



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

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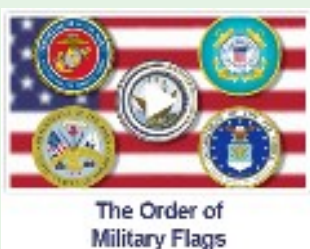
Volume 6, Issue 7

Message from the Chairman

Newsletter Date: July, 2017

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Fellow Veterans:

Our Memorial Day ceremony was a huge success again this year. The turnout by our community to honor those who served and are now deceased was overwhelming. We thank all who participated, especially Brig. General Brian Simpler, Deputy Adjutant General, FLANG who was this year's speaker.

A recent meeting of Veterans Council Presidents was held in Jacksonville for the purpose of determining the need for better coordination between all of the Veterans Councils from Duval, Baker, Nassau, Clay, and St. Johns County. Certainly we are stronger when we speak with one voice. Many of our challenges are the same but we lack the strength of numbers to achieve the mission. Clearly, the consolidation

of our voices to our elected leaders will strengthen our position. I will present this as a proposal to our membership at our next meeting and ask for a vote for membership in the NEFL County Veterans Council Presidents group. More details of this program appear in a later section of this month's Patriot Reader newsletter.

The POW/MIA Memorial at Cecil Field is gaining support due to the hard work of Mike Cassata and his team of volunteers. Mike has put together a strong team of professionals dedicated to bringing this dream to fruition. Their presentation before the Jacksonville City Council this month all but guarantees the program will be successful. There are still many hurdles to overcome but with Mike's capable leadership we will see this POW/MIA Memorial become a reality. I am very pleased to be on the Adviso-



ry Board for this very worthy project.

Our Veterans Council has reached an agreement with St. Johns County for the continued use of the Muscovy Room in the County Health and Human Services building for the foreseeable future. Our meetings will continue to be scheduled on the last Thursday of the month except for November and December which will be scheduled according to the Holidays. I would like to express my appreciation to the County for making the Muscovy Room available to our Council for our business meetings.

Bill Dudley, Chairman
Veterans Council of St. Johns County

The State Veterans Nursing Home in St Augustine is named after Navy Hero Clyde Lassen

Medal Of Honor recipient USN Vietnam, 6/19/1968, Lt Jg Clyde Lassen rescued 2 downed aviators in the dark.

Clyde Everett Lassen (1942 – 1994), a native of Fort Myers, Florida, was a retired Commander in the United States Navy and a Naval Aviator. As a Lieutenant, he received the Medal of Honor for his rescue of two downed Naval Aviators while piloting a search and rescue helicopter in Vietnam.



Medal of Honor citation

Lassen (at left) and three other men shortly after receiving their Medals of Honor from President Lyndon B. Johnson (center).

Rank and organization: Lieutenant, U.S. Navy, Helicopter Support Squadron 7, Detachment 104, embarked in U.S.S. Preble (DLG-15). place and date: Republic of Vietnam, June 19, 1968.

Entered service at: Jacksonville, Fla. Born: March 14, 1942, Fort Myers, Fla.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as pilot and aircraft commander of a search and rescue helicopter, attached to Helicopter Support Squadron 7, during operations against enemy forces in North Vietnam. Launched shortly after midnight to attempt the rescue of 2 downed aviators, Lt. (then Lt. (J.G.)) Lassen skillfully piloted his aircraft over unknown and hostile terrain to a steep, tree-covered hill on which the survivors had been located. Although enemy fire was being directed at the helicopter, he initially landed in a clear area near the base of the hill, but, due to the dense undergrowth, the survivors could not reach the helicopter. With the aid of flare illumination, Lt. Lassen successfully accomplished a hover between 2 trees at the survivors' position. Illumination was abruptly lost as the last of the flares were expended, and the helicopter collided with a tree, commencing a sharp descent. Expertly righting his aircraft and maneuvering clear, Lt. Lassen remained in the area, determined to make another rescue attempt, and encouraged the downed aviators while awaiting resumption of flare illumination. After another unsuccessful, illuminated rescue attempt, and with his fuel dangerously low and his aircraft significantly damaged, he launched again and commenced another approach in the face of the continuing enemy opposition. When flare illumination was again lost, Lt. Lassen, fully aware of the dangers in clearly revealing his position to the enemy, turned on his landing lights and completed the landing. On this attempt, the survivors were able to make their way to the helicopter. En route to the coast he encountered and successfully evaded additional hostile anti-aircraft fire and, with fuel for only 5 minutes of flight remaining, landed safely aboard U.S.S. Jouett (DLG-29).



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



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

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

Chairman: Steve Spickelmier

Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley, Treasurer: John Mountcastle

Assistant Treasurer: Michael Rothfeld, Secretary: Kathy Church

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

Historian: Kathy Cayton



Notes from County Veterans Presidents Meeting

Subject: Council of County Veterans President; Creation of

Meeting was held at American Legion Post 137 from 1330 to 1430.

