



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

Bill Dudley, Publisher

Michael Rothfeld, Editor

Volume 12, Issue 2

From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

February 2023

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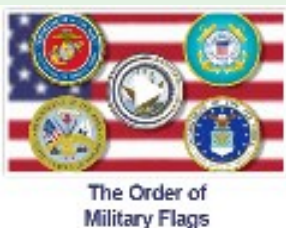
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Fellow Veterans,
The Veterans Council continues with its task of helping veterans in need of housing and shelter in St. Johns County. The task is large and continues on an upward trajectory. Rampant inflation making the cost of living expenses out of reach for so many veterans is having a devastating effect on many of our veterans. Over the past year, the Veterans Council has been able to assist veterans with locating suitable apartments or housing to preclude being homeless. We have also been able to help many of these veterans with donated furniture as many of them had no household furnishings. Due to the high demand for furniture for our veterans, the Veter-

ans Council is running low on donated furniture and are in need of more to replenish our inventory. If anyone has any good used furniture they would like to donate, please contact the Veterans Council and we will make arrangements to have it picked up. Recently, the Veterans Council met with the Vets 4 Vets organization and have agreed to take on the excellent work they have performed in the past in helping our local veterans. We found that most of the services they were providing were redundant with those of the Veterans Council. So with that being the case, the Vets 4 Vets was closed out as of this past Friday and all funds moved into the Veterans Council account. The Veterans Council will provide all



the services formally provided by the Vets 4 Vets.

This past week, the Veterans Council met with MOAA-ACC planning committee to begin preparation for this year's Memorial Day service. Memorial Day this year will be held on Monday, 29 May 2023.

We have a great program lined up to honor our veterans who have given their all for this country.

Thank you for your service.

Bill Dudley,
Chairman
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County



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

Upcoming Speakers

February 23, 2023

James Bullock, Fort Mose History
Dr George Cressman, Camp Blanding Museum

March 30

Gini Solano, Jr. Service League of St. Augustine
Jeanette McMahon, Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation (ZOOM)

April 27

Robert Covert, Veterans Oral History Project
St Augustine Historical Society
Zach Peyton, President West Point Society of N FL

May 25

DeAndrea Fuller, Outreach Director
Steven A Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone

June 29

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

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



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Determine eligibility for other VA services and benefits.

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

Eligible individuals, regardless of VA enrollment status, are:

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

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

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

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

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

From Pat Mulvihill

TEXT 904.534.0035 / pem@axisp.com

North JAX Rotarians, Interactors & Scouts Are “Tip-of-the-Arrow” Leaders in Health-Education-Wellness-Environmental-Workforce Development Outreach Initiatives For

Combatting Child Trafficking; and Aiding Disaster Victims / Elders / Ukraine War-Zone Refugees / Military & Veterans / Youth

OUR ROTARY FAMILY STANDSTALL & DOES GOOD

FROM THE DESK OF PADRAIC E. “PAT” MULVIHILL, CLUB CHAIRMAN- INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS / HUMANITARIAN-RELIEF UKRAINE, 31 Dec 2022

A Jacksonville-based language translator who is working with a wounded Ukraine Army soldier who is currently in JAX at the Brooks Neuro-Rehab Hospital Center has reached out to Rotary regarding the possibility of donating a significant supply of male catheters in the 14-16 size / Please advise if you have any ideas as to where to obtain this item.

Please OVERVIEW below / Warmest regards / Safe journeys / Pat Mulvihill



From: Padraic Mulvihill <pem@axisp.com>

FROM THE DESK OF PADRAIC E. “PAT” MULVIHILL

Chairman, Rotary District 6970 Ukraine Relief Committee

Member, Health-Education-Wellness Rotary Action Group

www.NorthJAXRotary.org

Our North JAX Club is a “Tip-of-the-Arrow” Leader in Health-Education-Wellness-Environmental Outreach Initiatives For

Combatting Child Trafficking; and Aiding Disaster Victims / Elders / Ukraine War-Zone Refugees / Active-Duty Military & Veterans / Youth Services

Maksym Slipnets- Wounded Ukraine Warrior

Revived Soldiers Ukraine

www.RSUkraine.org

RSU was formed to provide medical aid and sustainable living standards for the soldiers of Ukraine and members of their families



adversely affected by the 2022 Russian military invasion-conflict in the ATO Zone

(Anti-Terrorist Operation-Eastern Ukraine).

OVERVIEW

It is my understanding currently that during the horrific Russian February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Maksym, a Ukraine soldier of the 54th Mechanized Ground Forces Brigade, which has fought in the battle of Donbas and is based in Bakhmut, at a battle in the Ukraine village of Kostyantynivka received a shrapnel injury in April 2022 to the spinal cord at the waist level, and the subsequent amputation of his right leg above the knee (please see attached pictures).

Thanks to the Orlando-based foundation “Revived Soldiers Ukraine” Maksym was able to come to the Brooks Neuro Rehab & Recovery Center in Jacksonville, Florida on November 15, 2022. His wife Natalya and under two-year old son, Sashko, traveled to Northeast Florida together. They currently live at Brooks Rehabilitation Housing while Maksym is in a comprehensive neuro-recovery program. This wounded warrior still has a long road to recovery. It is reported that it will take years for Maksym to recover from this very severe neuro injury. I understand that he is making great progress learning how to function in everyday life. However, he needs some additional rehabilitation time at Brooks, and it will cost additional funds. This young Ukraine family are not able to pay for this additional treatment and are currently attempting to raise funds to allow Maksym to continue on his road-to-recovery.

Warmest regards. Pat Mulvihill

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

December 22, 2022

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS: Chairman Dudley

PLEDGE: Chairman Dudley

INVOCATION: Vice Chairman Quinn

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Minutes of last meeting conducted on November 17, 2022, were presented by Chairman Dudley. Copies of Minutes and Agenda are available on the sign-in table and were sent to members electronically by the Secretary. The minutes were approved by voice vote with no changes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer John Mountcastle was not in attendance and Chairman Dudley provided a detailed report that as of November 16, 2022, there was a balance of \$122,873.62 and as of date of meeting there is balance of \$122,788.28. The Council spent \$3,722.05 and the income for the month was \$6,300.00. Chairman Dudley then read the narrative of how the Veterans Council has performed this year, attached on last page of Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer's Report was approved by voice vote with no changes.

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKERS/GUESTS: Chairman Dudley

There were several new attendees at this month's meeting that introduced themselves.

SPEAKERS: Dr. Amelia Lyons, UCF, Veterans Legacy Program

Dr. Lyons discussed her project, UCF's Veterans Legacy Program and broke down for us how the Program operates.

There is a new grant for the Federal fiscal year that comes from the VA's National Cemetery Administration that puts funds into the program. There is a purpose of getting more teach-



ers/educators involved in the Veterans Legacy Program. The Program has partnered with Florida National Guard and will hold a 10-day Institute in June 2023, with educators from around the state about the Veterans Legacy Program. Applications are now out and will be reviewed in January. Twenty-five teachers will be selected to attend the Institute here in St. Augustine in the summer. They will write a biography on a Veteran that is buried at the St. Augustine National Cemetery and add to that what teachers are interested and what they want to teach in their classrooms. Different ways will be discussed with different projects to fit their classrooms.

Last month, UCF was named a Purple Heart Institution – not an easy recognition to obtain. UCF has a large veteran service within its campus. One of the oldest programs with the history department is the UFC Community History Veteran Project, since started in 2010 has completed over 800 oral history interviews with Veterans.

Another project is Florida/France Soldier Stories. These are for histories of soldiers that were killed in France during WWII.

Veterans Legacy Program was started in 2017 at UCF when the Veterans Administration approached the university about participating because of the past Veterans projects they had been involved in. Dr. Lyons then described the extent that students go through to obtain information on writing the biographies of the Veterans. The student really connects and enjoy doing these projects.

The main purpose of the Legacy Program is to memorize and honor the Veterans that the biographies are about, that why the VA helps fund them.

The floor was then opened to questions for Dr. Lyons regarding the Legacy Program.

