



# The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

Bill Dudley, Publisher

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From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

December 2021

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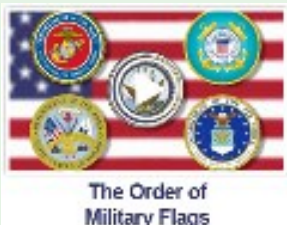
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Fellow Veterans,  
 If you missed this year's Veterans Day Program on Nov. 11, you missed an excellent opportunity to honor our veterans. This year's program was by far the best event we have ever hosted to honor our veterans. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Hal Kushner lived up to his reputation as an excellent speaker. His remarks focused primarily on his experiences while being held in captivity as a POW in Vietnam. His comments on the strength of the human spirit while being held in the worst of conditions was overpowering and gives one a fierce sense of pride in the courage of our soldiers who endured such harsh conditions. Dr. Kushner is a true patriot in every sense of the definition of patriotism. We were also enlightened by the remarks of Congressman Michael Waltz. Congressman Waltz is a Colonel in the Army National Guard and is truly a servant leader both to his constituency he has been elected to serve and to his constitutional oath as an Army Officer. His remarks

were met with much applause and a standing ovation.

The Ode to "Old Glory" performed by Navy Command Master Chief Mack Ellis and USAF Master Sgts. Mike DelPizzo and John Stills captured the emotions of everyone who attended. The historical tribute to our grand old flag gave one the most intense sense of pride in our flag and all she stands for.

Our theme for this year's program was to honor our Vietnam veterans. The focus was on the 23 soldiers from St. Johns County that were Killed in Action (KIA) in Vietnam. We were also honored to have the Gold Star Families of several of our KIA veterans in attendance and they were recognized from the podium by our Master of Ceremonies.

We were honored to again have the Vietnam Traveling Wall and the Wall on Terrorism on display in the atrium along with over 40 display tables. We had planned on 1000 attendees and we were not disappointed in the turnout as we hit our expected attendance and then some.

Our Veterans Day program has become the Veterans Councils signature event of the year and



we planned to continue it each year as we find ways to improve and expand as we honor our veterans. Our next big event is our Wreaths Across America program on Dec. 18th. As in years past, the Veterans Council will place a wreath on every gravesite at the St. Augustine National Cemetery using volunteers of local citizens and youth organizations. The unloading of the truck begins at 9 AM and the ceremony begins at 12 noon. The wearing of a mask is optional. Volunteers who would like to help with the unloading are encouraged to be at the cemetery by 0845 or if you planned to attend the ceremony and place a wreath on a gravesite you should be at the cemetery by 1145.

Bill Dudley  
 Chairman

Veterans Council of St. Johns  
 County

# Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



## State Veterans' Homes

### What is the purpose of the program?

The State Veterans' Homes Program provides comprehensive, high-quality, and cost-effective health care services to eligible Florida veterans who are in need of long-term nursing home care or assisted living.

### What services does the program provide?

The State Veterans' Homes Program operates six nursing homes in Florida that provide full-service long-term residential care to eligible Florida veterans, supervised by registered and licensed nurses as well as a domiciliary home (assisted living facility). The six nursing homes are located across the state.

Alexander 'Sandy' Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home (Pembroke Pines)

Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home (Land O' Lakes)

Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home (Panama City)

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home (St. Augustine)

Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home (Port Charlotte) and

Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home (Daytona Beach)

In addition to these, a new facility, the Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie, is under construction and the Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando is under renovation. Both are expected to open to residents in 2021.

The 150-bed, Robert H. Jenkins, Jr., State Veterans' Domiciliary Home, located in Lake City, provides assisted living residential care to eligible ambulatory veterans. The program helps veterans function at their highest level of independence.

### What is the occupancy rate for veterans' homes?

All six of Florida's veterans' nursing homes have the capacity to serve 120 residents, and with the exception of the Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home in Daytona Beach, each of the nursing homes can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. Including the Robert H. Jenkins, Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home that has 150 beds, the State Veterans' Homes Program has a total of 870 beds.

The department's goal is to have a 90% occupancy rate at all veterans' homes in operation for two years or longer. During Fiscal Year 2019-20, average occupancy rate for State Veterans' Homes operating for at least two years was 93.1% and the average for all skilled nursing facilities was over 93.1%.

### Who is eligible for State Veterans' Homes admission?

Basic eligibility for all state veterans' homes includes an honorable discharge, state residency prior to admission, and certification of the need for assisted living or skilled nursing care as determined by a VA physician.



## The Jacksonville National Cemetery Greetings from the Support Committee at the Jacksonville National Cemetery



The Support Committee invites everyone to attend its **next scheduled meeting**. The meeting will be at **6:00pm**. The meeting will take place at Community Hospice, **4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257 in Conference Room A.**

Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee Meetings for 2018  
At Community Hospice of NE FL.  
4266 Sunbeam Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257  
Hadlow Bldg – Conference Room A 6:00 pm

### +++++2021 Officers of the SCJNC+++++

Chairman: Steve Spickelmier  
Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley, Treasurer: Pat Welch  
Secretary: Kathy Church, Judge Advocate: Don Guthrie  
Master-At-Arms: Mike Smith, Historian: Win Delpizzo  
Chaplain: Pat Archuleta, Public Affairs: Pat Mulvihill

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 Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, at 7 pm

**From the January 2022 meeting onward all Council meetings will be held at the VSO building, 200 San Sebastian View**

*All SJC Health Guidelines will be followed.*

*Please stay safe, Bill Dudley, Chairman, VC of SJC*



### Upcoming Veterans Council Meetings Speakers

**December 16:** Vicky Carregal, HorsePlay Therapy Center  
Dan Bean, The New Jax Museum, the USS Orleck

**January 27, 2022:** Mary Anne Newman, Pres. Associates of Vietnam Veterans, FL Assoc.  
Selena Hernandez-Haines, First Coast Honor Flight

**February 24, 2022:** Derek Collins, Program Manager, The Fire Watch  
Suzanne Hoff Ogawa, The History of the POW Flag

## **Vietnam POW shares story at St. Augustine Veterans Day ceremony: 'I have no bitterness at all'**

**Dr. Hal Kushner: 'I feel fortunate that I survived intact.'**

Sheldon Gardner, St. Augustine Record

Dr. Hal Kushner spent several years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, and he shared his story during a Veterans Day event in St. Augustine on Thursday.

An estimated 850 to 1,000 people gathered in the main sanctuary at Anastasia Baptist Church for the ceremony, which began at 11 a.m.



Hosted by the Veterans Council of St. Johns County and the Ancient City Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, the event celebrated all veterans but paid special tribute to veterans of the Vietnam era.

Doors opened at 9 a.m. to allow people to look at displays in the atrium, including a traveling Vietnam wall and a global war on terrorism wall.

The ceremony named men with local ties who died while serving during the Vietnam era, and family members of several of those men stood for applause.

"Each of these families deserves our gratitude no matter how much time has passed," said retired Army Sgt. Maj. Ray Quinn.

Among the crowd were many current and former veterans, judges, city and county commissioners, fire and police chiefs, Sheriff Robert Hardwick and U.S. Rep. Michael Waltz. Waltz represents the 6th congressional district in Florida, which includes part of southern St. Johns County, part of Lake County and Flagler and Volusia counties.

### Surviving as a prisoner of war

Kushner, a retired U.S. Army colonel, went to Vietnam in 1967 as an Army flight surgeon but was captured after a helicopter crash and held as a prisoner of war until 1973, according to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. His many military awards include the Silver Star.

He described his early days treating the wounded in Vietnam, his capture and the harrowing years that followed.

After being found after the crash by a group of Viet Cong, he was marched for 30 days mostly at night barefoot to a jungle camp, where he lived for about 3 1/2 years, he said.

"We had no shoes, no clothing, no blankets, no soap, no toothpaste, no tobacco, no nothing," he said.

The prisoners were cold and starving, were forced to perform slave labor, were beaten, and got sick with malaria and dysentery, he said. Thirteen of 27 in the group died there, Kushner said.

"The hardest part for me was watching my brothers waste away, give up hope and die," he said, adding that their remains were eventually returned home.

A dozen survivors, including Kushner, were taken from the jungle camp to Hanoi via a 540-mile trek, he said.

In 1973, Kushner was freed and returned home to his wife, his 5-year-old son, whom he had never met and his 9-year-old daughter.

"I lost about six years of my life, 55 pounds, seven teeth, 13 brothers and the joy of seeing my children grow up," Kushner said. "I have no bitterness at all. I feel fortunate that I survived intact. I am so proud and honored that I could serve my country under very difficult circumstances. And I survived to come home to my exceptional America."



**First Militia Chapter AUSA recognizes chairman for his work for our county's veterans and is pictured here with COL Gray Johnson of the FLANG receiving an award.**

The Veterans Council Chairman, Bill Dudley has been the visionary and inspirational leader of the St. Johns Veterans Council for over 10 years and we are reprinting a short bio of the Chairman from *Liberty Life Media*



**Veteran Spotlight :William “Bill” Dudley – St Johns County Veterans Community Commanding Officer**

**VETERAN SPOTLIGHT:William “Bill” Dudley: St. Johns County Veterans Community Commanding Officer**

*By Reuben Keith Green, Liberty Life Media*

If The Liberty Coast had an official Veterans community commanding officer, it would likely be Bill Dudley.

The small town where he was born—Williamston, North Carolina—is less than four square miles nestled along the Roanoke River. Dudley had his sights set on bigger venues for adventure, however. He joined the Air Force in 1955 and was accepted to attend Officer Candidate School after completing basic training. Dudley spent ten years on active duty flying mostly heavy cargo aircraft, performing maintenance officer duties and deploying due to world crisis situations.

Upon retirement from military service as a Lieutenant Colonel, Dudley worked in mid-level and executive positions in the aerospace industry, both in the U.S. and abroad. With decades of accomplishment, travel, cultural exploration, and career success under his belt, Dudley began to focus on his real passion: volunteer service to Veterans.

Twenty years later, and because he chose to settle locally, Dudley’s leadership and innate compulsion for actionable service have left The Liberty Coast much enriched, particularly in our Veteran community. With the approaching 20th anniversary of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, of which Dudley has been president for ten years, he reflected on council accomplishments and the impact of each. Three of these achievements include: funding a van for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), securing handicapped Veterans parking at county buildings and regular support to area youth through Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, Sea Cadets and the Young Marines.

An additional highlight is the long-anticipated fulfillment of a 10-year effort to establish a permanent community-based outpatient clinic in St. Johns County—The Leo C. Chase Jr., Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic—projected to open on June 22, 2021. The new clinic, named in honor of the county’s first soldier to die in the Vietnam War, will be large enough to serve the needs of the Veteran population.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County works closely with county officials and other organizations and is widely regarded as the model for Veterans councils across the state.

Furthermore, the Council has produced many Veteran awareness and celebration events, educational documentaries and panel presentations. They also provide cash and other assistance to Veterans in need, such as car repair payments, home repairs (including roof replacements), utilities and other necessities.