Attendees included:

Bob Adelhelm, Vets4Vets, Facilitator

County Representatives:

Larry Porterfield, Baker County

Bill Dudley, St. Johns County

Paul Kicker, Nassau County

John Martin, Nassau County for Doc Monaghan

Robert Brewster, Clay County

Steven Spickelmier, Duval County

Guest Attendees:

Henry Moreland, Korean War Veterans, Semper Fidelis Society

Anthony G. D'Aleo, Vietnam Veterans Association, President

Michael Rothfeld, St. Johns County Veterans Council

Harry Silvers – VFW

Paul Haws, Clay County

Topics discussed:

Formation of the Council made up of the Presidents of the NEFL County Veterans Council Presidents for the purpose of better coordination among Veterans and Veterans organizations, sharing information, supporting each other when needed and having the ability to unite to address issues that affect the veterans community at large.

Purpose of a Council would be to Inform, Connect, Unite and Organize Veterans and Veteran Organizations. It was stated this would be primary goal with a long term goal of actually establishing a Veterans Community Center where Veterans of all eras could gather. It is believed many of the issues affecting Veterans are better addressed by Veterans and a community center for Veterans would provide a way to address issues like PTSD, unemployment, homelessness as well as having a place for the fostering mentorship among old and young

Veterans.

Presidents Council would be chaired by rotating Country Veterans Council Presidents for a one year term.

There is a V4V Website in draft that would highlight each county and provided a 5 county calendar of events at one web location for Veterans and their organizations to share information. The web site is setup at v4vflorida.org, but still needs input from the county reps to be completed.

Web site could become a source of revenue through sponsorships that would support county Veterans initiatives and community outreach events.

Community Out Reach Events under V4V and the direction of the Presidents Council would be set up to reach out to Veterans across NEFL and to introduce Veterans to those in the community who know little about what Veterans are doing in the community.

Draft Constitution was provided for review and comments. It was suggested that By Laws be written up with input from all the counties if it is decided to formalized a Council of Presidents.

Suggested that Quarterly meetings of the Presidents take place an hour prior to the V4V Gathering of Veterans in the Veterans Memorial Arena as a start to provide the venue for coordination and future Council Direction.

V4V Quarterly Gatherings would become the outreach to the Veterans community for the County Presidents. They would decide the agenda.

Summary: Handouts of information was provided for review and comment. Final decision as to moving forward is pending a confirmation of participation from all the counties. Once all agree to formalize a Presidents Council, incorporation of the council will proceed. V4V will remain a movement for the reasons discussed. It was emphasized this isn't an "I or Me" effort , but a "We and Us" effort that would require all to be involved if it was to make a difference. It could provide the Veterans of NE FL with one powerful voice. It was agreed **the next meeting would be on July 15th at 1000 prior to the V4V Quarterly Gathering of Veterans in the Veterans Memorial Arena.**

Contact info: Vets4VetsNJax@gmail.com

Veterans deserve to be recognized...lead letter to the Editor of the
FL Times Union from Robert Adelhelm, ULTC SMC, (Ret)



Memorial Day ceremony at the City “Veterans” Wall once again involves adding more names to the Wall. This year they are adding 4 service members who succumbed to PTSD and committed suicide. Yet, the city continues to ignore adding Marine Sgt Randal Hansen to the Wall despite the fact he also succumbed to PTSD. The difference is these 4 were on active duty and Sgt Hansen who is actually a Veteran by definition is denied the recognition was not. He has become a Veteran denied the recognition of being honored on his home town Veteran Memorial. Once again, the Hansen family is ignored and denied the privilege and sense of healing extended to the families of the 4 who also suffered and succumbed to PTSD. Is the Hansen family loss less meaningful?

For the sake of argument a Veteran according to Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations is “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.” This definition explains that any individual that completed a service for any branch of armed forces classifies as a veteran as long as they were not dishonorably discharged. Ergo, Sgt Hansen who is a true Veteran is ignored while others who are not Veterans are added to the Veterans Wall. If the city is going to continue to ignore Veterans and deny them the right to be recognized on a memorial established in their honor and routinely add non Veterans, then they need to consider changing the name of the memorial wall or actually start adding Veterans to it.

They also need to get back to the original intent of the founder, Ray Moore, who clearly stated those being added to the Memorial attend a local high school or have a “Home of Record” in Jax. Simply having an address here has supplanted home of record, per the Mayors ill advised Executive Order, to provide, it seems, cover for past decisions of adding non home of record individuals to the memorial. If home of record was never the intent, then please explain how Marine and Medal of Honor Recipient Robert Jenkins was added to the wall. He is from Interlachen. He was added because Jax is where he enlisted making it his home of record. Your home of record is the state recorded by the military as your home when you were enlisted, appointed, commissioned, inducted or ordered in a tour of active duty.

I commend the city for adding those who succumbed to an invisible wounds of war and bringing attention to PTSD suicides, if in fact those being added this year actually served in combat and their PTSD can be related to that experience. But, I find it highly hypocritical the city continues to ignore actual Combat Veterans who also suffer from and succumbed to PTSD from being added to the city “Veterans” Memorial Wall. This is simply hypocritical or maybe outright stupidity.



The "VOICE" of Women Veterans

Northeast Florida Women Veterans, Inc. is focused on ensuring women who served on active duty, National Guard or Reserves and their children, transition into the civilian community with the tools they need to become self-sufficient.

