ralph Williams is a veteran of the Vietnam War. He was assigned to HHC 7th Battalion, 6th Infantry, 2nd Armored Division and was a combat truck driver. An interesting note in the Williams family history is that Ralph and his father Dock Williams were serving in Vietnam at the same time and had a short time to visit and catch up before his father shipped home.

Williams' father was a career soldier and retired as a Sergeant First Class. Ralph lived in France for a time when his dad was assigned there. When Ralph Williams was honorably discharged from active duty in 1969 he had earned the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze service stars and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Williams later served in the New Jersey National Guard for more than 10 years. Williams resides in Palm Coast with his wife Diana. He is a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 8696 in Palm Coast and encourages eligible veterans to join and support the organization.







**VVA Florida State Council, PO Box 626, Orange Park, FL 32067-0626  
Contact David Treffinger (609) 320-1723; corsec@vvaflsc.org**

June 10, 2024

### **Gary Newman elected FSC State President**

Aaron “Gary” Newman of Orange Park, FL was elected President of the Vietnam Veterans of America Florida State Council on June 8 at the Orlando Marriott Lake Mary.



The Navy veteran has served as Florida State Council 1st Vice President for the last four years and prior to that he held the position of 2nd Vice President.

The Florida State Council is the second largest VVA state council with 5,825 members and 30 chapters as of April 2024.

Newman, the founder and former president of VVA Col. William G. Byrns Chapter 1059 in Clay County, FL, was inducted in 2018 into the Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame.

He also founded Chapter 1080, the incarcerated chapter at Union Correctional Institution, and currently serves on the VVA’s Veterans Incarcerated and In the Justice committee and was recognized in 2017 by the VVA for his work with incarcerated veterans.

A recipient of the VVA’s Special Achievement Award of 2022, he is the former president for the Florida Vietnam Veterans Assistance Foundation.

He was the 2017 Florida State Council John Koprowski Member of the Year and in 2015 he received the VVA President’s Special Recognition Award for a new Veterans Treatment Court in Clay County.

Newman replaces John McGinty of Chapter 1084 who held the FSC’s president position for four years.

Marc Goodell, President of Thomas H. Corey Chapter 25 in West Palm Beach, was elected 1st Vice President and Jerry Klein, Vice President of Thomas H. Corey Chapter 25 in West Palm Beach, was elected as 2nd Vice President.

David Treffinger, President of Col. William G. Byrns Chapter 1059 in Clay County, was elected secretary and Stuart Berman, Secretary-Treasurer of Chapter 594 in Ft. Myers was elected treasurer.

## From West Point to Stanford to Miss USA

with 2LT Alma Cooper, US Army, Miss Michigan USA & Knight Hennessy Scholar, Stanford University

2LT Alma Cooper will be representing Michigan at the Miss USA Pageant this August, but she's definitely NOT your traditional contestant. A 2023 graduate of West Point, she is a Knight-Hennessy Scholar currently completing a graduate degree in data-science at Stanford University, focusing on body mass index research that could aid the Army's recruiting efforts. Hosts LTG (Ret.) Leslie C. Smith and SMA (Ret.) Dan Dailey sit down with Lt. Cooper to discuss her experience and inspirations at West Point, why she believes obesity is a major cause for concern in the world, and they listen as she pulls back the curtain on Miss USA and pageants today.



## **Patriot Place**

### **For Southeast Building Conference Aurora Award**

**“It is great to receive this recognition. “We are honored to be chosen as a finalist for these prestigious awards,” said SJHP Executive Director Bill Lazar. “This is our first submission for the Auroras, and we are excited to share this important project with a new audience. We are thrilled that the dedication and talent of our partners, donors and team has been recognized.”**

**The Southeast Building Conference (SEBC) Aurora Awards encompasses all facets of the residential, commercial and remodeling industries. From overall design to sustainability, the awards program offers sixty categories for each participant in the construction industry as well as sales and marketing professionals.**

**The Conference includes residential and commercial construction professionals actively involved in projects located in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and the Eastern Caribbean.**

**Patriot Place is a collaboration between MountainStar Partners, a real estate investor and developer, SJHP and St. Johns County. Patriot Place was built by Robert Marshall of World Island Builders and designed by Architect Bryan McCloskey. Financial partner Ameris Bank financed the construction.**

**These new, low-income residences help address St. Johns County’s critical need for housing for at-risk and homeless veterans while also saving water and benefiting Florida’s environment.**

**The Northeast Florida Association of Realtors Charitable Foundation, Bo Strange with Lovely Loo and the Snodgrass Family Foundation do-**

nated additional funds, time, and materials. Other contributors and supporters included The Home Depot Store # 6334, Eagle Scout Michael Korfhage and Boy Scout Troup 243 and University of Florida IFAS Master Gardeners. The entire Solar panel systems was donated by Everybody Solar, JinkoSolar and Synergy Solar.

Patriot Place is the most recent development to receive the Florida Water Star certification. It also received “Florida Green” certification from the Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC), the state’s leading certifier of residential and commercial construction projects, land developments and local governments. FGBC certifying agents Kachman and Ralph Locke, both military veterans, waived their fee and volunteered their time.

Winners will be announced on July 26 during the Southeast Building Conference in Orlando.

The Aurora Awards program is affiliated with the Florida Home Builders Association and SEBC, one of two regional trade shows recognized by and affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders.

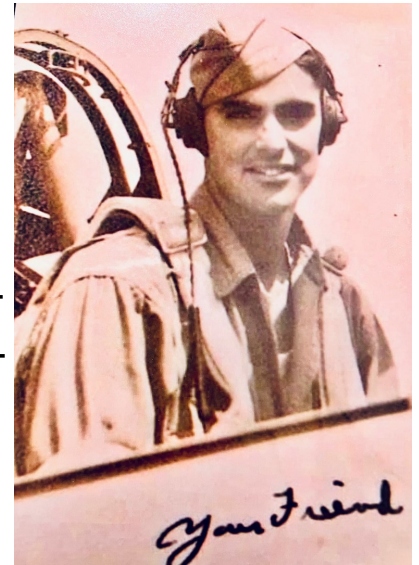


## JACKSONVILLE FL MIA

### Pilot Accounted for from WWII

#### Defense POW-MIA Accounting

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that U.S. Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Alfred J. Hamwey, 24, of Jacksonville, Florida, killed during World War II, was accounted for on May 20, 2024. **LT Hamwey will be buried on September 12, 2024, in Jacksonville, Florida. For funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.**



#### Pilot Accounted for from WWII (Hamwey, A.)

Washington –

In January 1945, Hamwey was assigned to 360th Service Group, Combat Replacement Training Center, Far East Air Force, and deployed in present day Papua New Guinea. As part of an attempt to neutralize the Japanese threat near Wewak, Territory of New Guinea, Hamwey's unit attacked enemy defensive positions on nearby Cape Wom. Hamwey was reported as missing in action on Jan. 20, when friendly forces lost contact with the A-20G Havoc bomber he was piloting.

Following the war, the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS), the military unit responsible for investigating and recovering missing American personnel in the Pacific Theater, conducted exhaustive searches of battle areas and crash sites in New Guinea, concluding their search in late 1948. In June 1949, a board of AGRS officials concluded they were unable to locate any remains of Hamwey and the other two crew members. They were designated as non-recoverable.



DPAA predecessor organizations began researching and recovering service members from Papua New Guinea in the early 1980s. In December 2011, an Australian Defence Force officer reported seeing an aircraft crash site in a swamp near Cape Wom, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea. A local guide from the nearby Wom Village had discovered the site roughly six months prior and stated human remains had been seen in the crash. Between July 2015 and May 2016, DPAA personnel interviewed locals, collected crash materials and various life support items, and collected possible osseous remains. In late 2022, a DPAA Underwater Recovery Team conducted operations at the site, and recovered possible human remains, material evidence, and other life support equipment. The remains were sent to the DPAA Laboratory for review and analysis.

To identify Hamwey's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as material and circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Hamwey's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

**Hamwey will be buried on September 12, 2024, in Jacksonville, Florida.**

For family and funeral information, contact the Army Casualty Office at (800) 892-2490.

Hamwey's personnel profile can be viewed at <https://dpaa-mil.sites.crmforce.mil/dpaaProfile?id=a0Jt0000000Xm81EAC>.

## 2 sisters, ages 12 and 7, raise \$20,000 so veterans can experience Honor Flight

*By Courtney King and Gray News staff*

CINCINNATI (WXIX/Gray News) - Two sisters from Harrison, Ohio, are being praised after they raised more than \$20,000 for veterans to take part in Honor Flight.

