



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

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St. Augustine, FL 32085

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From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

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Fellow Veterans ,

It was a record breaking day for attendance at this year's Veterans Day program at Anastasia Baptist Church on Nov. 11. This years attendance exceeded past years and was beyond our expectations with over 1000 attending. Sponsors and exhibitors' tables and booths also exceeded past years with the Atrium area maxed out of floor space. This year's program to honor our veterans who have served in the Global War on Terrorism was highlighted by the pinning of those veterans with the GWOT lapel pin by our cadets from St. Augustine High School JROTC. Over 100 veterans were honored in front of the huge group of attendees and received a roaring standing ovation from the audience.

We also had the opportunity to recognize Sgt. Major Ray Quinn for his many years of service to

our country both in uniform and his continued service after retirement. His leadership in the Veterans Council and other veterans' organizations is without equal and was recognized by being inducted into the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame in 2021. The Veterans Council salutes Sgt. Major Quinn for his dedication to our country and our community.

We have two major events coming up in the next few weeks that I'm sure you will want to attend. On Dec. 8 will be the World Changers Concert at the St. Augustine amphitheater. Tickets are still available but it's advisable to purchase them now to assure a seat for this world classic event to honor our veterans. Proceeds from the concert will go to veterans' organizations such as ours to help homeless and needy veterans.

The other event is our annual Wreaths Across America program on Dec. 16 at



the St. Augustine National Cemetery. The ceremony will begin sharply at 12 noon here and at over 3400 participating cemeteries throughout the country. The truck with the holiday wreaths will arrive at 10 am. We need volunteers to assist with unloading the truck and unboxing the wreaths in preparation for placing the wreaths on each headstone after the ceremony. Please plan to attend and join us in honoring those veterans who have given their all for this country.

Happy Thanksgiving and thank you for your service to our country.

Bill Dudley
Chairman

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc



The Veterans Council of St. Johns County meets on the last Thursday of the month, all are invited to attend.

We meet at the County Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View, at 7 pm in the Muscovy room.

Upcoming Speakers

November 30

Sigrid Newbury, Haven's "We Honor Veterans" and Jennifer Jenkins, Wounded Warrior Project

December 28

Joseph Pearce, Wish for Our Heroes

January 25, 2024

**Dennis Graves, CJ3 Foundation
William Zorich, Irreverent Warriors**

February 29

**Ramona Rood, Soldiers Angels
Carey Picklesimer, CorpsStrength**

The passing of our Comrade Sgt. Major Ray Quinn

It is with much sadness that I must inform our veteran community of the passing of our comrade and brother in arms, Sgt. Major Ray Quinn. Ray passed away Thurs.evening peacefully at Flagler Hospital. Ray's passing will leave a large void in our hearts as well as our veteran community. His contributions to helping not only veterans but all who were in need were immeasurable. A strong man of faith, he was a spiritual leader as well as a leader of those who walked in his path. He will be deeply missed by his comrades and a community that held him in the highest esteem.



Sergeants Major Ray Quinn - US Army (Retired) - St. Augustine, FL

EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

MILITARY EDUCATION:

Ft. Jackson Leader Course 14 Jan 66

Advanced Individual Training, Ft. Jackson 14 Jan 66

Jungle Operations Training, Ft. Sherman U.S. Canal Zone 15 Aug 74

Admin Supply Technician 01 Apr 77

Battalion Training Management System 1981

Senior Noncommissioned Officer Course 28 Mar 82

Reserve Component First Sergeant Course 13 Jan 85

National Guard Bureau Training NCO Course 24 Apr 86

Florida National Guard Personnel Training 26 Aug 86

U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy 08 Jul 88

Personnel Data Systems U.S. Air Force 27Feb 90

Total Quality Management Course 17 Sep 93

CIVILIAN EDUCATION:

Graduate Umatilla High School, Umatilla, Florida (1964)

Awarded Life Experience Credits from Mercer County Community College (96) Awarded Life Experience Credits from Vincennes University (53)

Awarded College Credits from U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (18)

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY:

Sergeant Major Quinn became a citizen Soldier on 13 Jun 65



Worked for Winn-Dixie from 1965 to 1973.

Parts Clerk for the Florida Army National Guard Organizational Maintenance Shop, Florida Army National Guard 1973 to 1977.

Promoted to Administrative Supply Technician and First Sergeant of Combat Support Company, 2nd Bn 124th Infantry 1977 to 1985

Promoted to Operations Sergeant and later Chief Personnel NCO for Full Time Manning of Florida Army National Guard (Promoted to Sergeant Major)

Retired from Florida Army National Guard 30 November 1995 (30 years' service)

Employed by Florida Department of Military Affairs December 1995 as Administrative Assistant

Promoted to Director of Executive Services, Department of Military Affairs serving on the Staff of the Adjutant General

Retired from the Department of Military Affairs February 2008

ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF VETERANS:

Since retirement in 1995 Sergeant Major Quinn has been the community's "go to guy" for answers pertaining to retired military. He has stayed abreast of regulation changes and has offered his assistance when called upon.

He was one of the founders of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County. The Council was founded 4 July 2001 and he continues to be totally immersed in its operation. He is currently serving as the Vice Chair and has served as the Chairman. As part of his duties as Vice Chair he has chaired the Wreaths

Across America Program for the St. Augustine National Cemetery for the past six years. Several times each year St. Johns County suffers the loss of a veteran that has no next of kin. Upon these occasions the county verifies their service and arranges for interment at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. The Veterans Council of St. Johns County has a policy that no veteran goes home alone. Sergeant Major Quinn volunteers to conduct a graveside service for every veteran that has no family.

In 1998 he was asked to apply for a position on the Fort Stewart, Georgia Retiree Council. He was accepted and served with distinction from 1998 until 2008. It was his honor to serve as the Chairman of the Enlisted Retiree Council of Ft. Stewart. In 2002 the Council asked him to apply for a position on the Chief of Staff U.S. Army Retiree Council. He was subsequently selected by General Eric Shinseki to serve that prestigious Council. It is a three-year duty, meeting at the Pentagon, however he was asked to remain on the Council for a fourth year.



Sergeant Major Quinn was invited to serve on the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Council in 2012. He immediately accepted the invitation and was one of the initial members in assisting with the creation of the Hall of Fame. He was installed as the Vice Chair the first year and afterward served as the Chairman until 2019.

Sergeant Major Quinn has been a member of St. Augustine American Legion Post 37 for the past 12 years. He has served on committees as well as serving as the Post Historian and currently the Post Chaplain.

Sergeant Major Quinn is Past President and Life Member of the NCO Club of St. Augustine, Florida.

Sergeant Major Quinn serves on the Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee. He began his service on the committee in 2008 and continues that service today. He has served as both Vice Chairman and Chairman of the committee.

Sergeant Major Quinn is a Life Member of the Enlisted Association of America and of Florida. He is the Vice President for Retiree and Enlisted Affairs of the First Militia Chapter, Association of the United States Army.

CIVIC ACTIVITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS:

Sergeant Major Quinn was asked if he would serve his county as an Interim County Commissioner in August of 2009. Subsequently he was appointed by Governor Charlie Crist as an Interim County Commissioner for the County of St. Johns serving from January 2010 to January 2011. His military organizational skills and leadership style was a good fit.

Sergeant Major Quinn served as a Board Member of the Matanzas Bay Club and non-political action group to ensure the progress of St. Augustine and St. Johns County.

He has served as member and Past President of the Kiwanis Club of Historic St. Augustine, Florida. Was proud to be among the civilian leaders of the community. While serving he instituted a toy drive for indigent families of St. Johns County. The Sergeant Major could be seen ringing the bell for the Salvation Army or picking up roadside trash for his club. He was very active from until 2008.

AWARDS AND HONORS:

MILITARY

Legion of Merit,



1988

Army Meritorious Service Medal,

Army Commendation Medal (2),

Army Achievement Medal (3),

Good Conduct Medal (4),

Army Reserve Components Medal,

National Defense Service Medal,

Humanitarian Service Medal,

Armed Forces Reserve Medal,

Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon (5),

Army Service Ribbon,

Army Reserve Components Overseas Service Ribbon,

Florida Cross,

Florida Distinguished Service Medal (2),

Florida Service Medal,

Florida Commendation Medal,

Florida Meritorious Service Ribbon (21),

Florida Service Ribbon (5),

Florida Active State Service Ribbon,

Florida National Guard Recruiting Ribbon,

Florida Meritorious Unit Citation,

State Command Sergeants Major Award

Graduate of the Basic, Advance and Senior Noncommissioned Officer Courses

Graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas

Certificate of Completion U.S. Army Jungle Warfare School and award of Jungle Expert Patch

Sergeant Major Quinn was inducted into the Order of St. Maurice at the Centurion Level. (The Order of St. Maurice is awarded to those who have significantly contributed to the United States Army Infantry.)



CIVILIAN:

Sergeant Major Quinn was honored by the State of Florida and Governor Rick Scott by presentation of the Governor's Medal of Merit. This award has been presented to those veterans that have significant contributions to our state's veterans and our communities.

January 2018 Sergeant Major Quinn was named the Military Citizen of the Year for St. Augustine. He was honored at the Fourth Annual Military Ball held in the City of St. Augustine.

WRITTEN NARRATIVE:

Sergeant Major (ret) Ray Quinn is an inspirational leader who has committed his life to serve veterans and their families. He has a distinguished military and civilian career that is worthy of selection to the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame and I am honored to nominate him.

Sergeant Major Quinn's superior to veterans and military families was built on the foundation of an outstanding military career. He began his military career by enlisting in the Florida National Guard's Company C, 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry in Eustis, Florida. He progressed through Infantry assignments and rank serving as an Automatic Rifleman, Fire Team Leader, Scout Section Sergeant, Anti-armor Platoon Sergeant and First Sergeant. Throughout these assignments Ray exhibited outstanding leadership skills with the mindset of being a selfless leader. This tremendous record of excellence was recognized with his promotion to Sergeant Major. Selection to Sergeant Major an honor achieved by a select few Non-Commissioned Officers and is reflective of his consistently strong performance regardless of duty assignment. Sergeant Major Quinn's mentorship skills were recognized by his serving as an instructor at the Florida National Guard Military Academy and a facilitator at the First Sergeants Course. The Florida National Guard recognized Sergeant Major Quinn's leadership by selecting him for active-duty assignment with the Guard from 1973-1995.