"Helping Women Veterans excel beyond their own expectations"



As we grow our network, it is important that we connect with female veterans, community partners and all those who support our military.

Visit our website to seek assistance, sign up to participate in our many activities, or volunteer your time.

If you or your company would like to support our mission, contact us at info@forwomenvets.org or call (904) 239-9519.

www.forwomenvets.org

2133 Broadway Ave, Jacksonville, FL 32209

Northeast Florida Women Veterans, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

MIAP Call to Honor #12 South Florida national cemetery Lake Worth Florida, Saturday June 17, 2017.



A FRONT ROW SEAT TO SEMINOLE WAR HISTORY

Editor: Compliments for The Record's excellent coverage throughout this Memorial Day weekend, highlighting the meaning and background to this solemn day of remembrance. Sunday's article on the St. Augustine National Cemetery and the three iconic Dade pyramids therein was especially welcome.

Few visitors are aware of this historic and visual gem — it is not included on trolley tours or highlighted on some common tourist maps. Even many local residents have only a vague understanding of the causes and course of the Seminole Wars, or of their profound impact on the nation's military, treasury and psyche at the time.

St. Augustine was a vital gateway to the remote battlefields of the long, costly Second Seminole War. It became the final



resting place of Major Dade's command seven years after their deaths ushered in that war. Newspapers emotionally described the August, 1842 parade and

ceremony that reinterred the “honored dead” from scattered battlefields to mark the war’s end as “melancholy” and “solemn.”



In light of this, readers may be interested to know that this year the West Point Society of North Florida’s annual living-history commemoration of 1842 parade and ceremony will be held at the cemetery here the morning of Aug. 12.

Further, the Seminole Wars Historic Foundation, Inc. has chosen St. Augustine as the site of the first “Convocation of Seminole War Historians.” This convocation will also take place over the weekend of Aug. 11-13, and will gather individuals and organizations interested in the Seminole War era for a comprehensive program of talks, meetings and discussion.

Both events provide unique opportunities for residents to deepen their understanding and appreciation of this important era in Florida’s development. The commemoration is free. A modest registration fee is required for the three-day convocation program. For information to seminolewars.us.

JOE NAFTZINGER, St. Augustine

For the last five years, **Kathy Church** has volunteered a portion of her time working to secure a proper, final resting place for men and women who have served their country. It is quiet, solemn work that gives her satisfaction.



“This is my way of giving back to the veterans,” Church said Wednesday, sitting in a conference room at The Record.

She had just left Craig Funeral Home where she and a small group of volunteers will be focusing their efforts in the coming months.

Church is the Florida coordinator for the **Missing in America Project**, an organization that identifies and collects the unclaimed cremated remains of veterans and has them interred in national cemeteries.

The national, nonprofit organization started in 2007.

Since that time, it has located just shy of 15,000 remains — often referred to as “cremains” — and identified 3,418 of those as veterans.

Of those, 3,131 have been interred at national cemeteries.

Church, who has been doing the work since 2012, shared a little the process on Wednesday.

Many funeral homes, she said, have unclaimed remains stored at their facility and most of them don’t have the time, manpower or resources to track down family members.

Knowing this, volunteers with the Missing in America Project, or MIAP, work across the country to find those that are veterans and, instead of having them sitting on a shelf in a funeral home, do the footwork to find loved ones or have them laid to rest at a national cemetery.

At Craig Funeral Home, she said, there are about 100 unclaimed remains. She figured it would take her and other volunteers about six months to a year to sift through the information.

Those eligible for burial in a national cemetery are veterans, as well as the spouses and dependents of veterans. MIAP will find a resting place for any of them.

To determine eligibility, the volunteers have to secure specific pieces of information including date of birth, date of death, Social Security number and birth place. If they don’t have all of that, the information they do have gets sent to a genealogist to fill in the missing parts.

Once all the information is collected and eligibility confirmed, it gets sent off to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office for approval.

The group also sends letters via certified mail to any known living next of kin. If none is known, or exists, they also publish an “intent of action” in local newspapers.

“If we don’t hear from anybody, then we have permission from the VA to inter them,” Church explained.

“Once we get approval and say 20 at a time, then we schedule a service at the national cemetery,” she said.

Church is quick to say that she doesn’t do all of this alone. She said she has about 10 people across the state who make

these things happen including a volunteer genealogist, an urn maker and a coordinator who gets active-duty personnel for the services.

The services, she said, are “full military, with honors” and include the playing of taps, a volley and folding of the flag. An active-duty service member, from the branch in which the deceased veteran served, places the urn in the columbarium niche, she explained.

Since MIAP started operating in Florida they have held five ceremonies at the Jacksonville National Cemetery, one in Sarasota and five in South Florida. About 200 Florida veterans have been laid to rest, she said.

Church, who is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 233 in Ponte Vedra Beach, said she started volunteering after an assistant state coordinator gave a talk about the project at the Legion post.

“In a 10 minute speech, he got me hook, line and sinker,” she said. “I couldn’t believe someone was sitting unclaimed.”