Tessa Ziegler, 12, and Raya Ziegler, 7, said this is their way of thanking veterans.

“We went to an Honor Flight when Raya was 1,” Tessa said. “One of my mom’s friends invited us, and we really liked it. We just wanted to get involved with it.”

Honor Flight Network flies about 22,500 veterans annually to Washington, D.C., to visit memorials that honor their service and sacrifice.

The sisters said they go to businesses, explain their project and ask if they’re willing to donate. Often they get gift cards or other items they can raffle as prizes to raise money. The sisters said one business that donated is their local Skyline Chili.

“We’ve been doing garage sales and yard sales,” Raya said. “We worked at our mom’s work on Veterans Day.”

“We sell raffle tickets. Like a couple weeks ago, we went to Rockin’ on the River and raised money there.” Tessa said. Tessa said they do it “because we love our veterans.”



Vets 4 Vets August 24th Veterans Memorial Arena...Pass the word. Keynote speaker and speakers with information of interest to Veterans and their families. Tables for organizations to show case their organization...2 chairs per table. General attendance seating on first come basis on the arena floor...You can connect with a fellow Veteran and share in some camaraderie...ALL FREE...Veterans have already paid with their service and sacrifices. JOIN US!



**V4V**  
VETS4VETS

Inform ★ Connect ★ Unite ★ Organize

**Save the Date**  
**August 24th**  
**1100 to 1300**  
Veterans Memorial Arena  
Join Us!



## State law aiming to improve veteran services and preserve their stories takes effect July 1

**Florida Legislature passes House Bill 1829 revising Veteran benefits. Effective July 1, HB 1329 will be named after Major John Leroy Haynes of the US Marine Corps**

*Lucia Viti, St. Augustine Record*

Earlier this year, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 1329, which aims to bolster many of the state's veterans programs and creates a history program to preserve their stories.

Named after Maj. John Leroy Haynes, a U.S. Marine who died in 2023 at the age of 93, the new law takes effect July 1.

HB 1329 will introduce the Florida Veterans' History Program, which was born and bred from Burgess' frustration in trying to contact Florida's D-Day veterans to commemorate D-Day's 75th Anniversary.

"It was nearly impossible," he said in a news release issued by his office.

Burgess said that he realized the importance of preserving the memory of Florida's heroes before it was too late to do so.

"Creating the Florida Veterans' History Program will ensure that we remember the stories, impart the courage, and honor the service of Florida's veterans," he said. "Having the opportunity to not only help establish this program, but to name it after one of Florida's greatest heroes, like Major Haynes, is truly an honor."

Burgess underscored that because of the program, Florida's heroes will never be forgotten.

"Their stories will live on to benefit Floridians for generations to come," he said.

Burgess gave a nod to Collins as well as Reps. Danny Alvarez, R-Riverview, and Mike Redondo, R-Miami, for "championing this important legislation to honor and support veterans in the Florida House."



“As a retired Army Green Beret and a military spouse, I understand firsthand the type of support Veterans need and the difficulties they can often face,” Collins said in the release.

Collins described the passing of HB 1329 as validation that Florida is the most veteran-friendly state in America.

“It’s an honor to serve as a voice for veterans in the Legislature and help good policies like this that truly make a difference get across the finish line,” he said.

According to the news release, HB 1329 will:

Initiate the Maj. John Leroy Haynes Veterans’ History Program to record and preserve the history Florida’s veterans.

Appoint Veterans Florida as the initial point of contact for military transition assistance for Florida’s target market.

Define Veterans Florida target market as members of the U.S. Armed Forces with 24 months or less until they are discharged; veterans with 36 months or less since they were discharged; and Florida National Guard or reserve members, and their spouses.

Add two ex officio, nonvoting members from the House and Senate (appointed by the presiding officers) to the board of Veterans Florida.

Revise the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program to match the target market with target and secondary industry businesses and grants; encourage entrepreneurship and veteran-owned small businesses to grow; and redesignate the SkillBridge program as the SkillBridge initiative.

HB 1329 will also create links between Veterans Florida and state agencies by authorizing Veterans Florida to assist state agencies to recruit veteran talent and maximize access to benefits, services, training and education.

### **Other provisions include:**

New hunting and fishing license fee exemptions for disabled, honorably discharged U.S. Armed Forces veterans who are certified with a 50% or greater service-connected disability by the VA or a branch of the Armed Forces.



Including two veterans who have had a traumatic brain injury, chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or sub-concussive impacts from their service, or their family members, to the Advisory Council on Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries.

Required public school instruction on the history and significance of Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

Haynes completed 30 years of active-duty service that included combat duty in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. His numerous awards include a Purple Heart; a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with a Gold Star and Combat “V”; a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal; a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal; three stars; two Presidential Unit Citations; three Navy Unit Citations; a Combat Action Ribbon; a China Service Medal; an Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal; a Korean Service Medal; a Vietnam Service Medal; a World War II Victory Medal; and the Cross of Gallantry - Silver Star (Vietnam).

Haynes was internationally recognized for his expertise in disposing of explosive ordinances designed for a reduced number of casualties.

After completing his military service, Major Haynes spent 50 years as a volunteer to service Veteran comrades and their families. Other accolades include his induction into the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame; a Governor’s Medal of Merit; and joining former Governor Rick Scott in Washington DC for the signing of the “VA Mission Act of 2018.”

Haynes received the DAR Medal of Honor a year prior to his death.



# The Little-Known Adventure Park In Florida Where You Can Drive A 17-Ton Military Tank

By: Author David Reeve

Florida is bursting at the seams with one-of-a-kind adventures that lie beyond the beaten path.

Nestled in the heart of Orlando is an adrenaline-pumping, off-the-radar experience that's sure to rev your engines and elevate your weekend plans to blockbuster status.

So, buckle up and prepare for a journey into the world of military might and mud tracks, where you can take the driver's seat in a colossal 17-ton tank!

Florida's sunny disposition often conjures images of palm-fringed beaches and roller coaster rides, but there's a hidden facet to this vacation paradise—Tank America.

This thrilling adventure park is where civilians get a taste of military-grade excitement, swapping sunscreen for a helmet and a day at the office for a mission on caterpillar treads.

Driving up to Tank America, you wouldn't expect to find such a high-octane playground tucked away amidst the Floridian foliage.

The site is unassuming at first glance, but the rumble of engines and the distant crunch of earth under heavy metal quickly hint at the exhilaration to come.

Visitors to Tank America are greeted with a variety of experiences tailor-made for those with a taste for adventure.

The main draw, of course, is the opportunity to drive a real-life FV433 Abbot tank.



This British beast weighs in at a jaw-dropping 17 tons and promises an experience that's literally groundbreaking.

Before you're handed the keys to this behemoth, you'll undergo a crash course in tank driving.

Instructors, some of whom are military veterans, bring a level of authenticity and expertise to the briefing that's both reassuring and exciting.

They'll guide you through the controls and safety procedures, ensuring you're battle-ready for the course ahead.

Where: 6605 Muskogee St, Orlando, FL 32807

After a day at Tank America, you'll leave with more than just memories.

The rush of driving a tank, the camaraderie of laser combat, and the unique atmosphere of the park combine to create a story worth sharing.

It's an experience that adds a whole new gear to the term 'adventure park' and one that's waiting for you to discover in the heart of Florida.

So, are you ready to trade flip-flops for combat boots and take the wheel of a 17-ton tank for an adventure you'll never forget?







POW★MIA



SEPTEMBER 21, 2024

# FLORIDA'S 4TH ANNUAL SEVEN BRIDGES POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE DAY RIDE & CEREMONY

Sponsored by: The American Legion Riders Department of Florida

Police Escorted Ride from Adamec HD Baymeadows, over the Seven Bridges, crossing the St. Johns River, and ending at the National POW/MIA Memorial (6112 POW-MIA Memorial Pkwy, Jacksonville FL 32221) for a POW/MIA Ceremony at 1:30 PM.

