



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

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St. Augustine, FL 32085

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Volume 6, Issue 2

Newsletter Date: February, 2017

Message from the Chairman

Fellow Veterans,

This week our Veterans Council met a major milestone....the launch of our long awaited Veterans Treatment Court. It was an impressive ceremony with Chief Judge Terry Perkins speaking on the importance of a Veterans Treatment Court and presenting the Administration Order establishing the VTC. Also attending were Senior Judge Dave Beck, Judge Brian Feigenbaum, and Judge Steve Henderson, each delivering remarks about the success of the Veterans Treatment Court in their district. I was pleased to be on the dais with each of the Jurists and to offer remarks on behalf of the Veterans council and the 23000 veterans in St. Johns County. Judge Howard McGillin was the Master of Ceremony and will be the presiding judge for the VTC.

Our Veterans Treatment Court has been nearly 4 years in the making with a lot of hard work by our VTC committee of volunteers to bring

it to fruition. A big Bravo Zulu to all who worked unselfishly to make this program a reality. The day to day administration of our program will be under the guidance of Brian Jacobson. Brian is extremely qualified to take the helm having served in the US Navy for 28 years and is a retired Naval Officer. His educational background and work in related fields since his retirement without question qualifies him to assume the duties of Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator. Welcome aboard, Brian. The Veterans Council looks forward to working with you.

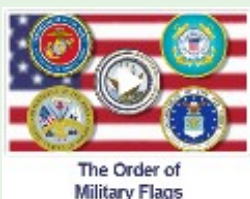
It was my distinct honor and privilege to be this year's honoree at the 2017 Annual Military Ball on Saturday, January 14 at the Mark W. Lance Armory in downtown St. Augustine. The Forward March Committee under the leadership of Ron and Nancy Birchall did an outstanding job of putting together a gala worthy of the tribute to our military and veterans whose purpose it was to honor. The funds raised from the evening's proceeds



goes to restore the Hamblen House which is the home of American Legion Post 37. Once finished, this will not only be a historical landmark but will be one of the best dining venues in downtown St. Augustine as well as providing a much needed meeting facility for our many veteran organizations.

A big shout out to all who volunteered on Saturday morning, January 14 to help pick up the wreaths at our St. Augustine National Cemetery. The wreaths, placed on each of the headstones during our Wreaths Across America program on Dec. 17 have to be collected by the second Saturday in January. There was an impressive showing of volunteers this year including many youth volunteers.

Bill Dudley, Chairman
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County



Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



Celebrating New Years at Lassen We drop our own Ball





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



JNC SC Chairman,
Ray Quinn

The Support Committee invites everyone to attend its **next scheduled meeting, on Monday, ?????, 2017**. The meeting will be at **7:00pm**. The meeting will take place at Community Hospice, **4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257 in Conference Room A**.

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

Chairman: Ray Quinn

Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley, Treasurer: John Mountcastle

Assistant Treasurer: Michael Rothfeld, Secretary: Kathy Church

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

JAG Officer: Patrick Bennett, Historian: Jody Raymond

Our Nation Wide Progress to Date as of 1/01/2017

Total Funeral Homes Visited - 2,022

Cremains Found - 14,423

Veterans Cremains Identified - 3,267

Veterans Interred - 3,003



AHCA Announces 2017 Gold Seal Award Winners

TALLAHASSEE -- The Florida Agency for Health Care Administration announced Jan. 17 that 11 nursing facilities have received the Gold Seal Award from the Governor's Panel on Excellence in Long-Term Care, including two state veterans' homes.

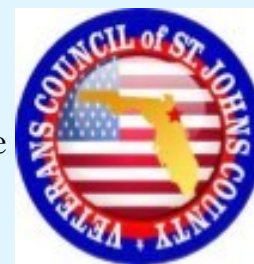
Among the new award recipients for 2017 are the Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home in Land O' Lakes and the **Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home in St. Augustine**. They join the Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home in Panama City as one of 37 statewide recipients of the award, which recognizes long-term care facilities that consistently provide their residents with exceptionally high levels of care.

Governor Rick Scott said, "Gold Seal facilities represent the very best nursing homes that Florida has to offer. Our state is dedicated to providing our seniors with the best possible care, and these facilities help give families the peace of mind that their loved ones are in good hands. I would like to thank these nursing homes and their staff members for their commitment to providing exceptional care for elderly Floridians."

"I'm very proud of the men and women in our network of award-winning veterans' homes," said Glenn Sutphin, executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. "The Gold Seal Award is another reason Florida is the most veteran-friendly state in the nation."

Facilities that wish to be considered for the Gold Seal Award must be in operation for a minimum of 30 months and meet rigorous standards for quality of care, financial soundness, family and community involvement, training and workforce stability. Facilities must also have an excellent regulator history in the 30 months preceding their application.

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, a summary of year's accomplishments



Supported Memorial Day Ceremonies at the St Augustine and Jacksonville National Cemeteries

The Council fostered patriotism at County July 4th events

Initiated a new non-profit program, Vets-4-Cops to stand in solidarity with our police and first responders; with the support of Sheriff Shoar we hope to take this national

Veterans Day Weekend: second annual Veterans Day Parade, military Film Festival with VC produced documentaries featuring stories of local veterans in WW II, Korea, Vietnam, K9's for Warriors with PTSD and those held captive as POWs.

Supported the Lee Greenwood concert as a fund raiser for county veterans not for profits.

Raised \$ 5,000 for the new DAV van, through a grant submission

Did a one hour weekly veterans radio show on WSOS

Completed training for mentors for our Veterans Treatment Court which will start mid-January

Took part in Wreaths Across America and placed wreaths on every headstone at St Augustine National Ceremony

Worked with County to fund proposal preparation for a new CBOC near the County Health & Human Services Building

Supported the Homeless Veterans Standdown at the Elks Lodge 829 providing haircuts, showers, food, dental exams, clothing, etc.

Continuing communicating with veterans through social media with its monthly Patriot Reader newsletter, website and Facebook page.

Supported Clyde E Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Supported activities for Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee

We look forward to 2017 as another good year but encourage all member organizations to get more involved in Council activities.....

By Nancy Birchall – nancybirchall@gmail.com

Forward March hosts the third annual St. Augustine Military Ball to honor LT COL (Ret) William “Bill” Dudley, Chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.



Evening gowns, tuxedos and military dress uniforms were to be admired as guests greeted one another across tables glittering with gold accents and white orchids. The elegant occasion on Saturday, January 14, 2017, was the Forward March, Inc. third annual St. Augustine Military Ball at the Mark Lance Armory in St. Augustine. The proceeds from this event, attended by over 250 guests, go to the renovation of the historic Hamblen House, home of American Legion Post #37.

A unique and prestigious addition to this year’s Silent Auction was having prominent local artist, Matthew Cutter, complete a beautiful painting as the evening progressed. The painting was then auctioned off to the delighted highest bidder.

The 2017 recipient of the Forward March, Inc. Military Achievement Award was Bill Dudley. He was honored for his outstanding dedication and service to the veterans of St. Johns County. Serving as the chairman of the Veterans Council and also the chairman of the Navy League of St. Augustine, Bill has been the “Champion” of the veteran community for years.

The two previous recipients of this award were MG (Ret) Emmitt R. Titshaw, Jr. and MG (Ret) Kennedy C. Bullard.

Serving as the Co-Chairmen of the Ball for the third straight year were Dan and Helene Sullivan. The Chris Thomas Band provided music for dancing, and The Black Molly Grill catered the delicious dinner.



The Military Ball originated in 2015 as a 450th military tribute, and Forward March plans to continue the tradition through the years. The public is invited to attend the 2018 Ball to be held on January 13. For more information call Nancy Birchall at 904-794-2883.

From the St Augustine Record: By Jared Keever, jared.keever@staugustine.com

Veterans, home from war and readjusting to life in society, who find themselves on the wrong side of the law will now have a chance to get a little help from the criminal justice system.

During a ceremonial session at the St. Johns County courthouse on Thursday afternoon, 7th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Terence Perkins officially opened the county's Veterans Treatment Court, naming Circuit Judge Howard McGillin as presiding judge.



During the hour long ceremony, McGillin, a veteran himself, having served as an Army lawyer with the Judge Advocate General's Corps, said the day's events were the culmination of a 4-year process to bring the program to the county.

He credited the effort of Veterans Council of St. Johns County chairman, Bill Dudley, and the vision of Senior Judge David B. Beck, who started the 7th Circuit's first Veterans Court in Volusia County when he was still a circuit judge.

Both Beck and Dudley were in attendance Thursday, as were County Judges Bryan A. Feigenbaum and Steven C. Henderson, both of whom preside over Veterans Court in Volusia County these days.

All men shared success stories from the court and praised the efforts of St. Johns County officials to get the program up and running here.

"There is indisputable evidence that these programs work and there is a cost savings to the taxpayers and lives can be saved, and productive men and women have been turned back to society," Dudley said. "The bottom line of all of this is it is the right thing for us to do."

McGillin has been making the rounds in the county recently, touting the success of such programs and advocating for the creation of one here.

In May, he got approval from County Commissioners to fund the administrative costs in the program, and in September he spoke with a group of county residents at St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church in Lincolnville to describe what the program does.

In general it is meant to help veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other conditions, who find themselves in trouble with the law. Problems for veterans living with those conditions, McGillin said then, can often manifest as drug charges for individuals who are "self-medicating" or they can include DUI or even domestic violence charges.

The charges and legal system can have a compounding effect as convictions make it harder to find jobs and

St Augustine Record, January 22, 2017 GUEST EDITORIAL: Veterans Court will “welcome home’ desperate vets”

Howard O. McGillin, Jr., Volusia County

The news reminds us almost every day of the dedication, hard work and sacrifices of the men and women in our armed services. We are grateful to them and to their families for what they do for all of us.

As a former military attorney, and now as a judge, I have seen firsthand the challenges that veterans face. Veterans come home to reunite with their families and start or restart a civilian career, but may suffer from post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury or other physical and psychological problems. Unfortunately, some engage in misconduct, including domestic violence, DUI, substance abuse and theft to support a habit. They may lose touch with their families or become homeless. They often cannot work, and their disease, notably PTSD, often prevents them from seeking help or staying in therapy. Instead they end up with frequent law enforcement and judicial encounters and get caught in a vicious cycle that often ends in jail or suicide.

In many ways they have not made it all the way home. The hidden wounds of modern battle keep them separated from us. The old way of doing business is clearly not working.

This week, our circuit court has launched a Veterans Treatment Court in St. Johns County. This program joins those already in existence in Volusia County and across the river in Clay, Duval and Nassau counties.

We’re grateful for the support and funding from the County Commission to hire a program coordinator. According to the U.S. Census, we have over 23,000 veterans in St. Johns County. That number grows every year.

Veterans Treatment Court allows judges to resolve cases by using a multi-disciplinary approach with each veteran. A new participant must admit he or



she needs help and must be actively involved in treatment.

The Court partners with the Department of Veterans Affairs to make sure the veteran is getting access to medical and social benefits and transitional housing, if needed. The veteran must attend regular court sessions and required treatment, while maintaining a clean and sober lifestyle. The court will also bring together other resources from community partners, such as EPIC Behavioral Health and St. Johns Legal Aid and other social welfare organizations. If the veteran can work, the court will monitor attendance and performance. In many ways, a Veterans Court participant should be the model employee — on time, clean and sober, and ready to work!

The veteran won't be alone. Participant will have a trained veteran mentors who will be there as a "battle buddy" as the veterans fight their way back. In many ways, the Veterans Treatment Court organization mimics the military structure with a team approach that the veteran should find familiar. The judge acts, in many ways, like the Commanding Officer of the team — encouraging good behavior and discouraging negative behavior.

To be clear, Veterans Court is not a free pass for veterans. It is not an easy program. It is hard work. If participants don't keep up with the program, they face sanctions including jail time, additional community service and even prison. But here's the beauty of the program: Rarely anyone ends up in prison. The Buffalo, N.Y. court where this idea began has a 98 percent success rate, meaning only 2 percent have failed out or re-offended. There isn't any other criminal justice program, anywhere in the country, with a similar record

As the presiding judge, I look forward to a day a year or so from now, to the first graduation ceremony. At the end of that ceremony I will be able to salute the first graduate and tell him or her, "Welcome home."