One of Dudley’s many proud accomplishments is his instrumental work in helping to establish a Veterans Treatment Court for St. Johns County. The court was activated in January 2017, with Judge Howard McGillin presiding from the bench. Veterans participating in this program likely don’t know that it took four years of dedication and tireless effort for Dudley and Judge McGillin to bring to fruition, and that it is largely underwritten by the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.

“I haven’t missed one court session since the court was stood up in 2017,” said Dudley.

That simple fact sums up his commitment to the Veteran community. He understands that many Veterans return with not only physical wounds, but those such as emotional or moral injury that, while not as visible, lead to problems that occasionally result in involvement with law enforcement. It is a victory anytime a Veteran can be helped back onto a sustainable path with mentorship, treatment and financial assistance through this innovative and compassionate endeavor.

“You’re not always going to be twenty years old. You will not always stay young and healthy,” said Dudley when asked to advise young Veterans. “You need to think about aging, and we all need help and medical assistance as we get older.”

Dudley recommends that both young Veterans and retirees register with the Veterans Administration (VA) and learn about the benefits and services available to them.

I shared with him my own reluctance to engage with the VA upon my retirement, and he told me that was a very common story. Then he shared with me something that I didn’t know: funding for the local VA facility is based upon the number of enrolled Veterans in the area. That means that for every Veteran or retiree that enrolls, the potential for funding increases.

He says that Veterans should keep that in mind. When I asked him for any further advice, Dudley said “Continue serving; don’t stop serving and help your battle buddy.”

As you can see, Dudley has lived a life of service and walks what he talks.

Dudley has been married to his wife Nancy for 59 years. Their son Troy and his wife Jan live nearby with their sons, Ethan and Avery.

Bill Dudley has likely helped more Veterans than all the people that lived in the river town of Williamston when he left and raised his right hand to take his first oath of enlistment. I’d say he has kept that oath, and many more, for a lifetime.

You can learn a great deal about the mission and programs of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County at [VeteransCouncilSJC.org](http://VeteransCouncilSJC.org)

Publisher’s note: Bill Dudley’s advocacy also impacts many outside St. Johns County. That list, as well as the number of national, state and community leaders that regularly seek his experience and service are simply too numerous to list in this one story.





*ALL are invited to attend*

## **Veterans Council Upcoming Meeting Change**

The December Veterans Council meeting will be Thursday, December 16 (moved up a week because of Christmas)

Please see below for the Dec. 16 speakers.

HorsePlay Therapy Center helps Veterans with PTSD

The new Museum in Jacksonville will feature the USS Orleck

ALL Meetings in 2022 will be back at 200 San Sebastian View where the Veterans Service Office (VSO) is.



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

## **St. Johns County Veterans Council December Meeting**

- Thursday, December 16 | 7:00 p.m.
- County Administration Building | 500 San Sebastian View
- Speaker | Vicky Carregal, Executive Director, Horseplay Therapy Center
- Speaker | Daniel Bean, The Jacksonville USS Orleck Museum

**For more information, please call 904.209.6160.**

# The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration



## Certificate of Honor Program



The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration established the Commemorative Partner Program, an organizationally-based, hometown-centric initiative to assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring Vietnam veterans and their families where they live. As part of the Commemorative Partner Program, Certificates of Honor have been designed to honor and give special recognition to four categories of veterans and their families.

Certificates of Honor are available for our Commemorative Partners to present along with accompanying lapel pins for the following groups:



### Former, Living American Military POW

The Former POW certificate and lapel pin are for former, living American military POWs from the Vietnam War as listed by the Department of Defense. If the former POW is deceased, the lapel pin may be presented to the surviving spouse.



### Unaccounted For

The Unaccounted For certificate and lapel pin are for the immediate family members (parents, spouse, siblings and children) of American military personnel listed as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War by the Department of Defense.



### In Memory Of

The In Memory Of certificate and lapel pin are for the immediate family members (parents, spouse, siblings and children) of a veteran who is listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.



### Deceased Vietnam Veteran's Surviving Spouse

The Deceased Vietnam Veteran's Surviving Spouse certificate and lapel pin are for the surviving spouse at the time of death of a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period from November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location.

Certificates are requested through Commemorative Partners on the Commemorative Partner Portal on the website listed below. For further questions, email [whs.vnwar50th\\_cpp\\_coh@mail.mil](mailto:whs.vnwar50th_cpp_coh@mail.mil) or call 877-387-9951.

Published: October 2016

[www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com)

# John Leslie of the Veterans Council presents a Blue Star pin to a local family

Presentation of a Blue Star Pin to a local deceased Vietnam  
Veterans Surviving Spouse



Lynne "Lil" Shirkey receives Blue Star in memory of  
Jack Shirkey, US Navy  
11 November 2021



## From Veterans Councils John Leslie

This Veterans Day week has been the busiest, best, most interesting and emotional week I've experienced in years. November 10 and 11 involved the set up and then execution of a major



Veterans Day Ceremony and Program including the Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall and Global War on Terror Wall, and 35 organizations on display, with a formal program filled with love and respect for Veterans of all ages, but aimed mostly to those of us from the Vietnam War Period -1955-1975. Our guest speaker was Dr. Harold Kushner, COL, US Army (ret), a POW in Vietnam for nearly six years. A moving and emotional recount of his experiences. A wonderful day indeed.

The evening of 12 November Pat and I were guests at a Marine Corps Birthday Ball affair with 72 other Active Duty and Veterans with all the pomp and circumstance that goes with it. There was at least one current Active Duty Marine at each table, and I must say they were magnificent - or, as is the saying "A J Squared Away!"

The following day, 13 November, was a day of rest in the company of a fellow Vietnam Veteran (with two back-to-back tours in Vietnam) at their country home, again enjoying their company, libations, and the freedom of our lives.

Then today, 14 November, we were guests at a major "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" affair at the Vystar Veterans Arena in Jacksonville, with approximately 1000 others, with Rocky Bleier as the guest speaker. We were fortunate to have our Daughter, Jill and two of our grandsons, Bryce and Brandon, in attendance as well. Rocky, as you may know, was a 4-time Super Bowl Champion with the Pittsburg Steelers, but was also a Purple Heart and Bronze Star awardee of the Vietnam War. A great speaker.

The emotions ran hard and fast, from laughter to silent tears, and I wouldn't change it for anything.

Not sure it if will work properly, but attached is a scrolling file I made for the 11 November program.

Keep serving!

# The Fallen Sons of St Johns County



A TRIBUTE TO THOSE WITH CLOSE TIES TO ST. JOHNS COUNTY WHO MADE THAT LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR PERIOD, 01 NOVEMBER 1955 TO 15 MAY 1975.



**LEO C. CHASE, JR.**  
PFC, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**ROBERT EARL MILLER**  
SMA, US Army  
27 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**RICHARD FLOYD SMITH**  
PFC, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**JOHN WOODWARD SKINNER, JR.**  
2nd Lieutenant, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**RAYMOND ELWANS**  
SMA, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**FRANK JAMES ROBERTS**  
PFC, USMC  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**ROCKY DON CASTLEBROWN**  
PFC, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**LEON WARDEN HUBER**  
SM, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**HENRY LEOPOLD BURKUP**  
SMA, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**RICHARD ARNOLD OSTEN, JR.**  
PFC, USMC  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**STEVEN ANDREW KELLY**  
PFC, USMC  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**HERBERT RANDOLPH FAGANS**  
SGT, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**JOHN WILLIAM HARRISON**  
PFC, USMC  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**JAMES LOUIS BUCHY**  
PFC, USMC  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**EMMETT EDWIN COE**  
PFC, USMC  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**CHARLES EDWARD MILLER**  
Chief Master Sergeant, USAF  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**TOM DAVIS, JR.**  
SGT, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**JAMES BARNES THOMAS**  
1st Sergeant, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**DAVID FRANK BURNEY**  
PFC, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**EDWARD ARTHUR THRELL, JR.**  
SGT, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]



**JAMES LINDSEY WILLIAMS**  
PFC, US Army  
17 Oak Blk, 17th St, Ft. Ogle, CO

- Date of Birth: 08 September 1928
- Date of Death: 18 November 1967 Age 39
- Cause of Death: 18 Nov 67 (MIA) (Vietnam)
- Nationality: United States
- Ancestors: [unreadable]

# The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Commemorative Partner Program

The Veterans Council St Johns County (VCSJC) was accepted as a Commemorative Partner with The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration on 18 October 2021. The Commemorative Partner Program is designed for federal, state and local communities, veterans' organizations and other nongovernmental organizations to assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring our Vietnam veterans and their families. Commemorative Partners are encouraged to participate in the Commemoration of the Vietnam War by planning and conducting events or activities that will recognize Vietnam veterans' and their families' service, valor, and sacrifice. Details of this special program can be found at [This Week In History | This Week in History | Vietnam War Commemoration \(vietnamwar50th.com\)](https://www.vietnamwar50th.com)

An important component of the Commemorative Partner Program is the presenting of the Blue Star lapel pin, awarded to the surviving spouse of a Vietnam War Period Veteran. A Vietnam War Period Veteran is a veteran who served in active duty between 01 November 1955 to 15 May 1975, regardless of duty stations. There is other such awards for Gold Star Families (direct family members of a veteran listed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall, and similar awards for POWs, MIAs, and equally the Veteran Lapel Pin for any active duty member who served anywhere during the Vietnam War Period.



*Bill Dudley receiving  
Commemoration Flag 28  
October 2021*

The VCSJC has presented six Blue Stars since its entry into the program, the first being during our 28 October Council meeting. If you are aware of eligible awardees in any of the categories, or if your organization wishes to become a Commemorative Partner, contact

John Leslie at [john\\_leslie15@yahoo.com](mailto:john_leslie15@yahoo.com) for information. It's easy!



*Kathy Goodman receives  
Blue Star on behalf of her  
mother Beatrice Maloney  
in memory of Joe Maloney,  
US Army, 28 October 2021*



*Lynne "Lil" Shirkey receives  
Blue Star in memory of Jack  
Shirkey, US Navy  
11 November 2021*



*Pattie Foulk receives  
Blue Star in memory  
of Donald Foulk, Jr.  
US Navy  
11 November 2021*



*Joanie Hendricks receives  
Blue Star presented by  
Larry Kaiser in honor of  
Paul Hendricks, US Navy  
11 November 2021*

Other recipients receiving Blue Stars via mail were Gail Dilks in honor of Bob Dilks, US Navy, and Darlene Graves in honor of Tommy Graves, US Army.



## The American Legion Supports and Embraces Veterans & Their Families - Serving Free Pre-Thanksgiving Meals for Veterans

*written by S Rodney November 20, 2021*

The American Legion Post 194 and the Auxiliary Unit 194 are always supporting veterans and their families, and this Saturday they gave out their annual pre-Thanksgiving meals to veterans and surviving spouses in the community.

In great assembly-line fashion gratitude and serving the community continues to be pillars always on display at our local American Legion here in West Augustine.

Veterans and surviving spouses could either show up at the American Legion Alton Green Unit 194 at 1029 Pearl Street, or they could call in to get it delivered.