## All Riders Welcome!

Scan QR for:  
Registration  
Hotel Info  
Event page...



limit to 250 motorcycles or trikes (no autocycles)

- Meet & Greet on Friday Night September 20 at American Legion Post 316 (1127 Atlantic Blvd, Atlantic Bch, FL 32233) at 5:00PM
- After Event Social following ceremony
- Registration 8:00AM-10:00AM at Adamec Harley-Davidson® 8909 Baymeadows Rd Jacksonville, FL 32256
- KSU 10:30AM
- Cost: \$20 Per Bike/\$5 passenger

POC: Denny Luke, POW/MIA Chair  
904-403-0181  
POWMIA@legionmail.org





**Rotary**  
Club of Orange Park  
Sunrise



# FLAGS FOR HEROES



**Join Rotary Club of Orange Park Sunrise  
in honoring all heroes, including those who  
supported the post 9-11 recovery.**

*We honor current Service Members, Prior Service Members, Retired or  
Veteran Service Members, Local First Responders, Health Care Workers,  
Pharmacy Workers, Grocery Stores, Teachers, Truckers and Delivery Services.*

**CEREMONY: WED, SEPT. 11 AT 10AM AT TOWN OF**  
*200+ Flags will be displayed Sept. 6-13th* **ORANGE PARK**

**With all donations, your hero's name(s) will be mentioned at the  
ceremony, event program, social media & [www.oprotarysunrise.com](http://www.oprotarysunrise.com)**

**Hero:** \$50- 1 flag displayed & keepsake medallion

**Friend:** \$100- up to 2 flags & medallions

**Bronze:** \$250- up to 4 flags & medallions

**Silver:** \$500- up to 6 flags & medallions, business logo

**Gold:** \$1000- up to 8 flags & medallions, business logo

**Platinum:** \$2000- up to 10 flags & medallions, business logo  
inclusion, opportunity to display a table at the ceremony

**SPONSORSHIP DEADLINE AUGUST 28**

**LEARN MORE**

Proceeds will support Clay Fire, OP Police,  
GCS Police, Clay Sheriff, Florida Army National  
Guard, YMCA Clay Military Programs and more

[www.oprotarysunrise.com/flags-for-heroes.php](http://www.oprotarysunrise.com/flags-for-heroes.php)







JACKSONVILLE  
**VETERANS**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# VETERANS Business Summit

REGISTER NOW



Location: 300 A Philip Randolph Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32202

Date: 21 September 2024

Doors Open 0800

Event 0900 -1500

Three tracks to choose:  
Supplier Diversity  
Access to Capital  
Business Foundations

Attendees:  
Veteran business  
owners/vendors: FREE

Civilians/Vendors:  
NOMINAL FEE

Presentations:  
Engaging Speakers  
Panel Discussions  
Vendor & Networking  
Grants for VOSB/SDVOSBs

Continental Breakfast and Lunch Will Be Provided

Sponsorships & Vendor Opportunities

Contact Us [info@jaxvcc.org](mailto:info@jaxvcc.org)

Contact Us | [www.jaxvcc.org](http://www.jaxvcc.org) | [info@jaxvcc.org](mailto:info@jaxvcc.org) |

## How big is the USS Navy?

**The United States Navy is one of the largest and most powerful navies in the world. As of 2022, the US Navy has:**

**Fleet:** The US Navy has a total of 355 ships and submarines, including:

- 12 aircraft carriers (Nimitz-class and Gerald R. Ford-class)
- 12 amphibious assault ships (Wasp-class and America-class)
- 22 cruisers (Ticonderoga-class and Arleigh Burke-class)
- 62 destroyers (Arleigh Burke-class and Zumwalt-class)
- 72 submarines (Los Angeles-class, Virginia-class, and Columbia-class)
- 34 frigates (Oliver Hazard Perry-class)
- 64 patrol boats (PCs and FPBs)



**Personnel:** The US Navy has a total of around 330,000 active-duty personnel, including:

Officers: around 65,000

Enlisted personnel: around 265,000

**Budget:** The US Navy's annual budget is around \$170-180 billion.

**Operations:** The US Navy operates in over 70% of the world's oceans and has a significant presence in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

### **Some interesting statistics about the US Navy:**

The US Navy has a fleet that can deliver over 100,000 tons of cargo and supplies to distant shores.

The US Navy has over 3,700 aircraft and helicopters on its fleet.

The US Navy has a total of around 9 million square feet of deck space on its aircraft carriers.

The US Navy has over 20,000 vessels of all sizes, including warships, support ships, and tenders.

The US Navy has a network of over 11,000 miles (18,000 km) of undersea communications cables.

The US Navy has over 300 military bases and facilities worldwide.

**Overall, the US Navy is one of the largest and most powerful navies in the world, with a significant presence in global affairs and a critical role in defending American interests.**

# Form 180 to get DD214

Standard Form 180 (Rev. 09/2011) (Page 1)  
Prescribed by NARA (24 CFR 123.1042)

Authorized for local reproduction  
Previous edition unusable

OMB No. 3095-0029 Expires 04/30/2024

## REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

Requests can be submitted online using eVetBoes at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>  
To ensure the best possible service, please thoroughly review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY OR TYPE BELOW.

### SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much information as possible.)

|   |                      |                  |                   |                          |                          |   |
|---|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, full middle)  | 2. SOCIAL SECURITY # | 3. DATE OF BIRTH | 4. PLACE OF BIRTH |                          |                          |   |
| 5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that ALL service be shown below.)                                |                      |                  |                   |                          |                          |   |
|   | BRANCH OF SERVICE    | DATE ENTERED     | DATE RELEASED     | OFFICER                  | ENLISTED                 | SERVICE NUMBER<br>(If unknown, write "unknown") |
| a. ACTIVE   |                      |                  |                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| b. RESERVE  |                      |                  |                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| c. NATIONAL GUARD   |                      |                  |                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| 6. PLEASE LIST LAST FOUR DUTY STATIONS, IF KNOWN: 1. _____  |                      |                  |                   |                          |                          |   |
| 2. _____  |                      |                  |                   |                          |                          |   |
| 3. _____  |                      |                  |                   |                          |                          |   |
| 4. _____  |                      |                  |                   |                          |                          |   |
| 7. IS THIS PERSON DECEASED? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES - MUST provide Date of Death if veteran is deceased: _____ |                      |                  |                   |                          |                          |   |
| 8. DID THIS PERSON RETIRE FROM MILITARY SERVICE? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES                                       |                      |                  |                   |                          |                          |   |

### SECTION II - INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. CHECK THE ITEM(S) YOU ARE REQUESTING:

DD Form 214 or equivalent: Year(s) in which form(s) issued to veteran (Date of Separation): \_\_\_\_\_  
This form contains information used to verify military service. An UNDELETED DD Form 214 is ordinarily required to determine eligibility for benefits. If you request a DELETED copy, the following items will be blacked out: authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and, for separations after June 30, 1979, character of separation and dates of time lost. Please note - recent veterans may be able to request a DD Form 214 through milConnect by visiting: <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/>  
An UNDELETED copy will be sent UNLESS YOU SPECIFY A DELETED COPY by checking this box:  I want a DELETED copy.

Official Military Personnel File (OMPF): The OMPF may include duty stations and assignments, training and qualifications, awards and decorations received, disciplinary actions, administrative remarks, enlistment and/or discharge information (including DD Form 214, Report of Separation, or equivalent), and other personnel actions. Detailed information about the veteran's participation in battles and their military engagements is NOT contained in the record.

Medical Records: Includes health (outpatient), extended ambulatory, and dental records. If inpatient/hospitalization records are requested, please specify below.  
 I request inpatient/hospitalization records from \_\_\_\_\_ (facility), last treated in \_\_\_\_\_ (year). (NOTE: Fields are required)  
If available, you may receive copies of inpatient narrative summaries, operative reports, discharge summaries, etc. contained in the record.

Dental Records: Please check this box if ONLY dental records are needed from the medical record.

Other (Please Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. PURPOSE: (Providing information about the purpose of the request is voluntary; however, it may help to provide the best possible response and may result in a faster reply. Information provided will in no way be used to make a decision to deny the request.)  
 Benefits (explain)  Employment  VA Loan Programs  Medical  Genealogy  Correction  Personal  Other (explain)  
Explain here: \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. REQUESTER NAME: _____   | 2. RELATIONSHIP TO VETERAN: _____   |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> I am the MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER OR VETERAN identified in Section I, above.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> I am the VETERAN'S LEGAL GUARDIAN (MUST submit copy of Court Appointment) or AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (MUST submit copy of Authorization Letter or Power of Attorney)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am the DECEASED VETERAN'S NEXT-OF-KIN (MUST submit Proof of Death. See item 2a on instruction sheet.) | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify): _____   |
| 4. SEND INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO:<br>(Please print or type. See item 4 on accompanying instructions.)                            | 5. AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE: I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the information in this Section 3 is true and correct and that I authorize the release of the requested information. (See items 2a or 3a on the accompanying instructions sheet. Without the Authorization Signature of the veteran, next-of-kin of deceased veteran, veteran's legal guardian, authorized government agent, or other authorized representative, only limited information can be released unless the request is archival. No signature is required if the request is for archival records.) |
| Name _____   | Signature Required - Do not print _____ Date _____  |
| Street Address _____ Apt. # _____  | * This form is available at <a href="https://www.archives.gov/veterans-military-service-records/standard-form-180.pdf">https://www.archives.gov/veterans-military-service-records/standard-form-180.pdf</a> on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) web site. *  |
| City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____  |   |
| Daytime Phone _____ Fax Number _____   |   |
| Email Address _____  |   |