Since starting, Church has seen family members — many whom never knew their loved one’s remains went unclaimed — moved by the group’s efforts.

Two brothers, who were 13 and 21 when their father died, never realized their mother hadn’t picked up his remains, but MIAP found them years later.

“Back in 2014, they attended a service Jacksonville,” she said. A daughter who lost her dad to a car crash when she was 2 showed up at another service. “She never knew his cremains sat on a funeral home shelf all those years,” she said.

“I could go on and on with the stories I have.”

Gus Craig at Craig Funeral Home said he is happy that Church and others have taken an interest and welcomed her in.

“We are just delighted to have her here to do it,” he said in a brief phone interview on Wednesday.

Church is too.

She said some funeral homes are reluctant to even acknowledge they still have the remains, which is why she agrees to talk with newspapers and other outlets whenever she is asked so she can explain what her group does.

No one in MIAP gets paid for their time “not even our president,” she said, which means the group needs more volunteers, but it also needs more facilities to give them access.

Church said she is working to build relationships with other funeral homes as well as crematoriums and medical examiners offices across the state.

If she got more volunteers, she said, she would like to build a stronger statewide network.

“We are doing great things with the team we have,” she said. “But we do need help.”

“My goal is to get a team close by where every cemetery is,” she said.

For information about the Missing in America Project, visit www.miap.us. To contact Florida representatives email miapjax@yahoo.com or call Church at 219-3035.

From the Florida Times Union By Joe Daraskevich

DAR group looks to find faces of fallen Jacksonville servicemen

46 images still missing from Vietnam War Memorial

Brenda Onur is always looking for potential projects for the women in her chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She's the new vice regent of Jacksonville's Fort San Nicholas Chapter, and she thought she found one that was simple enough when she visited a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial when it was on display in April at Jacksonville's Metropolitan Park.



Things though aren't always as easy as they seem. While she and her husband paid their respects to the soldiers who gave their lives defending the country, they made a point to visit the educational booths to learn as much as they could about the conflict.

They were surprised to learn there's a website where people can view pictures of every veteran whose name is engraved on the wall — www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces — as long as the photos have been submitted.

Onur didn't realize until later how many veterans don't have pictures. "We saw that men's faces were missing from our local area," Onur said. So she decided it would be a nice tribute to the fallen if the women in her group found pictures of every last one from Jacksonville.

"Being a Jacksonville person who went to high school here, I thought it would be easy," Onur said. "But I'm now finding out it's not." When they started, 51 men from Jacksonville were missing photos. Now there are 46.

Onur said she's discouraged that they've made such little progress, but she's not giving up. The website lists each veteran's name, the date they died, the date they were born, their hometown, where they died, their branch of service and where to find their name on the wall. Some of them have multiple photos and even more information.

But for the 46 from Jacksonville without an image, there is a generic silhouette of a soldier wearing a helmet with the words "we need your help finding this person's photo" written below it.

The photos can be submitted through mail or uploaded directly to the site. The instructions are listed for people who have pictures they would like to contribute.

Onur said the women from the Fort San Nicholas Chapter started visiting public libraries and going to high schools around the area to thumb through annuals from the Vietnam era. But they haven't had much luck.

There are 87 members of the Fort San Nicholas Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, and they meet once a month from September through May. To join the group you have to prove direct lineage to a patriot of the American Revolution.

But they are asking for help from the entire community to complete their project as a way to honor the men from the area who died in Vietnam.

The RIDE HOME, Inc., 3818 Litchfield Loop, Lake Wales, FL 33859
theridehome.com



On National POW/MIA Recognition Day we will be hosting **The RIDE HOME 2017**. This weekend event, 14-16 September 2017, takes place in and around the cities of Warner Robins, Perry and Andersonville, Georgia, home of the National Prisoner of War Museum. The RIDE HOME 2017 complies with the Presidential Proclamation by paying tribute to Former American Prisoners of War who have returned home and the families of those Americans still Missing in Action.

Honorees for the 2017 event will include former Prisoners of War and families of our Missing in Action from World War II, Korea, Cold War, Vietnam, USS Pueblo, Iraq and Afghanistan. As part of the tribute package to these true American Heroes, The RIDE HOME with the help and generosity of American Patriots, like you, will provide a room (3 nights), Heroes Dinner, Ground-Pounder & Fly-Boy Lunch, entertainment, Awards Ceremony as well as transportation to and from the events for the Honored Guest. This complete Tribute package is valued at \$375.00. For all they endured as Prisoners of War and the emotional torture the Missing in Action families struggle with every day, we hope you agree this is worthy of your participation. Remember, a full Tribute Package or a portion of one, either choice is greatly appreciated and will help us reach the goal of 200 Honored Guest for the 2017 event.

The RIDE HOME is open to the public and we encourage everyone to attend so that they may meet and spend time with the POW or MIA family member you help sponsor.

Please complete the form below and mail it with your contribution to The RIDE HOME. Contributions of \$375 or more will receive The Ride Home 2017 t-shirt, patch, sponsor bar, and pin. If you would prefer to use your Debit or Credit Card, you can go to our website, www.theridehome.com, click on DONATE and follow the instructions.