Upon his retirement Sergeant Major Quinn chose to continue a life of service in impactful ways. He served with the Florida Department of Military Affairs for many years culminating with his selection as the Director of Executive Services. Ray was instrumental in the professionalism of Florida National Guard events, ensuring that protocol exceeded the standard. At the same time Sergeant Major Quinn was continuing to serve the Florida National Guard for his full-time job, he was providing leadership and support to multiple military oriented organizations.

While I will not repeat the lengthy contributions Sergeant Major Quinn has accomplished that are already outlined in this application, I will highlight some of his achievements. Without question he is the most sought-after leader in the Northeast Florida veterans' community. Sergeant Major Quinn has a reputation of saying "yes" to every veterans' initiative regardless of the commitment. He is one of the founders of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County and has served as Chair and currently is Vice Chair. This Veterans Council has become a tireless advocate for veterans not only in St. Johns County but throughout

the region. Through Ray's leadership the Council participates in the annual Wreaths Across America Program, ensures that every St. Johns County veteran who passes is properly honored, and multiple other initiatives. His caring leadership is demonstrated when he volunteers to conduct a graveside service for every veteran that has no family.

Even in retirement the Army continues to recognize Sergeant Major Quinn's leadership. He was asked to apply for a position on the Fort Stewart, Georgia Retiree Council where he served for 10 years highlighted by his role as Chairman of the Enlisted Retiree Council. Through his service to Fort Stewart Sergeant Major

Quinn was asked to apply for a position on the Chief of Staff US Army Retiree Council where he not served a traditional three-year term but also was asked to serve an additional year.

Sergeant Major Quinn's work has impacted veterans across Florida. He was invited to serve on the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Council and was one of the leaders in the creation of the Hall of Fame. In recognition of his leadership, he served as both Chair and Vice Chair. Sergeant Major has served not only Florida veterans but all Floridians. He was asked to serve his County as an interim St. Johns County Commissioner and he enthusiastically accepted and professionally served in this demanding position.

This application contains an excellent summary of Sergeant Major Quinn's life of service and I will not repeat his numerous other achievements. I consider Ray Quinn one of the finest Soldiers with whom I have had the honor to serve. It is irrelevant to Ray whether he is in uniform or not; he is first and always a Soldier serving others. He is a role model for not only military members but all Floridians who want to serve their community, state, and nation. Sergeant Major Quinn is the ultimate example of a citizen warrior. He served our country with distinction during his military career and he continues to serve our community today. Sergeant Major Quinn is truly an American hero and is unquestionably worthy of selection to the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.





St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Office of Public Affairs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Johns County Honors Veterans, Recognizes Saturday, November 11 as Veterans Day

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, Florida, November 7, 2023 – At the November 7, 2023, St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting, Chairman Christian Whitehurst presented a proclamation to Bill Dudley, Chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, and Joseph “Mac” McDermott, Director of the Veterans Service Office, recognizing Saturday, November 11 as Veterans Day.

In addition, Dudley and McDermott presented the County Commissioners and Administration staff with challenge coins, honoring them for their continued support and dedication to St. Johns County’s veterans.

This proclamation recognizes the significance of this commemoration and hopes that a grateful Nation might pay appropriate homage to the veterans of all its wars who have contributed so much to the preservation of this Nation and have answered the prayers of millions around the globe.

All non-emergency offices, excluding the library and solid waste, will be closed on Friday, November 10 in recognition of Veterans Day. For more information, the public may [visit the County’s website](#).

On this day, let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of the men and women who stepped forward when America needed them, all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom.

For more information on the Veteran Council of St. Johns County, [visit their website](#).

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The Veterans Day Ceremony hosted by the Veterans Council of St Johns County and MOAA, Ancient City Chapter, Honored our Veterans at Anastasia Baptist Church on Veterans Day. It was by all accounts a huge success as the community came out to thank all of our veterans.



Photo credit: Bill Gradwell and Paula Lee





ST. AUGUSTINE
Lighthouse
& MARITIME MUSEUM

Opening Ceremony of the Military Honor Plaza at the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum on Friday, November 10, 2023.

During World War II, the St. Augustine Light Station served as a United States Coast Guard station. The St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum honors this military heritage by opening the Military Honor Plaza featuring commemorative bricks to honor the members of the nation's Armed Forces.

Thank you to the Veterans and special guests who attended.

The Tin Pickle Local Gedunk (canteen/snack bar), which is housed in the former Coast Guard Jeep Garage on the Light Station property, served root beer floats and apple pie as a special treat during the event.

Special thanks to Karen Moore, the Museum Membership & Legacy Program Coordinator. She was instrumental in organizing the event and coordinating the Military Honor Plaza.





National League of POW/MIA Families

Hello everyone!

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

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

nationalleague@pow-miafamilies.org

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

All proper credits will be given.





WREATHS *across* AMERICA

2023 Wreath Sponsorship Order Form

Sponsored wreaths are placed on grave markers at state and national veterans' cemeteries, as well as at local and community cemeteries each December for National Wreaths Across America Day.

Your donation will ensure the placement of a veteran's wreath for one or more veterans laid to rest at the participating location of your choice.

All sponsored veteran wreaths are shipped directly to the location selected by the sponsor on this form. Wreaths are not shipped to individual wreath sponsors.

CHECKS PAYABLE TO
WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA
SEND TO:
VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST JOHNS COUNTY
P.O. Box 2117
St. Augustine, FL 32085
questions? Call 904-347-8293

SPONSORSHIP TYPE	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Individual = 1 Wreath	\$17.00		
Family = 4 Wreaths	\$68.00		
Small Business = 10 Wreaths	\$170.00		
Corporate = 100 Wreaths	\$1,700.00		

For quicker processing and the convenience of paying with a credit card, debit card, Google Pay, or PayPal, veteran wreaths may be sponsored online by scanning the QR Code above or by visiting: www.wreathscrossamerica.org/FL0080

You should be the only one to enter your credit card information at checkout on the Wreaths Across America website. For your security, do not share this information with anyone else who offers to place an order for you. To verify the validity of the QR Code, always check that wreathscrossamerica.org is part of the web address when sponsoring wreaths online.

If you prefer to pay with a check, please complete this form and mail it along with your check to Wreaths Across America at the address listed in the box above.

CHECK #	CHECK DATE	SPONSOR NAME FOR DISPLAY <i>If different than name on check</i>
GROUP ID(s)	FL0080	EMAIL ADDRESS
LOCATION ID(s)	FLNSA	PHONE #
DOLLAR AMOUNTS(s)		MAILING ADDRESS

To split your donation between multiple groups and/or locations, please list the IDs and dollar amounts for each.

SPECIAL REQUESTS

Please note in memory/honor of requests do not place a wreath on a specific loved one's grave.

IN MEMORY OF REQUEST	The "In Memory Of" Name will be listed on the Wreaths Across America online Remember Wall, along with your personal message.	IN HONOR OF REQUEST	An email will be sent to your chosen recipient from Wreaths Across America letting them know of your donation of sponsored veteran wreaths in their honor.
NAME FOR MEMORY WALL POST		RECIPIENT NAME	
SPONSOR EMAIL ADDRESS		RECIPIENT EMAIL ADDRESS	
MESSAGE (optional)		MESSAGE (optional)	

Thank you for supporting our mission to REMEMBER, HONOR, and TEACH!

**From David (Fly Boy) Shelton, Patriot Guard Riders
FL, Ride Captain**

**I'd like to give a big thank you for all those who as-
sisted in escorting FL PGR's Vietnam and War on Ter-
rorism Walls from Daytona Beach to St. Augustine,
FL. for our annual Veterans Day Wall display.**

**I'd also like to thank Flagler and St. John's County
Sheriff Offices who provided a dozen motor officers
and patrol cars to block countless intersections
along the route to insure our safe arrival.**



Veterans Day salute: Jacksonville-area men to be inducted in Florida Veterans Hall of Fame

Beth Reese Cravey, Jacksonville Florida Times-Union

Together, Michael Fleming, David Abramowitz and Blair Craig served almost 90 years in the military and received numerous medals and awards. Then they retired — but they kept serving.

Fleming, 69, and Craig, 78, both of St. Augustine, and Abramowitz, 64, of Jacksonville, each found ways to help fellow veterans. Between them, they are saving and improving lives by connecting veterans with mental health and suicide prevention services, jobs and housing, explaining their value to high school students and providing camaraderie for veterans in prison, among other things.

Tuesday they will be inducted into the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame.

"This is our opportunity to formally recognize distinguished men and women who have served in ... our Armed Forces and highlight their post-service contributions to the citizens of Florida," said retired Air Force Lt. Col. Steve Murray, spokesman for the state Department of Veterans' Affairs, which administers the Hall of Fame. The 20 members of this year's class, he said, are "highly deserving."

Nominations are made to the Hall of Fame council and inductees selected by the governor and Florida Cabinet.

Brig. Gen. Michael Fleming, U.S. Marine Corps/U.S. Army

Growing up in the 1960s, Jacksonville native Fleming wanted to be an astronaut. Instead, he followed a natural military connection — his father served at Naval Station Mayport — by joining the Marine Corps at age 19.



His 36-year career in the military began with nine years in the Corps, followed by 27 years in the Army National Guard where he had numerous leadership assignments, including assistant adjutant general for the Florida Guard in St. Augustine. He retired in 2010 as a brigadier general.

Then Fleming turned to helping veterans, a thread through his post-military work.

"It was a conscious decision," he said.

While stationed at Parris Island, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in South Carolina, he was "a scared private. If you told me I was going to be a general some day ... I would just have thought that was hilarious," he said. "But over time ... people invested in me. And so I was able to invest in people who work for me. And now I feel like I'm still giving back."

Fleming, who has two master's degrees, uses his status as a retired brigadier general.

"It's really not particularly relevant what rank you are as a veteran other than if you can use that former rank to get something for veterans," he said. "Sometimes generals can get ... things started that maybe other people can't."

In 2010, Fleming approached Deutsche Bank about creating a veterans program and ended up hired as managing director of the Jacksonville office. While there, he was a founding member of Veterans on Wall Street, which helps recent veterans find career opportunities in finance.

His next job was as Jacksonville University's chief government, military and community relations officer, where he helped launch an initiative to get military members into local colleges and employed.

Currently, Fleming is outreach manager for Cohen Veterans Network, a national network of 24 mental health clinics, including one in Jacksonville, for post-9/11 veterans, service members and military families.

Fleming is also founder and chairman of the Jacksonville Military Veterans Coalition, which has 500 companies committed to hiring veterans, and chairman of The Fire Watch, a nonprofit aimed at preventing veteran suicide in a five-county area of Florida.