# Form 180 to get DD214

The various categories of military service records are described in the chart below. For each category there is a code number which indicates the address at the bottom of the page to which this request should be sent. Please refer to the Instruction and Information Sheet accompanying this form as needed.

| BRANCH       | CURRENT STATUS OF SERVICE MEMBER   | Personnel Record | Medical or Service Treatment Record |
|--------------|--|------------------|-------------------------------------|
|              |  |                  |                                     |
| AIR FORCE    | Discharged, deceased, or retired before 5/1/1994   | 14               | 14                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 - 9/30/2004  | 14               | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/1/2004 - 12/31/2013  | 1                | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014  | 1                | 13                                  |
|              | Active (including National Guard on active duty in the Air Force), TDRL, or general officers retired with pay  | 1                |                                     |
|              | Reserve, IRR, Retired Reserve in non-pay status, current National Guard officers not on active duty in the Air Force, or National Guard released from active duty in the Air Force | 2                |                                     |
|              | Current National Guard enlisted not on active duty in the Air Force  | 2                | 13                                  |
| COAST GUARD  | Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1898   | 6                |                                     |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1898 - 5/31/1998  | 14               | 14                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 4/1/1998 - 9/30/2006  | 14               | 13                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/1/2006 - 9/30/2013   | 3                | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 10/1/2013   | 3                | 14                                  |
|              | Active, Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve or TDRL  | 3                |                                     |
| MARINE CORPS | Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1895   | 6                |                                     |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1905 - 4/30/1994  | 14               | 14                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 - 12/31/1998   | 14               | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1999 - 12/31/2013   | 4                | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014  | 4                | 8                                   |
|              | Individual Ready Reserve   | 5                |                                     |
|              | Active, Selected Marine Corps Reserve, TDRL  | 4                |                                     |
| ARMY         | Discharged, deceased, or retired before 11/1/1912 (enlisted) or before 7/1/1917 (officer)  | 6                |                                     |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 11/1/1912 - 10/15/1992 (enlisted) or 7/1/1917 - 10/15/1992 (officer)  | 14               |                                     |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/16/1992 - 9/30/2002  | 14               | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired (including TDRL) 10/1/2002 - 12/31/2013   | 7                | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired (including TDRL) on or after 1/1/2014   | 7                | 9                                   |
|              | Current Soldier (Active, Reserve (including Individual Ready Reserve) or National Guard)   | 7                |                                     |
| NAVY         | Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1896 (enlisted) or before 1/1/1903 (officer)   | 6                |                                     |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1896 - 1/30/1994 (enlisted) or 1/1/1903 - 1/30/1994 (officer)   | 14               | 14                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/31/1994 - 12/31/1994  | 14               | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1995 - 12/31/2013   | 10               | 11                                  |
|              | Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/2014  | 10               | 8                                   |
|              | Active, Reserve, or TDRL   | 10               |                                     |
| PHS          | Public Health Service - Commissioned Corps officers only   | 12               |                                     |

## ADDRESS LIST OF CUSTODIANS and SELF-SERVICE WEBSITES (BY CODE NUMBERS SHOWN ABOVE) - Where to write/send this form

|   |  |    |   |    |  |
|---|--|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | Air Force Personnel Center<br>AFPC/DP2SSM<br>550 C Street West<br>JBSA-Randolph TX 76150-4721<br>Fax Number: 214-565-3124<br>Email: DP2SSM.MILRECS.INCOMING@USAF.MIL   | 6  | National Archives & Records Administration<br>Research Services (RDTIR)<br>700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW<br>Washington, DC 20460-0061  | 11 | Department of Veterans Affairs<br>ATTN: Release of Information<br>Claims Intake Center<br>P.O. Box 4444<br>Janetville, WI 53547-4444<br>Fax Number: 844-531-7818<br><a href="http://www.va.gov">http://www.va.gov</a>                                      |
| 2 | Air Reserve Personnel Center<br><br>Total Force Service Center: 1-800-525-0102<br><a href="https://reqprc.af.mil/">https://reqprc.af.mil/</a>  | 7  | US Army Human Resources Command's web page:<br><a href="https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/1113">https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/1113</a><br><br>or 1-888-ARMYHRC (1-888-276-9472) | 12 | Division of Commissioned Corps Officer Support<br>ATTN: Records Officer<br>1101 Wooten Parkway, Plaza Level, Suite 100<br>Rockville, MD 20852  |
| 3 | Commander, Personnel Service Center<br>(BOPS-C-MR) MS7100<br>US Coast Guard<br>2703 Martha Luther King Jr Ave SE<br>Washington, DC 20593-7200<br><a href="https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/omg/">https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/omg/</a> | 8  | Navy Medicine Records Activity (NMRA)<br>BUMED Detachment St. Louis<br>4300 Goodfellow Boulevard, Building 103<br>St. Louis, MO 63120<br>Fax number: 314-260-8128                 | 13 | AF STR Processing Center<br>ATTN: Release of Information<br>3370 Macgregor Road, Suite 116<br>San Antonio, TX 78217  |
| 4 | Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps<br>Manpower Management Records & Performance<br>(MMRP-10)<br>2098 Elliot Road<br>Quantico, VA 22134-5030<br>SMB.MANPOWER.MMRP-10@usmc.mil   | 9  | AMEDD Army Record Processing Center<br>3370 Macgregor Road, Suite 116<br>San Antonio, TX 78217<br>Fax Number: 210-201-8310  | 14 | National Personnel Records Center<br>(Military Personnel Records)<br>1 Archives Drive<br>St. Louis, MO 63138-1062<br><a href="https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/">https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/</a> |
| 5 | Marine Corps Forces Reserve<br>2090 Opelousas Avenue<br>New Orleans, LA 70114  | 10 | Navy Personnel Command (PERS-313)<br>5720 Integrity Drive<br>Millington, TN 38055-3130  |    |  |



**WOMEN  
VETERANS**

*Conference*

**HONORING HER SERVICE**

**SEPTEMBER 13-16, 2024**

**EMBASSY SUITES**

**2149 JACKSON RD.**

**JACKSONVILLE FL.**



Women Veterans

REGISTER AT [WOMENVETERANSOFAMERICA.US](https://www.womenveteransofamerica.us) OR SCAN THE QR CODE.



## St. Johns County Parks and Recreation

Come paddle down memory lane as we relive last Thursday's **Veterans Kayaking** at Trout Creek, where we rowed onto the St. Johns River to watch the sunset.

Want to come along for real? Sign up for our newsletter to find out about future trips and other fun programs:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/vgkHwTm/SJCParksandRec>



## UNF Division of Continuing Education

### Animal-Assisted Services Information Sessions

Interested in learning more about our Animal-Assisted Services certification class? Register for one of our upcoming information sessions to see how we help you get certified! Each session is from 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm EST.

Register today! <https://conta.cc/3wMvnr0>

A photograph of two white puppies sitting together. They are looking towards the camera. The puppy on the left has a blue tag on its collar, and the puppy on the right has a red tag.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**ANIMAL-ASSISTED SERVICES INFO SESSIONS**

|                    |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| APRIL<br><b>17</b> | MAY<br><b>22</b> | JUNE<br><b>12</b> | JULY<br><b>17</b> | AUG.<br><b>21</b> | SEPT.<br><b>4</b> |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|



# Calendar of Events

2024

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>15<br/>AUG</b>  | <b>HerTOTALWellness Cohort 32<br/>Graduation</b>              |
| <b>6-8<br/>SEP</b> | <b>HerTIME Retreat</b>  |
| <b>17<br/>SEP</b>  | <b>HerTOTALWellness Cohort 33 Starts</b>                      |
| <b>12<br/>OCT</b>  | <b>Nassau County Veteran Benefits &amp;<br/>Resource Fest</b> |
| <b>19<br/>OCT</b>  | <b>Women's Self-Care Symposium</b>                            |
| <b>24<br/>OCT</b>  | <b>HerTOTALWellness Cohort 33<br/>Graduation</b>              |
| <b>7<br/>NOV</b>   | <b>Swings for Service Charity Golf<br/>Tournament</b>         |
| <b>16<br/>NOV</b>  | <b>HerVOICE Live Presentation</b>                             |

✉ [sdeary@forwomenvets.org](mailto:sdeary@forwomenvets.org)

☎ (904) 862-6039

🌐 [www.forwomenvets.org](http://www.forwomenvets.org)



# VETERANS APPRECIATION WEEKEND

*The Friends of Marion County Veterans Park*  
*in association with*  
*The Florida Military Vehicle Heritage Group*

Invite the community to join them for a weekend event  
honoring those who have served our Country!