Circuit Judge Howard O. McGillin, Jr. presides over unified family court and Veterans Treatment Court at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center in St. Augustine. A retired U.S. Army colonel, he was appointed to the bench in 2014. He served in the U.S. Army for 24 years, including 15 years as a military attorney.

Record EDITORIAL: Veterans Treatment Court a good first step

January 22, 2017



Some veterans will tell you that what they get when they come home from duty is an adrenalin dive. They've been wired tight. They've lived on the edge for a while with a very clear purpose, but a shrouded and deceptive enemy. Anyone on a street corner at any time could be the enemy. It takes a mental toll.

And when it stops suddenly after they return home, it doesn't stop completely. The enemy is gone, but in too many cases so is a sense of purpose. Camaraderie was key on duty. Everyone understood. Now no one does. Coming home can be more unsettling than leaving it.

One in six returning vets who served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom suffer from substance abuse issues. Others just feel twisted.

Thursday, St. Johns County took a big step in helping the more mentally wounded of these returning soldiers, opening a special Veterans Treatment Court designed to divert veterans from the regular court system and bring them into a unique program designed to work for what ails them.

Circuit Judge Howard McGillin will be the presiding judge. He's a military vet himself and it probably wouldn't work any other way. The program gives vets who've had run-ins with the law a way out of the downward spiral that's much more familiar to them. It

includes strict rules, measured treatments, regular testing for drug and alcohol and, probably most important, comradeship with others who've been there and find themselves in the same place today. The structure of the program is both familiar and essential.

We spoke with a success story who went through a program in another state. She wishes to remain anonymous. But she praised the program and said it saved her — from her.

But she'll tell you that the Veteran's Treatment Court is one leg of a necessary stool of structure. Another leg is having the mentoring part of the program. Many programs have too few of these special people to push one-on-one into the difficulties ahead.

Another important piece of the whole is having a VA hospital facility nearby. We're working on that here, but it's a long way off for those who need the help now. In many cases, VA facilities have molded their treatment options to the exact needs of the Treatment Court participants. It's a symbiotic success story.

Finally many need meaningful jobs that offer a measure of stability and pride. And our local businesses can be so key to that.

It's a long road for those participating in the Veteran Treatment Court.

Our source told us that it works sometimes with only the commitment of the individual. But it works much more often with the commitment of the community. We need to keep that in mind. We need to make our part work.

Veterans sink deeper into substance abuse and get into more trouble. Some end up in prison, and, in the worst cases, some commit suicide.

Feigenbaum said Thursday there are quite a few with the potential for such a sad story.

He said over 2 million men and women have served in the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is believed over 300,000 of those have PTSD and another 300,000 have issues associated with TBI.

“That’s a lot of people,” he said. “And less than half of them seek help.”

Those who don’t seek help end up in court, he said, but the Veterans Court track can set them on a path that doesn’t end with jail time or saddling them with convictions.

In September, McGillin described a little of how the process would work.

Qualifying offenses include misdemeanor drug-and alcohol-related offenses as well as some lower level felonies.

The State Attorney’s Office, in such cases, can offer Veterans Court as an alternative track from the traditional justice system. If they don’t, the Public Defender’s Office can ask for it, in which case the judge would have the final say.

Veterans must be eligible for VA benefits, meaning that those who have dishonorable or bad-conduct discharges won’t be eligible.

Those meeting initial requirements must admit to the crime they are accused of committing.

Once in the system, they have to complete the 12- to 18-month program, which is modeled after the drug court program already in place in the county. During their time in the program veterans must stay employed if they are able to work, submit to drug testing and attend all VA appointments for treatment.



Local veterans who will be mentor in the Court

Once completed, veterans are eligible to have charges dismissed or their records expunged.

“I can tell you that the last thing a Veterans Court is is soft on crime,” Perkins said in his remarks on Thursday. “There is an accountability at levels that you won’t believe until you see the results, and that is why they are so successful.”

And the success is impressive, according to McGillin, who said recidivism rates range from 1 to 3 percent for those who complete the program.

Feigenbaum said that, given the nature of today’s wars which demand numerous tours and extended deployments, helping those who are struggling to transition home is the only right thing to do.

By Anne Heymen, Record correspondent

10 WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: GREG WHITE ‘It takes all of us working together to make a change’

West Augustine resident and community advocate Gregory “Greg” B. White should change his middle initial from “B” to “E” — E for education.



“I’m a firm believer in education,” White emphasized recently while seated in a community building at the Collier Park facility located at the corner of West King Street and Holmes Boulevard. For the person who has a good education, the jobs come, said White, a 1965 graduate of Richard J. Murray High School,

The message of a good education is one of the many causes White embraces through his numerous community outlets including as chairman of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee since its founding in 2005; as chairman of the West Augustine Steering Committee of the Community Redevelopment Agency; and as a life member of American Legion Post No. 194.

With the latter, White is proud of the Kids Safe Zone program — an after-school tutoring program, which, since its inception, has produced some fine young people who have continued their education at the college level and gone on to excel in life. “Early childhood education is the key to success,” White emphasized.

With both the Weed and Seed and the CRA, the ultimate goal is improvement for all, White continued. Concept of the Weed and Seed, a program brought to the community by former U.S. Rep. John L. Mica, is to weed out the criminal environment and feed the economic development. When federal funding for the program was stopped, White said, St. Johns County Sheriff David Shoar saw the importance of the program and continued the funding. “A lot of communities didn’t,” White points out, but Shoar realized how important it was.

CRA COMPONENTS

Goals of the CRA are similar, White said. There are six components to improve the quality of life in West Augustine, ranging from infrastructure and policing to cultural, economic development and affordable housing and the elimination of blight.

Among accomplishments of the CRA have been the opening of a Dollar General Store on West King Street, establishment of the Solomon Calhoun Center, city water for more than 90 percent of

the residents, and the demolishing of hundreds of old homes that were in disrepair.

White is a “man of integrity, a man of compassion, a man of caring. He gives more than he receives. He’s phenomenal,” said Dwala Willis, Weed and Seed site coordinator.

In fact, once Willis is asked a question about White it’s hard to get another word in. White gives of “his time, his resources and his compassion,” said Willis. “He’s a good leader. He never asks for anything in return. He stands for what’s right, what’s needed and he leads by example.”

Similar words of praise come from Thomas Crawford, who has worked with White on numerous projects including American Legion Post No. 194. “Since he retired from [Florida Power & Light] his whole passion has been the community,” Crawford said of White. “This is what drives him — community service, and he has always fought for the underdog. He’s been working effectively with the county probably since about 2000, and he’s learned to be every effective with the commissioners and county staff.

“He’s literally,” Crawford concludes of White, “obtained tens of millions of dollars for West Augustine.”

Born in Edgar, Florida — a spot located between Hawthorne and Palatka and also known as Johnson — White, 69, has lived in St. Augustine since the fifth grade. He moved here with his parents, George and Martha Armstrong, when both were hired at the Florida School for The Deaf and The Blind. White retired from FPL as an energy consultant, and his wife, Lydia, retired from Flagler Hospital. After high school, White served two years in the U.S. Army, including one year in Vietnam.

He and his wife are parents of four — Greg White Jr., Joel White and Deandria Palmer, all of St. Augustine; and Monica Anderson, Palm Coast. There are grandchildren, but “too many to count,” and there are four great-grandchildren.

In addition to his leadership in CRA, Weed and Seed and American Legion, on which he serves on the executive board, White is a life member of the DAV, Vietnam Veterans of America and VFW. He also serves on the FSDB Foundation board.

He loves St. Augustine and West Augustine, he says, because, growing up, West Augustine was a “close-knit” community. Things have changed, he admits, but it’s still a great place to live.

As to being selected one of the 10 who have made a difference this past year, he terms it “an honor.”

“I really, really appreciate that.” However, he says, it takes more than one person to make a difference. “It takes all of us working together to make a change.”

New year, new hopes for VA clinic

County forges ahead with bid to build permanent care facility for veterans

By Jake Martin, jake.martin@staugustine.com

One thing the new year could bring is some progress regarding the St. Augustine Community-Based Outpatient Clinic. St. Johns County and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs continue collaborating on plans to design and build a new, permanent facility for the county's veterans.

County commissioners on Dec. 20 unanimously approved spending an additional \$65,000 to beef up a consulting team working on the county's offer to the VA to make the clinic a reality.

The county has already spent \$50,000 on the Architectural and Engineering Task Order and will have to draw from General Fund Reserves to bring in a security, technology and communication design specialist as well as a medical planner.

Damon Douglas, project manager, told commissioners the VA's requirements for the facility are "voluminous" and that staff and consultants didn't initially realize complexities of certain components.

"We need to be sure about this particular cost," Douglas said. "When we make an offer to the VA, we really need to know we have a good idea of what it would actually cost to build the building."

County Commissioner Jeb Smith expressed concerns with the unexpected expenditure and the broadening scope of the process but reiterated his support for the project as a whole.

"I'm definitely for the project and I definitely don't want to go into it without the proper data," he said. "That's what this is securing, but I don't want to end up spending more and more and more on this, unanticipated. I'm just a little surprised by this one, to be honest with you."

Commission Chair Jimmy Johns echoed Smith's concerns and said the county needs to be sure it has the funds to get the job done.

"This is a perfect example of an immediate need that's needed in our community," he said. "It will take some time to evolve but I want to make sure we have funds in our budget available to meet this need."

Commissioner Jay Morris, a Vietnam veteran, said he was committed helping fellow veterans in the county and asked Douglas if the additional dollars (combined with what's already been spent) constituted a final, firm number.

"Win, lose or draw, that's the number," Douglas replied.

The VA in December 2015 announced its intent to enter into a sole-source contract with the county to lease built-to-suit facility adjacent to the county's Health and Human Services building on San Sebastian View. Douglas said this was after a long series of unfruitful negotiations between the VA and private developers.

The county brought in architectural and engineering support to determine project feasibility and analyze the costs of the VA's construction requirements. It then negotiated with the VA to reduce expensive building components.

A draft offer, expected to be brought before the board at its March 7 meeting, is due to the VA by March 17.

Douglas said the design team will have a conceptual plan ready by the time of the initial offer and that it will be fine-tuned over time, likely with input from the VA.

He said the county has issued requests for qualifications for a construction management firm to complete that function. The county plans to shortlist qualifying firms and to work alongside those firms as the county solidifies its plans, until the point where firms can issue price proposals to complete the project.

Douglas said he expected a building would be complete in less than two years, upon the VA's approval.

The VA currently provides services from temporary facilities at the intersection of Old Moultrie Road and Southpark Boulevard. The process of moving the clinic from its previous location at 1955 U.S. 1 South began several years ago.

St. Johns County notified the VA in 2011 of the possible sale of the property to Lowe's and the requirement for the clinic to relocate by the end of March 2015.

The process was delayed, allowing the VA to open its current location at 195 Southpark Blvd. in September 2015, but not without paying lease extension fines. The VA cited procurement regulations as the reason for overstaying its welcome.

The VA also did not accept a more than \$5 million offer made by the county in August 2014 to build the clinic, citing a regulatory need to keep the process competitive.

Local officials at the time said a contractor was ready to begin work at the Health and Human Services complex site.

The plight of the VA clinic, which serves thousands of veterans, attracted the attention of local, regional and national officials, causing them to get involved and make calls for action.

Bill Dudley, chairman of the St. Johns County Veterans Council, said he imagined everyone was "a little bit overwhelmed" by the long, drawn-out process.

"I think if the VA had done their homework three years ago when we first approached them on co-locating with us at our new Health and Human Services building ... we wouldn't be here today talking about this particular issue," he told commissioners. "They did not choose to do that, so we are where we are today."

Dudley said the council appreciated the monies already invested in the effort and that he supported the request for additional funding. He also stressed a "critical" need for veterans to have a clinic close to other support facilities.

MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT, FEBRUARY – 2017

The Missing in America Project (MIAP) is a registered 501(c)3 Non-profit Corporation. Our intention is to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremains of American veterans. The Missing in America Project was launched nationwide in January, 2007

NATION WIDE PROGRESS AS OF 1/20/2017

Total Funeral Homes Visited - 2,023	Cremains Found - 14,471
Veterans Cremains Identified - 3,288	Veterans Interred - 3,036



FLORIDA PROGRESS AS OF 1/23/2017

Total Funeral Homes Visited – 119	
Cremains Found – 882	Veterans Interred – 122
Spouses Interred – 50	Dependents Interred – 1

MIAP Florida continues to work this project currently actively working in north and south Florida. We hope to start working back in the Tallahassee area in the very near future with a new volunteer coming on board. We also are trying to work with a funeral home in St. Augustine that has over 100 unclaimed cremains.