On behalf of The RIDE HOME, Inc. Board of Directors,

Thank You!

Respectfully,
Jim 'moe' Moyer , Chairman

I wish to help sponsor a former POW and/or a MIA Family member to The RIDE HOME 2017

_____ Tribute Package \$375. _____ Other

Includes a t-shirt for donations of \$375.00 or more: _____ size

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City _____

State & Zipcode _____

Phone/email: _____

Mail check to: The RIDE HOME, Inc. 3818 Litchfield Loop, Lake Wales, FL 33859



GATHERING OF VETERANS

Veterans Memorial Arena
300 A Philip Randolph Blvd, Jacksonville, FL

JULY 15TH

1030-1100 Gather
1100-1230 Speakers
Free Buffet Lunch 1230-1300

JOIN US!

"TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER"

Pittsburgh Pirates Team President Frank Coonelly and PA Chapter 4 Rolling Thunder® VP Kath Webb unveiled this "One Empty Seat", the POW/MIA National Chair of Honor.



Why doesn't the Jaguars have a
POW/MIA National Chair of Honor?

A local veterans organization should step up
and contact the Jaguars Administration.

Robert Adelhelm is the driving force behind the movement to unite veterans from the surrounding 5 counties. The Presidents of the Veterans Council or their representatives recently attended the movement's first meeting and the Minutes of that meeting were posted here.

Robert Adelhelm

Bob was born and educated in New Jersey. He graduated from William Paterson College in Wayne, New Jersey with a B.S. Degree in Criminal Justice and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marines in 1973. He spent 22 years on active duty.



His service included assignments in various command, staff and instructor billets with 8th Marines, 4th Marines, 2d Reconnaissance Battalion, Blount Island Command, The Basic School (TBS) Quantico MCB, Amphibious Reconnaissance School (ARS) NAB Coronado, NROTC University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill / North Carolina State University and he was an Aide-de-Camp for the Assistant Division Commander of the 3d Marine Division. He was with 2nd Battalion 8th Marines during operations in Beirut, Lebanon. Bob retired with the rank of LtCol in 1995. His MOSs include 0302, 0402, 9953 and 9960. He the recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal with three Stars, Navy Achievement Medal, Marine Expeditionary Medal and the Combat Action Ribbon.

He is the founder and past president of the Jacksonville Semper Fidelis Society. Life member of the VFW, a member of the American Legion and Marine Corps League and is a Past Chairmen of the NE Florida Veterans Council. He remains actively involved in assisting veterans.

Local veteran biography of the month

Biography of Commander John C Leslie Jr, USN (Ret), President of Vietnam Veterans of America 1084, Leo C. Chase Chapter



John Leslie was born in Sacramento, California in 1945, and graduated from the California State College, San Luis Obispo in 1967 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering.

Later that year he started Aviation Officer and flight training with the US Navy and was designated as a Naval Aviator in February 1969. During his twenty-one years of active duty, John flew A-7E combat missions in Vietnam flying from the USS Enterprise. He attended the U.S. Navy Test Pilot School in 1975, and was the Commanding Officer



of two Strike Fighter Squadrons flying the F/A-18 Hornet. John retired from the Navy in October 1988, and began his second career in November that same year as an Experimental Test Pilot with the Grumman Aerospace Corporation in Calverton, New York.

As a civilian Test Pilot for Grumman, John flew the F-14D, A-6E, EA-6B, and the E-2C aircraft. While employed as a Test Pilot with Grumman, John also earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Dowling College in Oakdale, New York.

John was transferred to the Grumman St. Augustine facility in 1994 to assume duties as the Chief Pilot and Director of Flight Operations. John shifted duties in 2000 to become the Integrated Team Leader (IPT) for all aircraft modification and overhaul programs at the St. Augustine facility for Northrop Grumman. He retired from Northrop Grumman in the summer of 2006. He and his wife Pat reside in St. Augustine Beach. They have two children and nine grandchildren.



The Veterans Council is proud to have had Moe Moyer as its speaker in April. Pictured here is Moe receiving the Veterans Service Award from Governor Scott in recognition for Moe's mission of bringing back all those who are MIA. If anyone can do it Moe is the one.

A letter to all from Moe Moyer, National Chairman The Ride Home

Good Day Veterans, Patriots, Advocates!

There is a movement afoot in the Jacksonville Florida market to turn approximately 26 acres of the former US Navy Cecil Field into a national Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Memorial. The property is owned by the City of Jacksonville and for anyone to lease or occupy said property, due process calls for a Bill to be initiated, read three times, allow for public debate and then the council votes. This past Tuesday, June 13, the Executive Director of the POW/MIA Project, Mike Cassata, received permission from the authority to have a few involved with the project to speak to the Council. The below presentation was given by Captain Dennis Gillespie US Navy (Retired), a shipmate of LT. Scott Speicher.