## Activities will include:

- \*Military Vehicle Static Displays
- \*Small Arms Demonstrations
- \*Education & Exhibit Center
- \*Food and Beverage Trucks
- \*“Living History” Encampments
- \*Themed Music & Entertainment
- \*Military Memorabilia Vendors
- \*Activities for Children & Teens

## Location:

Ocala-Marion County Veterans Memorial Park  
2528 E Silver Springs BLVD, Ocala, FL 34470

## Event Dates and Times:

Friday - Sunday, October 25-27, 2024  
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

## Admission Fees:

This event is Free and Open to the Public!  
Donations are welcome.

## For More Information:

Websites: <https://marionvetpark.com/> & <https://flmvhg.com/>

Vendors/Exhibitors: Mike Zulkoski - 518-951-8012 - [zwolf96@yahoo.com](mailto:zwolf96@yahoo.com)





Florida's Largest Veterans Day Experience

# ZEPHYRHILLS



## BATTLE FOR VETERANS

Hosted By

**ZEPHYRHILLS**



Featured Guest

**WW2Armor.org**

ZMMH.org



For Updates!



November 8th-10th, 2024 - Fri, Sat & Sun - 10am-5pm

5200 Airport Rd, Zephyrhills, FL 33542

- World War II Battle Reenactment on Saturday & Sunday
- Reenactors & Living Displays
- All-Era Military Vehicle Show & Display
- Saturday Morning Veterans Day Parade in Downtown Zephyrhills
- Free Event
- RV & Camping Sites
- Food & Military Vendors
- Online Registration Open
- Museum Open During Event

Sponsored By



FLYER NSN 7610-01-VP3-2024

**Hi, I wanted to share information about two of our no-cost 3 night retreats: Family & Friends of the Fallen Support Retreat and Military Support Retreat that have openings this year.**

### **Family & Friends of the Fallen Support Retreat:**

-This 3-night retreat supports those who lost a loved one in service to our nation and is open to all adult family members and/or those adults significantly impacted by the loss of the service member. The death can be from all conflicts/eras, all branches of service, and all circumstance of death.

-There is no cost to attend and hotel, meals, and activities are all provided.

-The retreat has a split focus on nature based recreation, creative arts, and interactive workshops and groups discussions with the goals of teaching supportive strategies & how to navigate challenges and to connect with others at the retreat.

-This program is recommended for those 1 year or more away from their loss.

-You can also find the details and application directly at: <https://gratitudeamerica.org/fallen/>

### **Military Support Retreat:**

-Our Military Support Retreat program is held in various locations in Georgia and Florida once a month and is a 3 night retreat program that has 2 focuses:

-1 focus is on education through large and small group discussions led by mental health clinicians and military peer mentors and the 2nd focus is on Nature-based recreational activities focused on providing an opportunity for bonding, fun, and/or relaxation.

-Military Support Retreats provides education on coping skills, communication skills, and how to better understand oneself and also to connect with the person that is attending with them via group discussions and nature-based recreation.

-This program is available for any member of the military who deployed to combat anytime during service and is for the service member to attend WITH a support person of their choosing (friend, spouse, partner). Service member cannot attend alone.

-Information and application to attend can be found here: <https://gratitudeamerica.org/retreats/>

Both of these programs are for adults only - no children are permitted and childcare is not provided. We provide hotel, activities, and meals and we cannot assist with transportation.

Ashley Semerenko, GratitudeAmerica.org

**Flyers on next 2 pages**





# MILITARY SUPPORT RETREATS

GratitudeAmerica Military Support Retreats (MSR) are a 4-day immersive and intensive program centered around nature-based recreational activities and education via interactive workshops and group discussions. MSRs are a breakthrough experience designed to enhance relationships and build connections between veterans, first responders, and their closest support person.

★ **All accommodations, food, and activities are provided at no cost** ★

Helen, Ga. June 27-30 | Sarasota, Fl. July 18-21 | Helen, Ga. Aug 8-11

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

If you are qualified and interested in applying for MSR, please visit our website at

**[GratitudeAmerica.org](https://www.GratitudeAmerica.org)**

Please note: You must be 18 to attend, and no childcare is provided. Veterans must bring a support person to attend.



*It's hard to forget someone who gave you so much to remember.*



Family and Friends of the Fallen Support Retreat is a transformative three-night experience providing solace and resilience-building for those who have lost loved ones as a result of service to our nation. This program provides a meaningful experience for participants to forge connections with peers and learn essential coping mechanisms for their healing journey. The retreat has a split focus on inspiring outdoor activities, and education focused on healing and supportive strategies.

Facilitated by a dedicated team of subject matter experts who serve as compassionate guides and mentors. The program is open to adult family members who have been directly impacted by the loss of one who served our nation, including all conflicts, all branches of service, and all circumstances of death. The circumstance of death does not have to be service-related. This Program is recommended for participants more than one year out from their loss.



**All accommodations, food, and activities are provided at no cost**



Please note: You must be 18 to attend, and no childcare is provided.

**Amelia Island, Fl. June 6-9** **Amelia Island, Fl. Aug 1-4**

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

If you are qualified and interested in applying for MSR, please visit our website at

**[GratitudeAmerica.org](http://GratitudeAmerica.org)**





## The Fire Watch

With the release of our Annual Report, we'd like to thank ALL Watch Standers for getting #veterans to the help they need! In Northeast Florida, Veteran suicides decreased 25% below our 2019 baseline year for the 3rd straight year. Across all areas of #Florida where our Watch Standers are located, Veteran suicides decreased by 16% – in areas where they aren't, Veteran suicides actually increased by 8%.



# The Blue Angels will not return to Jacksonville Beach in 2025 for air show

*By Meghan Moriarty, Action News Jax*

JACKSONVILLE BEACH, Fla. — Breaking a twenty-three-year tradition, the United States Navy Blue Angels are not returning to Jacksonville Beach for the 2025 air show.

The Blue Angels started performing at Naval Air Station Jacksonville in 1946. Shows were held there until 1973 when it was relocated to NAS Cecil Field. In 1990, the show reverted back to NAS Jacksonville for the 50th anniversary of the base. Moving forward, shows alternated between NAS Jax and NAS Cecil Field until Cecil closed in 1999.

Starting in 2001, the City of Jacksonville held its first show in Jacksonville Beach, and the tradition has remained in place. are Disrupting the Industry

The air show will still happen at NAS Jax this coming fall and in 2026, but Jacksonville Beach has been removed from the rotation. Instead, the Blue Angels are opting to go to Punta Gorda in 2025.





JACKSONVILLE JUMBO SHRIMP  
**MILITARY APPRECIATION**

**FREE** admission for all military and dependents!



**2024 MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHTS**

**Sunday, April 21 | 3:05PM**

**Thursday, May 30 | 7:05PM**

**Monday, July 1 | 7:05PM**

**Sunday, August 4 | 5:05PM**

**Thursday, September 19 | 7:05PM**



**CONTACT**

**Theresa Viets**  
Military Liaison  
O: 904-374-4598  
theresa@jaxshrimp.com

Keep us in mind for command  
events, reenlistments,  
homecomings, and other  
celebrations!



# Free Military Family Field Day

Sat., Aug. 3, 2024  
10AM – 1 PM

**Where:** University of North Florida (UNF)  
Adam W. Herbert University Center  
12000 Alumni Dr.  
Jacksonville, FL 32224

**Who:** Active Duty Service Members (ADSM),  
Veterans, National Guard and Reserve  
and their families and friends

**What:** Military-focused, fun, family-friendly field day  
at UNF. Participating organizations will provide  
activities, resources and education



**YOGA CLASS**  
Yoga 4 Change



**ZUMBA CLASS**  
YMCA



**STEM ACTIVITY**  
YMCA



**FACE PAINTING**  
Angels Kids



Food sponsored by Blue Star Families



Jacksonville Jaguars\* ticket giveaway by  
Blue Star Families (limited quantities)

\*Humana Military is a sponsor of the Jacksonville Jaguars Salute to Service game this season.