CALL TO HONOR #11 South Florida National Cemetery, 6501 S State Rd 7, Lake Worth, FL 33449 on Saturday, April 01, 2017, 11:00am

Our current plans for this service will be to inter 13 veterans and 7 spouses of other veterans. This service is open to all members of our communities. If you or your organization would like to participate in this service please contact me. There will be a motorcycle escort of the cremains to the SFNC and all are welcome to join in this escort (motorcycles, cars & trucks).

DONATIONS ACCEPTED All monies raised are devoted exclusively to this program. This is strictly an all-volunteer organization with no salaries, compensation or reimbursement of expenses paid to board members, officers or volunteers. Donations pay for the following:

Copies of Death Certificates, Registered letters to Next of Kin, Insurance, Administration fees, permits, etc., Office Supplies and printing fees, Travel fees (for volunteers traveling over 100 miles for MIAP services, etc.), Fund Raising expenses

Donations can be made in various ways. If you would like to donate to MIAP-FL directly you may write a check to MIAP-FL and mail to the address listed below. You can also visit our website @ www.miap.us and pay via PayPal, credit cards and other methods. Click on Florida if you wish your donations to go to MIAP-FL.

I personally would like to thank all our volunteers who continue to work and put in much time for this project. Currently we have only a handful of active volunteers but we hope to grow across the state. This project will be around for a very long time. Please contact me if you would like to join our TEAM.

MIAP has many Facebook pages if you would like to see what we have been doing across the states. Our website also has videos and pictures from events and services across the USA.

*From Veteran Council member **Fred Dupont**: Watching the news of the Japanese Prime Minister visiting Pearl Harbor today, this memory came back to me.*

A VISIT FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT

One afternoon a gentleman stuck his head in my office door and asked to speak to me. Although I cannot remember his name, he identified himself as a representative of the State Department. It was 1992 and I was then the director of Radar Maintenance School at Fleet Training Center in Norfolk, Virginia. After offering him a cup of coffee, the door was closed and he asked me point blank if I hated the Japanese. Racking my brain trying to get a handle on such a loaded question, I couldn't remember any statement I had made to that affect, responded no, and asked him why he would ask such a question. He told me that because my Uncle Ralph had been killed by the Japanese during WWII he wanted to know if I harbored any hatred for them. I complimented him on doing his homework but, no, that was a long time ago and life moves on. He went on to explain the United States was selling five Aegis class destroyers to Japan that included the MK-XII IFF System (Identification Friend or Foe), the training for which was under my control and that there would soon be two Japanese technicians reporting to me. The State Department did not want an international incident that would jeopardize the sale.



The following Monday I walked into my office to be greeted by a Japanese second class petty officer and a Lieutenant that could not be more than four feet, ten inches tall. Since we were indoors and uncovered, I bowed instead of saluting and her return bow was so low that she won the contest. Fortunately, she could speak English since I did not know a word of Japanese. After summoning the Chief in charge of IFF and explaining the situation to him, he left to induct them in to the class starting that day and I was left worrying if this was going to be the end of my career since the class was four months long and anything could happen.

A few weeks later at the open mess hall for lunch, I saw the Lieutenant sitting by herself and asked if I may join her. My hope was to exchange pleasantries about the differences in our cultures, like if she had been to Busch Gardens in Williamsburg and that sort of thing. Instead she almost immediately turned the conversation to WWII and apologized for Pearl Harbor. The alarm went off in my head, "Danger, Danger, career ender, Danger." Not knowing what else to say, I responded that I thought that Hiroshima and Nagasaki more than made up for Pearl Harbor. She immediately went into a prayerful chant about Hiroshima and I got up and left fully expecting to pack my bags and head home when the State Department gets hold of that conversation. Nothing happened and I even received a note from her after she left my school, thanking me for my hospitality and professional courtesy.

The following is a reprint of the letter my grandparents received from the Secretary of the Navy concerning Uncle Ralph:

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON, 19 November 1945

Mr. and Mrs. William Daniel DuPont
2812 LaViere Street
Jacksonville, Florida

My dear Mr. and Mrs. DuPont:

Your son, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Ralph Cornelius DuPont, United States Naval Reserve, who was attached to Fighter Squadron EIGHTEEN, based aboard the U.S.S. INTREPID has been carried on the official records of the Navy Department as missing in action since 12 October 1944 when his plane was lost during an aerial engagement with enemy planes over Formosa.

On the evening of 11 October 1944, the ships of Task Force THIRTY-EIGHT of which the U.S.S. INTREPID was a member, headed for launching points from which attacks against the enemy were to be made. Flying conditions were generally unfavorable, especially over the target areas. There was wind, cloudiness, and squally weather. Your son's plane took off from the U.S.S. INTREPID in a flight of sixteen planes on the first fighter sweep mission over Shinchiku and Matsuyama Airfields, Formosa. Over Shinchiku Airfield heavy anti-aircraft fire was encountered but no enemy aircraft. Near Taien Airfield, several enemy bombers were attacked and destroyed. The formation was counter-attacked by the enemy fighter planes in great numbers. In the ensuing melee, division formations were broken up and all pilots in the flight were fully occupied in combat. Several planes were seen to crash and one or two pilots were seen to bail out, but no pilots returning were able to identify either planes or pilots. Your son did not return.

In view of the fact that the plane your son was piloting was lost during an aerial engagement, because his name does not appear on any captured and translated Japanese interrogation reports, because his name has not appeared on any lists of personnel liberated from Japanese prisoner of war camps, because there has been no official nor unconfirmed reports that he survived, and in view of the length of time that has elapsed since he was reported missing, I am reluctantly forced to conclude that your son is deceased. In compliance with Section 5 of Public Law 490, 77th Congress, as amended, the death of your son is, for the purpose of determination of pay and allowances, settlement of accounts, and payment of death gratuities, presumed to have occurred on 13 October 1945, which is the day following the expiration of twelve months in the missing status.

Sincere sympathy is extended to you in your loss. It is hoped that you may find comfort in the thought that his sacrifice was made in order that the freedom of his country might be preserved.

Sincerely yours, James Forrestal

Missing in America, FL

Anne Urban Served in WWII and Later Sat on a Shelf for 30 Years

World War II vet Anne Urban died in 1989, but when no one came to claim her remains, her ashes sat on the shelf of a Palm Beach funeral home for nearly 30 years. She was finally interred along with more than a dozen other forgotten vets and military spouses on April 9, 2016, ultimately receiving the honorable burial she certainly deserved.

Urban served as a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Corps, later returning to the United States where she went to law school in Miami and settled down in West Palm Beach. When she passed away at age 67, she was cremated, but no one claimed the ashes. The story is like many others, although the reasons why these military service members' ashes are forgotten is often unknown.

The Missing in America or MIA Project was launched in 2007 to identify and inter the remains of veterans who have been left behind across the nation. It has identified more than 3,000 as of May 2016. American Legion members, local funeral homes and various volunteers have joined the effort under the moving slogan "You Are Not Forgotten."

On April 9, the group organized a military funeral for Urban and the other veterans and spouses left at Palm Beach County funeral homes. The service took place at South Florida National Cemetery and included bagpipe renditions of each branch's anthem as well as the 21-gun salute. More than 200 people, including Palm Beach County Commissioner and Vietnam vet Hal Valeche, showed up to pay their respects to these brave men and women. Attendants, many of whom were unrelated to the deceased, described the ceremony as beautiful, emotional and humbling.

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To Volunteer contact FL State Director of MIAP– Kathy Church,

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THE ARMY IS THE ONLY BRANCH OF THE MILITARY WITHOUT A NATIONAL MUSEUM



The National Museum of the United States Army will serve as the capstone of the Army Museum Enterprise and provide the only comprehensive portrayal of Army history and traditions. The National Army Museum will celebrate the selfless service and sacrifice of over 30 million men and women who have worn the Army uniform since 1775. The Museum will be a technological marvel incorporating the latest advances in museum exhibits while providing advanced educational opportunities that will capture the attention of visitors old and young. As the Army's national landmark, the Museum will honor United States Soldiers – past, present, and future – and provide an interactive educational experience explaining the Army's role in creating and defending our nation, as well as the Army's social initiatives and contributions for more than 240 years.

The Army established the National Museum of the United States Army Project Office to oversee the design and construction of the Museum. Under a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of the Army, The Army Historical Foundation was designated as the official fundraising entity for the National Museum of the United States Army. This unique partnership will continue when the Museum opens -- the U.S. Army will operate and maintain the Museum and The Army Historical Foundation will be responsible for all Museum related revenue-generating operations. The Museum anticipates approximately 750,000 visitors annually.

The National Army Museum will be located on over 80 acres and a publicly accessible site at Fort Belvoir, VA less than 30 minutes south of our nation's capital in Washington, D.C. The main building will be approximately 186,000 square feet and display selections from thousands of pieces from the Army Art Collection and the Army's vast collection of artifacts, documents, and images. The majority of these rare and priceless artifacts have never been seen by the American people. The Museum will also feature an Experiential Learning Center and the Museum center will host a variety of outdoor experiences.

Here is the link to the Museum: www.THENMUSA.org

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. Minutes of December 29, 2017

Officers present: Chairman Bill Dudley; Secretary Michael Rothfeld, Treasurer John Mountcastle, Vice Chairman Ray Quinn

Chairman Dudley called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

Chairman Dudley led the Pledge to the Flag and SGM Ray Quinn gave the invocation.

Last month's Minutes were approved as presented at the meeting.

The Treasurer's Report was approved as amended at the meeting.



Visitors:

Tom Priest, Marine Corps Detachment 383, St Augustine; David Lydon, VSO Flagler County

Speakers: None

Committee Reports:

Joe McDermott, Sr SJC VSO: Mac spoke about the new VA ID card, when available and how to get one.

Marines at Camp Lejeune: drinking water soon to be a presumptive if time there meets requirements, more to come.

Out patient medical and drug co-pay soon to rise. Fisher House soon to have another one in FL, in Bay Pines.

Veterans can now pre-qualify with the VA National Cemetery.

Michael Rothfeld, Secretary: The VC has a new website address: <http://www.veteranscouncilsjc.org/>

Copies of VC documentaries to be given to Flagler, Clay, Putnam & Duval schools and libraries

Kathy Church, MIAP FL: Update, next interment will be in March in Lakewood National Cemetery. Over 14,000 cremains have been interred by MIAP nationwide.

Ray Quinn, WAA: recent Wreaths Across America Ceremony at St Augustine National went well. 250 wreaths will be carried over to next year but about \$ 10,000 will have to be raised. Young Marines, Boy and Girl Scouts assisted with wreath laying and are learning about veterans sacrifices. Ray will be stepping down from this position.

Chairman Dudley: 2016 was a good year for the VC, a summary of events, activities and programs follow. This will be elaborated in the February Patriot Reader: July 4th events, formulation of Vets4Cops with Sheriff Shoar, Veterans Day Weekend events- Parade, Military Film Festival and Lee Greenwood concert, raised \$ 5,000 for new DAV van, weekly veterans radio show on WSOS, initiating a Veterans Treatment Court in St Johns County, Wreaths Across America, working with County on new VA CBOC, and the Homeless Veterans Standdown at St Augustine Elks Lodge 829, the Patriot Reader-newsletter of St Johns County veterans enters its 6th year of publication, the VC now has a website and Facebook page where veterans can share their stories, and pictures.

New Business: The Elks Lodge is offering free lunch to veteran on the third Monday of the month.

Fred Dupont is working with Boy Scouts in providing flag disposal drop off boxes for the county.

The Veterans Council will have a table(s) at the January 14th Military Ball. Please contact Chairman Bill Dudley (anuday00@aol.com) for tickets and more information.

Meeting ended at 8:18 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 26, 2017, 7 pm, Elks Lodge # 829, 1420 A1A S., St. Augustine

Respectfully submitted by Michael Rothfeld, Secretary, Veterans Council SJC



Vets 4 Vets
Attention Veterans
&
Veteran Organizations



1st Quarterly Gathering of Veterans in 2017

Feb 4th
(1100-1300)

at the

VETERANS MEMORIAL ARENA

Join us!