The American Legion Post 194 and the Auxiliary Unit 194 have numerous events for veterans and the community throughout the year, and the comradery is always evident.

Vietnam War veterans Septimus Connor and Albert Wright, Jr., connected at the sign-up table for the meals, as they realized they had both been a part of the Big Red One division in Vietnam.

Wright, a Purple Heart recipient who lives next door to the American Legion, had never joined, but members of the American Legion Unit 194 and the Auxiliary Unit quickly embraced Mr. Wright and invited him to join their community, as they always look to support more veterans in St. Augustine.

The American Legion Alton Green Memorial Post 194 here in West Augustine is always looking for new members, and they provide a great community and support system for veterans, active military and their families.



## First Coast Honor Transports Veterans - Cost Free - To D.C. To Visit War Memorials

By Lucia Viti, WOKV

Jacksonville — Honor Flight Network is a national organization that transports military veterans - cost free - to Washington D.C., to visit the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, The Vietnam Wall, Arlington National Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Women in Military Service Memorial.

Currently working with veterans from World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars, Honor Flight will serve terminally ill veterans, regardless of the era of their service.

Formed in 2005 by Jeff Miller and Earl Morse, Honor Flight has expanded to include - and incorporate - into one organization which has since taken more than 245,000 veterans to D.C. First Coast Honor Flight, Inc., is one of the 10 Florida hubs of the 128 in 45 states.

The Jacksonville hub recently completed its inaugural flight under the direction of Selena Hernandez-Haines, Commander U.S. Navy (ret) and President of First Coast Honor Flight. Twenty-five veterans - and a guardian for each - plus a physician and six staff members flew to D.C. all expenses paid. And not a single member of the group was a paid employee.

The group of 56 gathered earlier than most Revelrie calls at a hotel adjacent to the Jacksonville International Airport. Breakfast was given as one of the first of three boxed meals. Hernandez-Haines described the onset of the day as when the “tears started early.”

“We moved as a group to the airport where the JAA staff was incredibly supportive,” she said. “People throughout the terminal were clapping, cheering and saluting. There were even bagpipes.”

And it didn’t stop there. Later that evening, the group returned home to a crowd





of over 200 doing the same. In addition to Board Members, volunteers and local military organizations - "and the Patriot Guard Riders" - the community had gathered to celebrate the veterans. Hernandez-Haines admitted that even she was pleasantly surprised.

"There were Sea Cadets, ROTC, active duty and family members and the Girl Scouts cheering with signs," she said. "And then there were even more tears. Keep in mind, the Vietnam veterans came home to disregard, disrespect and outright abuse. So to be welcomed home, respected and recognized was something that many of them had not experienced.

"As the daughter of a Vietnam veteran, the mission was personal," she continued. "It was so important to give these veterans, now in their late 70s, 80s even some in their 90s, a once in a lifetime experience."

The retired Navy Commander described the day as powerful. Landing in Baltimore, they were greeted by a chartered bus and a boxed-lunch. Hernandez-Haines said that words could never adequately depict the emotions that occurred upon their arrival to the memorials.

"We had a veteran who had never been to the Vietnam Wall," she said. "He went up and put his hands on his brothers name. I can't even talk about it now. But that is the kind of thing that happens on an Honor Flight."

Hernandez-Haines said that she was thrilled to share the Women in Military Service Memorial with the two female veterans present.

She also described the changing of the guards at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as powerful.

"It was precise and respectful," she said. "There was a huge crowd and everyone watched in absolute silence. More big emotions. It's all about honoring service members whose names we don't even know. Honor Flight is a place for healing even decades later."

Seventy-two year old Popeye Mathis, Navy (ret), was among the Vietnam serviceman on board who says he was humbled by the experience.

"I was honored to be on the first flight coming out of Jacksonville," he said. "It was a wonderful, wonderful experience. I can't say enough good things about

those folks. They really have their stuff together.”

Mathis described his visit to the Vietnam Wall as intense. With tears, he placed his hand on his brother’s name. He says even he was surprised by his outpouring of emotion honoring those “you knew who are no longer here.”

Hernandez- Haines explained that watching the Vietnam Veterans “looking up at the wall” to honor their brothers in arms as moving.

“Honor Flight is an incredible program,” she said. “The rewards, you just can’t describe. If you know a veteran, if you love a veteran, if you want to honor a veteran, think about Honor Flight. That’s what we’re here for.”

First Coast Honor Flight is funded by private and corporate donations. The Jacksonville hub is the first to serve veterans of Northeast Florida. According to Hernandez- Haines, the ballpark estimate per trip runs between 25 and 30-thousand dollars.

Word of mouth and showcasing their presence with other military organizations fuel their efforts at awareness. Honor Flight has also been approved for the pre-sale of a license plate.

As they prepare for a 2022 Spring flight, the Network continues to serve over 22,000 veterans every year, noting their efforts as a “unique opportunity to show our gratitude to these Heroes who made it possible for us to enjoy the freedoms that we have today.”

“We have the opportunity to show our nation’s veterans the appreciation and honor they deserve,” they said. “Honor Flights give veterans the opportunity to share this momentous occasion with other comrades, to remember friends and comrades lost, and share their stories and experiences with other veterans.”

**For more information contact [info@firstcoasthonorflight.org](mailto:info@firstcoasthonorflight.org)**



## THE FIRE WATCH

Each year more than 6,000 U.S. Veterans take their own lives, including more than 500 here in Florida. Veterans are dying by suicide at a rate nearly 1.5 times higher than that of their civilian counterparts.



*Derek Collins*  
*Program Manager*

This tragedy covers all age groups and demographics.

No part of Northeast Florida is untouched by the tragedy of veteran suicide. The rate of veteran suicide in the region from 2010 to 2019 was 31.6 (per 100,000 veterans), which was on par with national numbers. The rate of Northeast Florida civilians during the same period was half that which is also consistent with national numbers. This means that U.S. and Northeast Florida veterans are losing their lives to suicide at a rate nearly twice that of their civilian counterparts.

A new approach toward ending this preventable tragedy was needed. In 2019 this effort became led and implemented by The Fire Watch, a Northeast Florida based non-profit founded on the core belief that if we can help veterans find the community resources they need before considering hurting themselves, then we can reduce, or even potentially end, veteran suicide in our communities.

The Fire Watch launched our cornerstone prevention initiative called the Watch Stander Program, an early intervention, life-saving network of community members trained to identify risk factors of veterans in crisis and direct those veterans to the resources they need. This program is made available to all Floridians. It is free, on-line, and available to everyone. At the same time, The Fire Watch maintains non-identifiable, county-specific data on veteran suicides from 2010 through 2019 for the entire State of Florida. When used together, the Veteran Suicide Data and the Watch Stander program allow The Fire Watch – and the community – to identify hot spots throughout our state and focus on building a strong community support network in those areas.

Since our launch over 1,500 Watch Standers have been trained with more being added each week. However, our efforts have not stopped there, and we continue to expand our outreach.

Just days ahead of Veterans Day 2021 the Northeast Florida Fire Watch Council has announced that it has awarded \$95,500 in grants to nine local organizations serving veterans in crisis across Northeast Florida. Organizations in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, and St. Johns counties will receive awards.

The nine organizations receiving grant funds include the St. Johns County Veterans Council, Northeast Florida Women Veterans, Operation Barnabas, the Veterans Council of Nassau County, Five STAR Veterans Center, Operation New Uniform, Hope Therapy, VVA Chapter 1143 (Baker County Veterans), and Community Hope Outreach. The grant program, including its policies, selection criteria and funding rules, was developed under the supervision of the City of Jacksonville's Office of Grants and Contracts Compliance Department.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has called on individual states to accept the challenge of decreasing suicide rates among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families by implementing community-led prevention programs – and Florida has accepted this challenge. The “Florida Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families” will deliver on this promise – to end veteran suicide by preventing veteran suicide. As of November 15, 2021, this effort is being led by the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs (FDVA) and implemented by The Fire Watch. We are now able to expand beyond Northeast Florida to the entire state.

There is more to be done. The Fire Watch is being taken to local business and organizations to train them to become Veteran Safe Places. Faith Leaders are being equipped with training and resources to help those they serve. More individuals are needed to become Watch Standers. You are needed. It is your turn to stand.

You can learn more at [www.thefirewatch.org](http://www.thefirewatch.org) or email [info@thefirewatch.org](mailto:info@thefirewatch.org) for more information.



# Sponsorship Levels

First Coast Honor Flight is 100% dependent upon donations from generous people and organizations.

Without your support, FCHF would not be able to transport WWII, Korean War, and other Northeast Florida Veterans to Washington, D.C. for a day of honor and remembrance.

Trip Sponsor : \$25,000

Honor Guard : \$10,000- \$24,999

Gold Star : \$5,000-\$9,999

Silver Star : \$2,500- \$4,999

Bronze Star : \$1,000- \$2,499

Contact FCHF @  
[info@firstcoasthonorflight.org](mailto:info@firstcoasthonorflight.org) for more  
information on sponsorship packages

First Coast Honor Flight is a 501(c)3 corporation and  
is in compliance with the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act



## First Coast Honor Flight Donation

I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to honor Veterans.

Please make check payable to: First Coast Honor Flight, Inc.

Mail to: First Coast Honor Flight, Inc.  
P.O. Box 600785  
Saint Johns, FL 32260

To make a donation by credit card please visit our website at:

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

Click on "Help Our Cause" and then Click on "Donate Now" and submit your donation through PayPal. *Thank you!*

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**This donation is:** In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Veteran? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Served \_\_\_\_\_

**First Coast Honor Flight** warrants that the information contained on this form is for internal use only and will not be shared, transmitted, or used for any purposes other than recording and acknowledging the donation. Donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. First Coast Honor Flight is a registered 501(c)3 Not for Profit EIN:84-4667182 For questions please Call: 888-400-1185 or email: [info@firstcoasthonorflight.org](mailto:info@firstcoasthonorflight.org).

## 'We are honored and we are humbled': Veteran gets mortgage-free home in Nocatee

**Jerry Majetich served nearly two decades in the military before his vehicle was hit by an IED in 2005, and he was shot four times.**

Author First Coast News StaffAuthor

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, Fla. — Flag-lined streets and a hero's welcome greeted Army Staff Sgt. Jerry Majetich and his wife Mary-Ella Thursday.



They were given a brand new mortgage-free home in Nocatee's Del Webb community this Veterans Day thanks to Pulte Group's Built to Honor Program and Building Homes for Heroes.

"I cannot tell you the relief that I have knowing that I'm never going to have to look for another contractor or find myself googling for a handicap accessible home while watching him recover. Because you, our fellow Americans, have taken care of that," Mary-Ella Majetich said. "We are honored and we are humbled. And we thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

Jerry Majetich served nearly two decades in the military, first in the Marines, then the Army before his vehicle was hit by an IED in 2005, and he was shot four times. More than 80 surgeries later, as he and his wife stepped into their new home, the excitement was mixed with so much relief.