## Questions?

Contact: Lavender Morrison  
[lmorrison2@humanamilitary.com](mailto:lmorrison2@humanamilitary.com)  
(904) 704-4511



Humana Military is the administrator of the Department of Defense (DoD) TRICARE East program. TRICARE is a registered trademark of the DoD, Defense Health Agency (DHA), all rights reserved. XGBB0524-A





- Health Care
- Education
- Earned Benefits

**FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV**  
**727-319-7440**



OPERATION  
STRONG & READY

A Military Wellness Program

**STARTING JULY 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2024**  
**OSR - VETERANS ONLY!**

**To register stop by the  
Welcome center or  
email**  
[EHernandez@fcymca.org!](mailto:EHernandez@fcymca.org)

### Program Overview

Operation Strong & Ready (OSR) – “Veterans Only” is an 8-week/16 session program designed to not only help our veterans get back into shape physically, but also mentally and emotionally. The program is held twice a week for approximately 1.5-hours. Each week a new topic will be discussed or a new resource will be provided to help better assist the veterans during their 8-week journey.

### Program Goals

Increase participant’s physical and mental health through exercise, peer support and educational resources.

### Who Can Participate?

The program is open to any military veteran who desires to increase their physical activity, improve their overall health, and to connect with other like-minded veterans.

For more information, email our Military Outreach Program Coordinator, Eric Hernandez, at [EHernandez@fcymca.org](mailto:EHernandez@fcymca.org).

STRENGTHENING OUR MILITARY FAMILIES™  
YMCA OF FLORIDA'S FIRST COAST | FCYMCA.org

### Program Cost

Thanks to generous donations and sponsorships, this session is FREE for anyone qualified. Future programs may have a participant costs pending future funding.

### Program Details

In a small group setting, an OSR Instructor will safely guide participants through 8 weeks of exercise programming designed specifically to meet the veteran’s needs. The program consists of pre and post assessments, 16 exercise sessions with a certified instructor, healthy living and veteran resource discussions, and a YMCA membership for the participant and their immediate family members for the 8-week duration of the program.

#### The 90-minute OSR session consists of:

- ✓ Healthy-Living/Resources Discussions
- ✓ Warm-Up
- ✓ Teamed Cardio + Strength Workout
- ✓ Cool-Down

**Program will be held at  
Dye Clay Family YMCA. We  
will meet twice a week on  
Tuesday and Thursday's  
from  
10:00AM – 11:30AM.**



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF AMERICAN  
PRISONERS & MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA  
5673 Columbis Pike, Suite 100, Falls Church, VA 22041

PH ---703/465-7432

[www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)

FAX ---703/465-7432

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**A four-member Delegation, representing the National League of POW/MIA Families is headed to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia on February 25<sup>th</sup>.**

Falls Church, Virginia (February 23, 2024) — The National League of POW/MIA Families a non-profit, 501(c) (3) organization whose threefold goal is the return of all prisoners, the fullest possible accounting of the missing, and the repatriation of all recoverable remains of those who died while serving our Nation during the Vietnam War, is proud to announce that another League Delegation is now headed to Hanoi. The purpose of the visit is to seek expanded efforts to bring home America's military and civilian Vietnam War Veterans still unreturned, thus ending the uncertainty of their families.

This is the first notable Vietnam War POW/MIA Delegation to visit Vietnam since the significant upgrade in bilateral relations to the level of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, announced last September when President Biden visited Hanoi. The stated purposes for the upgrade were peace, cooperation and sustainable development. The League believes the new relationship offers potential opportunities for both countries to increase and improve the pace and scope of unilateral and joint accounting efforts, before it is too late.

The League has pursued the fullest possible accounting for America's missing Vietnam War Veterans – unreturned POW/MIAs – since before the end of active US involvement, ended by the Paris Peace Accords on January 27, 1973. Such efforts became "a matter of highest national priority" in the mid-1980s, after President Reagan came into office with a personal commitment.

As Governor of California, he was in office when the listed POWs came home in 1973, recognizing then that not enough was being done to account for those still missing. The first League delegations to talks with Vietnam's leaders in Europe date back to before war's end and, since then, the League has participated in or led many delegations seeking answers for the families, and always with the single goal of bringing American servicemen and civilians home, to the country they served.

For additional information contact Michael Bamarni, Social Media Coordinator.





## National League of POW/MIA Families

Hello everyone!

The League is always seeking out photos of POW/MIA flags, monuments, Missing Man Honors Tables, POW/MIA empty chairs, etc. from your community to feature on our social media pages and website.

Sharing with us is easy, just message your photos to our email -

[nationalleague@pow-miafamilies.org](mailto:nationalleague@pow-miafamilies.org)

With your full name as well as a brief description of when & where the photo was taken.



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF AMERICAN  
PRISONERS & MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA  
5673 Columbia Pike, Suite 100, Falls Church, VA 22041

PH ---703/465-7432

[www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)

FAX ---703/465-7433

### 2024 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer to receive League material by email? Y\_\_N\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ @\$20/member

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

IRS EIN# 23-7071242



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES  
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

5673 Columbia Pike, Suite 100, Falls Church, VA 22041

PH ---703/465-7432

[www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)

FAX ---703/465-7433

**ABBREVIATED LEAGUE DELEGATION TRIP REPORT**

March 26, 2024

The League Delegation's recent visit to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia took place from February 25 – March 14, 2024. We deeply appreciated the incredible policy and logistics support provided by the Defense Intelligence Agency and their Defense Attachés and Stony Beach Specialists in each country. Especially commendable is Stony Beach Operations Director & Cambodia Specialist Eric Phillips who was with us at every turn, in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

On the heels of upgraded bilateral relations with Vietnam to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, our visit to Hanoi was timely, as was the transition within the League and a new generation of leaders in Cambodia. The atmosphere and environment seemed to fall into place for utilizing League Advisor Dr. Jay Veith's Intelligence Assessment to get the attention of Vietnam and DPAA. It did – positively with Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security (MPS), Minister To Lam, his Deputy LTG Quang, and the Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP).

Not so with DPAA, though the League had requested such a study for years! Further, in-country DPAA personnel assigned to Detachments 1, 2 and 3 were instructed not to attend any League-scheduled meetings in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. This DPAA leadership decision undermined priority and visibility on the accounting mission, consistently recognized as foundational by the Vietnamese, and denied our on-the-ground DPAA personnel the opportunity to meet senior officials.

From MPS and VNOSMP, we obtained specific pledges of cooperation, including on our proposal of a three-man team (one each Stony Beach, VNOSMP and DPAA) working year-round to expand the planned quarterly Joint Field Activities (JFAs). This longtime DIA/League objective now has potential. During our very positive meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup> with MPS, Minister To Lam arrived unexpectedly and reinforced the positive pledges made. Until MPS's pledge to consider our proposal, cooperation by Vietnam had been disappointing despite their known control of 85-90% of loss sites of all still missing and unaccounted-for Vietnam War Veterans.

In Cambodia, new Prime Minister Hun Manet indicated full cooperation will continue, as will direction by long-time POW/MIA Committee Chairman General Pol Saroeun, aided by another old friend and supporter, H.E. Sieng Lapresse. We couldn't ask for more in Cambodia, including an ongoing underwater partnership recovery. We passed along our best wishes to PM Hun Manet's father, former PM Hun Sen, and the other familiar fathers whose sons are now also designated Ministers.

A cordial, productive meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> with Lao Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Saleumxay Kommasith brought his pledge to quickly issue a simple legal document to protect our DPAA and DIA/Stony Beach POW/MIA accounting specialists. This small corrective step has yet to be taken, likely due to too low-level staff policy attention, but we're cautiously optimistic about positive results coming soon. New US Ambassador to Laos Heather Variava has meetings this week with Deputy Minister Saleumxay and the Lao Deputy Minister of Defense. Laos already has set ongoing Stony Beach investigations year-round to take advantage of opportunities that arise during DPAA-scheduled Joint Field Activities.

A fuller, more descriptive League Delegation Trip Report will be completed soon, posted online and distributed by USPS mail to all League members.