Veterans, representatives from Veteran Organizations, friends of Veterans and all supporters of Veterans

V4V is a forum to share information of interest to the Veteran community in NE Florida and beyond. The intent is to Inform, Connect Veterans and Veteran Organizations and Unite Veterans in NE FL.

Commanders and Presidents of Posts, Chapters, Associations, independent Veterans, etc., are encouraged to attend the quarterly gatherings or to appoint a representative to attend to represent your organization. All interested individuals are also welcome.

**Another great line up of speakers and time to connect with fellow Veterans
Buffet Lunch will be available.**

This is a continuing effort to start coordination and cooperation amongst veterans, veteran organizations and those who support Veterans in NE Florida.

V4V contact information:

Vets4VetsNJax@gmail.com

**VETERANS
MATTER**

NORTHEAST FLORIDA VETERANS COUNCIL

Jacksonville City Hall , Lynwood Roberts Room, 117 West Duval Street,
Jacksonville, FL 32202 www.nefvc.org



“Strength in Unity”

NORTHEAST FLORIDA VETERANS COUNCIL REPORT January 23, 2017

The NEFVC meets monthly at the Jacksonville City Hall on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm. This year the Council is re-energizing and we are inviting ALL veteran organizations with a registered 501©3 non-profit status to join the Council. This invitation is being extended to Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, St Johns and GA counties as well. We would like to have one voting member from veteran organizations. A member can only represent one organization at a time. Others are welcome to attend our meetings as well.

The Council has been organized since 1985. On November 11, 2016 Jacksonville’s Mayor Lenny Curry updated and signed Executive Order 2016-04.

2016-2017 OFFICERS:

Chairman – Hallie Williams-Bay (VFW 4761)

Vice Chair – Steven Spickelmier (AFSA)

Treasurer – Hallie Williams-Bay, Denise Mathis ((DAV #7)

Secretary – Kathy Church (MIAP)

Chaplain – Lori Garland (WAC, Chapter 56)

It only cost \$25.00/year to join the NEFVC. If your organization is interested in joining the Council please contact me and I will send you an application and a copy of the Executive Order 2016-04. Each application must be signed by the lead person (President, Commander, etc.) of your organizations. Representatives must attend all meetings (3 missed meetings will disqualify your organization from voting).

Let’s all work together for the good of our veterans as there is “Strength in Unity”.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Church, NEFVC - Secretary

I got an email copy of the January Patriot Reader newsletter from Lee White, President of the Vietnam Veterans of America South Metro Denver Chapter 1106 and also VVA State Chair. Very impressive! I write the newsletter for our chapter. Recently I read more information about veteran suicides and it caused me to write the attached. Feel free to publish it or pass it along.

God bless you and God bless America ... Land that I Love!

Regards, Bob Rotruck, CWO3 USN (RET)

The Boot

I sit here with a pistol in my hand,
I stare at it but can't read its brand.
It doesn't really matter anymore,
I just need to settle the score.
In the field Jack and I were best friends,
We did our duty with no bends.
Our platoon would take our orders,
We were thousands of miles from our home borders.
We'd head out in the dawn's early light,
Praying we would see tonight.
Looking for hidden bombs was no game,
We did the best we could with no shame.
That morning our dog Sammy gave the look,
It was right out of the training textbook.
Something wasn't right Sammy's face said,
In an instant Jack and Sammy were both dead.
I lay there on my back with my head spinning.
I hoped this was a dream we were winning.
I rolled to my right and felt the sharp pain,
My face was on fire and felt like needles of rain.
I looked for Jack and Sammy and saw Jack's boot,
But the remains of Jack's body was not on his foot.
I wanted to get up and help my brother and dog,
But they both looked worse than a butchered hog.
I've been out of rehab and home for weeks,
But I try to close my only eye I get repeats.
I just can't take the loss of my friends any longer,
It is time I join where we will all be stronger.
In my mind I see Sammy and Jack's boot alone,
And I want to take it to him and give Sammy a bone.
The pain will go away if I just pull the trigger,
Each day I live the boot just gets bigger.
War is hell and leaves so many in mental distress,
I came home and don't feel at all blessed.
Maybe I should wait until tomorrow,
Hopefully I won't see the boot and have so much sorrow.
Lord help me live through this day I pray,
With Your strength I can take just one more day.

AMEN!

ROTRUCK - '16

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



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:

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

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

Please join our group on Facebook at:
VeteransCouncilofStJohnsCounty,FL

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

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

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

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

WHAT IS PTSD

Post-traumatic stress often occurs after someone goes through a devastating experience such as an accident or combat

STATISTICS

over 2.7 million veterans served in OIF & OEF

roughly 29% of post-9/11 veterans suffer from PTSD

around 50% of veterans diagnosed do not seek treatment

nearly 1-in-5 veterans commit suicide due to PTSD

HOW CAN A SERVICE DOG HELP

- pause panic**
Often, a dog can sense when its warrior becomes anxious and can prevent panic from setting in with a quick lick to the face.
- halt hypervigilance**
The feeling of always needing to stay combat-ready can end. A dog is more vigilant than a human could ever be and is attentive with watching their warrior's back.
- decrease depression**
A service dog becomes a constant companion for a warrior to share love, joy, and other emotions with.
- stop sleeplessness**
The warrior can rest knowing a battle buddy will protect and soothe in the uncertainties of darkness.



Sources:
1. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014
2. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014
3. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014
4. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014
5. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014



NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL AWARDED TO ROD PHILLIPS

At the Vietnam Veterans Daytona Beach Chapter 1048 December 2016, General Membership / Member Appreciation Meeting VVA 1048 Secretary Robert Adkins (L) presented the National Vietnam Veterans of America Achievement Medal to VVA Chapter 1048 President Rod Phillips. Secretary Adkins nominated Rod for one of the highest National VVA awards in recognition for his chapter and state leadership positions, dedication, commitment, and advocacy for our fellow veterans.

From Chairman William Dudley
Ft Stewart Retiree Appreciation Day on UCF Campus Saturday,
February 25, 2017

Open to All Retired Military

Retiree Appreciation Days (RADs) are designed with you in mind. They're a great source of the latest information for retirees and Family members in your area. In general, they provide an opportunity to renew acquaintances, listen to guest speakers, renew ID Cards, get medical checkups, and various other services.

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This is information about the upcoming Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) being conducted by the Ft Stewart, GA Retirement Services Office (RSO). The RAD will be held on the campus of the University of Central Florida (UCF) on Saturday, February 25, 2017.

The Ft Stewart RSO would like to invite all retired US Army Soldiers and their families to this event. Attendees will be able to hear and meet SMA (R) Kenneth O. Preston, who will present the latest information on the current state of the Army, benefits and entitlements. Additional briefings will be provided by representatives from Defense Accounting and Finance Service (DFAS), the Military Health Care System (TRICARE), and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

At the conclusion of the formal program, there will be an "Information Fair" where attendees can meet with representatives from DFAS, TRICARE, Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), Army Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES), Public Health Service (PHS), Delta Dental, MOAA, and Veterans Affairs (VA).

Please use the link below to preregister the onsite lines are long

Retired Airmen, Sailors and Marines and their families are also welcome to attend. Pre-Registration and driving directions can be accomplished using the Eventbrite link.

Army Vietnam Veteran, Hotel/Resort Executive & National Cemetery Director

Becomes Certified Tour Guide for Saint Augustine

What an exciting life after retirement.....

Ahhhh, I remember the days when I was young and “moderately” stupid way back in 1966 when I graduated from Murphy High School in Mobile, Alabama. I thought I knew it all like teenagers often say before entering college in the fall of 1966.

With that said, things change rapidly in the fall of 1967. I had already completed my freshman year and was already in the first quarter of my sophomore year when I decided I needed to know exactly what was going on in Vietnam. You see, this was the first indication that I learn from experiencing the moment. This proved to be my best asset for the next 47 years of my working life.

Fast forwarding to March 1968 was my arrival date in Vietnam with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. I was assigned Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 12 Infantry with the 199th as a Supply Specialist and Field Weapons Repair. Of course when I got my feet wet I was all over the board, in the field and out of the field. Oh I remember it well as if it was just yesterday.

The Army came and went and after almost three years I decided this was not going to be my career path. I married during this time in 1969, went back to college, dropped out in my junior year from lack of funding and launched my career in the Hotel/Resort/Tourism Industry in 1971. What a ride this was for 30 years. I worked all over the United States with various National and International Hotel companies. During this time I divorced and remarried again and started my family “of one son”. That was a very difficult time in my life but true to my “learning experience in the moment”, I continued forward.

Let’s see now. The whirlwind has now moved forward to February 2001. My hotel career ended in Palm Desert, California after 30 years around the country and I relocated to reinvent myself in Biloxi, Mississippi. Life starts again as a single man. Second marriage did not particularly work well after 21 years. I chalk this up to just another “learning experience in the moment”.

I took a part-time position with the Department of Veterans Affairs with the National Cemetery Administration. I started out as a cemetery caretaker. I remember my son saying, “Dad,

why are you going from hotel executive to grave digger?” I don’t remember exactly what I said but it was probably something along the lines of I want to start a new career and this is just an interim situation. Little did I know it would be an interim position for almost 14 years. Yes, I re-invented myself. I seem to be famous for that.

I stayed in Biloxi from February 2001 to September 2006. In 2006 I was selected to enter the National Cemetery Directors Training Academy in St. Louis to be trained as a Cemetery Administrator (Director) and launch yet another career or maybe just more stress in the same career.

As a National Cemetery Director I became another military soldier after many years. To be there for a veteran, his wife and family members was the most gratifying feeling. I used to tell my students at the NCA Training Academy when teaching Customer Service, that working as a cemetery director gave me instant gratification and towards the end of my hotel career I got nothing but instant aggravation.

Well, I finally decided to retire in October 2014 after being transferred in 2013 from New Mexico to Jacksonville as the new director of the Jacksonville and Saint Augustine National Cemeteries. My last day on the job was December 19, 2014.

I moved away from Jacksonville to Saint Augustine.

I stayed in retirement mode keeping a low profile for my first two years but I always knew I would re-invent myself again into something else. I knew I wanted to do something infrequent and fun.

With Saint Augustine being a great tourist destination and me being in reasonably good health, despite of my age, I began to look around. It was not long before I zeroed in a yet another career, “kinda”.

I first thought it would be fun driving one of the trolleys you see around town but that turned out to be too many hours. I then focused on Ghost Tours at night but after taking a couple just to see, I became not interested.

I began to notice school field trip tours throughout the city. I thought now that is something I would enjoy participating. I discovered one day a company in downtown Saint Augustine that specialized in all types of tours. I spoke with them. I was told that I needed to take a test to be a tour guide as this was mandated by the city of Saint Augustine. I took the

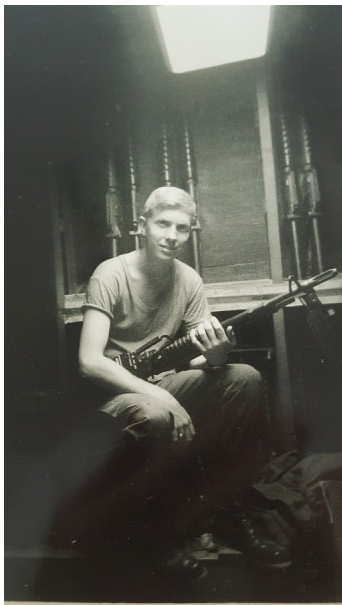
test in late 2016 and got my license. I work 2-3 days a week doing educational field trip tours for 4th and 8th graders from around Florida. I also was told by this tour company I could portray a character in the history of Saint Augustine and handle adult bus tours into the city. I shadowed one of those tours and accepted additional work. I chose to become Henry Flagler. I am now one of their casts of characters.

It is amazing how life develops if you follow your dreams and make it happen. I am one of those people.

As Paul Harvey used to say, “and now you know the rest of the story”.....