Due to 'Rules' of the Council each presenter has exactly three (3) minutes at the podium. Although Captain Gillespie was NOT able to complete the presentation in the time allotted, his presentation had a visible impact on all in the Council Chambers. When all presentations were completed we witnessed a rare movement by the Council. After three or four council members (19 total) noted the passion and commitment of the presenters they then requested that they be added as a co-sponsor to the Bill, someone made a request to make ALL Council members Co-Sponsors on the Bill. The action had the Council so excited that they started to approve the Bill right then, but, someone noted that it was only the 'second' public reading and it had one more to go.

The President of the Council address Mike Cassata and his crew and noted that the rare action by the Council just about guaranteed passage on the 27 of June of the Bill.

I hope you enjoy 'A letter from Scott Speicher' as much as those in the room that night.

We'll update you when the Bill is approved and provide conceptual artwork as soon as the engineers release it.

Reminder – the intent is to make this a NATIONAL Memorial in the future. Many legal steps yet to be taken but optimism prevails. Until they all come home.....

moe

I AM CAPTAIN DENNIS GILLESPIE, USN RETIRED FROM CLAY COUNTY

I STAND BEFORE YOU TO SPEAK FOR MY FRIEND WHO CANNOT SPEAK FOR HIMSELF, OR THE 560,000 AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY.

LETTER FROM LT. SCOTT SPEICHER, USN

- HOW MUCH CAN ONE MAN GIVE TO HIS FAMILY, HIS FRIENDS AND HIS COUNTRY
- HOW MUCH GRIEF AND EMPTINESS IS THERE WHEN HUSBAND, FATHER OR SON WILL NEVER COME HOME AGAIN
- HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO REMEMBER THE ENORMOUS PAIN, SUFFERING, LONELINESS AND HOPELESSNESS A WARRIOR ENDURES TO DO HIS PART TO FIGHT FOR THE FREEDOM

WE ENJOY IN THIS ROOM TONIGHT

- THESE SACRIFICES NEVER END.....EVER...ITS WAS MY JOB AS A NAVY CARRIER STRIKE FIGHTER PILOT
- FROM THE MOMENT I TAXIED TO THE CATAPULT, I KNEW THAT THIS WAS REAL...THIS WAS NOT TRAINING OR A GAME.THERE ARE NO GIMMIES OR DOOVERS
- AT FULL POWER, AMID THE FLAMES, THUNDEROUS NOISE AND VIBRATION WHEN I SALUTED TO BLAST DOWN THE CAT TRACK I KNEW THAT IT MAY BE THE LAST TIME I LIVED AMONG FRIENDS....AND WAS FREE
- AIRBORNE, JOIN UP, INFLIGHT REFUEL..NO TIME TO THINK OF FAMILY OR HOME. ...AHEAD JUST DANGER..AN ENEMY WHO WILL DO ANYTHING TO STOP ME
- AS I WATCHED MY RADAR, LOOKING FOR FIGHTERS..I LISTENED TO AWACS FOR THE DEADLY THREATS AHEAD
 - ONCE OVER ENEMY TERRITORY, THERE IS NO TURNING BACK..AS MISSILES AND GUNS TRAIN ON ME THERE IS NO TIME TO WONDER IF I WOULD BE REMEMBERED, OR WHO WOULD CRY FOR ME
- MY HEART POUNDED MY BRAIN IS RUNNING AT SUPERSONIC SPEED..MISSILES LAUNCHED AT ME..GUNS FIRED AT ME .EXPLOSIONS AND FLAK EVERYWHERE..I WAS ABSOLUTELY ALONE...WEAPONS ARMED AND READY, GOD DONT LET ME BE A COWARD...DONT LET ME FAIL..THE TARGET IS IN SIGHT
- MISSILES AWAY..TURN AND CLIMB..EYEBALLS OUT.....I MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVED..I BEAT THE ODDS AND SUDDENLY A HUGE THUNDEROUS CRASH, FLAMES EVERYWHERE, MY BLOOD EVERYWHERE
- AT 40000 FEET, AT 600 KNOTS I HAD NO CHOICE..EJECT OR DIE
- THE BLAST OF AIR WAS HORRIFIC, BATTERING EVERY INCH OF MY BODY, RIPPING OFF MY HELMET..BREAKING ARMS AND LEGS..BLOODED..PAIN IN EVERY INCH OF MY BEING
- THE LONG DESCENT IS AGONY,ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT.. NO FRIENDS BELOW, TORTURE, SUFFERING AND DEATH.....AT GROUND IMPACT I UNBUCKLED MY CHUTE..GOT MY GUN..AND RAN TO COVER..HOW LONG CAN ONE HIDE FROM A COUNTRY OF SOLDIERS WHO WANT TO PUNISH AND KILL YOU
- BE QUIET..DONT MOVE..DONT BREATHE..CLOSE YOUR EYES AND PRAY...GOD SAVE ME PLEASE..TAKE ME HOME....BACK TO MY FAMILY...I HAVE TO SURVIVE
- SCREAMING MEN APPROACH, KICK, PUNCH, SPIT..YOUR FREEDOM IS GONE..YOU ARE A PRISONER...YOU WILL NEVER SEE HOME AGAIN..BLINDFOLD, CHAINS..THIRST..HUNGER FOR AS LONG AS IT LASTS..FOR SOME A QUICK DEATH IS MERCIFUL ,...NOT ME..ENDURE...SURVIVE OR

DIE IN A DESOLATE CELL

- ALONE..ALONE..ALONE..DOES ANYONE REMEMBER ME..WILL I DIE HERE AND BE DUMPED IN A HOLE

- DAYS,MONTHS,YEARS GO BY....NO LETTERS..LITTLE FOOD..NO HOPE

- ITS OVER...GOD, WHERE ARE YOU TODAY..I HOPE PEOPLE DONT FORGET THAT I EVER LIVED.