"I've had a lot of surgeries, and I'll have probably more for the rest of my life. And a lot of them make me incapable of walking or climbing into a tub. And I've told her for years that I'm going to die getting into the bathtub. And now we don't have to worry about that anymore," Jerry Majetich said. "We were having to get hotel rooms after surgeries because there wasn't a handicap accessible bathroom, and it's just going to change our life."

From a massage room to help him heal to a pool where he can relax and do water therapy, building this house was a labor of love.

"Just an awesome day. It's been a year-long journey for us with Jerry and Mary-Ella. And it was just so exciting for them to finally get a chance to see the end product," Tony Nason with Pulte Group said. "We've gone through months and months of design, and really our goal was to make this a home that fit all their needs."



It's a home designed for a humble hero, in a community honored to have him and his wife as neighbors.

"Just the fact that everybody got together and did this for us, and sacrificed for us so that, you know, things can lighten the burden a little bit for what we go through," Mary-Ella Majetich said.

"Many times today people thanked me for my sacrifice, and I think it's important to note I didn't sacrifice anything," Jerry Majetich said. "This nation has given me everything. I just served the nation I love and would die for."

## HorsePlay Therapy Center expands to veterans with PTSD in St. Johns County

**Director: 'If we could strengthen a person, a parent, we knew we could strengthen a family'**

Colleen Michele Jones, St. Augustine Record

Retired U.S. Air Force Maj. Chad Timberlake can talk about the camaraderie and inclusiveness of being part of a military unit.

Timberlake can also describe how that feeling of belonging can be tested once soldiers transition back to civilian life, especially if they are struggling with wounds of the body or mind when they return.

"Sometimes, what's left from that cohesion (you felt as a soldier), is you can feel very alone," Timberlake said.

Helping to heal wounds — visible or otherwise — is the idea behind a newly expanded program of the HorsePlay Therapy Center in St. Augustine: the Rise Up for Veterans Therapy Program, which aims to help area veterans take advantage of horseback riding to treat post-traumatic stress disorder.

The nonprofit organization was established by Executive Director Vicky Carregal at the current location off State Road 207 in 2018 after studies showing the success of equine therapy to overcome cognitive and physical challenges, Carregal said.

HorsePlay Therapy Center announced its expansion into this area of treatment on Thursday to coincide with Veterans Day.

"If we could strengthen a person, a parent, we knew we could strengthen a family," Carregal said at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

A grant from the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund will help pay for the new program.

Hippotherapy uses horseback riding to benefit a person trying to maintain balance in response to a horse's motion. The movement, which is like the natural rhythm of the human





gait, trains the client's muscles, helping to improve coordination and strength, according to the nonprofit. It can also relax the mind enough so participants better respond to other treatments they may receive while riding, such as speech therapy.

Timberlake, who is now the owner of Southeast Veterinary Hospital in St. Augustine, which is adjacent to HorsePlay, said that people and horses form a strong bond, and that bond can build trust and confidence.

When The Record first visited the facility two years ago, HorsePlay was seeing about 80 clients a month, from about ages 2 to 15. Since then, the nonprofit has expanded to more than 900 sessions a month.

Just some of the conditions hippotherapy has been shown to benefit are Down syndrome, autism, cognitive challenges, attention deficit disorder, genetic abnormalities and development disorders, according to Carregal.

Most health insurance will cover the sessions, which are billed the same way as other therapy treatments as long as clients meet certain qualifying criteria, Carregal said. As a nonprofit with operating expenses, HorsePlay Therapy Center charges a nominal co-pay, but no one is denied treatment based on insurance status or ability to pay. That's why the center raises funds for scholarships.

It will be the same with the Rise Up for Veterans program. The Jacksonville-based Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund has provided \$21,000, with Horseplay matching that amount for a total of \$42,000 toward offsetting treatment costs for veterans. Additionally, an anonymous donor contributed \$100,000 toward the program.

Statistics show there are about 20,000 veterans in St. Johns County, with at least 4,000 of them struggling with the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, according to information provided by HorsePlay.

The equine therapy program at HorsePlay is available to any veteran of any age from any branch of the military.

## Daughter of MIA soldier reminds community to remember 'unreturned veterans', looks forward to building of local memorial

The future plans for the National POW-MIA Memorial and Museum include a hall where the names of all the MIA soldiers will be projected on a glass wall. of MIA soldier reminds community to remember 'unreturned vans', looks forward to memorial

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — While Veterans Day is a way to celebrate those who served our country, it's a difficult day for others who are still waiting on their loved ones to return home.

More than 81,000 soldiers remain missing since World War II.

One Jacksonville woman has found hope in a local project to remember her father and the thousands of other MIA soldiers. As American flags filled the air, Pam Cain waved back from a float.

She didn't know she'd get as emotional as she did during her first time being a part of Jacksonville's Veterans Day parade. "It's with me every day," Cain explained. "I get emotional every day, but my dad is always with me, always a part of me. I just would like him to be home, and buried in his country."

It's been 55 years since her father, Air Force Colonel Oscar Mauterer, went missing while serving in the Vietnam War. Now, Cain is involved in a group in Jacksonville that's trying to help remember her father and the tens and thousands of other soldiers who went missing in action.

"I think it's a real place of hope. It's a place of history. It's a place where families can tell their stories," she said.

The future plans for the National POW-MIA Memorial and Museum include a hall where the names of all the MIA soldiers will be projected on a glass wall. Phase 1 of the memorial recently broke ground. It will honor all who were lost while stationed at NAS Cecil Field.

"We started construction, but COVID did set us back a little. But now we're going to get it finished, thanks to Vystar," Mike Cassata, Pow-MIA Memorial Executive Director said. "Vystar is a huge supporter. We've got a matching \$150,000 fund that we're trying to get together."

Recent additions to the property include a Gold Star Families Memorial and Vietnam plane. While she waits for the MIA memorial to be built, Cain wants others to not forget about those still unaccounted for this Veterans Day.

"In my dad's case, he and the other MIA's are unreturned veterans. So, they should be honored and remembered on Veterans Day as well," Cain explained. And we need to always commit to getting that fullest possible accounting for him, and all of them."

If you would like to donate to Phase I of the memorial, Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. is raising funds on its website.



## Ex-Steeler Rocky Bleier coming to Jacksonville with message for other Vietnam vets: Welcome home

Matt Soergel, Florida Times-Union

Rocky Bleier says he had it easier than a lot of his fellow Vietnam veterans. Sure, he was drafted into the Army, interrupting his rookie season with the Pittsburgh Steelers. And sure, he had been seriously injured in a fire, losing part of his foot in the process.



But he'd managed to come back home, to rebuild his strength and speed, and to make the Steelers roster again — becoming a big link in a team that went on to win four Super Bowls.

And because of that, he said, he became a story, a story about a young guy coming back, trying to make the team again. People cared about him, they asked him about his experiences. For that, he was lucky.

Many other veterans of Vietnam, Bleier says, felt they were misunderstood, judged, and could only find catharsis in the presence of other vets. So he was lucky, and he found some catharsis of his own.

But the memories of that war, and those with whom he served, stayed with him. He saw that when he went back to Vietnam many years afterward to film an ESPN special.

They found the location where he was injured and drove there with a camera crew. He recognized physical landmarks but marveled at the changes: Where there was once just jungle, there was now new construction, lots of it, and a highway busy with trucks and motor-scooters.

How do you feel? The interviewer asked when they got out of the van.

Bleier, speaking over the phone years later, relives the moment. "I have to tell you this," he said. "Out of nowhere, all of a sudden, this emotional upheaval feeling, like from the soles of my feet, I could feel it moving up through my body into my gut. This feeling of, what? I couldn't grasp it, and all of a sudden I break down and start to cry. I think part of it in my subconscious is: We lost 58,000 troops during that period of time. I think the question was, for what? In my case, they are still a Communist country, though they have great love for Americans, and the economy's going strong, a hybrid economy. They're capitalists... And it's like, OK, why, why?"

That moment, he said, gave him insight into what other vets might be going through. "OK, fine," he said, "I talked about my experiences. I'd gone through this catharsis, yet I'm having this kind of reaction. What about those soldiers who didn't have the opportunity to express themselves?"

The event to honor Vietnam veterans was sponsored by the Jacksonville Bar Association, Vets4Vets and the Vietnam Veterans Association.

"Many were drafted into that war. It was unpopular at that time, yet they served their country as diligently as they could," he said.

A Notre Dame University star, Bleier was drafted by the Steelers in the 16th round of the football draft of 1968, then drafted into the Army after his rookie NFL season.

He wasn't itching to join the military, he said. But when the call came his way, he went. "I wasn't a political guy. All the protests that were going on, that was not a part of what I was. There was a war going on, and I felt a responsibility when I did get drafted: I was like everybody else. Wherever they sent me."

He was sent to Vietnam, joining a veteran unit as a new guy. Nobody cared much that he played football, he said. It's not like he was a superstar, after all. And days in Vietnam soon took on rhythms similar to that of a football training camp.

"You take it a day at a time, a day at a time," he said. "You've got to get through this. You practice, you get up, you take a nap, you practice again, you go another meeting. It's one day at a time, and you just don't think about it."

'The hope business'

But then came the warfare. Bleier speaks movingly of the events of the day he was wounded — the fear, the confusion, the eerie silence during a lull in the fighting.

And he remembers those who helped him after he was injured — the unknown soldier who carried him to a helicopter, and later, in a military hospital, a soldier, a recent triple-amputee, going bed to bed offering encouragement to the wounded.

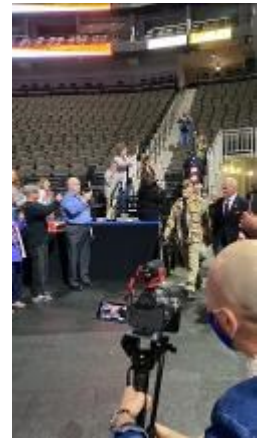
"It's about the influential people in our lives, who helped pull us along," he said. "I basically will talk about the hope business: We didn't get to where we are today, no matter our experiences, by ourselves. We had help from a parent, a coach, a mentor, a drill sergeant, a lieutenant, whatever, along the way."

The message is this: Just look around you, Bleier said. You're never in this alone.

"I look back on my life as, 'Oh man, how lucky am I to have the experiences that I had, given the situations?'" he said. "And it's not because of me."

There was over 500 Vietnam Veterans at a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena on Sunday the 14th from 1pm to 3:30pm. Guest Speaker Rocky Bleier Vietnam Veteran, 4 time Super Bowl winner with his rings from the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Semper Fidelis Anthony G D'Aleo  
President Nicholas J Cutinha Chapter VVA1046



## St. Johns-based K9s for Warriors graduates its first Vietnam vet and 700th military service member

*Dan Scanlan, Florida Times-Union*

A 73-year-old veteran became the 700th retired armed service member to graduate from K9s for Warriors, joined by his new service dog named Loose.



David Wood also became the first Vietnam War veteran to benefit from a canine companion from the 10-year-old Ponte Vedra Beach-based provider of trained service dogs to military veterans suffering from PTSD, traumatic brain injury and other trauma.