OFFICER KELLY KEMP, CHAPLAIN, SJSO, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Officer Kemp introduced himself as Chaplain for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and has been there since 1995. Officer Kemp gave a background detail on his life and choosing to go to work as a law enforcement officer here in St. Johns County. Over the course of his career Officer Kemp started counseling people that he would encounter during his job as a law enforcement officer. The Lord reached out to Officer Kemp and told him, "Go spread the word and preach the gospel in law enforcement." He was hired about a year later to serve as the chaplain for the Sheriff's Office and has served since that time. Pray for your

law enforcement officers and keep them safe.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE UPDATE, JOSEPH MCDERMOTT

Mr. McDermott stated that next month the VA will start gearing up for the PAC Act and start processing the claims that have been filed regarding the PAC Act.

Mr. McDermott has been VSO for many years and spoke of the people that he has learned compassion from while working with these veterans. Spoke of the many complaints/ comments he has received through the years and also spoke of those that are appreciative of his service to them as their Veterans Service Officer. The Veterans Service will continue to all they can to help and assist our Veterans.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT, JOHN LESLIE

Mr. Leslie introduced himself, he is the mentor coordinator for the Veterans Treatment Court here in St. Johns County. The VTC has just finished up their 6th year here in SJC and in those years have brought in 118 Veterans into the program. In the last court a big graduation was dedicated to graduating 5 from the program. The total number of graduates is now 69, with a few more scheduled to graduate within the next few months. The judge has asked Mr. Leslie to look into forming an alumni club for all the graduates and a new committee will look into working that out on January 11th. Emails have been sent out to all the graduates to participate.

There is a strong need for more mentors and that is starting to build up. The best source currently is those participants that have graduated and want to continue to assist in the program. The mentor program is a good way to keep them engaged in the VTC. Next VCT court date is January 6, 2023, in the Courthouse on the 3rd floor in room 355.

Floor was then opened for questions and comments regarding the Veterans Treatment Court.

NEW BUSINESS:

Vice Chairman Quinn spoke of the Wreaths Across America and the success of putting a

wreath on each grave in St. Augustine National Cemetery. Accolades were given to Joe McDermott and his success in getting the large donations to make this year's participation a success. The attendance this year was the largest ever experienced at the Wreaths Across America in St. Augustine – over 500 in attendance.

Chairman Dudley spoke of how involved the Council has been this year with helping homeless Veterans getting into apartments and homes. Started over a year ago in getting apartment complexes involved in having units available to offer our homeless Veterans. Now the Council has a storage facility filled with used furniture to allow the Veterans to go into and shop for what they need for their home. Two Men and Truck Movers have been superb in assisting with moving the furniture into these Veteran's homes. Chairman Dudley also spoke of gift cards that were donated by Winn Dixie and if anyone knows of those in need, see Chairman Dudley for the gift cards.

A special presentation was given to the Veterans Service Council of a framed poem written about the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Ms. Keller Williams was the author of the poem. The framed poem will hang in the Veterans Service Office here in St. Johns County.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Dudley, Chairman

Ray A. Quinn, Vice Chairman



The State of Florida established the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame in 2011 to recognize and honor those military veterans who, through their works and lives during and after military service, have made a significant contribution to the State of Florida, their city, town and community through civic, business, public service and other worthy pursuits.



The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Society, Inc. was formed in 2019 as a supportive non-profit organization to provide financial and administrative support to the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the Florida Veterans Foundation as requested to insure the continuing success of the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

JOHN LESLIE

[Leslie \(fvhofsociety.org\)](http://www.fvhofsociety.org)

<https://www.fvhofsociety.org/leslie.html>



ANTHONY D'ALEO

[D'Aleo \(fvhofsociety.org\)](http://www.fvhofsociety.org)

<https://www.fvhofsociety.org/daleo.html>



DAVID BELLAVIA

David Bellavia is the first and only living Iraq veteran to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, which is our country's highest military honor. He was awarded this medal at the White House on June 25, 2019, surrounded by his family and every living member of his Task Force.



Bellavia was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroic efforts on Nov. 10, 2004, during the Third Battle in Fallujah — dramatic efforts that saved the lives of his unit members. He served three military campaigns: Kosovo 2003 and Operation Iraqi Freedom I and Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

Bellavia enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1999 and chose to stay and fight following the Sept. 11 terror attacks. That sense of duty was ingrained in Bellavia by his World War II veteran grandfather, who served in the Army during the Normandy Campaign. Bellavia returned home in 2005 and founded advocacy organization Vets for Freedom and in 2019 founded Deuce Deuce Relief Fund, which supports the soldiers of his former Task Force 2-2 in Iraq.

Bellavia returned to Iraq as an embedded reporter covering heavy fighting in 2006 and 2008, and in 2007 wrote and published *House to House*, a book detailing his experiences in Fallujah. His book is considered one of the best first-hand military accounts ever written.

Bellavia's many awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, the National Defense Service Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, New York State Conspicuous Service Cross, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the NATO Medal. He was inducted into the New York State Veterans Hall of Fame in 2005.

Bellavia is a Western New York native. He is a 1994 graduate of Lyndonville High School in Orleans County and studied biology and theater at the University of Buffalo.

Today he is active traveling the country as a speaker sharing the important message of service over self and as a sought-after source for national media.



Stories of Service

St. Johns County Veterans Oral History Project



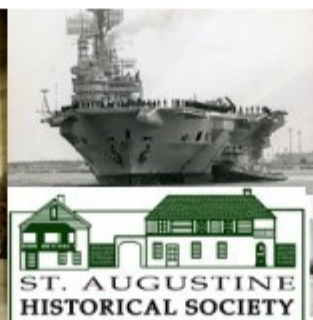
Stories of Service is an oral history project that aims to collect, document, and preserve the stories of local veterans for future generations by conducting audio interviews with them.



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

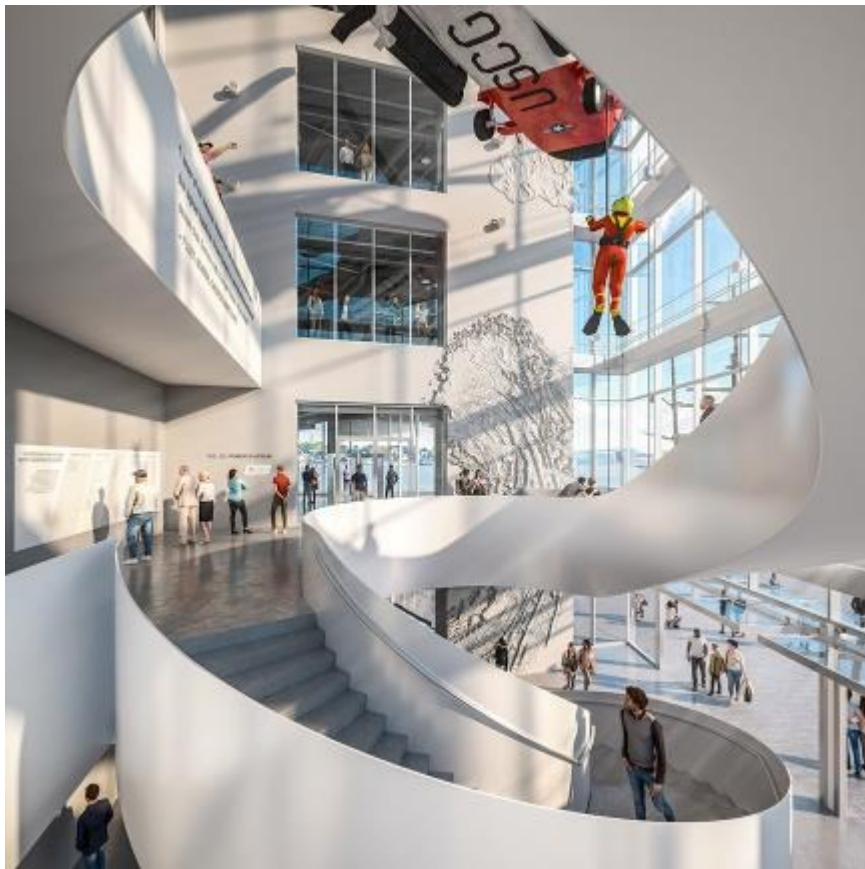


904-825-2333 ext 203
robert@sahs1883.com



The National Coast Guard Museum

The Museum Association is excited to share its recent architectural rendering of the National Coast Guard Museum atrium. The soaring five-story space will make for a dramatic welcome, and it's sure to create lasting memories for all visitors. A full-sized HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter will be suspended from the ceiling. Beneath the helicopter, a rescue swimmer in action will be displayed. Another unique feature within the atrium are the large street level windows capable of lifting to form open air access between City Pier Plaza and the interior. The wall of philanthropy is located at the top of the stairs and will be immediately adjacent to the doors of the Quarterdeck, where the Coast Guard journey begins.