THE LUCKY GET BACK..CHANGED FOREVER..NOTHING IS EVER THE SAME

- WIFE, CHILDREN AND PARENTS HAVE ENDURED WITH YOU, NOT KNOWING IF YOU ARE DEAD OR ALIVE

- HOW MUCH DOES A MEMORY COST..HOW LONG DOES IT LAST

- WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE FUTURE GENERATIONS REMEMBER YOU AND FEEL YOUR PAIN AND SUFFERING, AND UNDERSTAND THE COST OF FREEDOM, BOURNE BY MILITARY FAMILIES..... WHAT CAN YOU, HERE IN THIS ROOM DO TO REMEMBER THAT WE LIVED,... AND WERE FREE, BEFORE WE GAVE UP OUR FREEDOM....AND LIVES FOR YOU

- THIS PROJECT OF RESPECT AND HONOR STARTED BY PICKING UP STICKS AND RAKING LEAVES AT THE ABANDONED FORMER CECIL FIELD MEMORIAL PARK LAST YEAR. IT WAS NOT ENOUGH..EVERYONE AT YOUR TABLE, EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM EVERY PERSON IN THIS NATION OWES THESE MEN AND FAMILIES THE LOVE AND RESPECT TO REMEMBER..AND KEEP REMEMBERING..FOREVER. ITS NOT ABOUT MONEY..IT IS ABOUT HONOR...ITS ABOUT COMMITMENT..ITS ABOUT COURAGE..FOR THOSE WHO KNEW THEY WERE GIVING EVERYTHING..THE MOMENT THE CATAPULT FIRED. I GAVE EVERYTHING THAT I HAD..FOREVER.

- TWO WEEKS AGO, MEMORIAL DAY WAS A TIME OF REFLECTION, TONIGHT IS THE TIME FOR ACTION.

- THIS PROJECT COSTS ONE DOLLAR A YEAR, NOT THAT MUCH TO ASK, I WOULD PAY IT MYSELF IF I WERE ALIVE TODAY

- IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REMEMBER, EDUCATE AND HONOR

- IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR JACKSONVILLE TO LEAD THE WAY TO LEAD THE NATION

- I WANT TO THANK COUNCILMEN LOVE AND CARTER, THE MAYORS OFFICE, KERRI STEWART AND JIM STAFFORD AS WELL AS THE FOLKS FROM THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ROTARY CLUB.

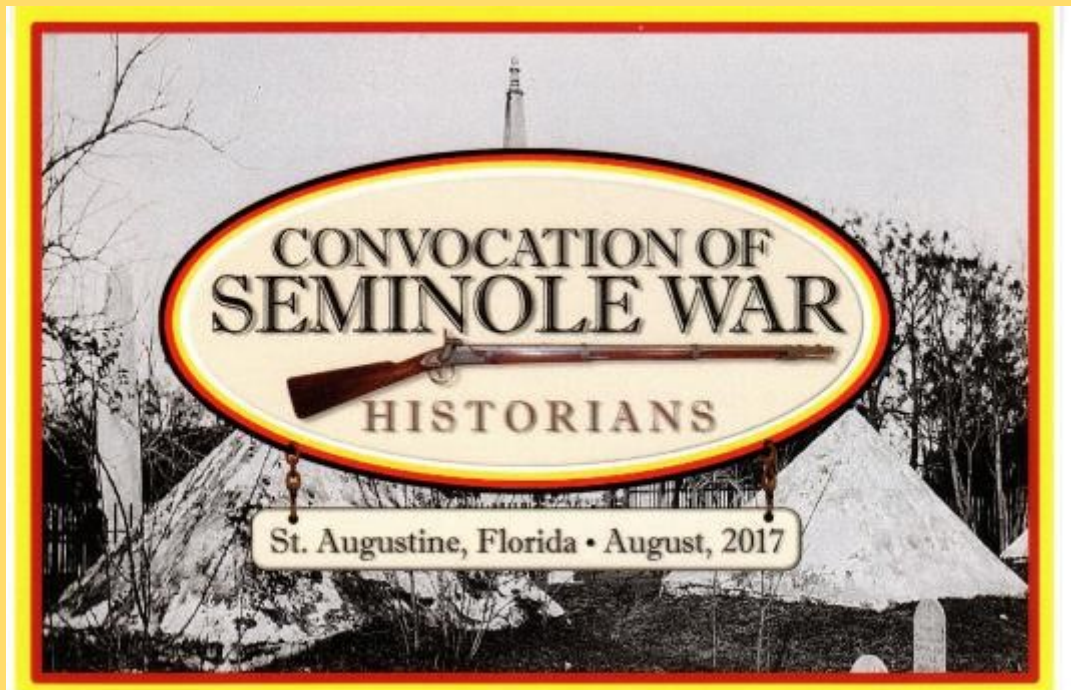
- I PARTICULARLY WANT TO THANK MIKE CASSATA, WHOSE VISION, PASSION, TENACITY AND RESPECT BROUGHT ME HERE TONIGHT.