Wood joined Loose at a Thursday program that saw them and four other veterans graduate from the program.

“Coming to K9s for Warriors and receiving Loose has been the best experience of my life,” said Wood, who is from Oregon and was flown in for the three-week program at no cost to him.

Wood was involved in a 1968 firefight when his left leg was shattered, the organization said. He was awarded the Purple Heart and Combat Infantrymen's Badge for his battle wounds, but his older brother Darrell was killed two years later, also in Vietnam.

Wood retired in 1995 after numerous tours, ranks and positions, but suffered from PTSD following his U.S. Army service. Saying he experienced "a lot of emptiness" over the last five years," Wood said he turned to K9s for Warriors for ways to handle those traumatic symptoms,

“I was within the VA system seeking therapy and medication. I was looking for an alternative, and that alternative led me to exploring dogs first," Wood said. "I then discovered the world of service dogs. I went online and found K9s for Warriors, and I immediately sensed it was genuine.”

His service dog is named after another Vietnam War veteran and Purple Heart recipient, John Loosen, who advocated for veterans and raised funds for K9s for Warriors until his early 2021 death.

### Making a difference for those who served

“We’ve served more than 700 warriors struggling with invisible wounds of war," K9s for Warriors CEO Rory Diamond said. "Lt. Col. Wood’s story shows us veterans of all eras can find hope again with a service dog.”

With the expansion of K9s for Warriors’ member population, the organization will now serve older veterans in its effort to prevent them from taking their own lives. K9s for Warriors now accepts service dog applications from any veteran experiencing service-connected symptoms.

As of this month, K9s for Warriors has rescued about 1,500 dogs. And during Thursday's graduation ceremony, Stryker Corp. presented a \$55,000 donation to the organization.

# HEY FLORIDA RESIDENTS!

## Proudly Support Veterans and Honor Flight with an Honor Flight License Plate



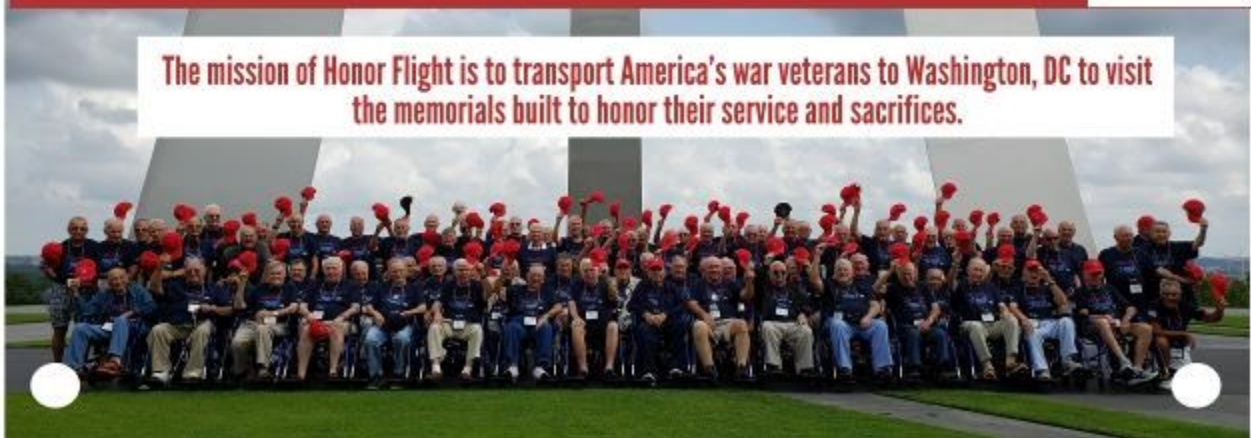
### ACT NOW!

- Honor Flight is approved for *pre-sale* of an Honor Flight license plate.
- 3,000 *pre-sale* transactions must be made before the plate will be manufactured.
- Go to <https://bit.ly/3F1dyij> to purchase your voucher to help make this plate a reality.
- A portion of every plate purchase goes to the ten Honor Flight chapters in the state of Florida.
- Once the sales goal is met, you will receive instructions for exchanging your voucher for the Honor Flight plate.
- A plate replacement fee may apply.

Scan me!



The mission of Honor Flight is to transport America's war veterans to Washington, DC to visit the memorials built to honor their service and sacrifices.





Safekeeping your military separation records is secure, fast and free of charge and easy to access with the St. Johns County Clerk of Courts.

Bring your original DD-214 to the St. Johns County Veterans Council's Veterans Day Celebration where Clerk staff will officially record it:

- 9:30 a.m. – Noon, Nov. 11
- Anastasia Baptist Church, 1650 A1A S., St. Augustine
- Your record will be returned to you immediately.

Recording your DD-214 maintains a permanent digital copy on file for safekeeping. Your record is **protected** – it doesn't become a public record for 62 years after separation, per the National Archives.

*Can't make it on Nov. 11? Record your discharge papers at the St. Johns County Courthouse, 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine. Call the Recording division at 904 819 3632 for details.*

File your DD-214 with your  
St. Johns County Clerk of Courts



## FLORIDA CLERK OF COURTS WILL "LOCK IT UP" FOR FREE

Do you have your DD-214? That is the first question Veterans are asked when engaging in almost every benefits or Veteran-status related process. Often, it is the first question Veteran widows and widowers are asked after hearing "I'm sorry for your loss."

Each of Florida's county Clerk of Courts knows how valuable it is having a copy of your DD-214 safely and privately stored, with easy access. Click and read how you can record your DD-214 for free, year-round, regardless of what county you live in.

BONUS- St Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Courts is providing complimentary passport photos and notary services for military and Veterans through November 30th. Click below for the details.

*From Liberty Life Media*



Veterans Council Chairman receiving a Grant check  
from the Jaguars Foundation for The St Johns County  
Veterans Treatment Court



# Transitional housing for veterans under construction in St. Johns County

Colleen Michele Jones, *St. Augustine Record*

Homeless veterans in St. Johns County will soon have a new option for transitional housing when Patriot Place, a six-unit apartment complex under construction at 79 Masters Drive, opens next year.



A flag-raising ceremony and dedication took place Tuesday at the site, which is expected to be completed by February 2022. Honoring those who served: Veterans Day in St. Johns County, Jacksonville and Palm Coast

Bill Lazar, executive director of the St. Johns Housing Partnership, said the project was more than three years in the making, including finding and purchasing an appropriate lot; securing financing for construction; and permitting and zoning regulations.



"For years, our local veterans' office has struggled to help local veterans who need a one-bedroom apartment to remain living in St. Johns County," Lazar said. "Our hope is that this unique partnership with Flagler Health+ will provide a level of case management and stability for our residents to get back on their feet. This is an effort to thank them for their service and stand by them while they integrate back into the community."

Patriot Place will be administered by Flagler Health+'s social health program, Care Connect+, which links area residents with resources like safe housing, food pantries, counseling services, workplace readiness and transportation.

"I just think it's a great start for us," said Bill Dudley, chairman of the St. Johns County Veterans Council, which has been instrumental in pulling together all of the project's moving pieces.

Lazar said getting homeless veterans on the path to affordable housing is just one of the goals of the St. Johns Housing Partnership in its collaboration with the Flagler Health+.

"We have an obligation as a provider of St. Augustine to make sure they [veterans] have the housing they deserve to have," Jason Barrett, president and CEO of Flagler Health+, said at Tuesday's ceremony. The one-bedroom apartments will measure 630 square feet and each veteran will pay about 30% of market rate with the balance subsidized through the St. Johns Housing Partnership's fundraising efforts.

The first six occupants will be selected shortly, considering those who are most in need at the current time, Lazar said. The idea is to connect veterans with wrap-around services to get them back on their feet within one to two years and then turn open units over to other local veterans.

The total cost of the Patriot Place project, including the purchase of land, lot preparation, design and construction is \$900,000. Ponte Vedra Beach-based MountainStar Capital purchased the land for \$100,000 and donated it to the project. "Our commitment to projects like Patriot Place goes well beyond development and investment. We have worked tirelessly with partners like Flagler Health+, St. Johns Housing Partnership and St. Johns County to make this affordable housing a reality for the most in need. Today is another step in our pledge to provide affordable housing and support of charitable causes," said Chris Lazzara, co-founder and CEO of MountainStar Capital. Ameris Bank, another partner, provided for construction costs. The Florida Green Building Coalition was also involved in the project to ensure the new complex is built to the most environmentally up-to-date standards.



The Military Museum of North Florida

We are having a Pearl Harbor Commemoration ceremony on 4 December, which will include car shows, reenactors, and a military collector show. Come by and join us. The ceremony starts t 10AM. We hope to see you there.

Northeast Florida Regional



# PEARL HARBOR MEMORIAL DAY EVENT



MILITARY VEHICLE SHOW

MILITARY ANTIQUE SALE

COMBAT VEHICLE TOURS

VINTAGE PLANE FLYOVER

**SATURDAY • DEC 4, 2021 • 10am-4pm**  
Military Museum North Florida • 1 Bunker Avenue  
Reynolds Industrial Park (Lee Field) in Green Cove Springs, FL

**FREE TO THE PUBLIC**

## MILITARIA FLEA MARKET

UNIFORMS, MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND MORE

BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!

4 x 4 TRAIL RIDE

FOOD VENDORS



[themilitarymuseumofnorthflorida.com](http://themilitarymuseumofnorthflorida.com) For more information visit: [www.exploreclay.com](http://www.exploreclay.com)

## 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.



## **VETERANS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES WREATH CAMPAIGN**

Chairman Bill Dudley of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County has announced the annual drive for Wreaths Across America has begun.

The council is dedicated to ensuring that every headstone in the St. Augustine National Cemetery is adorned with a live holiday wreath this year. The council has successfully sponsored the drive for several years.

The community is invited to send donations to purchase the wreaths. Individual wreaths are \$15.00. If two wreaths are purchased at \$30.00 the council receives a free wreath (3 for cost of 2). Our local businesses are encouraged to participate. With more than 1,200 gravesites the project is truly considerable.

The community is invited to the St. Augustine National Cemetery on December 18, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. for a ceremony followed by placement of the wreaths. Youth organizations are encouraged to participate to learn and honor our veterans.

Checks made payable to WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA may be sent to: Veterans Council of St. Johns County, P. O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117.

For any additional information please contact the campaign chair, SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn at 904.797.5622.

## Wreath Sponsorship Form

\*Sponsored wreaths are placed on the grave markers at state, national veterans cemeteries as well as local cemeteries each December. Wreaths may be purchased online at [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org)

If you wish to make your sponsorship with a credit card please visit our website for a secure online transaction.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**  
**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA**  
**SEND TO:**  
**VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS**  
**COUNTY:**  
 P.O. Box 2117  
 ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA 32085

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual= 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Mailed "In Honor" card= If you wish to send a mailed honor card telling someone of your sponsorship-see "In Honor" section below. *Card will not be mailed if the \$2 fee is not included.	\$2.00		
Family= 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business= 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate= 100 Wreaths	\$1500.00		
Merchandise available on WAA Website			
		Grand Total	

**\*\*SORRY- WE CAN NOT TAKE GRAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS\*\***

**In Honor of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide email of "In Honor Of" recipient, or mailing address so a card can be sent notifying them of your sponsorship in their honor. (if you have a specific message please write it on the back of this sheet and we will include it.)