Battleplan Against Suicide

*Healing Heroes
Raising Warriors
Restoring Families*



Florida CAN

*Saving Heroes
Join forces to combat suicide.*

Boots on the Ground

*Our mission is achieved
through action, adventure, and
the great outdoors.*

The Florida Christian Adventure Network is an all-volunteer not-for-profit that hosts over a thousand warriors, women, and youth each year. We offer hunting adventures, fishing trips, and wilderness survival training. We motivate warriors to take ownership of their health and wellness, focus on their priorities, and inspire newfound purpose.

We are no longer captive by PTSD nor bound by our disability. We are free, motivated, and focused on building strong communities.

Join us in our grassroots effort to build a better America, united for good.



The Florida Christian Adventure Network, a chapter of 10 CAN, Inc., is an innovative platform of likeminded organizations fighting the war on suicide. This spiritual war is fought within, but not alone. The battleplan requires a coalition to help balance ten life elements. We lay the foundation but need your help in building the house.

Our mission to save heroes, raise warriors, and restore families began in 2013 when our founder, Dr. Matthew Burke, discovered a reason to live.

Buried in suicidal thoughts, Dr. Burke evoked his purpose by harnessing his experiences to develop a battleplan against suicide. He realized the solution was found in his childhood, and began pruning dead branches to strengthen his roots. From which, a solution was created that is winning the war.

Learning how to fight is the first step in combat. Applying external training to internal conflicts fortifies our defenses. Tapping into good childhood memories through the five senses helps restore joy. Build back faith in God, restore family bonds, and ignite a purpose-driven life are key elements in suicide prevention. But these are all reactive strategies. So what about engaging this enemy proactively?

Fredrick Douglas wrote that it's easier to raise a strong man than to fix a broken one. Raising resilient warriors requires a focus on growing deep childhood roots in the outdoors.

Our goals are to revive the warrior ethos in disabled Vets, giving them a mission to mentor America's future defenders, create wingmen relationships, enhance health and wellness, restore family bonds, and give warriors something to fight for.

Serving fulltime throughout the pandemic created a financial hardship, which impacted operations. Many warriors asked to help carry the load, so we created a membership program. Those who cannot afford to make an annual donation can earn their membership by volunteering.

Service organizations can join the Florida CAN through our partnership program. No matter how big or small, we all play our part in preventing the next suicide.

"It's easier to raise a strong man than to fix a broken one."

Bill to speed vet survivor benefits becomes law

By KEVIN LANDRIGAN, Stars and Stripes

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER, MANCHESTER • December 31, 2022

WASHINGTON (Tribune News Service) — A new bipartisan law should speed up payments to hard-to-find survivors of recently deceased veterans, according to U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas, D-N.H., who co-authored the measure.

President Joe Biden signed the Faster Payments to Veterans' Survivors Act last Tuesday before heading off for a New Year's holiday vacation with his family to St. Croix.

When a veteran passes away, the surviving spouse or child are eligible to receive certain benefits, such as life insurance proceeds.

The U.S. Veterans Administration often struggles to identify, locate and pay these families or beneficiaries in a timely fashion.

The legislation cuts in half the time that the VA has to make the payment of life insurance benefits to survivors.

The current limit is two years for a primary beneficiary and four years for those who become alternate beneficiaries if the primary person cannot be located.

“By ensuring that family members and spouses have the resources and support that they need, we continue to honor and pay tribute to those who have sacrificed for our country,” Pappas said in a statement.

As of September 2020, approximately 15,000 individuals remain undisbursed with more than \$155 million in life insurance benefits owed to veteran families. By the VA's own account, that equals about \$10,500 per family.

The measure also requires the agency to better publicize an online tool that now exists to allow families to search for whether they qualify for survivor benefits.

The legislation instructs the agency to report to Congress six months from now on the progress of improving this program.

A coalition of veteran groups had supported this effort including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Modern Military Association of America, and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

The Veterans Legacy Program

The Veterans Legacy Program is offering a new way for Americans connect with their history. Through the program, VA's National Cemetery Administration is forging partnerships with academic institutions to engage students and professors alike in discovering the stories of service and sacrifice found in VA's national cemeteries.

Dr. Amelia Lyons is leading the University of Central Florida's team researching these stories. her students are researching Florida Veterans who fought in World War I and are interred at Florida National Cemetery. Along with Lyons, Dr. Barbara Gannon and four colleagues are teaching research skills that will help UCF students learn more about Florida history through its Veterans.

Researching Veterans who served a century ago can be challenging. Through archival research, they learn when their assigned Veteran served and when they came back. Using materials such as Census records, marriage certificates, newspapers and genealogical records, students began piecing together the lives of these Veterans. Many soldiers, sailors, and Marines gave the ultimate sacrifice in World War I, but many also came home. Students were able to assemble the Veterans' post-War lives. Ken Holliday, an Army Veteran, even found that his WWI Veteran had a son who served in WWII, and they are both buried in the same section of Florida National Cemetery. This was not an easy discovery, as the son had changed the spelling of his last name.

Bringing college students to the national cemetery is only half of the program. On May 19, UCF students were at Florida National Cemetery with 150 seventh-graders to teach them about the Veterans who came from their community. For students who otherwise only thought about, say, World War I as "arrows on a map," they have a new understanding of American history through Veterans. They now think about people from Florida serving in World War I and understand that Americans from every state and territory wore the uniform and contributed to the victory.



VLP 2022-2023



- UCF faculty and student researchers support educators
- Teachers will produce:
 - A biography of a Veteran buried in SANC
 - Mini-themed tour of SANC
 - Lesson plan for their class assignment
- Teachers around the state
- Potentially working with any of the 9 national cemeteries in Florida

Public and UCF History Department's Office of Experiences



- Public and UCF History Department's Office of Experiences
- UCF Learning Programs
- History Programs, U.S. History Center
- Florida History Center, Florida History Center
- U.S. History Center, U.S. History Center
- U.S. History Center, U.S. History Center
- U.S. History Center, U.S. History Center
- U.S. History Center, U.S. History Center
- U.S. History Center, U.S. History Center

Why We Do This Work



We do this work because we believe in the power of education to create a better future for all. We are committed to providing our students with the highest quality education and preparing them for the challenges of the 21st century.



Thank you, Question

Webpages and Contacts

UCF History Center
 UCF History Center
 UCF History Center
 UCF History Center
 UCF History Center

From Hope 4 Veterans

For those of you having BREAST CANCER or any kind of GYN Cancer such as Uterine or Ovarian. I want you to clearly understand that is now a presumptive condition under the new VA PACT Act. It falls under "Reproductive Cancer". Contact a Claims Service Officer and file your claim today.

The image shows a printed document with the title "New Presumptive Conditions" in a large, bold font. The document is divided into several sections. The first section explains that to get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For some conditions, the VA automatically assumes (or "presumes") that your service caused your condition. The VA calls these "presumptive conditions," and they are established by law or regulation. The second section states that if you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption. The third section notes that the PACT Act adds more than 20 health conditions to the presumptive list of conditions. The document then lists presumptive conditions for two groups of veterans: Gulf War-ERA and Post-9/11 Veterans, and Vietnam-ERA Veterans. The list of conditions includes Melanoma, Neck cancer of any type, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type, Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type, Asthma that was diagnosed after service, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease (ILD), Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, and Sarcoidosis. The document also mentions that two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions are added for Vietnam-ERA Veterans.

New Presumptive Conditions

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For some conditions, the VA automatically assumes (or "presumes") that your service caused your condition. The VA calls these "presumptive conditions," and they are established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

The PACT Act adds more than 20 health conditions to the presumptive list of conditions.

FOR GULF WAR-ERA AND POST-9/11 VETERANS
These cancers are now presumptive:

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma

- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

These illnesses are now presumptive:

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

FOR VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS
Two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

Hope 4 Veterans: Learn About Yourself Through Art

Are you seeking a connection with like-minded military women?

Are you seeking new opportunities to heal within, self-care, and explore the unconscious?
Do you feel you are struggling with the healing process or searching for new ways to grow?
Do you like to write, draw, art, or tell your story?