His passion is improving veterans' mental health and preventing veteran suicide, particularly through the Fire Watch "Watch Standers" training program that helps friends and loved ones spot signs of crisis in veterans and refer them to resources.

"This training is to tell them, show them, the signs of suicide, and also educate them on the military in the broadest sense," Fleming said. If a veteran friend or loved one is acting strange or depressed or suddenly stops playing golf every Saturday, ask what's wrong, he said.

"We want people to take action," he said.

About 5,400 people have been through the training. With their help and other suicide prevention programs, the veteran suicide rate in Jacksonville and Baker, Clay, Nassau and St. Johns counties declined 46% between 2019 and 2021.

"We want to embolden people," he said. "If we can surround the veterans with a sea of goodwill in the community ... then we'll make a difference."



St. Augustine's U.S. Naval Academy's Midshipman Liz Thompson is going places!

By Lucia Viti, St Augustine Record Daily Briefing



St. Augustine's Liz Thompson is going places. Thompson will graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in English in May. Since her first summer as a "plebe," Thompson has cheered on the Navy Spirit All-Girl Team (four years) serving as Team Captain this year, along with working as a photographer for the Lucky Bag, the school's yearbook. The soon to be grad also served as a detailer, helping to lead the class of 2027 during their boot camp.

The St. Augustine Record: You describe applying to United States Naval Academy at Annapolis as the best decision of your young life. How so?

Thompson: On I-Day, induction day, I began a rigorous seven-week training that turns civilians into midshipmen. On graduation day, I will be a commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy. On Thursday, Nov. 16, Service Assignment Day, 1/C midshipmen (seniors) will be given their first career assignment. I hope to be selected as a Naval flight officer, where I will support and assist with navigation, weapon systems, and flight operations in various Naval aircraft. Applying is just the best decision I ever made. I know that this path will set me up for success and help me to become the best version of myself.

The St. Augustine Record: What's it like to be a midshipman?

Midshipmen strive to perform well physically and academically. We take on leadership billets, form relationships with mentors, and maintain a tight connection with our company – a small group of classmates structured for accountability and mentorship – in order to have the best chance at receiving our desired service selection.

The St. Augustine Record: Describe your military training.

Incredible. I spent a month on a destroyer and a month with a helicopter training squadron out of Norfolk, Virginia. These experiences taught me about myself, others, and service to this incredible nation. I've spent the last four years around people that share my priorities and interests. The campus, also known as the yard, is filled with individuals driven to excellence who hold themselves to a higher standard. They push me to be my best, whether it's physical training, competing in team activities, or learning military traditions.

The St. Augustine Record: What is it like to be a woman knowing that you may be in a field surrounded by men?

The Naval Academy cares greatly for its people and provides resources for every midshipman to help them thrive. I have felt nothing but support at the academy and I know that feeling is felt among most midshipmen.

The St. Augustine Record: As part of the USNA's All-Girl Cheer Team, what events did you cheer at?

Football and basketball games along with events like pep rallies, media day functions, galas, etc., — events that promote school spirit. Our job is to create an enthusiastic atmosphere and encourage pride in our school, service, and nation.

The St. Augustine Record: What have you learned about the U.S. Navy during your four years at the academy?

The Department of the Navy is committed to its core values: honor, courage and commitment. These values are instilled in every midshipman at the academy to develop us morally, mentally, and physically.

The St. Augustine Record: Among the many things you've learned, what stands out the most?

My experience at the Naval Academy has reinforced my desire to help others to be their best. As a member of the Brigade of Midshipmen, I'll continue learning from and leading those around me. I will carry these skills with me as a naval officer. I'm enthusiastic, proud and excited to serve my country.

The St. Augustine Record: What inspired you to apply?

My dad, who was a 1998 West Point graduate. He embodies every aspect of the person I one day hope to become. I have always admired his desire to serve, and his ability to lead well.

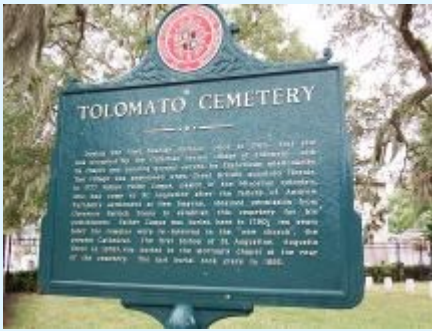
The St. Augustine Record: What are your fondest memories of St. Augustine?

I have so many fond memories of spending time at the fort, eating at Taco Shop, walking St. Augustine Beach, drinking coffee at Kookaburra, and walking down King George Street.

Saint Augustine Sons Of the American Revolution

The 2nd annual Patriot Remembrance Ceremony was presented November 18th at the Tolomato Cemetery in St. Augustine. The Ceremony was a joint project of the Maria Jefferson Chapter DAR, the St. Augustine Chapter SAR, and the Jacksonville Chapter SAR.

The Jacksonville Chapter SAR Color Guard presented the colors. Greetings were given by various DAR and SAR officers. Featured speakers were Elizabeth Gessner, Tolomato Cemetery Preservation Association, and Ray Hinkley, Westchester-Putnam Chapter, Empire State Society, SAR. Honors were given to Patriots from every state in the War for Independence.



St. Johns County's Parks & Recreation receives \$54,000+ for disabled veterans' adaptive sports programs



Funds awarded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will offer three, monthly veteran-exclusive, kayaking, fishing and art programs.

According to Ryan Kane, the county's Parks & Recreation director, monies will fund programs uniquely designed for disabled military veterans.

"These men and women will compete in activities in parks that display the American flag," he said. "And they'll know that the county cares about their physical, mental, and spiritual health."

"This phenomenal program enriches the quality of life for military veterans injured in their service in protecting our freedoms," continued Joseph McDermott, the county's veterans service director.

County commissioners authorized the Parks & Recreation Department to apply for the grant last April.

"Our slogan in Parks & Recreation is 'Play Your Way.'" Kane concluded.

"That's what we're offering – opportunities for these brave men and women of our military forces to play their way."

The Veterans Programs include archery, pickleball, art, fishing, and kayaking.

New 'tiny home' community for veterans in need coming to Clay County

By Finn Carlin, Action News Jax

CLAY COUNTY, Fla — A new neighborhood is being built in Clay County to serve those

who've served our country. Operation Barnabas, a Clay-based nonprofit, is building tiny homes in Middleburg for veterans in need.

Some of them, like Jordan Brimlow, say it's a space to start again.

"I was living a reckless life of drugs, felonies, just crime, crime, crime," says Brimlow, speaking of the struggles he faced after his service.

When Brimlow came home from his time in the military, he met more pain than praise.

"I lost my family, my wife took off, taking my four-month-old son and five-year-old daughter with her," Brimlow says.

He went from serving our country to serving time in jail. A hardship also felt by James Burse, who won a purple heart during his service.

"I was not okay," Burse says, "I was fighting with my wife, I was ready to leave, drop everything and run away."

Both men found themselves with nowhere else to go, until Operation Barnabas helped them find a home. Brimlow and Burse, since becoming involved with the nonprofit, have put themselves and their families in new homes, finding work with Operation Barnabas.



“It doesn’t matter how deep a hole you dig yourself into, how dark the room,” Brimlow says, “there is a light, a way out.”

Brimlow and Burse are looking to share this message with struggling veterans in Middleburg, looking to find their own homes. With the \$1.5 million network of tiny homes planned in the area, it’s now possible, especially being completely free for veterans.

“If you had asked us, we had never thought we would be in a home,” Brimlow and Burse say, “neither one of us.”

As Clay County becomes more costly, more people are saying neighborhoods like these are a need, particularly realtors like Jennifer Gregory.

“The rents are high, the housing prices are high, and it’s a problem,” Gregory says.

Gregory works with Coldwell Banker Vanguard. She says average home prices in Clay County have risen by around \$175,000 since 2016. Gregory’s hoping to see more efforts, similar to Operation Barnabas, for veterans making ends meet.

“I think it’s a huge need and will benefit lots of different communities of people,” says Gregory.

Operation Barnabas says the tiny homes are completely funded by donations.



‘Never forgotten’: New monument for fallen heroes unveiled outside Veterans Memorial Arena

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A solemn ceremony unfolded downtown as a Jacksonville group revealed its latest tribute to American service members who made the ultimate sacrifice. Despite the rainy weather, dozens gathered at the main entrance to the Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena for the unveiling of the Fallen Soldiers Monument on Friday.



The memorial holds special significance for the family of Army Private First Class Timothy Seamans, who was killed in action at the age of 20 in 2005. The ceremony, marked by 21 taps, a flag presentation, and a prayer led by a former combat chaplain, aimed to keep the memories of fallen heroes alive.



The unveiling ceremony included remarks from Dave Seamans, emphasizing his son’s compassionate nature even in the midst of war. “He always would give a shirt off his back to anybody,” Seamans said, with his wife, daughter, and granddaughter by his side.

“He loved his family. In Iraq, he held up a convoy to feed two sandwiches, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, to a young Iraqi boy who was hungry on the side of the road. So that says it all right there.”

The Fallen Soldiers Monument, strategically placed outside the Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena, serves as a poignant reminder not only of Timothy Seamans but also of the 1,700 other Jacksonville area residents who sacrificed their lives for the country. Every life mattered.

Jacksonville’s rich tradition of honoring veterans continues with this memorial, situated just a block away from the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Wall—the second-largest in the U.S., only behind Washington D.C.



Retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Gee Mercado highlighted the importance of such tributes with a flag ceremony. “Without us guys, the freedom we enjoy today, we wouldn’t have it,” he said. He encouraged passersby to acknowledge the sacrifices of service members by saluting the marble monument.

Unveiling of Fallen Soldiers Monument. (Copyright 2023 by WJXT News4JAX - All rights reserved.)

This installation, the 18th from the nonprofit Florida Fallen Heroes, is part of a series of monuments across schools in the area, funded by donations. Vystar Credit Union funded the latest Fallen Soldiers Monument, costing approximately \$8,000.

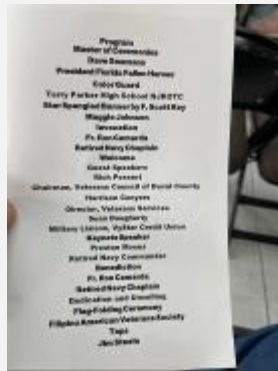
Florida Fallen Heroes is already planning its next monument at Andrew Jackson High School next year. Those interested in contributing or getting involved can visit FloridaFallenHeroes.org.

“Never forgotten,” Seamans said about those who made the ultimate sacrifice. “Never forgotten. Lest they be forgotten.”