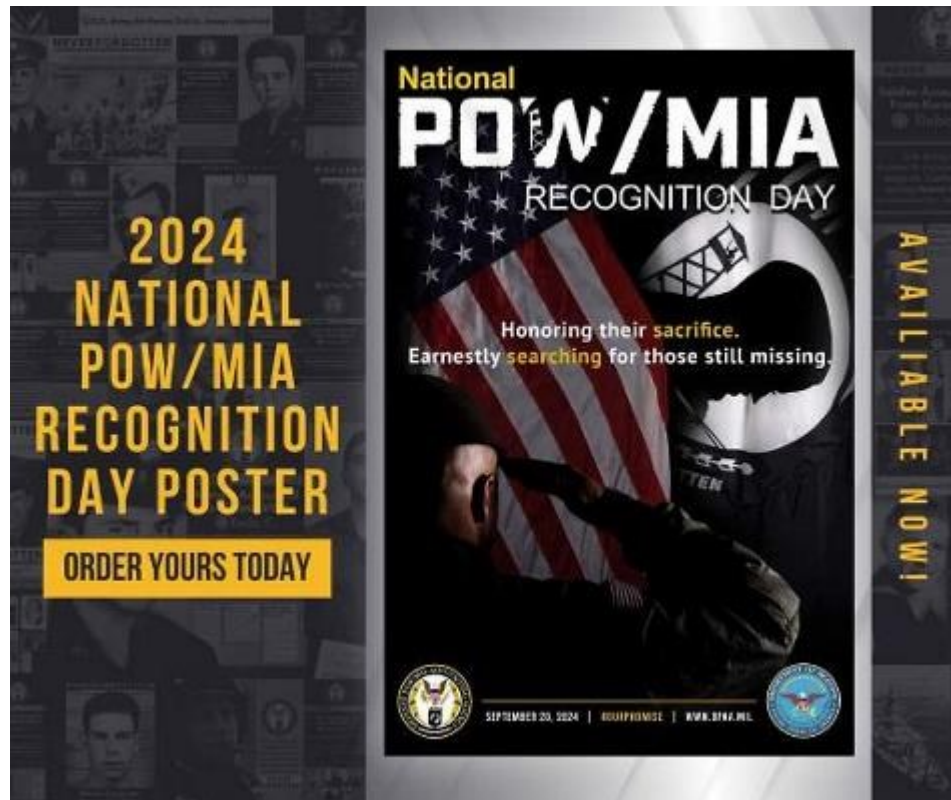
## National POW/MIA Recognition Day 2024

SAVE THE DATE!

National POW/MIA Recognition Day is held each year on the third Friday of September.

Join us at the National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum on SATURDAY, September 21 for several activities, including a program to commemorate and honor the commitment and sacrifices made by our nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action, as well as their families, the arrival of the American Legion Riders 7 Bridge Run with special guests, a candlelight ceremony (tentative) as well as other plans being considered.

Fly the POW/MIA flag and join us at Cecil and be a part of this important observance.



## The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Florida legislation allows disabled Veterans to select military license plates reflecting their service and awards. The initiative aims to honor the sacrifices of disabled Veterans by giving them a visible way to display their service on their vehicles. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3ROYAct>  
[#FDVA](#) [#FLVets](#)





### WARRIOR WHEELS FOUNDATION INC

Originally established after the tragic passing of Sgt Terry Terrance Long, June 14 2019. In an effort to honor Terri & his passion for the FREEDOM OF THE RIDE, family, friends and community members came together and raised awareness to eliminate veteran & first responder suicide, as well to donate a motorcycle to a deserving hero. Thus, Warrior Wheels Foundation was established.



### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **BECOME A MEMBER**
- **START A CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA**
- **ASK US HOW TO BE A MENTOR**
- **JOIN A WARRIOR WHEELS AUTO OR BIKE CLUB OR EVEN START ONE OF YOUR OWN**
- **DONATE**

VISIT  
[WWW.MYWARRIORWHEELS.COM](http://WWW.MYWARRIORWHEELS.COM)

## CONTACT US

Address: P.O. Box 331, Ocala, FL 34478

Phone: 352-789-5909

Website: [www.MyWarriorWheels.com](http://www.MyWarriorWheels.com)

Email: [info@mywarriorwheels.com](mailto:info@mywarriorwheels.com)



# WARRIOR WHEELS

FREEDOM FOR VETERANS, FIRST RESPONDERS & FAMILIES



SGT TERRANCE "TERRY" LONG  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
NOV 9, 1979 - JUN 14, 2014



The Warriors that join the FREEDOM OF THE RIDE program are hand selected by our board with community involvement. Recipients not only receive a motorcycle or other vehicle, but they embark on a one year journey with peer support, mentorship & camaraderie.

### PURPOSE

Warrior Wheels Foundation's Purpose is to eliminate Veteran & First Responder suicide by providing crisis intervention, peer support & camaraderie that provides a healing environment & supportive community

### MISSION

Warrior Wheels Foundation's Mission is dedicated to providing freedom for Veterans, First Responders & their families through donated motorcycles and other vehicles, while raising support awareness and funds for other community organizations

### PROGRAMS

#### Freedom of the Ride

Donating motorcycles & other vehicles to Veterans & First Responders



#### CAMARADERIE

Connecting with other Warriors & supporters to enjoy regular outings & the FREEDOM OF THE RIDE.

#### MENTORSHIP

Each recipient is assigned a mentor that will support them and their family on their journey through the program, transitioning into civilian life, employment & so much more, to ensure that they have the guidance & tools to be successful.

#### PEER SUPPORT

Warrior Wheels Foundation provides Peer Support Groups called "WARRIOR GROUPS" for all Veterans, First Responders & their Families. Warrior Groups provide a safe & confidential environment of camaraderie with fellow warriors that allow them find new ways to heal from trauma in their lives.

### Social Service Support



We provide 360° of support for our Veterans, First Responders & their Families through peer support, benefits assistance, financial assistance for vehicle recipients & other social services to ensure the success of our heroes

### Crisis Intervention



Warrior Wheels Foundation works alongside our police, fire, EMTs & other crisis Support organizations across the state and country to provide immediate crisis intervention support for our veterans, and first responders



# Join Our Team of Volunteers

We're currently looking for individuals who would be committed to restoring, maintaining, and being a docent on the USS Orleck.



## Requirements

- Veteran, Active Duty, Retired
- Minimum of 18 Years Old
- Healthy physically and mentally
- Youth groups with advisors
- Willing to volunteer where and when needed

## Registration On

[www.jaxnavalmuseum.org/volunteer](http://www.jaxnavalmuseum.org/volunteer)

## Skills Needed

- Welders & Electricians
- Docents & Office
- Painting, Cleaning, Events

## For More Info

[volunteer@jaxnavalmuseum.org](mailto:volunteer@jaxnavalmuseum.org)

## USS Orleck's Address

610 East Bay Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

## **How to report a Veteran's death to VA**

The passing of a Veteran is a solemn time that deserves to be recognized and reported with the utmost respect. Veterans have served their country and worked hard for their well-deserved benefits.

However, after a Veteran passes away, family members should report the death of the Veteran to VA as soon as possible to stop current benefits payments. If the death is not reported promptly, survivors or executors of the Veteran's estate may have to repay any overpayments received. Payments the deceased Veteran received may include compensation, pension, education or Veteran Readiness & Employment benefits.

VA encourages loved ones of deceased Veterans to follow the guidance below on reporting Veteran deaths to avoid falling victim to benefit scams.

### **How to report the death of a Veteran**

Calling is the fastest way to report a Veteran's death so VA will stop benefit payments, but there are other options available for reporting.

#### **Options for reporting:**

**By Phone:** Call VA 800-827-1000 (TTY: 711) and select 5. Agents are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.

**In Person:** Go to a VA regional office. Find the nearest VA regional office.

**By Mail:** Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Intake Center, PO Box 4444, Janesville, WI 53547-4444. Include your relationship to the Veteran and any supporting documents that can help us verify the Veteran's identity. Examples of supporting documents are:

Death certificate or other public record of the Veteran's death

Discharge document (like a DD214)

If you report in person at a VA regional office or by mail, provide copies of:

Death certificate or other public record of the Veteran's death.

Discharge document (like a DD214).

Provide as much information about the Veteran as you can when you first report the notice of death to VA. This information will help VA verify the Veteran's identity. This information includes:

Full name.

Social Security Number or VA claim number.

Date of birth.

Date of death.

Branch of service.

### **Best practices to avoid survivor benefit scams**

Save important files, such as the Veteran's military service/treatment records, discharge papers and copies of their VA claims.

Go to the VA website. For guidance on creating an account and obtaining a VA security Personal Identification Number (PIN) to securely access benefit information. A VA Security PIN is an additional way to secure direct deposit accounts from theft and protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Never give out PII via text, and be cautious of suspicious hyperlinks or unfamiliar hyperlinks.

If a survivor is missing a VA benefits payment, identifies a discrepancy in payments, or find suspicious activity with a direct deposit account, contact VA immediately at 800-827-1000.

Review all documents thoroughly. Survivors should never sign a blank form for some



one else to complete later. They should always review the completed form before signing and retain a copy of the completed form for their records.

For protection against identity theft scams, notify the major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) to update the individual's credit report with a deceased notice and notify the Veteran's financial institutions so all accounts can be closed or transferred appropriately.

According to AARP, scammers also use names published in obituaries to pretend to be long lost relatives of the deceased. When it's time to write your loved one's obituary, consider leaving out the birthdate, middle name, home address, birthplace and mother's maiden name.