Our objectives are to help with:

Vision/Goals, Mindfulness, Connecting to like-minded women (Sister Support), Understanding yourself through art, Writing, Art, Dance, Underlying Stressors, Bringing awareness /Telling her story, Honoring, Recognizing, and Empowering military women through growth, etc.

We want to invite Military Women (Includes Active Duty, National Guard, Veterans regardless of her discharges, and Women Spouses) to come, enjoy, and explore.

Join us on Tuesdays for alternating art classes in the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone community room and an online Finding Your Life's Purpose support group.

January 24 – April 18, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

To register, please enter your information into the following form, and Hope4veterans will contact you shortly:

<https://form.jotform.com/230048033622141>

Artwork and stories will be recognized and honored at the Third Annual Hope4Veterans Fundraising Gala Palencia club, 600 Palencia Club Drive on November 4th, 2023.

www.Hope4Veterans.org

If you are inspired by art and would like to help out and 'give back' to military women, or have an art project suggestion, we would love to hear from you. Please, send an email to lgeiser@hope4veterans.org



Learn About Yourself Through Art

Are you seeking a connection with like-minded military women?

Are you seeking new opportunities to heal within, self-care, and explore the unconscious? Do you feel you are struggling with the healing process or searching for new ways to grow? Do you like to write, draw, art, or tell your story?

Our objectives are to help with:

- Vision/Goals
- Mindfulness
- Connecting to like-minded women (Sister Support)
- Understanding yourself through art
- Writing, Art, Dance, etc.
- Underlying Stressors
- Bringing awareness /Telling her story
- Honoring, Recognizing, and Empowering military women through growth

We want to invite Military Women (Includes Active Duty, National Guard, Veterans regardless of her discharges, and Women Spouses) to come, enjoy, and explore.

Artwork and stories will be recognized and honored at the **Third Annual Hope4Veterans Fundraising Gala** Palencia club, 600 Palencia Club Drive on November 4th, 2023
www.Hope4Veterans.org

Join us on Tuesdays for alternating art classes in the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone community room and an online Finding Your Life's Purpose support group.

January 24 – April 18
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

To register, please enter your information into the following form, and Hope4veterans will contact you shortly:

<https://form.jotform.com/230048033622141>



If you are inspired by art and would like to help out and 'give back' to military women, or have an art project suggestion, we would love to hear from you. Please, send an email to lgeiser@hope4veterans.org

From the Treasurer

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

Vote-By-Mail

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

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

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

Exempt Organization 2023 Filing Deadlines and Reminders

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

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

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

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

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

Personal Federal Income Tax Deadline

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

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

The Story of Notre Dame's Legendary 'Rudy' Ruettiger Began in Vietnam

Defensive end Daniel Eugene "Rudy" Ruettiger is carried off the field by his University of Notre Dame teammates after Ruettiger sacked Georgia Tech quarterback Rudy Allen on the final play of the game, Notre Dame, Ind., Nov. 8, 1975. Notre Dame won the game.



(Courtesy of Notre Dame)

Daniel Eugene "Rudy" Ruettiger became a famous college football athlete, but he got his big start by joining the Navy in 1968 and serving two years at sea as a yeoman.

Using his GI Bill benefits, he enrolled in Indiana's Holy Cross College in 1972 and then at the University of Notre Dame in 1974, playing in the Orange Bowl in 1975 and the Gator Bowl in 1976 -- the year he graduated.

Former Notre Dame defensive end Daniel Eugene "Rudy" Ruettiger, gives a motivational speech to soldiers at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. (U.S. Army)

Despite being undersized for a football player -- 5 feet, 6 inches tall and 165 pounds -- Ruettiger was accepted as a defensive end on Notre Dame's Fighting Irish football team due to his drive and determination.

His claim to fame was brief, but spectacular. On Nov. 8, 1975, he was put in the game against Georgia Institute of Technology. During the final play of the game, he sacked Georgia Tech quarterback Rudy Allen.

Ruettiger's teammates were ecstatic, and they carried him off the field. At the time, he was the only player ever to receive such an honor.

The story of the undersized young man being allowed to play and sacking the opposition's quarterback led to the 1993 movie "Rudy," based on Ruettiger's short

football career. Ruettiger was played by actor Sean Astin.

Defensive end Daniel Eugene "Rudy" Ruettiger is carried off the field by University of Notre Dame teammates after Ruettiger sacked Georgia Tech quarterback Rudy Allen on the final play of the game, Notre Dame, Ind., Nov. 8, 1975. Notre Dame won the match.



(Courtesy of the University of Notre Dame)

Ruettiger actually appeared in the movie as a fan in the final scene. Although Hollywood often takes liberties to make events more dramatic when making films based on true stories, Ruettiger said the film was 92% accurate.



These days, Ruettiger likes to visit service members and give motivational speeches.

During one such visit to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, on Oct. 7, 2010, he told the soldiers that "the Navy actually changed my thinking around, my attitude around, and who I was."

Ruettiger said members of the armed forces are great Americans. "This is an honor for me to come here. I'm real humbled and real privileged," he said.

During his motivational speech, he talked about how everyone has the potential to be whatever they want to be.

"It's not your age; it's your attitude," he said, adding that people who work hard deserve a shot.

Ruettiger also told the soldiers that all it takes to succeed is what he called the four Cs: character, courage, commitment and contribution.

"The little things make a big difference," he said.

From American Legion 5th District FL

IMPORTANT VETERAN INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

NEVER release an ORIGINAL copy.

APPOINT an administrator for minor children.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE: contact your County Veterans' Service Officer

SAVE THE DATE.....

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

RECOGNITION CEREMONY

SATURDAY, MARCH 25. 10 am

915 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs





ATTENTION: MILITARY MEN CURRENTLY IN TRANSITION AND/OR VETERANS

**Have you been looking for help and direction
but getting very slow or no response?**

Project Help has a program just for you, coming in January 2023

A peer to peer support group offering a safe place to:

- Connect with other veterans
- Have open discussions, share experiences & problem solve
- Make new friends and help each other navigate the hurdles of life after service
- Meet and learn from other veterans who have successfully transitioned

A WARRIOR'S
Welcome

LEARN MORE & REGISTER AT
projecthelp.us/warriorwelcome



Vietnam vet gets Eastern Florida State College diploma 51 years after finishing coursework

John McCarthy

Florida Today, many young men in the 1960s, James Steen's education was interrupted when he was drafted into the Army. But after serving as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, he returned to Brevard Junior College — now Eastern Florida State College — and earned his AA degree in 1971.



But fresh out of the Army with a wife and three young children, he couldn't afford the fee to participate in the graduation ceremony.

But Thursday afternoon, more than 50 years later, Steen, now 76, strode across the stage at the King Center to finally pick up his diploma. And he did so to a standing ovation from the other graduates, many of whom were young enough to be Steen's grandchildren.

"I was so emotional. Just keeping myself from bursting into tears was a major accomplishment," he said afterward, holding his diploma as he sniffled and choked back tears. "It's still that way. I never dreamed I would have this. And now I have it. I'm just tickled pink."

Just before awarding Steen his diploma as the final recipient at the ceremony, the master of ceremonies told the audience of Steen's interrupted education and military service.

Steen originally attended Brevard Junior College in 1964-65 before being drafted. In the Army, he was chosen for Officer Candidate School and was trained to be a helicopter pilot. He served in Vietnam in 1968-69 during some the war's fiercest fighting.

During one mission when he was ferrying special forces troops, his helicopter was shot down over Cambodia. Despite suffering a leg injury himself, Steen carried the body of one fallen soldier for three hours through the jungle dodging enemy fire until a rescue mission reached him.

When they finally reached safety, doctors found that the seemingly dead man Steen had carried through the jungle still had a pulse and the doctors were able to save him. Steen himself spent more than a month in military hospitals recovering from his injuries.

That soldier he saved was able to track down Steen through social media three years ago, and the two keep in touch.

Steen rose to the rank of captain and received a Purple Heart and an Air Medal with 23 oak leaf clusters, each representing 25 hours of flying combat missions.



"I had no intention of being a hero ever," Steen said after the ceremony. "All I wanted to do was fly my helicopter from Point A to Point B and do what I could do in the war the way I was trained."

After hearing his story, the audience honored Steen with thunderous applause as he walked across the stage, steadied by a cane, to get his diploma.