Cliff Shields- Army Specialist; Cliff Shields – Hotel/Resort Executive

Cliff Shields – National Cemetery Director; Cliff Shields – Tour Guide



Cliff in Vietnam 1968



Cliff at the Biloxi National Cemetery, 2001



Cliff as Henry Flagler



Cliff with Governor Martinez



Cliff at a Cemetery Dedication

SUPPORT COMMITTEE AT JACKSONVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY

January 23, 2017

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



Chairman – Steven Spickelmier

Vice Chair – William Dudley

Treasurer – John Mountcastle, Assist Treasurer – Michael Rothfeld

Secretary – Kathy Church

Chaplain – Michael Halyard

Master-At-Arms – Joe McDermott

Historian – Kathy Cayton

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Church, CJNC - Secretary

From Shari Duval, President and Founder of K9s For Warriors

I AM SO PROUD TO ANNOUNCE:

**Former Highest-ranking SNCO of the
U.S. Armed Forces Joins North Florida Nonprofit**

(Ponte Vedra, FL) - K9s For Warriors, one of the nation's leading veteran service organizations for post-9/11 veterans is proud to announce the addition of our nation's former highest-ranking Senior Noncommissioned Officer to its team. Having just retired from the U.S. Marine Corps in August 2016, Sergeant Major Bryan Battaglia will now be donning a new uniform as he becomes the Director, Major Gifts.

“We are thrilled at the opportunity that Sergeant Major Battaglia brings to our Resource Development Department,” said founder, Shari Duval. “His vast experience and relationships among the military community will be invaluable to our team. As one of our Ambassadors, we will be able to plan better for the long-term financial sustainability to care of our wounded veterans, notably defeating our country's veteran suicide epidemic.”



Battaglia's nearly 37-year career consisted of various prestigious positions, including the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (SEAC) and the Command Senior Enlisted Leader to U.S. Joint Forces Command. He earned some of the military's top awards, including the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, two Bronze Star Medals with Combat Valor, and a Purple Heart. His time in service took him to Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. His enduring passion for military members and families now drives him to embark on a new venture with K9s For Warriors.

“Even though I have officially retired from the Armed Forces, I will continue to serve,” said Battaglia. “I am joining K9s For Warriors because I truly believe in its mission. Providing a thoroughly trained service dog permits a long-lasting medicinal recipe for physical, emotional, and mental wellness to the wounded who qualify to attend our program. I am honored to continue to directly impact our service members, veterans, and their family members.”

Speakers available for your Veterans Organization

My name is Alexander Warmka and I work for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, specifically the Division of Consumer Services. We are the state's clearinghouse for consumer complaints, information and protection. Our outreach program offers free speakers that present to various community groups on consumer protection topics such as the Florida Do Not Call list, charitable solicitation (charities soliciting donations must register with our department and provide us with financial documentation reflecting how the donation money is being used), fuel inspection (including detecting skimmers at gas pumps), telemarketing fraud, and scams just to name a few.

Our department has previously presented to various veteran organizations such as the American Legion, Vietnam Veterans, Korea War Veterans, Amvets and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Our goal for 2017 is to continue to reach out to veteran organizations throughout the state and provide them with information on the consumer protection services offered by our department.

Please let me know if you are interested or feel that the members of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County would be interested in having one of our speakers come out and do a brief presentation at one of your next meetings. If you want more information on what we do, our website is www.800helpfla.com or you can call me directly at 850-410-3665.

Thank you for your time,

Alexander Warmka

Research and Training Specialist

Division of Consumer Services

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

(850) 410-3665, Alexander.Warmka@FreshFromFlorida.com

The Rhodes Building

2005 Apalachee Parkway

Tallahassee, Florida 32399

The Support Committee at Jacksonville National Cemetery held it's ELECTION of OFFICERS. These positions will be held by the incoming for a period of two years.

- CHAIRMAN: Steve Steven Spickelmier
- VICE CHAIRMAN: William Dudley
- TREASURER: JOHN Dee Mountcastle
- ASSIST TREASURER: Michael Rothfeld
- SECRETARY: Kathy Beaudoin Church
- MASTER-AT-ARMS: JOE McDERMOTT
- CHAPLAIN: MICHAEL HALYARD
- HISTORIAN: Kathy Cayton

The Committee would like to thank our Past Chairman, Ray Quinn and our Historian, Ms Jodie Raymond for their past service to this Committee.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, April 03, 2017 at Community Hospice on Sunbeam Road. We welcome members of the community to join us.



The Battle of Thomas Creek- Revolutionary Battle site that is located in Jacksonville known as "The Southernmost Battle of the American Revolution". Attached is a copy of the flyer you requested and a brief magazine write up newspaper including a picture of our color guard at our 2015 ceremony. As information, General George Washington wanted to make Northeast Florida and especially St. Augustine that was a British strong hold make it our 14th Colony.

If you would like additional information, please let me know.

David Ramseur Past President Jacksonville Chapter and Florida Society Sons of the American Revolution

THE BATTLE OF THOMAS CREEK

THE SOUTHERNMOST BATTLEFIELD OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR
MAY 17, 1777

BY DAVID HARDY RAMSEUR,
JACKSONVILLE CHAPTER, FLSSAR

The NSSAR and FLSSAR, along with the City of Jacksonville, dedicated a Florida Historical Marker in Seaton Creek Historic Park

two Patriot colonels and two British colonels.

In 1975, the Florida Society C.A.R. placed a highway marker 4 miles south of Callahan, Fla., off U.S. Highway 1 commemorating the Battle of Thomas Creek. At that time, the exact location

Georgia militia organized in Sunbury, Georgia, just north of the Florida border for an expedition into British East Florida in retaliation for raids by British Loyalists. Traveling by water, the Continentals encountered British troops at Amelia Island, which delayed their rendezvous with the Georgia militia who traveled by land. On May 17, a small force of 109 Georgia militia men was ambushed by a mixed force of British Army, Loyalist militia, and Native Americans near the mouth of Thomas Creek in Northeast Florida. Lieutenant Colonel John Baker of the Georgia forces and 41 of the Georgia militia men survived the battle. The encounter was the first major engagement and the second of three failed attempts by American forces to invade British East Florida. It is considered the southernmost battle of the American Revolutionary War.



A FLORIDA HERITAGE SITE
SPONSORED BY THE FLORIDA SOCIETY SONS
OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE
AND THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
2015

Commemorating the 238th anniversary of the Battle of Thomas Creek. President General Lindsey C. Brock, a member of the Jacksonville Chapter, brought greetings to the nearly 100 SAR, DAR and C.A.R. members and others who attended the March 21 dedication ceremony. Greetings also were brought by the City of Jacksonville, the National Park Service, several SAR state presidents, representatives of the DAR and C.A.R., and Ralph Nelson from the National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association. Also attending the ceremony were President General (2005-2006) Roland Downing and his wife, Norma, and Dr. Sam Powell, SAR Foundation president.

There were 27 SAR color guardsmen commanded by Treasurer General Mike Tomme, past National Color Guard commander, and Mark Anthony, National Color Guard adjunct and South Atlantic District Vice President General. The invocation and benediction were given by chapter Chaplain Rev. Robert M. Hale, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Eagle Scout William Merkert. Compatriot Bill Ramsaur of the Marshes of Glynn Chapter of the GASSAR gave a presentation on "Four accounts of the Battle of Thomas Creek." The presentation gave the viewpoints from

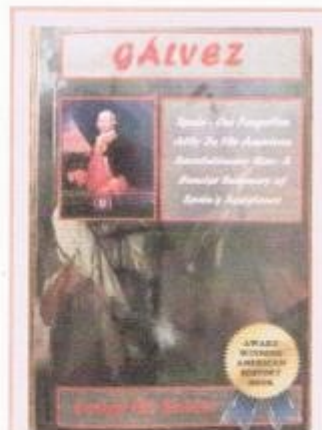
of the battlefield was not known. In 2004-2005, an environmental services testing group was hired by the former owner of the property. They found Revolutionary War period artifacts in a location that was most probable for an encampment requiring fresh water for the horses.

In 1970, the late Congressman Charles E. Bennett, a member of the Jacksonville Chapter, published a book entitled *The Southernmost Battlefields of the Revolution*. Bennett stated in his book, "It seems proper in 1969 that we plan a wilderness type park at the most southerly battlefield of the Revolution, Thomas Creek—commemorating there all of the southern frontier fighting of the war and preserving the wildlife and beautiful subtropical hammock land of the area." And now, 46 years later, we are fulfilling his dream with a beautiful preservation park that contains the hallowed ground of those who fought and died for the freedom we now enjoy.

Below is the wording on the Florida Historical Marker at Seaton Creek Historical Park.

AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR
BATTLE OF THOMAS CREEK
May 17, 1777

In May of 1777, 400 soldiers from the Continental Army and 165 members of the



Galvez / Spain - Our Forgotten Ally in the American Revolutionary War: A Concise Summary of Spain's Assistance

"Best Revolutionary War History Book in 2014"

By Judge Ed Butler
\$29.99 + \$6.50 p.&h.
See web page at
www.galvezbook.com
to order

240th Anniversary of the Battle of Thomas Creek Saturday May 13, 2017 in Jacksonville, Florida

The Florida Society SAR commemorates the 240th anniversary for the Battle of Thomas Creek (the Southernmost Battle of the American Revolutionary War). The ceremony will be held at Seaton Creek Historic Preserve Park at 10:00 AM. If placing a wreath and/or participating in the color guard, please arrive no later than 9:30AM to register your wreath. The park is located off I-95 at Exit 366 then head west 2.5 miles on Pecan Park Road to 2145 Arnold Road, Jacksonville, FL (3 miles North of the airport). The bad weather location event will take place at Sheltair, 14600 Whirlwind Ave.



We will have a social and orientation meeting Friday evening at 5 p.m. on May 12th at the Marriott Spring Hill Suites, 13550 Airport Court, Jacksonville, FL 32218 (904-741-8002). Identify yourself with the SAR for a discounted rate of \$94 (includes breakfast) or use your Marriott points. A block of rooms will be reserved up to May 1st. Organizations and participants will be announced during the ceremony. Our speaker will again be Dr. Roger Smith of Colonial Research Associates, Inc. and we will also have the Patriotic Choral Group "Let Freedom Sing" in addition to various Patriotic and Civic Organizations bringing greetings. To assure your organization's recognition and to receive a flag streamer, please complete the following by May 1, 2017 to:

David H. Ramseur (FLSSAR President 2011-12)
3733 River Hall Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32217
(904)-502-4819; Davidramseur12@gmail.com

Society Name: _____

Chapter or Organization Name: _____

Will present Wreath: Yes _____ No _____

Wreath Dedicated to: _____

Presenter(s) Name: _____

Title (if applicable) _____

Will bring flag? Yes _____ No _____ Color Guard? Yes _____ No _____

Number of members expected to attend from your group: _____ In Uniform _____

Will you participate in the black powder musket salute? Yes _____

American Legion Riders Chapter 233

Ponte Vedra Beach FL

5th Annual Fun Run to benefit the Gainesville Fisher House

501 (c)(3) non-profit



February 25, 2017



Pre-registration: \$10 Rider/\$5 passenger. **DAY OF:** \$15 Rider/\$5 Passenger.
Registration: Veterans Memorial Wall
(1145 E Adams St, Jacksonville FL 32202)
8A-10A Coffee and Donuts.

KSU 10A

Route: American Legion Post 9 (10737 New Kings Rd #101, Jacksonville FL 32219), American Legion Post 250 (3939 CR 218 Middleburg, FL 32068), Arnold's Lounge (3912 N Ponce De Leon Blvd, St Augustine, FL 32084)

LBI 4P at AL Post 233 (560 N Wilderness Trl, Ponte Vedra Bch FL 32082)

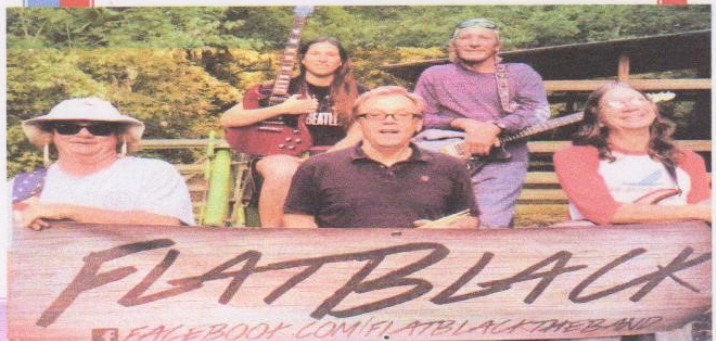
Prizes: \$200, \$100, and \$50
Visa Gift Cards

Food: 4P-6:30P "Gourmet Taco Bar" \$6, Chicken/Beef Tacos, Mexican Rice, Red Beans, Black Beans & Rice, Texas Caviar, Queso Dip, Salsa, and Dessert.