**Email:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

This name will be listed on our online memory wall, please provide name, rank, branch of service and state resided

**Branch of Service:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rank:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that **all** sponsorships are sent directly to the location and **no** wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

Location ID: FLSNA Fundraising Group ID: FL0080

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**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Cash \$: \_\_\_\_\_ Total\$: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # Checks: \_\_\_\_\_ Reconciled: \_\_\_\_\_

MO \$: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered: \_\_\_\_\_

GEN: \_\_\_\_\_

## Jack McManus to Serve as National President of Vietnam Veterans of America



(Washington, D.C.) – Jack McManus was elected to serve as National President of Vietnam Veterans of America on November 6 at the organization's 20th National Convention in Greensboro, North Carolina. He was first elected VVA national treasurer in 1995 and was re-elected to the position in 1997 and 2019. Jack previously served as the VVA Michigan State Council President for six and a half years from 1989 to 1996, overseeing the largest state program in VVA. In 1997, he was awarded VVA's highest honor, the VVA Commendation Medal, for his extraordinary service to the organization, to all veterans, and to the community at large. He has also been recognized by the VVA New York State Council with its Commendation Medal.

Originally from New York City, Jack joined the Air Force in 1965, where he served until 1969. Between 1967 and 1968, he was assigned to Operation Ranch Hand in Vietnam. Jack received his B.A. in Business Management from New York University in 1973. He resides in North Carolina, with his wife Jackie. He is a recipient of numerous business and community awards.

Jack is deeply committed to achieving justice and receiving answers for veterans and their families whose health has been impacted by their exposure to toxic substances during their military service.

Thomas Burke of New Philadelphia, Ohio, was re-elected to serve as Vice President; Bill Meeks, Jr., of The Woodlands, Texas, was re-elected as Secretary; and Linda Schwartz of Pawcatuck, Connecticut, was elected as VVA's Treasurer. In addition, 19 National Board of Directors were elected: Ten At Large and nine Regional. The At-Large directors are Dottie Barickman (NE); Charlie Hobbs (TN); Gumersindo Gomez (MA); Dennis Howland (UT); Felix Peterson (OK); Richard Lindbeck (WI); Dan Stenvold (ND); Kerwin Stone (TX); Charlie Montgomery (VA); and Sandie Wilson (MI).

The nine regional directors elected to serve a 2021-2023 term are: Region 1, Skip Hochreich (MA); Region 2, Ted Wilkinson (NY); Region 3, Rossie Nance (NC); Region 4, Spence Davis (GA); Region 5, John Riling (MI); Region 6, John Margowski (WI); Region 7, Dennis Andras (LA); Region 8, Francisco Ivarra (WA); and Region 9, Dick Southern (CA).

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's commitment to all veterans is exemplified in its founding principle, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

**ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla., Oct. 11, 2021 — Veterans now have preferred parking when doing business at the St. Johns County courthouse.**

“It’s just one small way we can thank our veterans for their service to our country,” said St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty. “While this designation is an active demonstration of our appreciation, reserved parking also is a functional benefit for our veterans.”

Circuit Judge Howard O. McGillin Jr., Chairman Bill Dudley of the St. Johns County Veterans Council and Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator Cynthia Thompson joined Clerk Patty Friday to formally designate two parking spaces near the south entrance to the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, located at 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine.

“A priority parking space is a small but meaningful gesture to extend to our veterans,” said Judge McGillin, who presides over Veterans Treatment Court in St. Johns County. “Many of the veterans in our program and other veterans who need to access the courthouse suffer from physical disabilities that do not qualify for handicapped parking. These spaces extend a courtesy to them in particular that simply says ‘thank you for your service.’”

“The reserved parking underscores the feeling of patriotism of our elected officials in St. Johns County and their support for our veterans,” said Dudley.

Veterans Court is an initiative in the 7th Judicial Circuit designed to focus on the distinctive needs of veterans in the criminal justice system. Veterans Treatment Court in St. Johns County started in 2017 under the leadership of Judge McGillin and Dudley and the Veterans Council, with support from St. Johns County.

Veterans Courts follow a positive, authoritative model to assist veterans with resolving legal matters while linking veterans to services to which they are entitled, such as medical, substance abuse and mental health treatment, housing and food.

With the north entrance closed indefinitely since spring 2020 due to the pandemic, the south entrance provides the only public access to the complex.

Disabled veterans with the appropriate permit from the Department of Motor Vehicles or a Disabled Veterans license plate or placard should continue to use designated parking spaces for disabled persons.

Pictured left to right: St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty, presiding Veterans Treatment Court Circuit Judge Howard O. McGillin Jr., St. Johns County Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley and county Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator Cynthia Thompson





**VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY**

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**28 OCTOBER 2021**



**CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Dudley**

**INVOCATION: Vice Chair Quinn**

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS: Chairman Dudley**

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND VISITORS: Chairman Dudley**

**Jason Snodgrass, COO, K9's for Warriors**

**BG (Ret) Michael Fleming Outreach Director, Cohen Military Family Clinic**

**TREASURERS REPORT: John Mountcastle**

**Treasurer Mountcastle provided a detailed treasurers report. The report included all transactions during the month. He stated the current balance as**

**\$58,051.93. Of the amount on hand approximately fifty per-cent is held in restricted funds. Upon hearing the report, a unanimous vote was received to approve.**

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Member John Leslie presented to the Veterans Council of St. Johns County a map of Vietnam. The map is special to veterans of St. Johns County because it lists the KIA's from our county and the location of their sacrifice. The map is mounted on a display board and can be used at the council's many functions. The membership expressed gratitude to John for the presentation of his gift.**

**PRESENTATION: Jason Snodgrass provided an overview of K9's for Warriors whose primary mission is to empower veterans to return to civilian life with dignity and independence. A further primary goal is to pair a K9 with a veteran with suicide prevention as the mission. We were reminded that 20 veterans commit suicide daily.**

**The program saves not only our veterans lives but saves the lives of K9's that would be put down if not selected for this incredible mission. An average of almost 2,000 dogs are put down daily. This program to date has saved 700 from that fate.**

**Members of the council were offered an opportunity to visit the program by contacting Jason in advance.**

**PRESENTATION: BG (Ret) Michael Fleming offered an overview of the mission of the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone. In addition he provided an overview of Operation Firewatch our NE Florida suicide prevention program.**

**The Cohen Military Family Clinic is in existence to serve as a deterrent to suicide among former service members. It is offered to National Guard and Reserve Soldiers, Caretakers, Spouses, Children, and those with a Dishonorable Discharge.**

**Established by the Cohen family their services are offered in twenty locations across the U.S. Locally the facility is in Jacksonville.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**CSM (Ret) Joseph McDermott provided an update from the St. Johns County Veterans Service Office. Unfortunately, the backlog at the National Personnel Records Center at St. Louis, Missouri has not improved. Veterans requesting records to file disability claims are waiting more than a year for documentation.**

**He provided news about the VA considering claims for damage done by particulate matter. More to follow as there are at least 3,800 claims for respiratory ailments.**

**John Leslie provided an update from Veterans Court. The program is now five years old. To date there have been 45 graduates. Court will convene next on 5 November and 19 November 2021. Members are invited to attend court on those dates at 1000 hrs. Court will be conducted in Courtroom 2.**

**Ray Quinn provided the status of Wreaths Across America. Donations are increasing the closer we get to the date of the ceremony. He stressed that volunteers will be needed on December 18, 2021 to off-load the wreaths and prepare for the ceremony. Tentative off load time is 0900 hrs. All are asked to assist at 1200 hrs 18 December 2021 with the ceremony. Much to be done between now and our mission date. Please continue to sell wreaths! Remember they are \$15.00 each or for \$30.00 we receive a free wreath (3 for \$30).**

**Chairman Dudley reported that our hopes for a homeless shelter for veterans had fallen through. The county was in favor and prepared to support the use of the temporary CBOC for a veteran's shelter. The owner of the portables was prepared to donate to us. However, the owner of the land represented by a firm in Georgia has other plans for the property.**

**Chairman Dudley stated the grand opening of the CBOC has been delayed by the Veterans Administration.**

**Chairman Dudley shared the council's plan for Veterans Day. The event will be conducted at the Anastasia Baptist Church on the morning of November 11, 2021. Doors will open to displays in the atrium at 0900 hrs. The program will begin promptly at 1100 hrs. Dr. Hal Kushner, COL, USA (Ret) will serve as the keynote speaker. In addition to Dr. Kushner, Congressman Michael Waltz will honor our veterans as well. The vocalists of the St. Johns County Center for the Arts will present a patriotic selection. All members are encouraged to attend.**

**Having no further business Chairman Dudley proclaimed the meeting adjourned.**

**Respectfully submitted;**

**William Dudley, Chairman**

**Ray A. Quinn, Vice Chairman**

## The Story of the Flying Santa

In 1929, Maine aviator Captain William Wincapaw began the Flying Santa tradition that has continued over 80 years. Captain Wincapaw was known as a very skillful pilot for the Curtis Flying Service, delivering packages and mail to the inhabitants of Penobscot Bay, Maine. On his flights, he used the lighthouse beacons as navigational aids during bad weather and over time, he began to stop and visit with the families who lived at the stations. Wanting to show his appreciation to these families, Captain Wincapaw loaded his plane with packages of newspapers, candy, coffee and other items. On December 25, 1929, he took off and began dropping packages at the light stations. Words of appreciation reached him from the grateful keepers' families, encouraging Captain Wincapaw to repeat the package drop the following year.



Photos Above: Captain William Wincapaw (left) was an accomplished pilot and began delivering holiday packages in 1929 (right).

In successive years, the flights continued and expanded to include Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Captain Wincapaw was joined by his son, Bill, who was learning to fly. The recipients of the packages referred to the flights as the "Flying Santa," encouraging Captain Wincapaw to embrace his role each year by dressing in a Santa costume. By 1933, with the operation reaching as many as 91 light stations, sponsors within the community helped to cover the costs of the yearly flights, but it was clear that additional pilots were needed. Bill Jr., who in 1934 became the youngest licensed pilot in Massachusetts, introduced his father to his high school teacher, Edward Rowe Snow, who was also a licensed pilot. Together, the men realized that they could cover more ground by making separate flights. By 1936, Captain Wincapaw was flying the northern route from Massachusetts while Bill Jr. and Mr. Snow flew the southern New England routes.

By 1940, Captain Wincapaw began working overseas and was unable to make his Christmas flights; as a result, his son and Snow completed the flights. However, Wiggins Airways joined the operation and offered another plane and pilot, Charles Cowan, to assist in the flights. Wiggins continued to supply several planes over the next sixty years. With the start of World War II, Bill Jr. became a flight instructor for the United States Navy in Pensacola. As a result, Mr. Snow and another pilot, Al Leckscheid, received approval from the Army and Navy to continue the flights. However, in 1942, the flights were cancelled altogether until the end of the war.