"I never dreamed being shot down in a foreign country and running from enemy soldiers would produce this. This is absolutely beyond my imagination, and for them to stand up and honor me," Steen said of the crowd's reaction. "There are guys that did a lot more than I did. It was mind boggling. I didn't know what to say or do. I couldn't even talk. I couldn't even say "thank you" to the president when he shook my hand."

Until recently, Steen had no idea that he could still pick up his diploma. Earlier this year, he stopped by the college's Military and Veterans Service Center because he was interested in taking a computer class. When the staff heard Steen's story, they unearthed his records from the school's archives and set him up for the graduation ceremony.

Thursday's graduation was not the end of Steen's academic journey.

"When I got back from Vietnam I went back to college and I finished. I made the Dean's list and I stayed on the Dean's list until I got my two-year degree and now I'm going to continue on and get the four-year. I really want to finish and have that four-year degree."

19 terms only sailors will understand, We Are The Mighty, Orvelin Valle

All sailors, from the “old salts” to the newly initiated are familiar with the following terms.

These are 19 terms only sailors will understand



1. Chit

A chit in the Navy refers to any piece of paper from a form to a pass and even currency. According to the Navy history museum, the word chit was carried over from the days of Hindu traders when they used slips of paper called “citthi” for money.

2. Scuttlebutt

The Navy term for water fountain. The Navy History Museum describes the term as a combination of “scuttle,” to make a hole in the ship’s side causing her to sink, and “butt,” a cask or hogshead used in the days of wooden ships to hold drinking water; thus the term scuttlebutt means a cask with a hole in it.

3. Crank

The term used to describe a mess deck worker, typically a new transferee assigned to the mess decks while qualifying for regular watch.

4. Cadillac

This is the term used to describe a mop bucket with wheels and a ringer. When sailors are assigned to cleaning duties, they prefer the luxurious Cadillac over the bucket.

5. Knee-knockers

A knee-knocker refers to the bottom portion of a watertight door’s frame. They are notorious for causing shin injuries and drunken sailors hate them.

6. Comshaw

The term used when obtaining something outside of official channels or payment, usually by trading or bartering. For example, sailors on a deployed ship got pizza in exchange for doing the laundry of the C-2 Greyhound crew that flew it in.

*Younger sailors may use the term “drug deal” instead of comshaw.

7. Gear adrift

The term used to describe items that are not properly stowed away. The shoes in this picture would be considered gear adrift. Also sometimes phrased as “gear adrift is a gift.”

8. Geedunk

The term sailors use for vending machine and junk food.

9. Snipe

The term used to describe sailors that work below decks, usually those that are assigned to engineering rates, such as Machinists Mates, Boilermen, Enginemen, Hull Technicians, and more.

10. Airdale

These are sailors assigned to the air wing — everyone from pilots down to the airplane maintenance crew.

11. Bubble head

The term sailors use to describe submariners.

12. Gun decking

Filling out a log or form with imaginary data, usually done out of laziness or to satisfy an inspection.

13. Muster

The term sailors use interchangeably for meeting and roll call.

14. Turco

The chemical used for washing airplanes.

15. Pad eye

These are the hook points on a ship's surface used to tie down airplanes with chains.

16. Mid-rats

Short for mid rations. The food line open from midnight to 6:00 a.m. that usually consists of leftovers and easy-to-make food like hamburgers, sandwich fixings, and weenies.

17. Roach coach

The snack or lunch truck that stops by the pier.

18. Bomb farm

Areas on the ship where aviation ordnancemen men store their bombs.

19. Nuke it

The term used when a sailor is overthinking a simple task. Here's how the Navy publication, All Hands describes the term:

The History of the Gold Star Program

The gold star program evolved out of the blue star program, which was founded by World War I Army Captain Robert L. Queisser of the Ohio 5th Infantry in 1917. His two sons served on the front line, and he developed the “Blue Star Service Banner” to honor them. This traditional banner featured a white background with a red border and a blue star in the middle for each service member. Captain Queisser displayed it proudly in his window, and soon other local military families did too, in their homes, churches, businesses, and schools. By September 1917, Ohio’s adoption of this service flag was formally codified in the Ohio Congressional Record.



The following year, the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense proposed that women—particularly mothers—wear a black armband with a gold star for each fallen service member. President Woodrow Wilson approved this proposal on May 28, and a decade later in 1928, 25 mothers went to Washington, DC, to officially form American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. These mothers and numerous other families amended the blue-starred service banners with gold stars to signify the sacrifices of their fallen relatives. In 1936, Congress declared the last Sunday of September “Gold Star Mother’s Day.”

Both the blue and gold star programs have stood the test of time, with numerous appearances in the modern day. For example, the American Legion provided service banners to families in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. In 2011, President Barack Obama amended “Gold Star Mother’s Day” to “Gold Star Mother’s and Family’s Day.” And, of course, gold stars still adorn license plates.

How to Apply for a Gold Star

If one of your family members has died in the line of duty, you may be eligible to receive a gold star on your license plate. Different states have different requirements; for example, California allows grandchildren to apply for a gold star, while Tennessee and Vermont only allow spouses, siblings, parents and children.

To discover the requirements for your particular state, look it up in this chart from Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Note that in order to apply you will need to prove relation to the fallen service member, as well as their passing in the form of a DD 1300.

Moreover, if you are struggling financially or emotionally in the wake of a loved one’s passing, consider reaching out to a Department of Defense Gold Star and Surviving Family Member representative. Other helpful organizations include the American Widow Project and the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.

Please join us for the 28th annual FMC Golf Tournament
March 24th, 2023

Time: 1200 Registration / 1300 Shotgun Start

Location: St. Johns Golf Club 4900 Cypress Links Blvd, Elkton, FL. 32033

Format: 4 Person Captain's Choice

Field: First 36 Teams

**28th ANNUAL FIRST MILITIA CHAPTER
AUSA GOLF TOURNAMENT
MARCH 24, 2023**

Time: 12:00 p.m. Registration • 1:00 p.m. Shotgun Start
Location: St. Johns Golf Club
4900 Cypress Links Blvd, Elkton, FL. 32033
Format: 4 Person Captain's Choice • **Field:** First 36 Teams

Entry Fee: \$50 per player (includes Green Fees, Cart, & Prizes)
Prizes for: 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Place
Hole Prizes include: Longest Drive, Closest to Pin, and Longest Putt
Chipping & Putting Contests (during the Tournament)

Awards Ceremony will be held on-site after the Tournament

Golf Shoes Must Be Soft Spikes Only

TEAM CAPTAIN: _____ PHONE # _____ EMAIL: _____
PLAYER #2: _____ PHONE # _____ EMAIL: _____
PLAYER #3: _____ PHONE # _____ EMAIL: _____
PLAYER #4: _____ PHONE # _____ EMAIL: _____

Mail Entry Forms (whether paying by check or credit card) to:
Mr. Lee S. Diggs c/o AUSA GOLF TOURNAMENT
P.O. BOX 3883, ST. AUGUSTINE, FL 32085-3883 • PHONE (904) 827-8567
Make checks payable to: First Militia Chapter - AUSA - or
To purchase online visit: <https://squareup.com/market/first-militia-chapter-ausa>

AUSA is an exempt organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the US Internal Revenue Code

2023 Summer Camp Dates & Locations

APPLICATION DATE
January 18, 2023



Find more information at
www.campcorral.org

Combined Federal Campaign #84788



Camp Corral

Triangle Y Ranch Camp	Oracle	AZ	June 11-16
YMCA Camp Hanes	King	NC	June 25-30
YMCA Camp Gorham	Eagle Bay	NY	June 25-30
YMCA Camp Loma Mar	Loma Mar	CA	July 2-7
YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin	Middleville	MI	July 2-7
Eastern 4-H Center	Columbia	NC	July 2-7
YMCA Camp Carson	Princeton	IN	July 2-7
YMCA Camp Hanes	King	NC	July 2-7
Camp Wood YMCA	Elmdale	KS	July 2-8
YMCA Camp Seymour	Gig Harbor	WA	July 16-21
4-H Memorial Camp	Monticello	IL	July 16-21
Camp Twin Lakes at Will-a-Way	Winder	GA	July 23-28
Camp Southern Ground	Fayetteville	GA	July 23-28
YMCA Camp Classen	Davis	OK	July 23-29
Camp Lakotah	Wautoma	WI	July 23-29
YMCA Camp Shady Brook	Deckers	CO	July 30-August 4
Camp Holiday Trails	Charlottesville	VA	July 30-August 4
YMCA Camp Weaver	Greensboro	NC	August 6-11
YMCA Camp Ernst	Burlington	KY	August 6-12

www.campcorral.org

WE ARE ★ **THE MIGHTY**

The original ‘Memphis Belle’ is now restored and on display

Harold C. Hutchison

The Memphis Belle has received a lot of attention over the years. In 1944, this Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber was the subject of a documentary, entitled *Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress*, that followed an aircrew as they completed their 25th and final mission. Today, we now know that the Memphis Belle was actually the second choice for that documentary — the first was shot down in battle.