Author: Vic Micolucci

Lifetime Jacksonville resident anchors the 8 and 9 a.m. weekday newscasts and is part of the News4Jax I-Team.

Florida Fallen Heroes dedicated their 18th Fallen Soldiers Monument at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena.





Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame recognizes and honors those military veterans who, through their works and lives during or after military service, have made a significant contribution to the state of Florida through civic, business, public service or other pursuits. It is not a traditional military hall of fame, as it focuses on post-military contributions to the State of Florida.

Class of 2023 Inductees

David Abramowitz, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)

Dennis O. Baker, Commander, U.S. Navy, (Ret)

John E. Bircher III, Colonel U.S. Army (Ret)

David Blair Craig, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)

Dr. Benjamin Findley, Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Ret)

Michael Fleming, Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps/ U.S. Army (Ret)

R. Craig Ham, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)

Gerald Hollingsworth, MD, Colonel, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force (Ret)

Joseph Kittinger, Colonel, United States Air Force (Ret)

Henry Lowery, Chief Warrant Officer 5, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)

Bruce Melnick, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret)

Frederic Raymond, Major General, U.S. Army (Ret)

Walter E. Raysick, Sr., Master Chief U.S. Navy (Ret)

Leon J. Roy, IV, Command Sergeant Major, U.S. Army (Ret)

Edward C. Sheffield, U.S. Army Veteran

Joseph G. Sicinski, U.S. Air Force Veteran

Alene Tarter, Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force (Ret)

Dewayne Thrift, U.S. Air Force Veteran

Donn Weaver, U.S. Army Veteran

Ellsworth Williams, Jr., Major, U.S. Army (Ret)

**LTC Blair
Craig**



**Brigadier
General,
Michael
Fleming**



The Veterans Council congratulates all veterans for their service in uniform and afterwards.

Local Veterans LTC Blair Craig & BG Michael Fleming are from NE FL and do much for local veterans and their families.

**DANNY GARCIA, WALKING MAN
PRESENTS**



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The World Changers Concert is Fri., Dec 8th at 6:30pm at the The St. Augustine Amphitheatre to honor and thank God, veterans, first responders, and their families. Guests of honor include Gold Star families who have lost military family members in the line of duty, to acknowledge their loss, grief, and continued healing.

The concert event will feature a favorite central Florida band, The Long Run (TLR), an Eagles tribute band. Event guest speaker is national bestseller Karen Vaughn, author of “World Changer”, the story of her son, Navy Seal Aaron Vaughn.

If you are interested in donating or sponsoring seats for our worthy vets, first responders, and families, please contact Director Chuck Burke at flaburke@hotmail.com.

Event Page: <https://thegarcias.cc/>

Buy Event Tickets: <https://www.theamp.com/.../detail/the-world-changers-concert>

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[Contacts](#)

Chuck Burke 321-693-3451

Jackie Garcia 703-615-9006

Danny Garcia 571-422-0963

email: globalwalk7@gmail.com

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Jacksonville, FL 32202

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10:30 am - 1 pm

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Speakers, Camaraderie, Lunch

Logos include: City of Jacksonville, Veterans Council of Duval County, VyStar Credit Union, and various military branches (Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard).

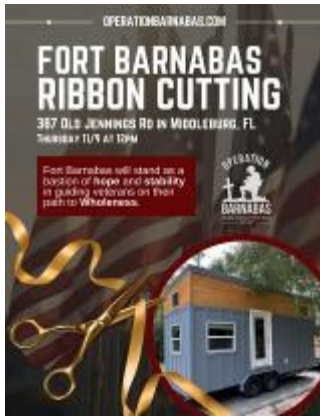
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Free Gathering of Veterans and Lunch
Contributions made by Vystar Credit Union
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Support of a Quarterly Veterans Gathering

The last V4V Quarterly Gathering 2021

Clay County Chamber of Commerce Florida

We celebrated the opening of Operation Barnabas Inc.'s Fort Barnabus with a ribbon cutting.

Located off Old Jennings Road, Fort Barnabus will stand as a bastion of hope and stability in guiding veterans on their path to stability. Fort Barnabus will be constructed as a mixture of portable tiny homes, or “Barnabas Bungalows,” and brick-and-mortar condo-style family homes. Thank you to our ribbon cutting post sponsor Community First Credit Union of Florida. by Joseph Lorentzson



VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 26, 2023



CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS: Chairman Dudley

PLEDGE: Chairman Dudley

INVOCATION: Danny Garcia

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKERS/GUESTS: Chairman Dudley

New attendees introduced themselves to the group.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Minutes of last meeting conducted September 28, 2023, were presented by Chairman Dudley. Copies of the Minutes and Agenda are available on the sign-in table and were sent to members electronically by the Secretary. The minutes were approved by voice vote with no changes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer John Mountcastle presented an updated Treasurer's Report. The Council's total liquid cash balance as of September 26, 2023, was \$163,126.41. Treasurer Mountcastle went through some of the expenditures and deposits since that time and the new current balance is \$165,099.77. This includes a Money Market account of \$154,394.49, which is earning interest at about 5%. The floor was open for questions and answers regarding the Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer's Report was approved by voice vote with no changes.

SPEAKERS:

KAREN MOORE, ST. AUGUSTINE LIGHTHOUSE

Karen Moore introduced herself and a new program called "The Military Honor Plaza" that the St. Augustine Lighthouse is conducting. During WWII the lighthouse was actually a Coast Guard Station for patrol of the local beaches and waterways. With that connection to the military, and requests from others in the community, it has opened up the concept of the need to honor Veterans. The brick area around the WWII anchor outside of the lighthouse is going to be turned into an area for mili-

tary recognition only. Bricks can be purchased that will be placed in the Military Honor Plaza and each brick will tell a story. A ceremony to honor the opening of the Military Plaza will be held on November 10, 2023, and Chairman Dudley will be the Keynote Speaker. The Military Honor Plaza bricks are for Veterans (both past and present), as well as active military. Flyers were given out to all interested in purchasing bricks for the amount of \$300. The floor was open for questions and answers regarding the Military Honor Plaza.

LYNN GEISER, HOPE 4 VETERANS

Lynn Geiser introduced herself and the non-profit organization she runs called Hope 4 Veterans. Hope 4 Veterans is in four counties, St. Johns County and Clay County are the primary focus counties. Hope 4 Veterans runs a Peer-to-Peer Therapy Art Program, and the program connects with women of the military to help with adjustment back to civilian life and prevent isolation and suicide. The Program includes the sharing of art and storytelling to help avoid the isolation and institutes involvement back into the civilian community. They have found that sharing stories and art help the female Veterans accept themselves fully and expounds on their accomplishments in life during and after the military. It helps rebuild the confidence needed to survive in this day and time. Ms. Geiser brought some of the artwork and masks that have been made by the Veterans to show their accomplishments. The floor was open for questions and answers.

CARL CRICCO, CEO, K9 FOR WARRIORS

Mr. Cricco introduced himself and gave some background on K9 For Warriors and how it was started in 2011 by Shari Duval. The dogs are rescued and trained to help Veterans that suffer from PTSD, TBI and MST. The organization is the nation's largest service dog provider and continues to grow. Each month about 12 Veterans are brought on to the campus in Ponte Vedra and spend 3 weeks in a residential program. The dog is fully trained and paired with the "right" Veteran. During that 3-week program the Veteran is introduced to the dog and bonds with and learns how to utilize the service dog. There is a new kennel on Phillips Highway and US 1 referred to as a mega kennel and opened 90 new places for service dogs to be housed and trained. The new facility has cut down the wait period from 4 years to around 18 months and they hope to get that wait period down to around 1 year. There have been over 1,000 service dogs for Veterans trained and homed since the inception of

K9 For Warriors and they expect to hit 160 this year. The floor was open for questions and answers.

Mr. Cricco introduced Veteran John Hannigan and his service dog, Henry. John gave a talk on just what he went through before and how he functions now after going through the K9 For Warriors program and Henry coming into his life.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE UPDATE, JOSEPH MCDERMOTT

Mr. McDermott was not at the meeting due to medical reasons. Chairman Dudley talked about the turnover in the Veterans Service Office and the new people that have been hired to replace those positions. The holdup is going to be the training programs that the new VSO's have to go through in order to file claims for our Veterans.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT, JOHN LESLIE

Mr. Leslie introduced himself, Mentor Coordinator for the St. Johns and Putnam County Veterans Treatment Court. Although the Treatment Court is actually taking Veterans from 6 other counties throughout the NE Florida area.

The Treatment Court is in its 7th year and brought in 139 veterans into the program and has graduated 81 participants. There are 37 veterans currently inflow. The next session is scheduled for October 27th at 10:00am in Room 355 of the Judicial Complex. All are invited to attend and observe the Treatment Court. Mr. Leslie is looking for any new mentors that would be interested in helping in the future. Currently there are 14 mentors and 20 are needed. The Treatment Court will have a table with information at the upcoming Veterans Day event on November 11th. The floor was open for questions.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Dudley gave an update on the upcoming Veterans Day program that will be held on November 11, 2023. The theme for this year's program will be on the Global War on Terrorism and held at Anastasia Baptist Church. The program will honor all the Veterans that have served in the last 20 years on the war on terrorism.

They will be recognized for their service and presented with a pin to honor them. The speaker will be Brigadier General William Temples. Gold Star Mothers will also be honored that day. There are 52 display tables planned and will be there supporting our Veterans. There is a large turnout expected and Chairman Dudley also talked about the parking situation, there will be a shuttle bus to help transport people to the program at the church.

The Wreaths Across America Program will be held on December 16th at the St. Augustine National Cemetery and the forms are available to order the wreaths. We are behind in sales for this year and everyone to asked to try to participate. Prices were discussed.

Chairman Dudley discussed the new homeless shelter that will coming to St. Augustine on SR 16. Other properties are also being looked at to add to the space available. Site work should start around the end of November/early December. Completion is hoped to take place around the end of July 2024. Due to cost, a new design has had to be implemented and Chairman Dudley shared pictures of what the new site will look like. There are other properties also being looked at with dwellings on them that can be restored to house our homeless Veterans.

The floor was opened to all others that had information to share with the Veterans Council.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Dudley, Chairman

OLDEST HOUSE MUSEUM: "STORIES OF SERVICE"

The exhibit is the result of an oral history project with veterans in St. Johns County.

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023 - Monday, Jan. 8, 2024 | 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The St. Augustine Historical Society presents the exhibit "Stories of Service" in the Dunham Building Map Gallery at the Oldest House Museum Complex, 14 St. Francis Street. The museum will display the exhibit from October 17, 2023, through January 8, 2024. A digital version of "Stories of Service" is available on the St. Augustine Historical Society's website.