Music: 5P-9P FlatBlack (facebook.com/FlatBlacktheBand)

The Fisher House program is a unique private-public partnership that supports America's military in their time of need. For members of our Armed Forces, veterans and their families, the Fisher House program offers shelter and support during a medical crisis. Fisher Houses offer a comforting "home away from home" while a loved one is receiving care in an unfamiliar environment. This special support is even more important to a family during the most stressful time – the hospitalization of a wounded or injured service member involved in military operations like Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom.

www.gainesvillefisherhouse.org



From the VA, No. NR-010-17, Jan. 13, 2017

Department of Defense Extends Online Military Exchange Shopping Privileges to Veterans

The Department of Defense announced a policy change that will extend limited online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans of the military. The veterans online shopping benefit will be effective this Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

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

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

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

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

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

For immediate release.....

From Chairman Dudley: anuday00@aol.com

On behalf of Senator Bill Nelson I am pleased to share the following information on potential sources of funding. Please see the below/attached grant opportunity and share as appropriate. If you (or whomever you forward this to!) plan on applying for one of these grants, please remember it is up to the applicant to review the program and determine if they qualify.

Please visit the grants section of our website at <http://www.billnelson.senate.gov/services/grants> if you are looking for General Grant Funding Resources (no specific grant in mind but want possible resources for grant monies), or for guidelines on Letters of Support.

If you are a Small Business looking for opportunities for support please use the following link as a resource: <http://www.billnelson.senate.gov/services/smallbusiness.cfm>

If you would like a letter of support for a specific grant for which you have applied, please refer to the letter of support guidelines at http://www.billnelson.senate.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg_uploaded/GrantGuidelines1182011.pdf

The request can be faxed to Orlando at 407-872-7165 or send to (appropriate name), Regional Director at (RD email/fax #). It is not necessary to send entire application.

Feel free to contact me directly with any questions you may have.

=====

AFCEA War Veterans Scholarships, Afghanistan and Iraq War Veterans (Undergraduate)– Deadline: April 15, 2017

The Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Educational Foundation (AFCEA) is dedicated to providing academic support to U.S. military personnel. To that end, the foundation is accepting applications for its War Veterans Scholarship program.

Merit-based scholarships of \$2,500 will be awarded to persons on active duty in the uniformed military services and to honorably discharged U.S. military veterans who are currently enrolled and attending classes in an undergraduate program part time or full time in an eligible STEM major degree program at an accredited four-year college or university in the United States.

Eligible candidates actively pursuing an undergraduate degree at a four-year university must be at least a second-year college student enrolled part or full time as a sophomore or junior at the time of application. An overall 3.0 GPA is required. Freshman and senior-level students are ineligible to apply.

All candidates must provide a copy of Certificate of Service, Discharge Form DD214, copy of latest performance review or other verification of service in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Distance-learning or online programs affiliated with a major U.S. institution are eligible.

*Scholarship awards are subject to availability of funding. Scholarship awards are restricted to tuition, mandatory fees, books and labs.

For more information, visit the AFCEA Foundation website @ <http://www.afcea.org/site/?q=foundation/scholarships/war-veterans>

Questions? Email them to edfoundation@afcea.org

Katie Ross, MPA- Regional Director, Office of U.S. Senator Bill Nelson

1301 Riverplace Blvd., #2010, Jacksonville, FL 32207

Phone: 904-346-4500, Fax: 904-346-4506, Email: Katie_Ross@billnelson.senate.gov

Web: <http://billnelson.senate.gov>

MEETING REMINDER

THE AMERICAN LEGION – AUXILIARY & AL RIDERS 5th DISTRICT MEETING

Sunday, February 12, 2017

AL Post 233

560 N Wilderness Trail

Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

All members of the AL/ALA/ALR from the Mighty 5th District are encouraged and welcomed to attend these meetings.

The ALR will hold their meeting at 12noon out on the screened in pavilion. The AL/ALA meetings to follow starting at 2:00pm with the AL meeting in the pavilion and the ALA meeting in the main hall.

AL Post 233 will host a lunch buffet following the meetings for all to enjoy.

We also serve breakfast from 9:00-11:30am for those who might want to come in early and join us.

SEE YOU AT POST 233!!!!

From Bob Rotruck, VVA 1106, South Metro Denver



Welcome Home

I talked to some Vietnam Vets today,
The subject wasn't about fun and play.
It was about the heartache of coming home,
To a group of people who threw a stone.
And spit was loosed from their hateful mouth,
They tried to make us feel like a louse.
But we held our head high those days,
Just glad to be able to see sun rays.
Many of us shown broken bodies and wounds,
And in our heads we could still hear the booms.
But the worst was leaving friends behind,
Some to never return because they lost their mind.
And to this day we still remember the hate,
That was blasted at us in every state.
Baby killers, war criminal, innocent lives,
Was all the haters could say with their lies!
But for the red, white, and blue we did our best,
We still stand strong, even with our mental test.
But many are homeless and struggle day to day,
A terrible price for their effort they have to pay.
Drugs and alcohol they use to deaden the pain,
To wash away the feeling of the country's disdain.
Next time you see a veteran displaying Vietnam,
Please say Welcome Home and extend your hand.
It may just heal a wound that still festers within,
But most times they'll nod and give you a grin!
God bless them all!!! Amen

ROTRUCK - 2015

By **DIANNA CAHN | STARS AND STRIPES** Published: December 31, 2016



WASHINGTON — The nonprofit Wounded Warrior Project entered 2016 with a more than \$400 million budget and reason to believe its meteoric growth would continue. It ended the year with detrimental losses following a scandal that led to the ouster of its two top executives in March.

And while the veterans charity has remained mum on projected 2017 revenue, there is little doubt that donations continue to fall.

The question is, by how much. New CEO Lt. Gen. Mike Linnington took the helm in July promising transparency as he worked to right the ship. After the organization announced its first restructuring -- laying off 15 percent of its 600-member staff -- Linnington told news organizations that WWP lost \$90-\$100 million in revenue. He told Stars and Stripes at the time that he would release exact figures at the end of September, when the fiscal year came to a close.



Last week, Linnington declined to release the 2016 tallies or projections for the 2017 budget, which began Oct. 1. He said he was “still a rookie on nonprofit accounting,” when he spoke with the newspaper in August and said he would release the financials only after they were audited and filed with the IRS -- likely next summer.

But an examination of WWP’s financials appears to indicate that the nonprofit could face big troubles in the coming year -- losses so steep that it would be forced to choose between depleting its reserves or cutting critical programs for wounded veterans and their families.

“They are contracting,” said Doug White, a nonprofits expert and professor who was director of Columbia University’s Master of Science in Fundraising Management. He left his position in June to conduct an in-depth study of what happened at WWP. “There’s no way they can’t contract at this point.”

White was fascinated by the controversy surrounding WWP spending, which raised questions about how nonprofits raise and allocate money and how their success is judged. In a strongly worded report, he concluded that the vision of ousted CEO Steve Nardizzi and Chief Operating Officer Al Giordano -- which involved aggressive and costly fundraising to exponentially grow the nonprofit -- was sound, even good business for the organization. But he acknowledged Nardizzi’s flamboyant style led to damaging perceptions. White is working on a book about the organization and the issues.

Nardizzi and Giordano were fired after reports in the New York Times and on CBS in January portrayed lavish spending and a toxic organizational culture. The charity had been placed on the Charity Navigator watch list for having too small of a percentage of donations going directly to programming. Charity Navi-

gator calculated that as much as 40 percent of revenue was spent on fundraising and administration. A forensic accounting of WWP's financials found no wrongdoing, but distrust remained. As donors began pulling their support, the board removed the two leaders.

By mid-spring WWP donations were plummeting. The charity pulled its TV ads and went into a holding pattern until Linnington's arrival in July. The ads have only recently resurfaced, but other than Linnington's initial statements in August and September, WWP has divulged little about its financial situation.

There has been a lot of speculation about WWP's numbers for 2017, and without transparency from the organization, there's no way to be certain. But there are ways to assess nonprofit financial performance.

White said that pulling advertising has unseen repercussions for a nonprofit, stalling new donations and limiting the ability to recoup donors as monthly donations expire and aren't renewed. He said the losses quickly build on themselves, leaving the nonprofit further behind.

With WWP out of the public eye, donor drop-off likely increased, he said. Without an aggressive campaign to restore fundraising, it's reasonable to assume things have gotten worse, he said.

"My feeling is they are on a downward spiral at this point," White said.

By the numbers

According to the latest financial documents available for Wounded Warrior Project -- the non-profit tax form 990 for 2015 -- the organization made \$398.7 million. Nardizzi said the charity had projected a budget increase to \$414 million in 2016 (plus \$13 million from reserves to be used for the long-term care trust) and to \$475 million in 2017.

By the time Linnington took the helm in July, Nardizzi said he believed the organization was on a trajectory to lose \$200 million in 2017.

In August, the Chronicle of Philanthropy reported that Nardizzi had slammed the trustees of WWP for downplaying the financial crisis. Nardizzi told the Chronicle that during a conversation with Linnington in early July, the newly appointed CEO told him that the 2017 projections were even more dismal: revenue of just \$185 million.

Linnington confirmed to the Chronicle that he'd spoken with Nardizzi, but said the figure was inaccurate. He told the magazine that it was too soon to predict the organization's fundraising amount, and that 2017 revenue could be anywhere from \$185 million to \$355 million.

Nardizzi confirmed to Stars and Stripes that when he left in March, WWP had \$250 million in reserves -- an amount they believed was "enough to weather any storms," he said.

Their plan was to transfer some of that into the trust created for WWP's Independence Program, which provides lifetime home care for the most severely wounded. The organization was looking to grow programming and planned to add less to reserves.



FALLEN PATRIOTS

<http://www.fallenpatriots.org/>

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide college scholarships and educational counseling to military children who have lost a parent in the line

of duty.

We are dedicated to serving the families of service members from all branches of the armed forces who have died as a result of combat casualties, military training accidents, service related illnesses, suicide, as well as other duty-related deaths as ruled by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The vision of Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation is to ensure that every child of a fallen patriot receives all necessary college funding.

- We believe a college education is the single most important gift we can give these children.
- We believe this is an important investment in the future of America.

We believe this is one of the best ways we can honor those who died defending our country.

HISTORY

In 1989, five days before Christmas, Sergeant William Delaney Gibbs from the 7th Infantry Division was killed in action during Operation Just Cause in Panama, leaving behind a young wife and an unborn daughter. Our Founder and CEO, David Kim, served with Sergeant Gibbs and was inspired by his sacrifice and never forgot about Sergeant Gibb's or his daughter.

David Kim returned to the United States and founded Children of Fallen Patriots in 2002. Since 2002, Children of Fallen Patriots has grown in its mission and vision to extend peace of mind through college scholarships to Gold Star families in all 50 states, in all branches of the military.

Frequently Asked Questions

If you are a family member or scholar looking for answers to questions regarding enrollment, please refer to our FAQs for family members in our [Scholar Resource Center](#) for more information.

Is Children of Fallen Patriots a tax-exempt organization?

Yes, Children of Fallen Patriots is registered under Section 501(c)3 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code: tax ID# 47-0902295. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by U.S. law. Consult your tax advisor concerning the tax deductibility of your donation.

Where can I find more detailed financial information on Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation?

Please [click here](#) for our most recent financials.

Is Children of Fallen Patriots part of another organization?

No, Children of Fallen Patriots is an independent charity. We do, however, promote collaboration with partner organizations that offer complimentary services to the families we work with. Please refer to our [Partner Page](#) to learn more about organizations we work with.

Why don't your scholars get government funding?

Nearly 100% of our scholars do receive Department of Veteran's Affairs benefits, most often The Fry Scholarship (Chapter 33) or Dependents Education Assistance (DEA) (Chapter 35). However, while generous, this does not cover all of the needs of any given scholar.

Do you cover expenses other than tuition?