Nonetheless, the Memphis Belle was thrust into notoriety and had a place in the public eye. Then, in 1990, that documentary was dramatized and turned into a film, titled *Memphis Belle*, starring Harry Connick Jr.

Now, you can see the famous bomber itself at the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. The bomber’s display was formally opened on May 17, 2018, which marked the 75th anniversary of the plane’s 25th mission. But this B-17 bomber endured a long journey before finally arriving at the museum.

The Memphis Belle being restored at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. In the background is Swoose, another historic B-17. (USAF)

According to an Air Force release, restoring the bomber has taken over 55,000 man-hours since 2005. She was saved from the scrapyard by the city of Memphis for a grand total of 0 in 1945. After that, the plane spent most of

her days stored outside, left exposed to the elements, as she awaited proper preservation. In 2004, the Air Force reclaimed the bomber.

Still, 55,000 hours is a long restoration period — what took so long? Well, the experts weren't interested in plastering on a pretty paint job and calling it done. Instead, they wanted this iconic plane to look exactly as it did when she flew that famous 25th mission. That was no easy task. One of the hardest parts was finding authentic parts for the plane, or at least period-accurate parts.

The Memphis Belle as she appeared during World War II. (USAF)

The Memphis Belle, a Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress, was able to carry as many as 17,600 pounds' worth of bombs and was equipped with as many as 13 M2 .50-caliber machine guns as well as a single .30-caliber machine gun. It had a crew of ten, a top speed of 325 miles per hour, and a maximum range of 4,420 miles.

Of the over 3,400 B-17Fs built, only three survive today — the Memphis Belle is one of those.



Middleburg VA Clinic:

The Middleburg VA Clinic provides a broad range of general and specialized medicine services: Primary Care, Women's Health, Laboratory & Vaccinations, Mental Health Care (individual, group, couples), Nutrition & Weight Management, Pain Psychology, Social Work, Substance Abuse & Tobacco Cessation, and Telehealth Services for a wide-variety of medical issues. The clinic also provides eligible Veterans with same day access.

Our diverse Veteran patient population requires a complexity of care that ranges from minor health care needs to chronic diseases. Patients who require hospitalization are assessed, stabilized, and transferred to local medical facilities or to the Malcom Randall VA Medical Clinic (VAMC) in Gainesville, FL or Lake City VAMC in Lake City, FL according to urgency of their needs.

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF/SGVHS) thanks everyone who contributed to the success of this event!

Special Thanks to Veterans Canteen Service for the refreshments.

Follow NF/SGVHS



Scan QR Code below to view photos and more info on the Middleburg VA Clinic



Middleburg VA Clinic Renaming Ceremony In Honor of Andrew K. Baker



Tuesday, January 17, 2023 | 11:00 a.m.
400 College Drive, Suite 200
Middleburg, FL 32068



Chief Andrew K. Baker

Chief Andy Baker enlisted in the U.S. Navy in October 1980, attending boot camp at Recruit Training Command Orlando. In April of 1981, he reported to his first duty station, USS Dwight D Eisenhower (CVN-69) as a Ship's Serviceman. During his time of service, Chief Baker graduated from Naval Aircrew, Aviation Rescue Swimmer School, and Aviation Warfare Systems Operator - A School and earned his Combat Search and Rescue designation. Chief Baker also completed multiple cruises to include a world cruise aboard the USS Nimitz and a cruise in the North Atlantic while assigned to HELANTISUBRON THREE (HS-3) at NAS Jacksonville and earned the rank of Chief Petty Officer.

Chief Baker served his country honorably for 17 years before tragically perishing while aboard a Trident 615, an HH-60H "Sea Hawk" helicopter, that crashed at sea on March 13, 1997, as a part of the USS Kennedy's Composite Training Unit Exercise. Chief Baker is survived by his wife, Chief Warrant Officer Tina Baker (retired), son, Chief Petty Officer Andrew "Drew" Baker, and two grandchildren Alice and Andrew III. One of his sons, Jacob, passed in 2019.

Bill S. 2159

On Monday, December 5, 2022, President Biden signed into law S. 2159, which states:

"S. 2159, which designates the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 400 College Drive, Middleburg, Florida, as the Andrew K. Baker Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic;

Thank you to Senators Rubio and Rick Scott, Representative Cammack, and the entire Florida delegation for their leadership."

Program

*Program starts at 11:00 a.m.

- Welcome and Pledge—Phillip Pitts, NF/SGVHS Executive Assistant to Director
- Opening Remarks—Wende Dettor, NF/SGVHS Interim Executive Health System Director
- Remarks—Matthew Dews, Office of U.S. Senator Marco Rubio
- Remarks—Gary Hollis, Office of U.S. Senator Rick Scott
- Remarks—Honorable Aaron Bean, U.S. Congress, Florida, District 4
- Remarks and presentation of U.S. flag, insert into Congressional Record, and note for Baker Family—Honorable Kat Cammack, U.S. Congress, Florida, District 3
- Remarks—Chief Petty Officer Andrew "Drew" Baker, Son of Chief Petty Officer Andrew K. Baker
- Close of Program—Phillip Pitts, NF/SGVHS Executive Assistant to Director



Chief Andrew K. Baker

*Please enjoy the provided refreshments after the ceremony.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Happy National Disc Jockey Day from the
Veterans Legacy Program!



In light of this special occasion, we thought we'd celebrate the career of the most famous DJ in any of NCAs 155 national cemeteries – SGT Adrian Cronauer, who was portrayed by Robin Williams in the 1987 film “Good Morning, Vietnam.”

Cronauer was born in Pittsburgh, PA on September 8, 1938, the son of a steel worker and a teacher. His first radio appearance came at the age of 12 and while attending Pitt he was part of a group that founded the school's first student radio station (now WPTS-FM.)

In 1963, he enlisted to avoid the draft and became a U.S. Air Force Radio and Television Broadcasting Specialist. He was trained in Texas and spent over a year in Crete before volunteering for Vietnam.

Arriving in Saigon in 1965, Cronauer became the radio host of a show called “Dawn Buster.” He began every broadcast with his signature, “Gooood morning, Vietnam!” which came to be either loved or detested by his fellow servicemembers in country. Either way, his trademark opening garnered a strong reaction, which is precisely what he wanted to accomplish. SGT Cronauer’s Vietnam tour ended in 1966.

After the war he worked for various radio stations and earned a master's degree in Media Studies from the New School for Social Research.

In the late 1970s, he had an idea for a television show that would be a blend of M*A*S*H and WKRP in Cincinnati. After several iterations, this became the basis for the movie, “Good Morning, Vietnam.” Robin Williams’ character was loosely based on Cronauer, although the DJ later joked that if he had done half of the onscreen antics depicted by Williams, “I’d still be in Leavenworth.”

Adrian Cronauer died on July 18, 2018, at a nursing home in Troutville, Virginia at the age of 79 and is interred in Section 8, Row 13, Site 614 in Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery, a VA Grant-Funded Cemetery. Please take a moment to leave a memory or tribute on his Veterans Legacy Memorial page, which can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3wm2xua>.

VA nurse awarded Distinguished Flying Cross

Distinguished Flying Cross for Iowa VA nurse second in history



Katie Lunning, of the 33rd Airlift Wing, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross January 7 at the 133rd Maintenance Group North hangar in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Lunning is an Intensive Care Unit nurse manager at Central Iowa VA and a Minnesota Air National Guard air transport nurse.

The second nurse ever presented the award, she earned the DFC for her exemplary service during a six-month tour based in Qatar that began in the summer of 2021.

She was a member of a Critical Care Air Transport Team, a three-person unit meant to pick up the most critically injured or ill and fly them to the higher echelon of care. Lunning helped evacuate and care for patients coming out of Kabul, Afghanistan, amidst active conflict.