The project includes tapes of interviews, photographs, and artifacts provided by several veterans from St. Johns County. They represent every branch of the military and nearly every conflict from WW II through to today. Robert Covert, Special Collections Manager of the Historical Society, met local veterans and recorded oral history interviews with them. Several of the veterans provided materials, documents, and photographs. The goal has been to honor our local military veterans' service and to preserve their stories for future generations.

Admission: This exhibit can be viewed at the Oldest House Museum Complex. Entrance fees are \$12.95 for adults, \$4.95 for children aged 4 - 17, and \$9.95 for seniors and the military. See their profile page for additional information.

When: Tuesday, October 18, 2023 through Saturday, January 8, 2024. The museum is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Where: Oldest House Museum Complex, 14 St. Francis Street, St. Augustine.

The photo here was taken at Camp Eagle in Vietnam and was contributed to the project by Lieutenant Colonel David Blair Craig, who was a member of D Troop, 2/17th Cavalry, 101st



Brunswick family of late Army staff sergeant receives mortgage-free home in honor of Veterans Day

Webb family (Tunnel to Towers Foundation)

BRUNSWICK, Ga. – The family of a late U.S. Army staff sergeant was surprised with the news that their mortgage was paid in full by the Tunnel to Towers Foundation in honor of Veterans Day.



According to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, from a young age, Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Webb decided he would join the military --

following in the steps of his mother, stepfather, grandfather and uncles. ed Warrior Project Carry Forward

Webb joined the National Guard as a teenager and later decided to earn his GED.

He went on active duty in the U.S. Army on Jan. 19, 1996.

Army Staff Sergeant Christopher Webb (Tunnel to Towers Foundation)

Unfortunately, on March 7, 2007, Webb was among three soldiers killed following an explosion near their vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq, according to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation.

Webb left behind his wife, Shalan, and their daughter, who was born months before he was deployed to Iraq.

This year, in observance of Veterans Day, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation decided to pay Webb's family's mortgage on their Brunswick home.

"Tunnel to Towers' support has given me the security of knowing I will always have my home," said Shalan Webb. "This will allow me to be more flexible with my work so that I can spend more time with my daughter."

Army Staff Sergeant Christopher Webb and his daughter (Tunnel to Towers Foundation)

Shalan said this gift is more than a financial relief. It makes her husband's service even more meaningful.

"One of my biggest fears is that my husband and his service to this country will be forgotten," Shalan said. "I'm so extremely thankful to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation for honoring my husband, his service and sacrifice, and his family."

The Webb family is among 50 families across the country who were honored this year with the gift of a mortgage-free home.

"This Veterans Day, we thank those who volunteered to step up and serve our country and acknowledge all they sacrificed to keep us and our country safe," Tunnel to Towers Chairman and CEO Frank Siller said. "For the loved ones of those heroes who protected us at home and abroad, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation stands with you in honoring your loved one's memory and their enduring legacy of service."

Stories of Service: Windsor at Ortega Assisted Living

Thousands of veterans were recognized across the United States on Veterans Day, and that included 12 residents of Windsor at Ortega Assisted Living.

Author: Rich Donnelly



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — This weekend millions of people flocked to parades to honor veterans across the country and thousands of veterans walked in those parades to be honored for their service to our country.

Jacksonville had a large parade as well and at the same time as that parade, another smaller, yet just as significant ceremony was taking place elsewhere in the city.

The bell rang precisely at 11:01am to recognize 12 residents of Windsor at Ortega Assisted Living and Memory Care who are also veterans.

"It's with deep gratitude and immense respect that I stand before you today in the presence of true heroes, our veterans who reside here at Windsor at Ortega," said Lisa Doerler, executive director at Windsor Ortega, "their bravery, sacrifice and unwavering commitment to our nation is not forgotten."

Part of the ceremony included the unveiling of their Wall of Honor, which includes pictures of the residents now, as well as when they served decades ago. "Just being part of the best country in the world, you really can't say enough," said resident and veteran Bill Billy, "it's just a wonderful experience."

American Legion Auxiliary post 372 built the wall and each veteran resident was honored with a plaque for their service.

"Freedom only lasts one generation," said resident and veteran Joseph Stokes, "you have to stay with it so I encourage young people today to back the military."

Windsor at Ortega's oldest resident is Hazel Womble. At 103 years young she proudly walked to the front of the ceremony to be honored for 8 years as an operating room nurse in the Navy.

"I'm glad that I could go," said Womble, beaming with pride of what she did more than half a century ago.

These veterans were the center of attention for the day.

"It's unbelievable, this has been the most beautiful presentation I can imagine," said Billy, who served on the USS Midway, "I appreciate all these people taking the time to honor us and they all need to be honored also."

If you have a Story of Service that you would like us to share, send us an email to storiesofservice@firstcoastnews.com.

From C Kevin Crowell, Palatka, FL

If you recently attended RCPT.USA, Operation Black Cat VII and had fun, enjoy!

Enjoy the moment! You just experienced the positivity of the Airborne Brotherhood!

With the Leadership and undeniable love of Val Markham, Bill Markham, Art Shaffer, Rick Randall, Eric J. Lewis, John Hoffstetter, Skyshark Dave, David DeSoucy,

Brent VanEverey, Juan Arrango, Christina Arango, Alex Arrango, John Garrison,

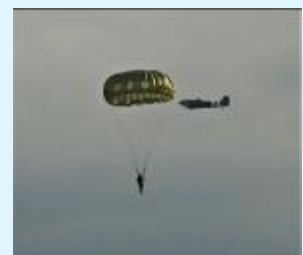
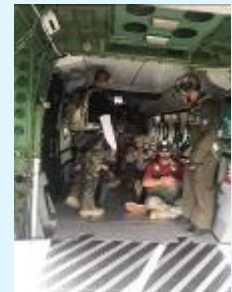
PA Dave, Peyton Lingle, Jason D. Parker, Russ Battiato, Paul Arentz, and everyone I'm forgetting; thank you!

Thank you for everything!

Here's some pics of the past! From meager beginnings! Some of my favorites!

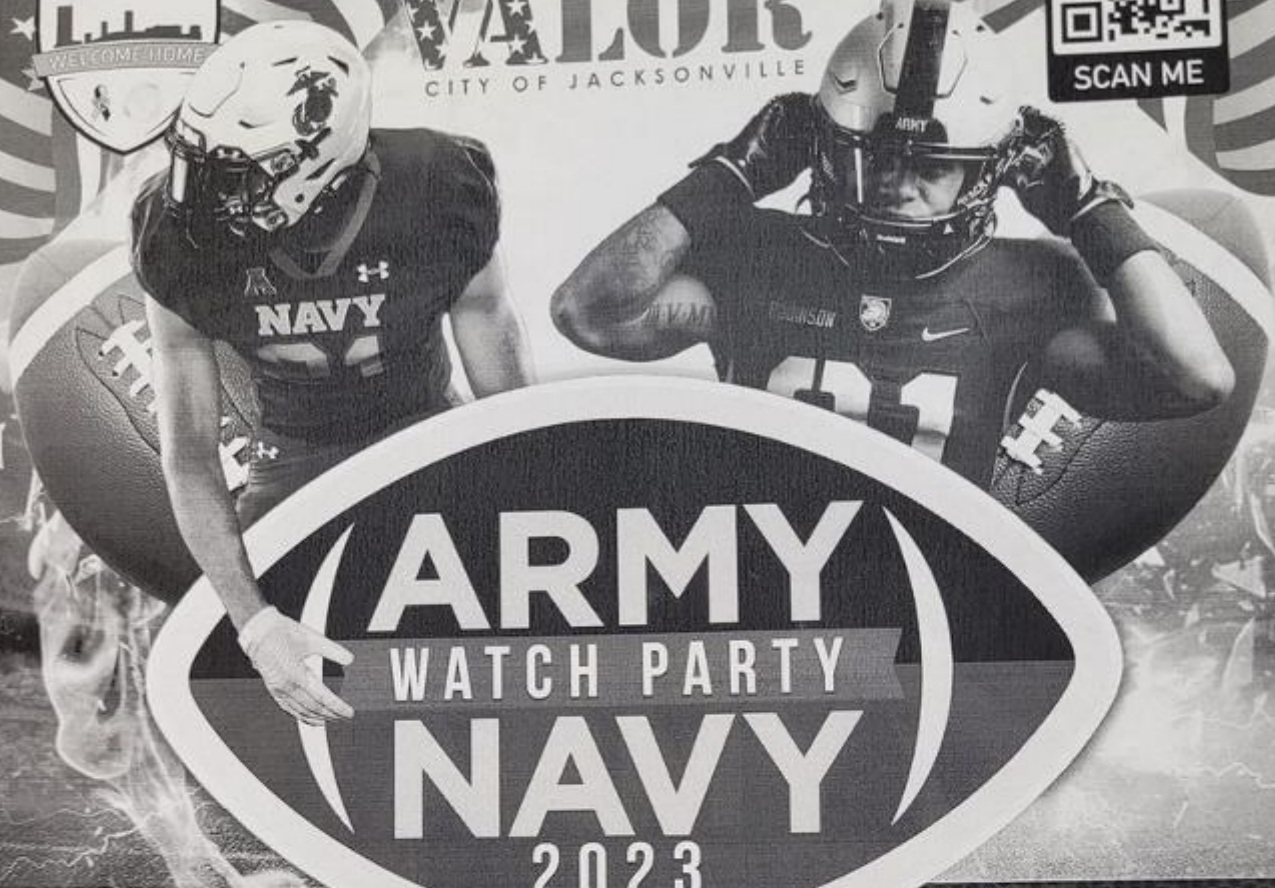
God Bless!

AATW!!





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A joyful reunion: Navy Sailor welcomes dog she rescued in the Middle East to her new home in Jacksonville

FLEMING ISLAND, Fla. – A U.S. Navy Sailor reunited with her beloved dog that she rescued while on deployment in the Middle East.

U.S. Navy Sailor Joy welcomed Koda to her new home Tuesday thanks to the organization Paws of War.

Joy has served 12 years in the military, and during her fourth deployment, she came across some puppies that seemed vulnerable because there was no mother in sight, according to Paws of War.

One evening, Joy found Koda tired and collapsed from the heat, and she did not hesitate to help her recover. Days later, they found all the puppies had been killed — except for Koda, Paws of War said.

“My heart broke for her because she was all alone, and obviously very scared,” she said.