Because we understand that tuition is not the only expense related to college, Children of Fallen Patriots assists with various living expenses, including but not limited to room & board, transportation, health insurance, internet expenses, etc. Expenses are justified through the submission of receipts. Please reference our [Scholar Resource Page](#) for more information.

How much does Children of Fallen Patriots award to each student?

Annually, Children of Fallen Patriots awards \$6,250 to each student. Please reference our [Scholar Resource Page](#) for more information.

Does Children of Fallen Patriots give scholarships to scholars whose parents are injured on active duty?

At this time Children of Fallen Patriots only supports scholars who have lost a parent in the line of duty. Please reference our [Scholar Resource Page](#) for more information.

Does Children of Fallen Patriots accept interns or volunteers?

On a case by case basis, Children of Fallen Patriots occasionally accepts interns and/or volunteers. Unpaid internships and volunteer opportunities are listed on our [Career Page](#).

How do I apply for a job at Children of Fallen Patriots?

Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Posted in Vietnam Veterans issues

The Vietnam War is perhaps the least acknowledged war of the United States. Casualties began in the year 1959 and ended in 1975 following the evacuation in Saigon. It was never designated as a war officially, and yet the conflict has been unpopular amidst the increasing news coverage. When the people who served during the conflict returned home, they were greeted with an unsupportive country and the media highlighting the veterans' social problems instead.



However, few attempts were made to give honor to the veterans. When an indefinite and insignificant plaque was seen to be placed behind an unknown soldier's tomb, Jan Scruggs, a Vietnam Veteran, was urged to take action and one year later founded the VVMF or Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. This fund asked the support of both war opponent and supporters in order to build a tangible memorial in honor of the veterans and not the Vietnam conflict itself.

The fund committee held a competition for the memorial design which would be reflective as to its character while blend with the surroundings. It was also to contain the names of people who served, died or were still missing from the conflict. Most of all, the design was not to make any political statement regarding the war. A panel composing of world-class architects and artists went over submissions of around 14000 designs and announced its unanimous choice on May 1, 1981. The design made by Maya Ying Lin, an undergraduate at Yale University, was chosen.

Although most of the veterans groups supported Lin's very simple and elegant design, there were some veterans and politicians who did not like the selection. They said that contrary to the usual memorial color of white, the design used the color black, horizontal rather than rising, abstract rather realistic and free from any nationalistic symbols. However, the unique design of the wall promotes interaction. The visitors are encouraged and invited to move across the walls and touch the names of the soldiers chiseled on.

This interaction also encourages visitors to leave some objects. Legend has it that this tradition was started by a brother of a fallen soldier who tossed a purple heart while the memorial was still in construction. Since then, half a million nonperishable items were left by visitors and collected by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection. Among the most common donations are flags and flowers but these are not anymore collected and housed in the museum. However, the objects that are being left reflects the diversity of Vietnam experiences by supporters and opponents as well. The memorial is still on its quest to not only unite the nation together, but to unite them in a common understanding of the conflict.

By Steve Patterson steve.patterson@jacksonville.com Florida Times Union

Long time coming, century-old building in Jacksonville about to house homeless veterans

A century-old building that burned and stood forgotten in downtown Jacksonville is about to reopen as apartments for once-homeless veterans.

That almost didn't happen.

"I can't tell you how exciting this is. ... We can't wait to get it done," Clara White Mission CEO Ju'Coby Pittman said as she led visitors through the building at 605 W. Beaver St., where renovations stopped for a while last year after city funding had been exhausted and more money was still needed to finish.

The last steps in the \$3.8 million creation of the Beaver Street Veterans Villas only happened because philanthropist Delores Barr Weaver approved a big check and a lot of less-famous people wrote little checks that paid for everything from shower curtains to cookware for use in the building's 16 apartments.

Pittman said she's still trying to raise another \$200,000 to finish equipping the building, but enough will be done that the first tenants can move in by February.

"All they really need to bring is their clothes," she said.



The 1916-vintage building will be considered supportive housing, with office space on the first floor for Veterans Affairs Department employees and studio and one-bedroom apartments on the second and third floors.

VA staff work now in a packed office in the mission's Ashley Street building, adjacent to a dorm-style room for veterans' transitional housing. That type of housing is designed for people without permanent homes to stay about six months, although some can be there as long as two years.

The new apartments, by contrast, are meant to be long-term homes, mostly for veterans who qualify for a Section 8-style rent voucher and VA case management. Apartments can also be rented at market rates — about \$800 a month — if tenants don't need a voucher, although the mission's supportive housing deal requires most tenants be VA clients.

Since 2010, the federal government focused attention on eliminating homelessness among veterans, and the number in Jacksonville is less than half of what it was in 2011.

But last month, people who track that population still had a list of 154 homeless veterans in Duval, Clay and Nassau counties, said Dawn Gilman, CEO of Changing Homelessness, a nonprofit formerly called the Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition of Northeast Florida. In 2011, there were 345 homeless veterans.

Plans for Veterans Villas were announced by city and state officials in 2011, the year after the mission bought the building. It had been damaged in 2005 by a fire.

Making the place safe and habitable required adding structural steel around the outer walls to make it stronger and more stable. Contractors poured new floors and reworked the bones of the old building to give it new use.

When the lifeblood of construction — money — ran short, Pittman pleaded for help from donors like the city's Downtown Investment Authority, which agreed to provide \$200,000 from a trust fund for historic preservation.

More money was still needed, and work simply stopped at one point. In June, the Delores Barr Weaver Fund at the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida gave the mission \$319,000 to continue its work, foundation spokeswoman Susan Edelman said.

Pittman said her last big fright came in October, when Hurricane Matthew's winds came to the still-unfinished building.

"I remember when I came back I was, 'Oh, my God, I hope the windows are safe.' Because the windows are \$400,000, the last bit of money we had to raise. I came around the corner, I was like 'Yay, the windows are still there.'"

Fundraising is still going on.

The mission linked its website to a Target registry where people could buy Veterans Villas household items ranging from \$2.99 potato peelers to \$19.99 sets of dinnerware. Ashley Furniture donated some furnishings, and the mission is selling naming rights for some rooms to pay for things like matching window blinds.

Veterans Villas is for men only, but Pittman said the mission plans to open apartments for women at a pair of duplex buildings on Jefferson Street a couple of blocks south of the mission.

Those are plans with no money, for now.

"But that," Pittman said, "will be the next stage."

Steve Patterson: (904) 359-4263Login

Apply online for the 2017 Legion Legacy Scholarship

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship application for 2017 is online for new and returning applicants to fill out. The Legacy Scholarship is available for children whose parents lost their lives while honorably serving on active duty on or after 9/11, as well as for children of post-9/11 veterans with a VA disability rating of 50 percent or higher.

The renewable scholarship will award up to \$20,000 for the expense of graduate or post-graduate tuition, books, room and board, meal plans, transportation and other supplies needed to achieve a higher education.

The application deadline is April 20. Please contact your local American Legion for information how to apply. .

The Legacy Scholarship is a needs-based one. The grant amount each scholarship recipient will receive will be based on his or her financial need after all federal and state aid is exhausted. Recipients will have a year to use the grant and may reapply to the scholarship up to six times. And the number of scholarships awarded and the amount of financial aid granted to each awardee (this includes returning applicants) will be determined on donations to the scholarship fund and one's financial needs.

Scholarship recipients are selected by The American Legion's Committee on Youth Education during the organization's annual Spring Meetings in May; all applicants, whether recipients of the Legacy Scholarship or not, will be notified immediately thereafter.

PONTEVEDRA, FLORIDA JANUARY 5, 2017

Air Force Sergeants Association Florida Chapter 559 President Steve Spickelmier presents a check to K9s for Warriors Carrie Bennett Air Force Sergeant's Association, Florida Chapter 559, was honored to support the Ponte Vedra, Florida based K9S for Warriors (<https://www.k9sforwarriors.org/>) program with a donation to support their needs.

Attending AFSA members and guests were treated to a tour of the Warrior facilities and to say they were most impressed would be an understatement. K9S for Warriors is one of the charities Florida Chapter 559 voted to support from fundraising activities in support of our communities.



Many members of the current Veterans Council did not know Chuck Ziers. He shared a couple of stories that he wrote about his service during WWII. I wrote this tribute to him and encapsulated part of them.

A very special friendship

ANNE HEYMEN Features Editor Published Sunday, June 23, 2002

World War II vet Charles Ziers, 81, has nothing but great respect for Prisoners of War.

"I've always had a soft spot in my heart for POWs," he explains.

And that's why, about four years ago, the former St. Louis, Mo., resident who's resided in St. Augustine for the past 22 years, went to a POW recognition event at NAS, Jax.

He picked out an individual, walked up to him and said "I want to have my own private POW."

"I'm it," responded St. Augustine resident Lloyd Woods, 80.

Little did the men know that four years ago was not the first time they'd come in contact with each other. But since hooking up, they've become best friends and also discovered they live about two miles from each other.

Woods, a St. Augustine native, enlisted in the Army just after Pearl Harbor in December 1941. He was assigned to the 101st Airborne.

Ziers, who was drafted, served in the 9th Armored Division.

Woods, says Zier, was in two major campaigns "before I ever got off the boat!"

It was in late 1944 or early 1945 - depending upon which man is talking - that Ziers first encountered Woods, although neither of them knew it. Woods, a veteran of the Normandy Invasion, June 6, 1944; the liberation of Holland Sept. 17, 1944 - the subject of the movie "A Bridge Too Far"; and the Battle of the Bulge, Christmas Day 1944, was seriously wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. A patient at a tent hospital in Belgium, the paths of the two first crossed when Ziers was part of a two-tank group guarding the crossroads. German tanks came along, Ziers recalls, and "took over." Woods and his fellow patients were captured, and the veteran soldier wound up at Stalag X11A in Germany.

Eventually, Ziers was part of the infantry division which came to the aid of the POWs, and just recently, as Woods recalled some of the horrors of being a POW, Ziers put two and two together, he says, and realized he'd seen Woods when the POWs were freed.

One thing which distinguished the plucky Woods from the others was the fact that Woods used a broken chair as a crutch. What Ziers particularly remembered was this skinny fellow, using a chair as a support, and "hopping around."

"He has more guts than he knows what to do with," Ziers says.

When the complete story was told, not only had Woods used the chair as a crutch, but as a portable carrier to help in his recuperation from a lung infection.

As Woods relates, shortly after arriving at the POW camp, he realized he had a lung infection. "I thought it might be the end of me."

But, a Polish doctor, also a POW, came to his aid. Scrounging around, the doctor finally found everything he needed - except anesthesia.

Woods said that didn't matter. The doctor should do what he had to. So, backing Woods up against the wall and having him raise his arms, the doctor made incisions under each arm, inserted a tube on each side and connected the other end of the tubes to vinegar bottles. The bottles, in turn, were attached to the chair Woods was using as a walking aid.

Woods was hooked to the apparatus for six weeks, and at the end, each vinegar container was about two-thirds full. Also by the end of the six weeks, "my fever had left me."

At the prisoner camp for about three months, Woods went from over 170 pounds down to just above 100. Each day's meal consisted of a 2 p.m. feeding, when a big bucket with potato peelings was brought around. The peelings, to which water had been added - the German soldiers ate the potatoes - were boiled, and each POW was given a tomato can of the boiled peelings.

When the POWs were finally rescued in Limburg, German, they were transported across the river to a field kitchen where they feasted on a meal of fried chicken, yeast rolls, mashed potatoes, fruit cocktail and milk.

"I ate a lot more than I should have," Woods recalls. He knows this, he says, "because I got sick.

From Limburg, the injured Woods was taken to England, remaining there for two months before being flown to the states and eventually to Atlanta, where he was hospitalized for about a year.

As a result of his service, he was awarded the Bronze Star, POW Medal, two Purple Hearts, about 12 different ribbons for European service, and the honors of which he is most proud - Presidential Citations. "My division was the only division to get two Presidential citations."

Ziers, who describes Woods as "a genuine hero, I am not. I'm a Johnny-come-lately," was also injured in an encounter in which three of the five serving together were killed. Ziers is the recipient of the Bronze Medal and Purple Heart.