*Photos Above: Father and son deliver packages (left) on one of the stops at one of the light stations (right).*

In 1945, however, the flights resumed with Edward Snow taking over the flights, and the following year, both Captain Wincapaw and his son returned as pilots. The flights delivered packages to 115 light stations from Cohasset, Massachusetts to the Canadian border. On July 16, 1947, Captain Wincapaw suffered a heart attack during takeoff from Rockland Harbor resulting in a plane crash killing him and his 20-year old passenger. During the memorial service fog horns and warning bells from the light stations across Penobscot Bay sounded in memory of Captain Wincapaw.



*Photos Above: Edward Snow visited with the families at the light stations (left) when making deliveries and often received help from his wife in loading the plane (right).*

Edward Snow took over the planning and staging of the flights following Captain Wincapaw's death. He expanded the program to include 176 light stations from Canada to Florida. The ironic part of the story is that Mr. Snow no longer could serve as pilot and instead hired a pilot to fly while he dropped packages. In 1953, the Flying Santa made its first transcontinental flight delivering packages on the East Coast in the morning, and finishing the day delivering packages on the West Coast in California and Oregon. In 1972, Mr. Snow delivered packages to the Boston Light and Graves Light by boat and car, the first time the Flying Santa incorporated alternative transportation. The following year, he chartered a boat to deliver packages to the Casco Bay light stations.

In 1978, with mounting safety regulations and insurance costs, Mr. Snow took to the skies in a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter visiting lighthouses from Massachusetts to Maine. He continued his visits until 1981, when he suffered a stroke, throwing the Flying Santa operation's continuation into jeopardy. The director of the newly formed Hull Lifesaving Museum, Judeth Van Hamm, heard about the Flying Santa and Mr. Snow's recent

health concerns. As a result, she approached the Snows and offered assistance in keeping the flights going. With her help, a new sponsor provided the funds for the operation and a new head pilot, Ed McCabe, resumed the flights.



*Photo Above: The Boston Light keepers welcome the Flying Santa in 1958*

The Museum provided additional volunteer pilots to assist Mr. McCabe during the 1980s. As an outreach program of the Museum, the Flying Santa operation continued to carry on the tradition of Captain Bill Wincapaw. Even with the era of the lighthouse keepers coming to an end, many of the light stations and installations still required personnel to keep them in operation. Therefore, as long as there were manned stations, the flights had to continue.

As we celebrate the holidays this season, take a moment to thank those who are in the service of our country as well as our community. To learn more about the Flying Santa program, check out their webpage at [www.flyingsanta.org](http://www.flyingsanta.org).

# FREE FOOD DISTRIBUTION DRIVE THRU-RAIN OR SHINE



ST. AUGUSTINE  
LIGHTHOUSE  
& MARITIME MUSEUM

**FARM SHARE &  
ST. AUGUSTINE LIGHTHOUSE  
& MARITIME MUSEUM  
ARE PROUD TO PARTNER  
FOR THIS EVENT**

**GLOVES AND MASKS WILL BE WORN FOR YOUR  
PROTECTION**



**DATE: Dec. 7, 2021**

**TIME: 9:00 AM - UNTIL FOOD RUNS OUT**

**LOCATION: BELK PARKING LOT**

**PONCE DE LEON MALL: 2121 US - 1**

**ST. AUGUSTINE, FL 32086**

**Enter from US - 1**

**Holiday Gift to first 600 children**

**Food is first come, first served.**

**Farm Share is an equal opportunity provider.**

**SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE LOCAL ST. AUGUSTINE BUSINESSES BELOW  
WHOSE GENEROSITY SUPPORTS THIS EVENT.**



## What are suicide red flags for veterans?

*PTSD (US Army / Released)*

*LYNN HULSEY - JOURNAL NEWS*

**Veterans commit suicide at higher rates than the general population, but experts say that the warning signs are similar for both groups.**

**“Many veterans may not show any signs of intent to harm themselves before doing so, but some actions can be a sign that a person needs help,” according to the Veterans Crisis Line, a free, confidential resource to assist veterans.**

**“Veterans in crisis may show behaviors that indicate a risk of self-harm.”**

**The risk factors do not always mean someone is considering suicide. But there are some that require immediate attention, according to the Veterans Crisis Line.**

**Those include: — Considering or researching ways to hurt or kill yourself — Talking about death, dying, or suicide — Self-destructive behavior such as activities involving drug abuse or weapons**

**Some other warning signs include: — Frequently sad or depressed — Hopelessness and feeling there is no way out — Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness or mood swings — Feeling as if there is no reason to live — Feeling excessive guilt, shame or sense of failure — Rage or anger — Engaging in risky activities without thinking — Losing interest in hobbies, work or school — Increasing alcohol or drug misuse — Neglecting personal welfare and appearance — Withdrawing from family and friends — Showing violent behavior — Giving away prized possessions — Getting affairs in order or writing a will**

**You can take a confidential Veterans Self-check Quiz to learn if stress and depression may be affecting you. The quiz was created by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.**

**There are resources available to help people who are in crisis or struggling with thoughts of suicide. Those include: — National Suicide Prevention Lifeline — 1-800-273-8255 — Veterans Crisis Line — 1-800-273-8255 Press 1 or Text 838255 <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/> — Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center Suicide Prevention Team 937-268-6511 Ext. 2675 \_\_\_**

For many, the biggest battles are after they come home...



**2021 the Journal-News**

## VETERANS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES WREATH CAMPAIGN

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**Checks made payable to WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA may be sent to: Veterans Council of St. Johns County, P. O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117.**

**For any additional information please contact the campaign chair, SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn at 904.797.5622.**





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



**From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley**

**Subject: VA Transportation Assistance**

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

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

**From Michael Isam**

**DAV van service to Gainesville returning on a limited basis.**

**Begins on Monday, 23 March 2021**

**The van will run on Monday and Wednesday ONLY**

**3 passenger limit**

**Masks are required to and from VAMC**



## The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

If you are looking for a simple way to help Florida Veterans, consider upgrading to a military themed specialty plate when you renew your tag. Revenue from military themed specialty license plates sales supports capital improvements to our State Veterans' Homes. For more information, click here: <https://bit.ly/3gxSZ8c>



**REQUIREMENTS**

**MILITARY**

SERVED MINIMUM 90 DAYS ACTIVE DUTY,  
1 DAY DURING WARTIME, WITH AN  
HONORABLE DISCHARGE

**MEDICAL**

NEED FOR ASSISTANCE WITH ACTIVITIES OF DAILY  
LIVING (ADLS) DUE TO A NON-SERVICE CONNECTED  
DISABILITY

**FINANCIAL**

INCOME AND EXPENSES IN RELATION  
TO MEDICAL EXPENSES

VA RECOGNIZED WAR PERIODS	BEGINNING	ENDING
WORLD WAR II	Dec 7, 1941	Dec. 31, 1946
KOREAN CONFLICT	June 27, 1950	Jan. 31, 1955
VIETNAM ERA	Aug. 5, 1964	May 7, 1975
PERSIAN GULF WAR	Aug 2, 1990	End date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation

**MEDICAL SCREENING**

The Veteran or surviving spouse must have a medical condition causing the need for assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs), such as bathing, dressing, grooming, using the toilet, preparing meals, and moving about safely).

**MONETARY SCREENING**

The veteran and or veteran plus spouse can have a maximum of \$129,094 in liquid assets. A primary residence and auto are not counted as part of the total liquid assets. Ongoing non-reimbursable medical expenses may reduce the annual countable income.

MAXIMUM PENSION AMOUNTS	PER MONTH	ANNUALLY
SURVIVING SPOUSE	\$1,244	\$14,928
VETERAN	\$1,936	\$23,232
COUPLE	\$2,295	\$27,540

From Lynn M Geiser  
Here are the Aid & Attendance requirements and qualifications for 2021. This is for veterans and their spouses who qualify and need assistance with their Activities of Daily Living (ADL's).



## 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: **FDVA**  
FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Become a Watch Stander with The Fire Watch**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Disaster Resources Available to Veterans

**“Veterans and their families should be focused on their health and safety during the natural disasters,”** said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

“VA is taking action to give those with pending debts greater flexibility during these challenging times.”

### Health Care Assistance

If you have questions such as where to go for care or how to receive prescribed medications, VA has established a toll-free number for assistance in areas that have been impacted by disasters. Veterans or their families can call the VA Veterans Disaster Response line 24 hours, seven days a week at 1-800-507-4571.

### Debt Relief

If you are affected by a natural disaster, have a VBA benefit debt and need temporary financial relief, please contact VA's Debt Management Center at 1-800-827-0648 to request assistance.

If you have questions on Compensation or Pension benefits: Call toll-free 1-800-827-1000 Monday - Friday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. CST.

### Other Resources

Find a VA Vet Center near you 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387) or <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

Mobile Vet Centers and Vet Center teams are actively responding to disaster-affected areas to offer counseling and grief support as well as connection and referral services to other VA and community resources.

Find a VA facility near you <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

Call the White House VA Hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-855-948-2311.

Apply for \$500 grant for your damaged primary residence (on a first come, first serve basis subject to funding) from PenFed Foundation.

National Resource Directory - Search for local resources for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

FEMA - FEMA helps with temporary housing, repair or replacement of existing homes.

American Red Cross - The American Red Cross offers emergency financial assistance to the most impacted counties. Please call 1-800-733-2767 to see if you qualify.

Disaster Assistance – An easy way to determine if your zip code has been declared a disaster and eligible for assistance. The website also allows users to complete an online application and the ability to check FEMA application status.



Florida veterans and military families have a new resource to receive the care they need thanks to a partnership dedicated to serving this most deserving population.

Centerstone and the Cohen Veterans Network have joined forces to offer compassionate, targeted behavioral health care for Post 9/11 veterans, National Guard, Reservists, their families and active duty family members at the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone, Jacksonville. <https://centerstone.org/cohen-military-family-clinic/jacksonville/>. The clinic’s skilled clinicians and staff have been trained to work specifically with veterans and their families, and some are veterans themselves. Services offered include individual therapy for children, adolescents and adults, couples therapy, family therapy, groups and workshops.

“Military families are some of the most resilient people you will ever encounter, but a life of service often gives way to invisible wounds and unique challenges that are difficult to navigate,” Elizabeth Sherr, clinic director said. “We understand those challenges and stand ready to support our veterans and their loved ones with effective, personalized care right now.”

The clinic’s ability to meet the needs of veterans and their families quickly is vital in today’s mental health environment where gaining access to care can often be daunting - with long wait times and all too common barriers to overcome. The Cohen Clinic at Centerstone is committed to reducing these barriers. Not only are military families currently able to receive same day appointments, the clinic also offers all therapy services via telehealth - breaking down time and distance concerns that can sometimes be problematic.