That’s when Joy knew she had to protect Koda at all costs.

“She was scared at first, and ran and hid. But, I was able to coax her out of hiding by giving her some water and some chicken that I had for lunch that day,” Joy said.

“I actually picked the name Koda because it means ‘ally’ or ‘friend’ -- it can also mean ‘little bear’ and she’s all three of those things (laughs).”

According to Paws of War, when Joy got orders to head back to the Jacksonville area, she felt uneasy about leaving Koda behind.

Joy asked Paws of War for help. Paws of War is an organization that brings back dogs and cats rescued by troops serving overseas to safety in the U.S. And that's exactly what Paws of War did for Joy.

The organization worked hard to help get Koda back to the U.S., where she will live with Joy.

When Koda saw Joy for the first time Tuesday since being in the Middle East, she ran towards her with a wagging tail, then continued to playfully bite Joy and rub against her legs.

“She really ended up being a big support for me too while I was there,” Joy said.

To learn more about Paws of War visit <https://pawsofwar.org/> and to watch the raw interview with Joy describing her love for Koda, click the video player below.



FIRST COAST NEWS

'Special envoy to the president': K9 Mack almost wins class presidency, keeps his veteran coming back for more

Veteran Steve Krist teaches high school creative writing in Jacksonville, and his K9 partner, Mack, makes sure the lessons keep coming every day.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Service dogs make living a normal life possible for so many veterans who battle post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

K9s For Warriors has provided nearly 1,000 veterans with service dogs since 2011 and one of those veterans is Steve Krist. He says his K9 companion, Mack, keeps him teaching high school in Jacksonville.



Photo credit: Lewis Turner

The only thing conventional about Krist's creative writing class at River City Science Academy, is roll call. From there, it's anything but a normal class.

"I like to be very unconventional," Krist told First Coast News.

One day, Krist's lesson for students was to write a short film with found footage. His students quickly reported to class, but then they were out the door to work on their videos. And as they left the class, Mack joined right along them. For this class, having a dog join them is just a part of the unconventional that has become conventional.

"He's got that cot in my classroom and is under my desk, he just chills most of the day," Krist said.

For obvious reasons, Mack is one of the most popular guys in school. So popular that kids at the school have decided to put him on the ballot.

"They took a photoshop of him, put him on a surfboard and he ran for class president," Krist said. "He would have won," Krist said, but technicalities and actual human job responsibilities prevented it.

"We'll just say he's a special envoy to the president," Krist said.

And if any of his creative writing students needs a topic to write about, novels could be penned about how Steve and Mack came together.

“I joined the Marine Corps when I was 17,” Krist told First Coast News, adding that he spent time all over the United States and served a deployment to Iraq.

But, it was his job in the military, in having to do the indescribable, caused so much trauma. As a casualty assistance calls officer, Krist had to deliver the news to a mother, a father, that their son or daughter had been killed and wouldn’t be coming home.

“We’re the people that rang the doorbell,” Krist said. “The families need someone to blame so, you take that upon you,” he said.

It was an incredible burden that took a toll on Krist.

“When I retired, I was really good at trying to hide my emotions but, I was very bad at hiding my emotions,” Krist said. “I was just angry, I was unapproachable,” he added.

This in turn, made his job as a teacher almost unbearable.

“I hate saying it, but I almost quit several times because it was just too much,” Krist said.

But, the twist in Krist's story comes from his little girl. “My daughter found K9s For Warriors,” Krist said. Krist's daughter filled out all of his paperwork and put it down on the table in front of him. He remember his daughter saying, “Hey, sign this.” From there, the process began and a life-saving relationship was born. “Every now and then, Mack will get up and lean against me, and when he leans against me, that tells me I need to relax,” Krist told First Coast News. “He senses something going on.”

So, Mack keeps Steve in the classroom. A new chapter written in class every day, in the story of a hero’s journey that’s no longer taken alone.

“I love it,” Krist said. “I love teaching here. And that’s him for me, he’s that guaranteed idea that we’re going to do this together.”

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SCAN ME

Man finds old military round in Florida garage; it was live and dangerous

By MARK PRICE THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER • November 1, 2023

(Tribune News Service) — Garages in Florida can hold all kinds of retiree booty, and one of the stranger examples required a bomb team in Alachua County.

A man cleaning the garage of a deceased relative found a live 30-millimeter round capable of stopping a tank.

“He loaded it up and brought it to the sheriff’s office (in Gainesville),” the Alachua County Sheriff said in an Oct. 31 Facebook post.

“Most of the time, we get sent to emergencies. Today, it came to us. ... The sheriff’s office reminds citizens to not transport live” ordnance.

Bomb team members rallied outside the building to gently haul the round to “a secure storage bunker until it can be turned back over to the military,” officials told McClatchy News in an email.

It is believed to be from the Vietnam War era and was likely used in a “Gatling gun on the front of the A-10 aircraft,” officials said.

There’s no clear explanation why it ended up in a garage, but it is not common for souvenirs of war to end up in the backpacks of military personnel.

It’s considered unsafe, and weapons experts do not recommend hauling such discoveries around, even to the sheriff’s office.

The sheriff’s office added that having its own bomb team “is a glorious asset.”

From the Alachua County Sheriff

Most of the time, we get sent to emergencies. Today, it came to us. This live 30-millimeter round was located by a citizen cleaning out a relative’s home. He loaded it up and brought it to the Sheriff’s Office. Having our own Bomb Team that responded immediately and was able to safely secure the round is a glorious asset to our community and surrounding areas. The Sheriff’s Office reminds citizens to not transport live ordnance, please contact the Sheriff’s Office Nonemergency line.



The CJ3 Foundation

A representative of the CJ3 Foundation will be speaking at the Veterans Council meeting on January 25, 2024.

Please make plans to join us then if not sooner.

The CJ3 Foundation provides advocacy services at no cost to the wounded/disabled American Heroes we support.

The CJ3 Foundation advocates on behalf of our Recipients to receive assistance they need/require.

This advocacy centers on providing Recipients with referrals for services or support to other organizations/agencies established to adequately address/help with specific Recipient issues/needs.

The CJ3 Foundation works as an interlocutor for and with other VSO's and non-profits who have like goals in order to assist Veterans in need.

The CJ3 Foundation also works to influence changes in policy and legislation that adversely affects our Wounded/Disabled U.S. Military Service Member/Veteran, Law Enforcement, Firefighter, and Emergency/First Responder brothers and sisters.

The CJ3 Foundation provides a forum to formalize our advocacy efforts for these groups on issues of concern; whether it is a policy change or legislative change required.

The CJ3 Foundation builds upon this by engaging legislators and their staff to advocate for changes in policy and legislation that adversely affects our constituents.

Finally, the CJ3 Foundation also partners with hunting, fishing, and other recreational type groups to provide much needed rest and relaxation activities to our Recipients and their families.



World War II Veterans now offered free VA Health Care **by Lindsay Hersey, Stars & Stripes**

WASHINGTON — Nursing home care and medical services are now free to the Greatest Generation under a new policy by the Department of Veterans Affairs that waives enrollment fees, copays and monthly premiums for the roughly 119,000 World War II veterans still alive.

The no-cost care is effective immediately under the new VA policies announced Friday. Veterans who served between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, are eligible for the free health care. They must be enrolled in VA health care to qualify.

Veterans turned down previously for coverage are encouraged to reapply, as are those denied coverage because of income eligibility restrictions.

The VA is in the process of contacting veterans, their families and their caregivers to inform them of the free services.

Some nursing home officials said Monday that they are waiting to hear from veterans service organizations on how the free care will be applied and implemented.

This included the Southwest Louisiana War Veterans Home, which has 13 residents who are World War II veterans. Staff there said they are aware of the announcement but are awaiting more information. Officials at the Maine Veterans' Homes had a similar response.

A VA spokesman on Monday did not provide details about the program.

The changes are part of the Joseph Maxwell Cleland and Robert Joseph Dole Memorial Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2022. Known as the Cleland-Dole Act, the legislation enables the veterans to keep their existing private health plans, Medicare, or other coverage. It also expands telehealth coverage and expands services for veteran homelessness, among other provisions.

The Act was named after the late Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., who served in World War II, and the late Sen. Joseph Cleland, D-Ga., a Vietnam veteran and former VA administrator.

More than 16 million Americans served in World War II. About 130 of those veterans are estimated to be dying each day, according to the VA.

“These members of the Greatest Generation answered the call to serve when our nation — and the world — needed them most. Now, it’s our job to serve them in every way that we can,” Dr. Shereef Elnahal, the VA undersecretary for health, said in a statement last week.



Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation provides college scholarships and educational counseling to military children, from all branches, who lost a parent in the line of duty.

We cover all college-related costs and there is a big need for our services as the VA does not cover the full cost of college. There is a \$25,000 average gap to cover one student for four years and we need your help.



Scan here to support the children of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

To mail a contribution, please send checks to:

Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation
ATTN: Courtney Nyren
1818 Library Street, Suite 500
Reston, VA 20190

FALLENPATRIOTS.ORG

Thank you for your support of our mission. CFC #69859



CFP is among top <1% of charities to receive a 100% rating in 2022

Observer, Palm Coast, Ormond Beach

Palm Coast veteran to receive free home upgrades thanks to nonprofit Vettes for Vets

Vettes for Vets chose U.S. Air Force veteran Christopher Preveziotis, who retired from the Air Force in 2017

By Sierra Williams

A U.S. Air Force veteran and Palm Coast resident is the surprise recipient of a home improvement package from a national nonprofit.

Vettes for Vets surprised local veteran Christopher Preveziotis at his home on Oct. 27 with a giant check labeled “free home restoration.” Vettes for Vets connects local contractors willing to donate their time with veterans who need assistance improving their homes.

Preveziotis retired from the Air Force in 2017 as an E6, or technical sergeant, specializing in healthcare administration. He initially enlisted in 1990 but left the service in 1994. In the summer of 2001, he returned to the Air Force and remained enlisted for the next 16 years.

Preveziotis, a disabled veteran who is unable to work, said Vettes for Vets offering to complete needed upgrades at his home was a complete surprise. He’s very thankful, he said.

“I had a lot of different feelings all at the same time,” Preveziotis said. “Financially, it’s going to help me out a lot but also spiritually ... it has given me a better outlook on life.”

Vettes for Vets was established in 2021 in Charleston, South Carolina by U.S. Marine Corps veteran Jason Dores, who owns a roofing company. The organization helps one veteran per year with home improvements in each state in which the nonprofit is active.