Left the airplane to get patients

“We were pulling them out as they are getting injured,” said Lunning. “August 26th, when the suicide bomber exploded at Abbey Gate, we were the first team in. It was the largest medical evacuation out of that coalition hospital ever and very dangerous on the ground. We had to leave the airplane to go get our patients as well.

“We took injured Marines and Afghan civilians who really weren’t flight worthy, but there was no choice. We just had to get them out of there. A lot of medical events occurred on the airplane, but we ended up being able to safely deliver everybody to Landstuhl, Germany, for further medical care.”

Evacuated more than 20 patients

These events surround the harrowing final days of the American evacuation from Afghanistan when an engineering student, turned Islamic State militant, strapped 20 pounds of explosives to himself and killed more than 160 civilians and 13 American service members at

the entrance to the international airport in Kabul.

Lunning and other members of her team worked around the clock to evacuate more than 20 patients out of the chaos as Afghanistan fell to the Taliban.

Lunning humbly describes her experience as a matter of circumstance and says she was glad to be in the right place at the right time to be able to help civilians and fellow service members in desperate need of evacuation and care.

“In that moment, I was really just focusing on the job,” she said. “We came up with a mantra. We would say, ‘We can’t control what’s happening on the ground and what we can control is our jobs.’ We focused very much on getting people home. We all have kids right around the same age that we wanted to get home to.

“We just focused on getting everybody home to their people because everybody’s going to have a why, right? We talked about that and how it was our role to get them back to their reason for being there.”

Lunning has a nine-year-old daughter with her husband, Joshua Lunning, the command sergeant major of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion at the Iowa Army National Guard.

Lunning joined the Minnesota Army National Guard as a combat medic right out of high school and then switched to the Minnesota Air National Guard to pursue nursing, receiving a direct commission as an officer.

Nurse passionate about caring for Veterans

She began working at Minnesota VA as a student nurse in 2009 while she attended Bethel University in Saint Paul for her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. After graduating in 2012, she worked as a registered nurse in the intensive care unit where she stayed until moving to Iowa.

Lunning is now an ICU nurse manager at the Central Iowa VA in Des Moines.

“I appreciate all of my experience at VA, my VA training and my VA ICU nurse experience,” she added. “That was really where I got the training it took to accomplish the mission. My whole background has been at VA so I’m appreciative of everything VA has given me. I’m very grateful to not only take care of Veterans on the front end but I’m also very passionate about working at VA and continuing the care for Veterans here at home.”



How the PACT Act is Already Helping Veterans

**Veterans are applying for benefits and
VA is expediting delivery**

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

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

Veterans are applying for the PACT Act benefits they deserve

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

Thousands of Veterans participated in toxic exposure screening pilot

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

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

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

VA will expand health care eligibility in October

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

Meeting Veterans where they are

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

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

The cross-section of a modern submarine being dismantled. Just a little technology squeezed in there! Not many know or realize that the actual amount of square footage available for crew “Living Space” is approximately equivalent to that available in a small to medium sized 3 bedroom house. Within that small “house” living amongst all the equipment and machinery with all the windows and doors sealed shut for up to 3+ months are between 120 and 140 submarine sailors. There are only enough bunks for about 2/3 of the crew and many bunks must be shared in shifts (Hot Bunking). Food is stashed everywhere possible including canned goods on the decks where the sailors literally walk on their food until they eat their way back down to the deck. No days off, no weekends, no holidays... 24/7/365 they operate in the harshest environment on earth. They are a rare breed living in extremely tight quarters, often sleep deprived and stressed, holding the line for freedom and our way of life. May God bless and keep them!





FIRST COAST
Honor Flight

First Coast Honor Flight
PO Box 600785
St Johns, FL 32260
1.888.400.1185
info@firstcoasthonorflight.com

BIRDIES FOR CHARITY

Guess the correct number of birdies made during **THE PLAYERS Championship** for a chance to win \$10,000!

Visit birdiesforcharity.playerschampionship.com to participate and for more information.

Contest runs **November 14, 2022 - March 8, 2023**



March 7-12, 2023 | TPC Sawgrass | Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

OPEN ONLY TO LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE 50 UNITED STATES AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (EXCLUDING NEW YORK) WHO ARE 18 YEARS OR OLDER AS OF THE DATE OF ENTRY. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY.

★ ACTIVE DUTY ★ VETERANS ★ NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVE ★

MILITARY SUPPORT RETREATS

RETREATS FOR COMBAT VETERANS AND THEIR PRIMARY SUPPORT PERSON



~~Amelia Island~~
Florida

~~FULL JAN. 12-15~~

Marineland
Florida

★ FEB. 2-5

Sarasota
Florida

★ MAR. 23-26

Hiawassee
Georgia

★ APR. 13-16

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



★ RESTORATION ★ RECREATION ★ RELAXATION ★

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

★ Small, friendly group setting ★

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

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

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

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



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



Hello First Coast Honor Flight Supporters:



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

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

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

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

Stay tuned for more information.

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

Your First Coast Honor Flight Team

Candace Mabry, Fundraising Director, First Coast Honor Flight

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

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

-Will Rogers



PROPERTY TAX BENEFITS FOR ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY AND VETERANS

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

Property Tax Oversight

Filing and Keeping Your Homestead Exemption

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

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

Property Tax Exemptions and Discounts

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

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



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

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

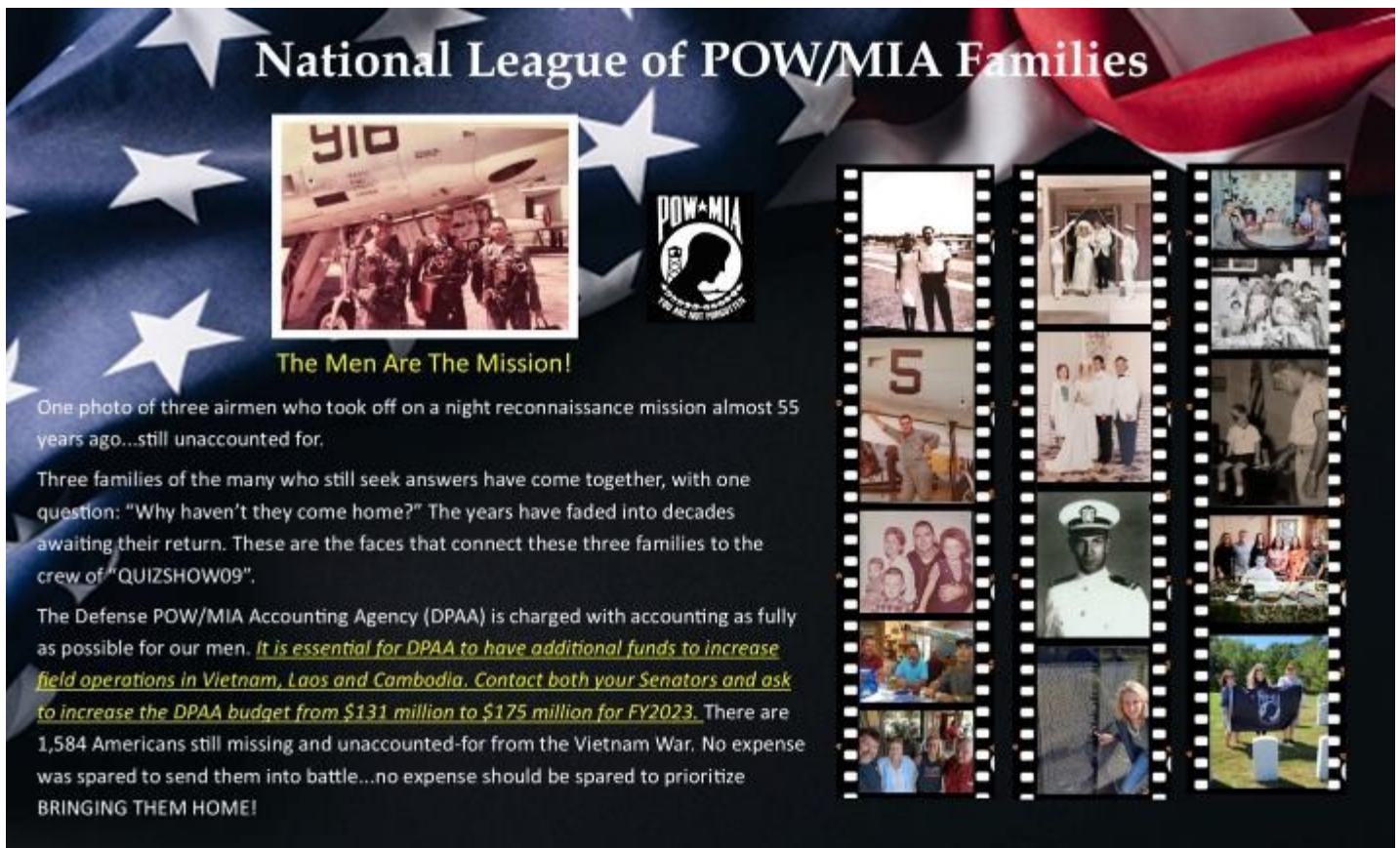
You should file all required forms and applications for these exemptions with your county property appraiser. If the property appraiser denies your application, you may file a petition with the county's value adjustment board. For more information, see [Petitions to the Value Adjustment Board](#).