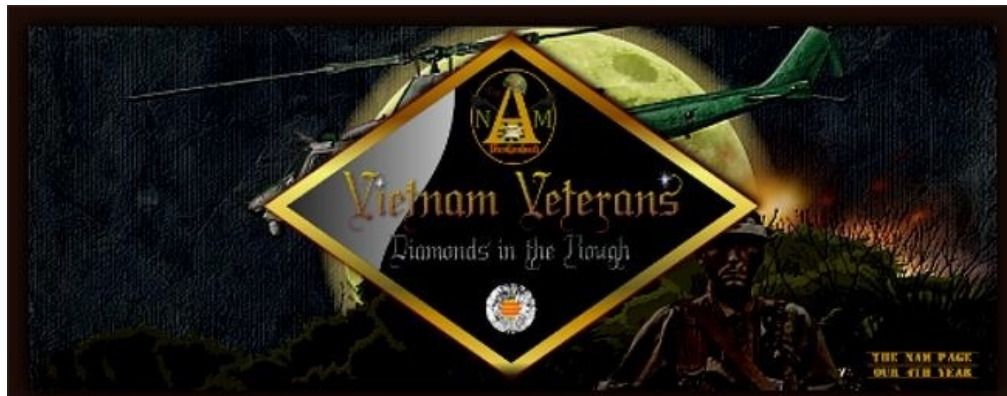
Woods has not found it difficult to talk about his war experiences, but Ziers admits it wasn't until about five years ago that he finally opened up. It was then that he sat down and wrote a paper entitled "The Purple Heart." He did that, he said, for a grandchild. He's also put down on paper a story, "The Bronze Star."

Woods keeps in touch with the military in a variety of ways. For the past 10 years, he has visited Fort Benning, Ga., where he was an instructor in the Airborne School. Through the years, he's become good friends with a major there, and during a recent visit, he was invited to lunch with the major and about 1,800 kids. "He introduced me," says Woods, and invited the young men to come up and visit with Woods.

"I betcha there were at least two-thirds of those people who came up."

Woods has also talked with his grandchildren about World War II, particularly his older grandson. He never would talk much about the military, says Woods, but his grandfather told the young man he should "take a shot at it."

About three months later, Woods learned that his grandson was at Fort Benning. Now he's in Alaska serving in the Infantry



Paid the ultimate sacrifice Vietnam
(Department of Defense)

ENLISTED	OFFICERS	WARRANT
E-1...527	0-1...805	OFFICERS
E-2...6,128	0-2...2,181	WO-1...917
E-3...17,939	0-3...2,196	W-O2...300
E-4...14,652	0-4...1,001	W-O3...62
E-5...6,412	0-5...519	W-O4...12
E-6...2,864	0-6...283	
E-7...1,237	0-7...7	<u>TOTAL</u>
E-8...278	0-8...5	1,291
E-9...114		
	<u>TOTAL-6997</u>	
<u>TOTAL- 50,191</u>		

E-1 E-2 E-3 = 39,288
 OF THE 58,479
 ON THE WALL.

The History Of Dog Tags – A Feature Of Warfare Since Before The First World War

Dog tags have a simple purpose; they exist to identify people. The term “dog tag” is informal, but it is the nickname for those two pieces of non-corrosive metal hanging around military personnel’s necks.

Public Domain

A WWI dog tag, from the German Army. Note all the info on the tag. It is possible to look back through history and find instances of something similar, but dog tags as we know them today did not come about until the mid-1800s.



As well as identifying people dog tags contain much more information than just a name. Over time, more and more information has been added to the tags, enabling them to be as helpful as possible.

History of Dog Tags

Roman Legionnaires had dog tags, called signaculum. They contained very basic information such as a person’s name and group. They were made of lead and had a leather rope attached for wearing around the neck.

The Chinese military started using them in the mid-1800s. However, soldiers in the United States fighting in the Civil War had to improvise to identify themselves on the battlefield. They wrote information such as their name and address on a piece of paper and then pinned it to the back of their jacket (on the inside of course). Some soldiers did not do this and instead opted to etch the info into their belts or knapsacks.

Public Domain

Union soldiers of the American Civil War

American businessmen spotted an opportunity. Recognizing there was a market for name tags within the military they advertised pins displaying a soldier’s name, rank, unit and military status. Usually, tags had a shield or an eagle on them, along with a phrase that represented war. For instance, one of the phrases used was “War for the Union.”

Just a few years after the American Civil War ended, tags were issued to the Prussian Army in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. These had a German nickname “Hundemarken” and were based on an identification system for dogs.

Military tags became commonplace. In 1906, the United States Army officially began providing them to personnel. In 1907, the British Army followed suit. British i.d. tags were made from aluminum, the same metal the United States used at the time. Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand all retained the same basic identification discs until well into the 20th century.

1916 brought a change to dog tags. Both the United States and the British issued two dog tags. If a soldier died, one disc was removed to assist with recording the death. The other was left with the body for identification once it was removed from the battlefield. In an intense fight, if a soldier dies, medics can later retrieve the body; and know who they have. It has remained this way with more and more militaries adopting tags.

World War II Dog tag of someone who was in the South African

Every country has different tags, different ways they make them, different materials and even different info. Here are some interesting facts regarding dog tags:

- Several countries utilize dog tags that break in two, like Canada, Israel, and Denmark.
- The ball chain is the most commonly used necklace to support the tags. In the past, a string was used, and in some countries chains.
- Dog tags are mostly ovals or rectangles.
- Some countries put religious affiliation on dog tags.

Public Domain

Pictured is a Russian dog tag. On the bottom is a serial number, on the top, is a phrase that means "Armed Forces of Russia."

– During World War II, the Soviet Union did not issue dog tags. Instead, they opted for a cylinder with a piece of paper in it providing the details. They began issuing oval tags after the war ended. The tags Russia uses today, are very similar to those.

- The three most common things on dog tags are; name, blood type and serial number.

Different Usage

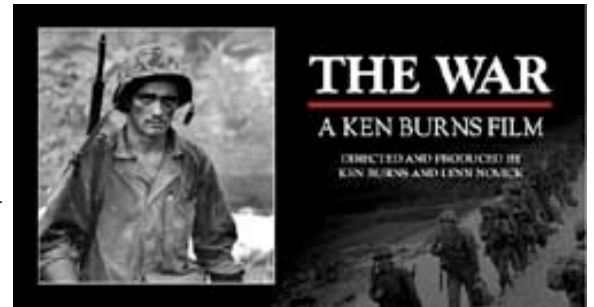
Dog tags have extended beyond the military, for use in other areas. For instance, dog tags have become a fashion accessory. Some businesses offer customers the opportunity to create their own personalized dog tags. They have also become a marketing item for some companies, with the person wearing the tag seeing the company name on the chain, over and over.

They are also used within the medical industry. A lot of info can be put on them regarding the patient, i.e. allergies, blood type, emergency contacts, etc. These are typically referred to as medical ID tags, but they are the same concept as dog tags.

Meat Tag

Meat tags and medical tattoos are one and the same. They include vital information about the person, just like a dog tag. Some military personnel have information tattooed on themselves, typically on their rib cage. These tattoos are informally known as meat tags.

THE VIETNAM WAR is a ten-part, 18-hour documentary film series directed by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick that will air on PBS in September 2017.



In an immersive 360-degree narrative, Burns and Novick tell the epic story of the Vietnam War as it has never before been told on film. THE VIETNAM WAR features testimony from nearly 100 witnesses, including many Americans who fought in the war and others who opposed it, as well as Vietnamese combatants and civilians from both the winning and losing sides.

Six years in the making, the series brings the war and the chaotic epoch it encompassed viscerally to life. Written by Geoffrey C. Ward, produced by Sarah Botstein, Novick and Burns, it includes rarely seen, digitally re-mastered archival footage from sources around the globe, photographs taken by some of the most celebrated photojournalists of the 20th Century, historic television broadcasts, evocative home movies, revelatory audio recordings from inside the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations and more than 100 iconic musical recordings by many of the greatest artists of the era.

The film will be accompanied by an unprecedented outreach and public engagement program, providing opportunities for communities to participate in a national conversation about what happened during the Vietnam War, what went wrong and what lessons are to be learned. In addition, there will be a robust interactive website and an educational initiative designed to engage teachers and students in multiple platforms.

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



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

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Did you know 22 veterans will commit suicide every day?

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

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

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

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



Join Post 233's Campaign To help the 5 Star Veterans Center !



As you know they put military veterans back to work by providing safe and secure housing with extensive services, intensive case management and counseling that promotes mental and physical wellness. They are presently in need of various non-perishable items.

The items needed:

Canned goods, soups, stews, vegetables, chili, etc.

Cans of soft drinks, small bags of chips, Doritos, Fritos, pretzels, microwave popcorn, Clorox, Windex, pine sol, dish detergent trash bags, paper towels, tissues, toilet paper !

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Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082 - www.al233fl.org ~ 904.285.2484

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



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

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



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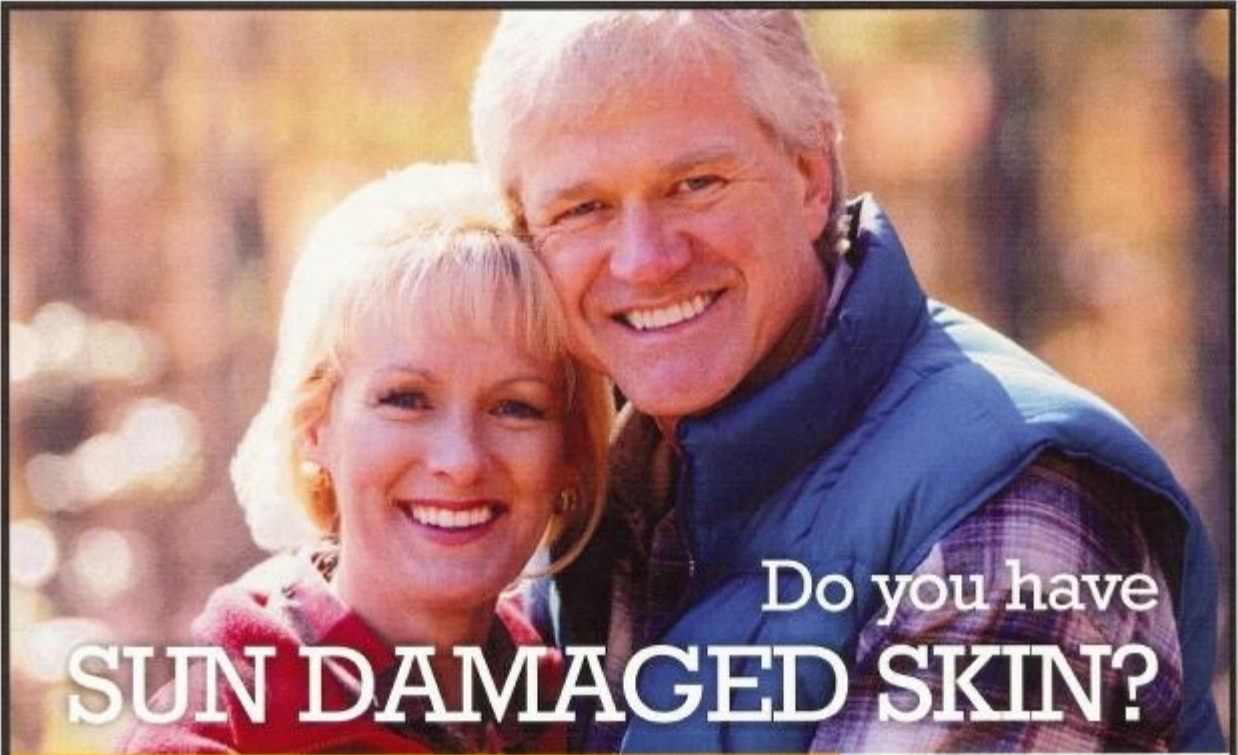
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*Veterans Council of St. Johns County,
"Helping All Veterans"*

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

Send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org

Please send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org



Senior St Johns County Veterans Service Officer, Joe McDermott

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 meetings are conducted at the the Elks Lodge # 829, 1420 A1A S., St. Augustine.

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

(physical location)

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

The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, Monday through Friday excluding holidays. Closed for lunch daily from 11:30 am 12:30 pm

Service is by appointment.

Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161

Joseph McDermott, CVSO

Rick Rees, Assistant VSO

Tammy Shirley, Assistant VSO

Lashonda Burns, Office Specialist

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