Dores and several other Vettes for Vets members drove down from South Carolina to meet with Preveziotis. He said the nonprofit began as a helping-hand volunteer group to help a South Carolina veteran get a new roof. It has since expanded to include the Washington D.C. area, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida.

“We’re going to continue growing,” he said. “It started off as just a roof, and now it has moved to bathroom remodels, appliances, bill assistance, anything that can help that veteran out.”

Dores said Vettes for Vets will open in three additional states in 2024 — Michigan, Ohio and Texas — and in 2025 add Pennsylvania and Kentucky to its locations.

“The goal is in 20 years to knock off all 50 states,” he said.

This is Vettes for Vets' first year in Florida. Ron Boisvert, the organization's Florida director and a Palm Coast resident, said Vettes for Vets raises money and connects to people who want to help out through car shows and local Corvette groups.

"So people with a common interest come and ask, 'Oh, what's this about,'" he said "We do the big picture thing. We pick a veteran and we do a home improvement to try to get them back up the right step."

Boisvert said he talks to local veteran service organizations to get recommendations for local veterans who are in need. In Flagler County, he went to the county's Veterans Services Office, the Florida Veterans of Foreign Wars office, and local branches of veteran groups like the American Legion for recommendations.

Once a veteran is chosen, he said, the hard part is trying to arrange things without the individual finding out until the day of the reveal.

"It's like having a surprise party for your spouse," he said. "It's difficult."

Boisvert said Lowe's has offered to supply the materials for the improvement projects, and he's received verbal confirmations from a roofer, a general contractor and a landscaper. He said the work on Preveziotis' home won't begin until after the holidays.

Preveziotis said Vettes for Vets will send someone to look at his home to see what work needs to be done, but he knows his home sustained some damage in the recent storms. Preveziotis said he doesn't easily trust people, but having this happen out of the blue has made him feel like a better person.

"It kind of heals me a bit," he said. "It really opened up something good inside me."



Find old service friends fast!

Stars and Stripes has partnered with Togetherweserved.com (TWS), the largest online community of U.S Military Veterans, with over 2.2 million members, and a significant archive of personal military histories, to help you find and reconnect with people you served with in your units, squadrons, ships, or military bases.

Together We Served has just launched a brand new portal page to help you find old service friends more easily! Simply click on the button below to access TWS's "Buddy Finder" where you simply enter a unit you were in, and associated timeframe, to see how many TWS Members served with you, ready for you to make contact.

<https://togetherweserved.com/findpeople>





You've made our country
A BETTER PLACE.

Enjoy your well-earned retirement at Silver Creek.

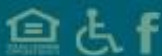
Thank you veterans for your service and sacrifice! At Silver Creek, you can live life as you choose with greater freedom, comfort and independence through the unique living options at our community - including independent concierge living, assisted living, enhanced assisted living and memory care.

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

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



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



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

Assisted Living Facility #12928

Explore VA benefits and health care, <https://www.va.gov>

Health care

Apply for VA health care, find out how to access services, and manage your health and benefits online.



Disability

File a claim for disability compensation for conditions related to your military service, and manage your benefits over time.

Education and training

Apply for and manage your GI Bill and other education benefits to help pay for college and training programs.

Careers and employment

Apply for vocational rehabilitation services, get support for your Veteran-owned small business, and access other career resources.

Pension

Apply for monthly payments for wartime Veterans and survivors with limited or no income who meet certain age and disability requirements.

Housing assistance

Find out if you're eligible for a VA-backed home loan. If you have a service-connected disability, see if you qualify for a housing grant to help you live more independently.

Life insurance

Explore VA life insurance options for Veterans, service members, and families. Manage your policy online, file claims for benefits, and access helpful resources.

Burials and memorials

Get help planning a burial in a VA national cemetery, order a headstone or other memorial item to honor a Veteran's service, and apply for survivor and dependent benefits.

Records

Apply for a printed Veteran ID card, get your VA benefit letters and medical records, and learn how to apply for a discharge upgrade.

Service member benefits

Find out what benefits you may be eligible for during service and which time-sensitive benefits to consider when separating or retiring.

Family member benefits

Learn about the benefits you may qualify for as a spouse, dependent, or survivor. And find out what you're eligible for as a family member caring for a Veteran with disabilities.

VA department information

Learn more about the VA departments that manage our benefit and health care

The Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW)

Northeast Florida MOWW #250

Massing of Colors – 17 February 2024

Invitation to Participate and/or Attend



Massing of Colors Ceremony

You are Cordially Invited to a Massing of Colors Ceremony
on February 17, 2024 10 AM at
Ridgeview High School Cafetorium
466 Madison Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32065

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

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

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

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



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

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

Please RSVP NLT 15 December 2023 to Chapter Commander, CWO David McCuiston via email at davidmcc44@outlook.com, or by telephone at 423-402-1643.

Patriotic Education – Massing of Colors Ceremony

Massing of the Colors is a patriotic ceremony held to rededicate our faith in the United States, to present our support to the National Colors, and the Servicemen and Servicewomen those Colors represent. MOWW chapters conduct Massing of the Colors ceremonies throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. These ceremonies usually involve color guard units from: Active Duty, Reserve and National



Guard military units; Senior and Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) units; armed services auxiliary organizations; state militias; veteran and civic groups; police, sheriff and fire departments; and Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations.

Please find attached announcement of the February 17, 2024 event at Ridgeview High School, Orange Park, Florida, which is hosted by the Ridgeview High School Navy Junior ROTC Unit. This is a great community service and patriotic education event.

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

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

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

Please RSVP NLT 15 December 2023 to Chapter Commander, CWO David McCuiston via email at davidmcc44@outlook.com, or by telephone at 423-402-1643.

Sincerely, and very respectfully, David McCuiston, Chapter Commander

Northeast Florida MOWW #250, davidmcc44@outlook.com, 423-402-1643



DELIVER
the Dream



FAMILY RETREAT

For Veterans and their family

FEBRUARY 9-11, 2024

Florida FFA Leadership Training Center
Haines City, Florida

Activities

Team building
Interactive games
Discussion groups
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More Information

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contact@deliverthedream.org



FLORIDA PANTHERS
FOUNDATION

The
Wawa
Foundation

From the St. Johns County Parks & Recreation Dept.

Do you know a Military Veteran with a *Blank Space* on their calendar? Check out our upcoming Veteran Programs (SJC Parks and Recreation's Version).

Veteran Fishing: Don't be overwhelmed by fishing regulations, *Shake It Off* and learn all about Keeping It Legal in September. Then join us to explore the *Wonderland* of Surf Fishing in October!

Veteran Art: Discover your artistic *Style* and try out a different art medium every month. Upcoming programs include Print Making and Pumpkin Painting!

Veteran Kayaking: *I Know Places* for some great wildlife viewing in and *Out Of The Woods* around Hallowes Cove and in Deep Creek this fall.

All You Had To Do Was Stay until the end of this post and you'd find the link for more information and program registration here: <https://bit.ly/46HMhEt>



The Jacksonville Naval Museum Needs You!

SKILLS NEEDED:

Docents
Cleaning
Welders
Metal Workers
Painters
Cashiers
Electricians
& More

JACKSONVILLE NAVAL MUSEUM

We need

YOU!



Volunteers are the backbone of every museum!

Step up to help out today!

Please don't wait for someone else to do it.

*Email our Volunteer Coordinator at
volunteer@jaxnavalmuseum.org*



WHAT TO DO:

Submit your name & contact information along with your skills using the above email.

The flags in the poster represent the 46 missing men that do not have photos. (Their names are listed to the right of each column)



HOW DISABILITY RATINGS WORK

SERVICE CONNECTED PERCENTAGE	DESCRIPTION
0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 point Veteran preference in federal hiring *Compensable & Non-Compensable* No cost health care and prescription drugs for service connected disabilities (if income limits are met) *Compensable & Non-Compensable* Travel allowance for scheduled appointments for care at a VA medical facility or VA authorized health care facility *Compensable & Non-Compensable* Commissary and Exchange Privileges *Compensable & Non-Compensable* Use of commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online. *Compensable & Non-Compensable* Waiver of VA funding fee for VA home loan *Compensable* Burial and plot allowance *Compensable*
10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost health care and prescription medications for service connected disabilities Travel allowance for scheduled appointments for care at a VA medical facility or VA authorized health care facility Waiver of VA funding fee for home loan 10 point Veteran preference in federal hiring Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (with a serious employment handicap) Burial and plot allowance Commissary and Exchange Privileges Use of commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online.
20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost health care and prescription medications for service connected disabilities Travel allowance for scheduled appointments for care at a VA medical facility or VA authorized health care facility Waiver of VA funding fee for home loan 10 point Veteran preference in federal hiring Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Burial and plot allowance Commissary and Exchange Privileges Use of commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online.
30-40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost health care and prescription medications for service connected disabilities Travel allowance for scheduled appointments for care at a VA medical facility or VA authorized health care facility Waiver of VA funding fee for home loan 10 point Veteran preference in federal hiring - Direct hire authority Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Additional compensation for eligible dependents (may include aid and attendance for eligible spouse) Burial and plot allowance Commissary and Exchange Privileges Use of commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online.
50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost health care and prescription medications Travel allowance for scheduled appointments for care at a VA medical facility or VA authorized health care facility Waiver of VA funding fee for home loan 10 point Veteran preference in federal hiring - Direct hire authority Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Additional compensation for eligible dependents (may include aid and attendance for eligible spouses) Concurrent receipt of military retired pay Burial and plot allowance Commissary and Exchange Privileges Use of commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online.
60-90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost health care and prescription medications Travel allowance for scheduled appointments for care at a VA medical facility or VA authorized health care facility Waiver of VA funding fee for home loan 10 point Veteran preference in federal hiring - Direct hire authority Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Additional compensation for eligible dependents (may include aid and attendance for eligible spouses) Concurrent receipt of military retired pay Individual Unemployability (must be unemployable due to service connected disabilities) - Dependents Educational Assistance (unemployable condition must be considered permanent) : Special restorative training, CHAMPVA-Civilian Health and Medical Program (unemployable condition must be considered permanent), Dental care (if rated unemployable) Burial and plot allowance Commissary and Exchange Privileges Use of commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online.
100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost health care and prescription medications Travel allowance for scheduled appointments for care at a VA medical facility or VA authorized health care facility No cost dental care Waiver of VA funding fee for home loan 10 point Veteran preference in federal hiring - Direct hire authority Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Additional compensation for eligible dependents (may include aid and attendance for eligible spouses) Concurrent receipt of military retired pay Dependents Education Assistance (must be considered permanent) - Special restorative training CHAMPVA-Civilian Health and Medical Program (must be considered permanent) Burial and plot allowance Uniformed Services ID card
100% with an additional separate 60%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Housebound Commissary and Exchange Privileges Use of commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in-person and online.