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


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

The Men are the Mission!

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is charged with accounting as fully as possible for our men. It is essential for DPAA to have additional funds to increase field operations in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Contact both your Senators and ask to increase the DPAA budget from \$131 million to \$175 million for FY2023. There are 1,584 Americans still missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. No expense was spared to send them into battle...no expense should be spared to prioritize BRINGING THEM HOME!



National League of POW/MIA Families




The Men Are The Mission!

One photo of three airmen who took off on a night reconnaissance mission almost 55 years ago...still unaccounted for.

Three families of the many who still seek answers have come together, with one question: "Why haven't they come home?" The years have faded into decades awaiting their return. These are the faces that connect these three families to the crew of "QUIZSHOW09".

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is charged with accounting as fully as possible for our men. It is essential for DPAA to have additional funds to increase field operations in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Contact both your Senators and ask to increase the DPAA budget from \$131 million to \$175 million for FY2023. There are 1,584 Americans still missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. No expense was spared to send them into battle...no expense should be spared to prioritize BRINGING THEM HOME!



KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION



CALLING ALL KOREAN WAR AND KOREAN DEFENSE VETERANS

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

Blue Angels Show Schedule 2023

Jacksonville in October

Blue Angels

► 2023 | SHOW SCHEDULE

MARCH

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

APRIL

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

MAY

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

JUNE

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

JULY

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

AUGUST

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

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

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

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

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

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

#FDVA #FLVets

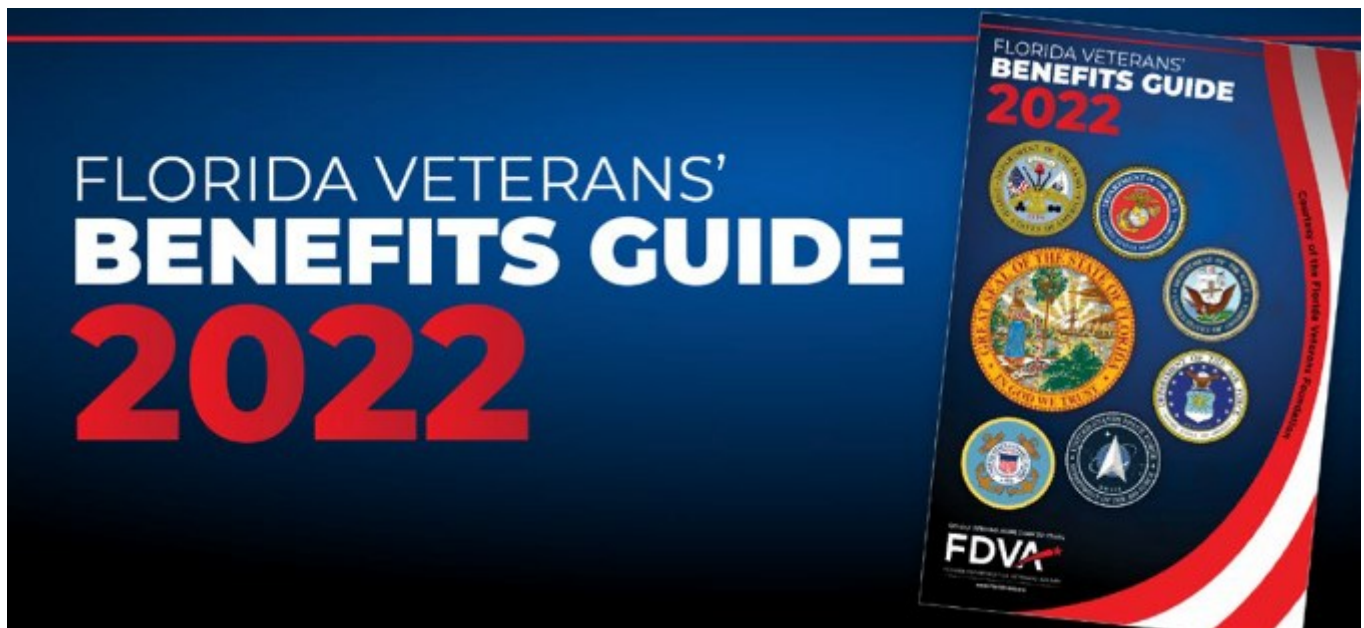
**GET OUR FREE
UPGRADED
APP.**

It won't take
up space on
your phone.



The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

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





VA SURVIVOR BENEFITS & THE PACT ACT

ESGR4U

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



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

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

How to Apply for DIC and/or Accrued Benefits

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



Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

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



Accrued Benefits

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

Additional Survivor Benefits Available:



Burials and Burial Allowance

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



Final Monthly Payment

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



Home Loan Guaranty

Certificate of Eligibility is available for surviving spouses receiving DIC.



Education and Training

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



Health Care

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

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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



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

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

COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE
MISSION Act eligibility, copayments

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

VETERANS CRISIS LINE
Immediate connection to caring, qualified responders

DEBT MANAGEMENT
Debt details, payment options and debtor rights

FACILITY LOCATOR
Locations of medical centers, benefits offices or cemeteries

BENEFITS ASSISTANCE
Information about a variety of VA benefits

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

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

FLORIDA SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Thanks!

Nick Howland

Executive Director, The Fire Watch

www.thefirewatch.org

904.525.1761



From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

Subject: VA Transportation Assistance

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

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

From Michael Isam

The DAV van is now operating 5 days /week!

It will now transport a full capacity of riders.

Schedule your seat on the DAV Chapter 6 van.

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

Contact the VA Clinic at 904-823-2954





Legal Aid for Veterans

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

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

1.866.486.6161

Call Today!

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



We Can Help With

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

Supported by the: **FDVA**
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL SERVICES
FLORIDA BAR ASSOCIATION

Become a Watch Stander with The Fire Watch



You sacrificed for our country.

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

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

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

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



THE FUTURE OF SENIOR LIVING

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



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

Assisted Living Facility #12928

Vietnam Veterans of America



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

Chapter/President/email/Location

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



REMEMBER WHAT OUR MEDAL STANDS FOR:

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



PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET VETERANS' UNIQUE NEEDS

Advance Care Planning

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

Palliative Care

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

Hospice Care

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

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

Complementary Therapies

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

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

We Need Volunteers

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

WE HONOR VETERANS
Partner

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

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

Mission Statement:

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



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

What the Council has done:

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

SA-0003147064-01

Veterans Crisis Line

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

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

STAND BY THEM
Confidential help for Veterans and their families

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

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

Military/Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255

Veterans Crisis Line

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

Confidential chat at MilitaryCrisisLine.net or text 838255

Veterans Councils of Northeast Florida



BAKER COUNTY

President: Larry Porterfield

Meetings:

Second Thursday of each month

Location:

MacClenny Primitive Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall on North Boulevard

Time : 1800 (6pm)

CLAY COUNTY

President: Harry Silvers

Meetings:

First Wednesday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1400 (2pm)

DUVAL COUNTY

President

Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 37
Main Building
San Juan Avenue

Time: 1900 (7 pm)

NASSAU COUNTY

President: Mike Doran

Meetings:

First Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

St. Johns County

President: Bill Dudley

Meetings:

Last Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

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



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:

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

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

Please join our group on Facebook at:

<http://veteranscouncilsjc.org>

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

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

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

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

He can be contacted at webmaster@veteranscouncilsjc.org

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

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

Send to: rothfeldm@gmail.com



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(physical location)

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

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

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

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