For other scams predators use, visit [www.VA.GOV/VSAFE](http://www.VA.GOV/VSAFE).

VA is committed to delivering world-class care and benefits to Veterans and their dependents by providing survivors with ongoing support and assistance. Check to see if you qualify for survivor benefits, such as health care coverage, Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance Program, housing assistance, or even help with burial costs.

For more guidance on how to report the death of a Veteran, submitting necessary documentation and finding additional resources available, visit [VA Benefits For Spouses, Dependents, Survivors, And Family Caregivers | Veterans Affairs](#).

To report a missing VA benefits payment, identify a discrepancy in payments, or find suspicious activity with a direct deposit account, contact VA immediately at 800-827-1000. You may also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission if funeral homes charge to set up funeral honors or schedule a burial with VA's National Cemetery Administration by visiting [reportfraud.ftc.gov](http://reportfraud.ftc.gov). For other scams predators use, visit [va.gov/vsafe](http://va.gov/vsafe).

## **Burials and Memorials**

**VA honors the service and sacrifice of Veterans and their family members.**

### **How to Apply**

**To find out in advance if a Veteran or family member is eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery, click “Apply for Pre-Need Burial Eligibility” to fill out and submit the application.**

### **Apply for Pre-Need Burial Eligibility**

**If pre-need eligibility has not been determined, upon the death of the Veteran or his or her spouse or dependent (also called the time of need), family members should locate the Veteran’s DD-214 or other discharge papers if readily available and click “Schedule a Burial” to begin the process. Then make arrangements with a funeral home, National Cemetery Scheduling Office, or directly with a VA national cemetery.**

### **VA Memorial Benefits**

**VA takes special care to pay lasting tribute to the memory of Veterans who served and sacrificed and that of their families. VA meticulously maintains 155 VA national cemeteries in 44 states and Puerto Rico and is working to increase access to accommodate Veterans and eligible family members close to home. Currently, more than 94 percent of Veterans have a burial option in an open VA, state or tribal veterans cemetery located within 75 miles of their home.**

**Note that most if not all of these benefits may be provided for Veterans who are interred in a State, Territorial or Tribal Veterans cemetery. Check with the cemetery to ensure coverage. Some benefits are also available for Veterans who choose burial in a private cemetery.**

**Veterans with a qualifying discharge are entitled to VA burial benefits. Spouses and dependent children are eligible too, even if they predecease the Veteran.**

**The following burial benefits may be provided:**

**Burial in a VA national cemetery**

Opening and closing of the grave for burial of casketed or cremated remains, or placement of cremated remains in an above-ground vault, also called a columbarium

A government furnished grave liner

Perpetual care of the gravesite

A headstone or marker with an inscription

A burial flag

A Presidential Memorial Certificate

A dedicated memorial page on the Veterans Legacy Memorial site where friends and family can upload photos and remembrances

**Burial in a private cemetery**

A government headstone, marker, or medallion

A burial flag

A Presidential Memorial Certificate

Some survivors may also be entitled to VA burial allowances as partial reimbursement for the costs of funerals and burials for eligible Veterans

Please note that gravesites in a VA national cemetery cannot be reserved in advance. To prepare for a private cemetery burial, VA suggests families review these questions and complete required forms in advance.

**VA Requirements**

Discharge papers to establish your eligibility for burial services







*You've made our country*  
**A BETTER PLACE.**

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**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](http://SilverCreekRetirement.com)



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

Assisted Living Facility #12928



# Stories of Service

St. Johns County Veterans Oral History Project



Stories of Service is an oral history project focused on the veterans of St. Johns County. The goal of this project was to collect, document, and preserve the memories of local veterans for future generations.

Materials collected by the Society for this project have allowed for the creation of two exhibits, one physical at the Oldest House Museum Complex at 14 St. Francis Street on display until January, one digital, accessible below and through our main website under the LEARN tab.

Items on display in both the digital and physical exhibits tell the stories of our local veterans, placing them proudly within the long and storied histories of St. Augustine and St. Johns County.

A sincere thanks to them all.



**View the Digital Exhibit:**

**<https://sahsstoriesofservice.omeka.net/>**



Main: 904-824-2872

Research Library: 904-825-2333

271 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084

Research Library located at 6 Artillery Lane, St. Augustine FL 32084





**WHAT WAS YOUR  
UNIT IN VIETNAM?**





# NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS VETERAN HOMEOWNERS SAINT JOHNS COUNTY

## FREE HOME REHAB

We believe everyone deserves to live in a healthy home. At Operation Lifeline Inc., we feel particularly indebted to those who served in the Armed Forces and have committed to helping as many struggling veterans as possible. Our program provides home rehabilitation services at no charge to eligible veterans to address accessibility and HUD's Eight Healthy Homes Principles.

## QUALIFICATIONS

### Participant Eligibility:

- Verifiable veteran status
- Gross income below 80% of the area's median income
- Occupy the property as a principal residence and have proof of ownership
- Be in compliance with any existing mortgage on the property
- Be current with utility accounts and property taxes

### Property Eligibility:

- Must be a single-family residence
- Must be the applicant's homestead
- Applicant must own the property by fee simple title
- Must be free of any encumbrances other than a first mortgage
- Located within the unincorporated portion of Saint Johns County or the City of Saint Augustine Beach

\* Please review full eligibility criteria on our website \*

## CONTACT US TODAY

*Funding is Limited and Restricted  
to Saint Johns County Homes*

Please visit our website to fill  
out an application

[WWW.OPLIFELINE.ORG](http://WWW.OPLIFELINE.ORG)



**OPERATION  
LIFELINE INC.**



# 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**



# 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](https://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/)



## Surviving Spouse Milestones

*\*Not all milestones apply to every persons situation\**

### One Year Mark:

- Moving out of quarters (if applicable)
- Storage at government expense expires
- Apply for Home of Selection (HOS) extension
- HEART Act (one year from date SGLI/DG received)

### Two Year Mark:

- Loss of Spouse's VA Transitional DIC Benefits (\$250 per family per month)

\*only applies to spouse with one or more minor children in household\*

- Apply for Home of Selection (HOS) extension

### Three Year Mark:

- TRICARE Healthcare and Dental benefits transitions to retiree rate for spouse
- Home of Selection (HOS) entitlement expires

### Spouse Turns 52:

- If disabled, can remain and retain SSA Survivor Benefits

### Spouse Turns 55:

- Can remarry and not lose SBP eligibility

### Spouse Turns 57:

- Can remarry not lose DIC eligibility

### Spouse Turns 60:

- Can remarry and retain SSA Survivor Benefits

## Surviving Youth Milestones

*\*Not all milestones apply to every persons situation\**

### Child Turns 16:

- Elimination of SSA entitlement for adult receiving Child in Care benefits

### Child Turns 18:

- College - Fry Scholarship \*Line of Duty Cases only\*
- College - Dependence Education Assistance \*VA Service Connected Death\*
- Loss of annuities (SSA, DIC, SBP) unless enrolled in school full time. SSA depends on age when graduating High School
- Loss of annual benefit report
- If DG/SGL beneficiary - If not already received

### Child Turns 21:

- Loss of DFFRS/TRICARE unless enrolled in school full time
- Enrollment in TRICARE Young Adult

### Child Turns 22:

- Loss of Child-Only SBP regardless of school enrollment

### Child Turns 23:

- Loss of DFFRS/TRICARE transitional Survivor unless incapacitated
- Enrollment in TRICARE Young Adult

### Child Turns 26:

- Loss of TRICARE Young Adult

### Child Turns 33:

- Loss of Fry Scholarship eligibility

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.thefirewatch.org/watch-standers) to learn more.

Thanks!

Nick Howland

Executive Director, The Fire Watch

[www.thefirewatch.org](http://www.thefirewatch.org)

904.525.1761



## 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     |                                 |
| 1048 | Bob Adkins       | adk123robert@outlook.com        |
| 1059 | Dave Treffinger  | dtreffinger433@msn.com          |
| 1084 | Bill Jefferson   | bill_jefferson@comcast.net      |
| 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.

### Veterans Council of Clay County:

President: Ansil Lewis

Meeting day is the same, first Wednesday of the month, but the location is changed to Clay County Administration Building, 1st floor conference room, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. Meeting start at 11 a.m.



## 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](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

..... Confidential chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://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](http://MilitaryCrisisLine.net) or text 838255



## 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**



## 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](mailto: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 D. McDermott Director  
Lori Chapman Assistant VSO  
Andrew Ashcom Assistant VSO  
Shauna Holton Assistant VSO  
April Manner 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.*