This matrix is the creation of former and current members of the Veterans Benefits Administration Web Communications Office.
VA Derivative Benefits Eligibility Service-Connected Matrix: https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/derivative_sc.asp



The Florida Veterans Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to those who have contributed to supporting Florida Veterans by purchasing a Gadsden Flag license plate. Through the sales of these distinctive plates, the foundation raises funds that help provide essential programs, services, and outreach materials. With each purchase, supporters display their solidarity with Veterans and actively participate in improving their well-being and honoring their sacrifices. Get your plate today at:

<https://www.helpflvets.org/gadsden-plate>.





Stories of Service

St. Johns County Veterans Oral History Project



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

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

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

A sincere thanks to them all.



View the Digital Exhibit:

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



Main: 904-824-2872

Research Library: 904-825-2333

271 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084

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



Remember

What Our Medal Represents

Red:

The 3 ancient Vietnamese Empires of Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin

Yellow:

The Imperial color of Vietnam

Green:

Surrounded by expansive jungle

A handwritten signature in gold ink, located on the right side of the text block.

Inspired by Tet Media, the Nam

From the VFW Aux-National Organization

Spread patriotism through song!



Youth are encouraged to enter the VFW Auxiliary's national anthem singing contest, Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! Contestants may sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" in the arrangement and genre of their choice: rock, pop, reggae, R&B, hip-hop, country, classical and other genres are accepted. But they can't change the words!

The contest consists of two grade divisions: K-8 and 9-12. Entries are due to a local VFW Auxiliary by March 31, 2024.

Visit <https://vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/youth-activities/> for contest eligibility, rules, an entry form, to see the 2023 winners' videos and more.



WOMEN SURVIVORS: BREAKING STIGMA RESOURCES AND PREVENTION

Women telling their stories
about breaking the stigma and
showing how they survived



MARINE FOR LIFE NETWORK

MARINE FOR LIFE NETWORK

Connecting transitioning Marines and their family members to education resources, employment opportunities, and other Veterans services that aid in their career and life goals outside of military service.

ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A **MARINE!**

Marine for Life Network can guide your search for:



Career & Technical Opportunities



Educational Opportunities



Entrepreneurial Endeavors

NETWORKING IS KEY

Linked in



Our online network utilizes LinkedIn to help Marines network with one another and connect with employers who want to hire Marines.

Face to Face Network



We focus on connecting Marine Veterans to local and national resources, as well as encouraging networking through Marine For Life events and meet ups.

[company/marine-for-life-network](https://www.linkedin.com/company/marine-for-life-network)

marineforlife.org

866-645-8762

[/MarineForLifeNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/MarineForLifeNetwork)



CATHOLIC CHARITIES

www.ccbjax.org

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

In an effort to assist children and families of Anchor Academy Elementary School and the Mayport Area, We are partnering with Feeding Northeast Florida and Humana Military to provide fresh produce, protein, and pantry staples.

This is a touchless, drive-through food giveaway. Please follow typical school pickup line procedures and remain in your car with windows up. You will pop your trunk for volunteers to place the food inside.

**Every 4th Saturday of the month
Starts at 9:00 a.m.**

**555 Wonderwood Dr.
Jacksonville, FL, 32233**



dcps.duvalschools.org/anchoracademy



**800-MyVA411
(800) 698-2411**

- LIVE ASSISTANCE**
General information, directory assistance and technical support for VA.gov
- VA HEALTH CARE**
Eligibility, enrollment, locations and COVID-19
- COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE**
MISSION Act eligibility, copayments
- NATIONAL CEMETERIES**
Burial benefits, interment scheduling and headstone/Veteran marker
- VETERANS CRISIS LINE**
Immediate connection to caring, qualified responders
- DEBT MANAGEMENT**
Debt details, payment options and debtor rights
- FACILITY LOCATOR**
Locations of medical centers, benefits offices or cemeteries
- BENEFITS ASSISTANCE**
Information about a variety of VA benefits
- HOMELESS VETERANS LINE**
Information and support for homeless and at-risk callers
- COVID-19 INFORMATION**
Frequently asked questions and live assistance for COVID-related questions

VETERANS CRISIS LINE 988

As of July 16, 2022 the United States transitioned to using the three digit dialing code of 988 press 1 in addition to the existing Veterans Crisis Line of 1-800-273-8255 press 1

FACTS ABOUT 988

ACCESSIBLE - It serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the U.S.

COMPREHENSIVE - 988 is a direct connection to compassionate care and support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress whether that is thoughts of suicide mental health or substance use crisis or any other kind of emotional distress

FOR EVERYONE - People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one or someone who may need crisis support



988

Call **988**, press 1 for Free, Confidential, 24/7
Mental Health Support



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
North Florida / South Georgia Veterans Health System

71822, 1/99, 3/24

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS VETERAN HOMEOWNERS SAINT JOHNS COUNTY

FREE HOME REHAB

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

QUALIFICATIONS

Participant Eligibility:

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

Property Eligibility:

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

* Please review full eligibility criteria on our website *

CONTACT US TODAY

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

Please visit our website to fill
out an application

WWW.OPLIFELINE.ORG



LIFELINE INC.

RESERVE COMPONENT TRANSITION ASSISTANCE ADVISORS



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

I am here to help with the following benefits:

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

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

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

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

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



Thank you for serving, now let me serve you.

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

David "Dave" Kennett

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

DIRECTION | BENEFITS | COMPASSION



RESERVE COMPONENT SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS

Do you need direction to your benefits?

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



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



BENEFITS:

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



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



Locate your closest RCTAA here!



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

From American Legion 5th District FL

IMPORTANT VETERAN INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

NEVER release an ORIGINAL copy.

APPOINT an administrator for minor children.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE: contact your County Veterans' Service Officer

KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION



CALLING ALL KOREAN WAR AND KOREAN DEFENSE VETERANS

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



VA SURVIVOR BENEFITS & THE PACT ACT

ESGR4U

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



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

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

How to Apply for DIC and/or Accrued Benefits

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



Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

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



Accrued Benefits

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

Additional Survivor Benefits Available:



Burials and Burial Allowance

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



Final Monthly Payment

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



Home Loan Guaranty

Certificate of Eligibility is available for surviving spouses receiving DIC.



Education and Training

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



Health Care

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

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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

Surviving Spouse Milestones

Not all milestones apply to every person situation

One Year Mark:

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

Two Year Mark:

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

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

- Apply for Home of Selection (HOS) extension

Three Year Mark:

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

Spouse Turns 52:

- If disabled, can remain and retain SSA Survivor Benefits

Spouse Turns 55:

- Can remarry and not lose SBP eligibility

Spouse Turns 57:

- Can remarry not lose DIC eligibility

Spouse Turns 60:

- Can remarry and retain SSA Survivor Benefits

Surviving Youth Milestones

Not all milestones apply to every person situation

Child Turns 16:

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

Child Turns 18:

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

Child Turns 21:

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

Child Turns 22:

- Loss of Child-Only SBP regardless of school enrollment

Child Turns 23:

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

Child Turns 26:

- Loss of TRICARE Young Adult

Child Turns 33:

- Loss of Fry Scholarship eligibility

FLORIDA SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Thanks!

Nick Howland

Executive Director, The Fire Watch

www.thefirewatch.org

904.525.1761



Vietnam Veterans of America



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

Chapter/President/email/Location

1046	Albert White	
1048	Bob Adkins	adk123robert@outlook.com
1059	Dave Treffinger	dtreffinger433@msn.com
1084	Bill Jefferson	bill_jefferson@comcast.net
1088	Roy (Corky) Rudd	corkstopper50@yahoo.com; Nassau
1092	Forest Hope	foresthope@usa.net; Gainesville
1134	Marvin Lagle	mdlagle@gmail.com; Baker



REMEMBER WHAT OUR MEDAL STANDS FOR:

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

Veterans Council of Clay County:

President: Ansil Lewis

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

Mission Statement:

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



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

What the Council has done:

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

SA-0003147064-01

Veterans Crisis Line

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

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

STAND BY THEM
Confidential help for Veterans and their families

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

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

Military/Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255

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

Confidential chat at MilitaryCrisisLine.net or text 838255



Legal Aid for Veterans

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

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

1.866.486.6161

Call Today!

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



We Can Help With

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

Supported by the:



Become a Watch Stander with The Fire Watch

Veterans Councils of Northeast Florida



BAKER COUNTY

President: Larry Porterfield

Meetings:

Second Thursday of each month

Location:

MacClenny Primitive Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall on North Boulevard

Time : 1800 (6pm)

CLAY COUNTY

President: Harry Silvers

Meetings:

First Wednesday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1400 (2pm)

DUVAL COUNTY

President

Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 37
Main Building
San Juan Avenue

Time: 1900 (7 pm)

NASSAU COUNTY

President: Mike Doran

Meetings:

First Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

St. Johns County

President: Bill Dudley

Meetings:

Last Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

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



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:

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

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

Please join our group on Facebook at:

<http://veteranscouncilsjc.org>

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

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

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

You may have noticed the Veterans Council's new logo, it was created by Roy Havekost.

He can be contacted at webmaster@veteranscouncilsjc.org

*Veterans Council of St. Johns County,
"Helping All Veterans"*

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County welcomes article submissions from all County Veterans & organizations. Articles should be of interest to all and veterans related. Submissions may be edited &/or shortened and used if space permits.

Send to: rothfeldm@gmail.com



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

Our formation date was July 4, 2001 in a proclamation issued by the St. Johns County Commissioners. It is composed of representatives of the various veterans' organizations within St. Johns County.

The Veteran's Council will work with city and county governments and other local organizations to achieve the mutual goal to provide a central agency to assist in the coordination and presentation of matters concerning veterans and veterans activities in St. Johns County.

The Veteran's Council will endeavor to precipitate, stimulate and assist various organizations as they perform patriotic events. One of the major purposes is the promotion and education of national patriotic matters.

**The St. Johns County Veterans Council meets the
last Thursday of the month at 7 pm.**

***The Veterans Council will meet at the County
Health & Human Services Building,
200 San Sebastian View
Auditorium, 1st floor***

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

(physical location)

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

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

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

The views expressed in The Patriot Reader Newsletter articles, submissions and spotlights are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County or the editors of The Patriot Reader. It is the purpose of this periodical to share a variety of information that pertain to local veterans and their organizations.