“We want to make getting help as easy as possible for our veterans and family members,” Brigadier General (ret.) Michael Fleming, the clinic’s outreach director said. “Sometimes just reaching out for help is difficult enough, and we want to ensure we meet this step with compassion and ease.”

For the time being, in an effort to ensure the safety of clients and team members amidst the COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines, that includes conducting all services via CVN Telehealth or telephone. Studies have shown telehealth has the same efficacy as in-person counseling and the clinic’s therapists are well trained in the delivery of this care. Additionally, front desk staff still have complete access to answer the appointment line during business hours, as before, and veterans, military families and outside organizations can continue to call directly for an appointment.

Veterans, National Guard, Reservists, their families and active duty family members may contact the clinic at (904) 431-3500 to schedule appointments. Clinic hours are:

- Monday 8:00am – 5:00pm
- Tuesday 8:00am – 5:00pm
- Wednesday 8:00am – 7:00pm
- Thursday 8:00am – 5:00pm
- Friday 8:00am - 12:00pm

For more information on clinic services log on to <https://centerstone.org/cohen-military-family-clinic/jacksonville/> or call the appointment line at (904) 431-3500.



*You sacrificed for our country.*

**AT SILVER CREEK,**  
FREEDOM IS YOURS.

Because of your commitment, you helped us achieve the American Dream. At Silver Creek, we want to return the favor – by providing the freedom, independence and personal attention you deserve. Since 2016, Silver Creek has served the St. Augustine community, offering military retirees and seniors at large a vibrant, community lifestyle complete with everything except the burdens of home maintenance. Impeccably-appointed independent concierge living, assisted living and memory care apartments homes, first-class amenities, holistic wellness programming, gourmet, all-day dining and abounding opportunities for enrichment are just a few of the many options you'll find.

Silver Creek provides residents the perfect balance of elegant, upscale living with the warmth and intimacy of home – inspiring socialization and fellowship within a close-knit community.

Call **800-665-9492** to schedule a tour and learn more.

**SILVER CREEK**

THE FUTURE OF SENIOR LIVING

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



## 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	Tony D'Aleo	adaleo5579@gmail.com; Duval
1048	Rod Phillips	cobra101st@gmail.com; Daytona
1059	David Treffinger	dtreffinger433@msn.com; Clay
1084	Salvatore Sorrentino	suncler1951@aol.com
1088	Roy (Corky) Rudd	corkstopper50@yahoo.com; Nassau
1092	Forest Hope	foresthope@usa.net; Gainesville
1134	Marvin Lagle	mdlagle@gmail.com; Baker



## PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET VETERANS' UNIQUE NEEDS

### Advance Care Planning

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

### Palliative Care

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

### Hospice Care

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

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

### Complementary Therapies

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

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

### We Need Volunteers

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



**WE HONOR VETERANS**  
*Partner*

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

For more information or to volunteer, call toll free **866.253.6681** or visit [CommunityHospice.com](http://CommunityHospice.com).



# SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES

Strength  
*built on*  
Sacrifice

## Your Florida SOS Team

### St. Augustine Area

Keith Ham  
Support Coordinator  
310 Charlotte Street  
St. Augustine, FL 32085  
(904) 823-0157 (desk)  
(904) 472-7689 (cell)  
[keith.c.ham.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:keith.c.ham.ctr@mail.mil)

### Tallahassee Area

Matthew Reeves  
Support Coordinator  
1225 Easterwood Drive  
Tallahassee, FL 32311-3599  
(850) 617-0192 (desk)  
(850) 459-6630 (cell)  
[matthew.p.reeves.2.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:matthew.p.reeves.2.ctr@mail.mil)

### Orlando Area

Shinekqua Baines  
Support Coordinator  
9500 Armed Forces Reserve Drive  
Orlando, FL 32827  
(407) 240-5939 ext. 1743  
[shinekqua.l.baines.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:shinekqua.l.baines.ctr@mail.mil)

### Tampa Bay Area

LaShawnda S. Strother  
Support Coordinator  
2801 Grand Avenue  
Pinellas Park, FL 33782  
(727)-563-3647  
[lashawnda.s.strother.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:lashawnda.s.strother.ctr@mail.mil)

### Miami Area

Support Coordinator  
9301 NW 33rd Street  
Doral, FL 33172-1202  
(305) 437-2178

## Scholarships & Application Deadlines

There are two primary VA Programs offering educational assistance. While federal benefits do not technically have a due date, it is important to apply as early as possible.

The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Fry Scholarship) is currently available for children of those who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. Beginning January 1, 2015, Fry Scholarship will also be available for surviving spouses of those who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001.

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program offers education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or of Veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition.

### Application Deadlines for surviving children

#### Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation

No set amount, available for children of those who died in the line of duty or of a service-connected disability. No application due date.

#### Freedom Alliance

Scholarships of up to \$5,000 for children of those who died in the line of duty. No application due date.

#### Fisher House Foundation/ Heroes Legacy Scholarship

Amount varies, for children of those who died while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Applications available from early December to March 14.

#### Special Ops Warrior Foundation

Amount varies, for surviving children of Special Operations Service Members who died in the line of duty. Applications due at least sixty days prior to the start of the semester.

### Deadline for multiple relationships

#### Army Emergency Relief Fund

Amount varies, for surviving spouses and children of soldiers who die while on active duty or in retiree status. Applications available from January 2 to May 1, 2015.

### Application Deadlines: For surviving spouses

#### Aspire

\$3,000 scholarships per semester for spouses of those who died on active duty. Applications due by October 31 for spring semester and June 30 for fall semester each year.

#### National Military Family Association

\$500 to \$2,500 scholarships for surviving spouses of those who died while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Applications available from December 1 to January 31.

#### Pat Tillman Foundation

Amount varies, scholarships for surviving spouses of those who died on active duty, in veteran status, or in retiree status. Applications available from February 1 to March 6.

### Application Deadlines: For surviving siblings

#### Matthew Freeman Project

\$1,000 scholarships for siblings of those who have died in the line of duty. No application due date

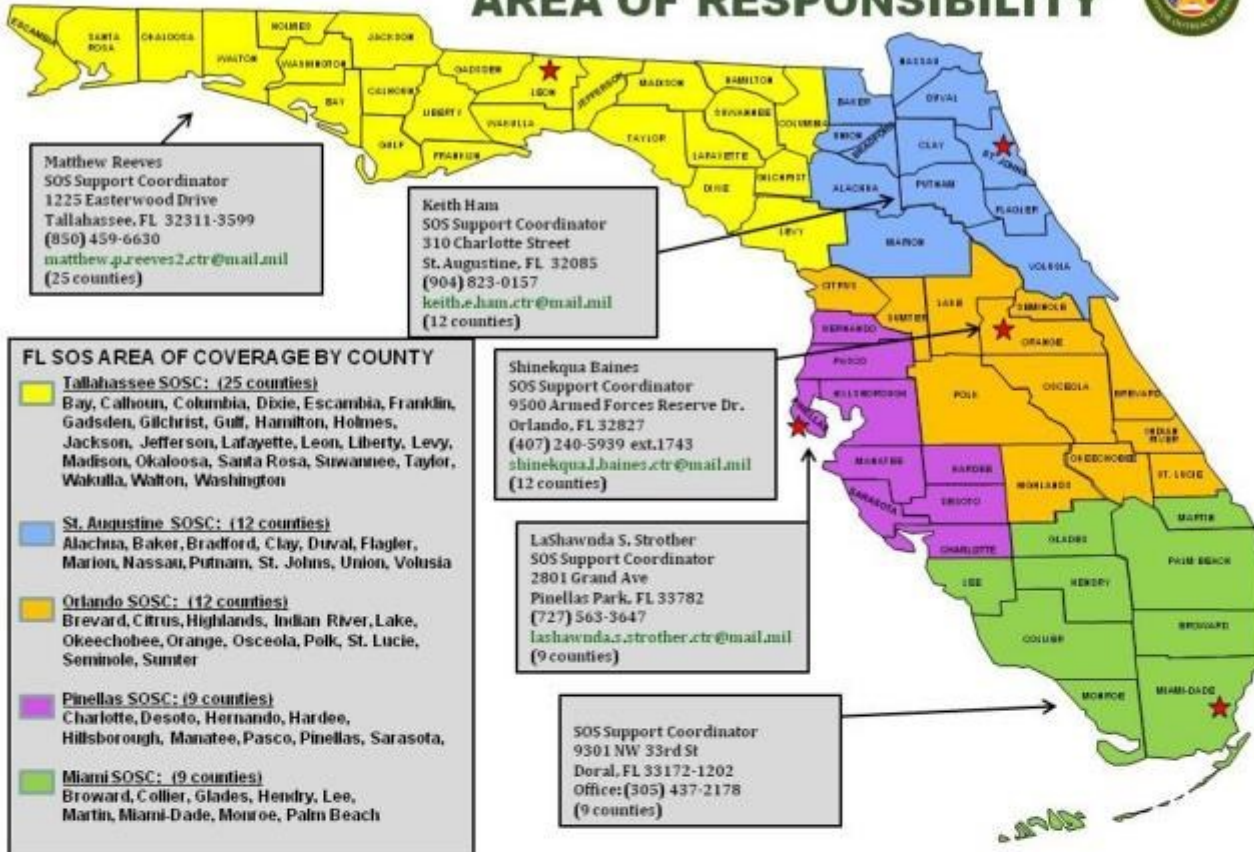
### Deadline for multiple relationships

#### Folds of Honor

\$5,000 scholarships for surviving spouses and children of service members who die in the line of duty or from a service-connected disability. Applications available from January 15 to March 15.

**Disclaimer:** The information presented in this newsletter is for informational awareness only and does not represent endorsement, sponsorship, recommendation, or promotion of any commercial events, commercial names or brands by the editors of this Newsletter, the Department of Defense, US Army, US Navy, US Air Force, US Coast Guard, National Guard, Reserve, or the federal government. Usage of commercial or trademark names is for identification purposes only.

# FLORIDA SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY



Survivor Outreach Services provides long-term support and advocacy for families of the fallen. Our support coordinators and financial counselors are dedicated to helping survivors from all eras understand and apply for benefits as well as stay connected to the Army family for as long as they desire.

Although Survivor Outreach Services is the focus of this newsletter, please know that all branches of the Armed Forces are equally committed to taking care of surviving military families. Please contact us, and we will connect you with additional resources that may be available for your branch of service. To find the Survivor Outreach Services location nearest you, check out the map on this page, or visit [www.sos.army.mil](http://www.sos.army.mil).



## 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

## 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 Steve Spickelmier

Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 37  
Main Building  
San Juan Avenue

Tome: 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](mailto: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 St.  
Johns County Administration Building  
500 San Sebastian View  
Auditorium, 1st floor***

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

*(physical location)  
The VSO Office is located in the St. Johns County Health and  
Human Services Building.*

*The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily,  
Monday through Friday excluding holidays.*

*Service is by appointment.  
Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161  
Joseph McDermott, SR VSO  
Travis Neidig, Assistant VSO  
Angela McKenzie, Assistant VSO*

*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.*