- I AM A MEMORY FROM THE PAST....ITS TIME TO BELLY UP TO THE BAR AND MAKE THIS HAPPEN.

Plan ahead, save the date.

Convocation of Seminole War Historians, Parade, curator hosted tours of the FL National Guard Museum, lunch, and evening presentation hosted by the West Point Society of N. Florida.

More information to follow.



August 11th, 12, 13th.

The convocation will gather organizations and historians throughout Florida interested in the Seminole Wars era.

Do not miss this unique opportunity to interact with others!

Highlights

- * **Friday:** Informal evening social at the St. Augustine Officers Club. Curator hosted tours of the Florida National Guard Museum.
- * **Saturday:** 10th annual living-history commemoration of the 1842 parade and ceremony, National Cemetery. Organized by the West Point Society of N. Florida.
 - >A festive lunch. Elgin Jumper presents his reflections on Seminole art and culture.
 - >Panels on: Research, publications, archaeology, Fort King, and Seminole history.
 - >Living-historians' workshop at the historic Ximinez-Fatio House.
 - >Evening presentation by award-winning authors Mary Lou and John Missall.
- * **Sunday:** Breakfast buffet. Retrospective of Frank Laumer's groundbreaking research, publications, and organizational initiatives. Speakers. Commentary.

Registration and Details at: www.seminolewars.org

(on line at: events.eventzilla.net/e/convocation-of-seminole-war-historians-2138894235)

Follow us on www.Facebook.com/Seminolewar.

Organized by the Seminole Wars Foundation, inc.

Supported by the St. Johns County TDC.



**CONVOCATION OF SEMINOLE WAR HISTORIANS
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA**

AUGUST 11, 12 and 13, 2017

Organized by the Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc.



FRIDAY, AUGUST 11

St. Augustine Officers Club, 82 Marine Street.

5:00 -- 8:30 Informal evening social. Early registration. Florida National Guard Museum open, curator on site for personal tours. Light hors d'oeuvres, cash bar.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12

Trinity Hall. Trinity Episcopal Parish, 215 St. George Street.

- 08:30 -- 09:30 Registration, welcome, orientation.
- 09:30 -- 09:50 Historical background, Alison Simpson, Florida National Guard Historian.
- 09:50 -- 10:15 Move to St. Francis Barracks via Trolley, foot, POV.
- 10:30 -- 11:30 **10th annual living-history commemoration of the 1842 parade and ceremony, National Cemetery. Organized by the West Point Society of N. FL. Public Invited.**
- 11:30 -- 12:00 Return to Trinity Hall.
- 12:00 -- 1:00 Lunch, award of coins. Steve Rinck, President Seminole Wars Foundation. Remarks by George Godfrey, President, West Point Society of N. Florida.
- 1:00 -- 2:00 **Convocation Address: Seminole art and culture by Elgin Jumper.**
- 2:15 -- 4:30 Breakout sessions: [Timing of individual sessions TBD]
 1. Living-historian workshop. Ximenez-Fatio House.
Chair: Steve Rinck. Seminole Wars Foundation.
 2. Seminole Heritage and History. Trinity Hall.
Chair: Chris Kimball. Seminole Wars Foundation.
 3. Archaeology and Resurrection of Ft. King. Hendri Hall.
Chair: David Laffey. Fort King Heritage Association
 4. Current Research and Recent Literature. Trinity Hall.
Chair. Dr. James M. Denham. Chair, History Dept, Fla. Southern College

Ringhaver Student Union Theater. Flagler College, 50 Seville Street.

7:00 -- 8:00 Award-winning authors John and Mary Lou Missall. Public invited.
"St. Augustine is Healthy and Delightful: Capt. John Rogers Vinton in the Second Seminole War."



SUNDAY, AUGUST 13

Marc Lance National Guard Armory, 190 San Marco Avenue.

- 09:00 -- 10:00 Buffet breakfast.
- 10:00 -- 11:20 Reports from breakout chairmen. Commentary, discussion.
- * 11:30 -- 11:45 Background to Osceola's death mask and its copy. St. Augustine Historical Society.
- 11:45 -- 12:30 Presentation of special award honoring Frank Laumer. Retrospective of efforts by Mr. Laumer and others to promote interest in Florida's Seminole Wars.
- 12:30 -- 1:00 Conference chairman's concluding remarks and future convocations:
(Steven Rinck with representatives from Fort King, Loxahatchee and Okeechobee.)

Follow us on WWW.Facebook.com/Seminolewar.

To register (\$60), follow prompts on the Foundation's website, www.seminolewars.org, or directly on line at:

<http://events.eventzilla.net/e/convocation-of-seminole-war-historians-2138894235>



Mayport sailors hear tales of World War II from veterans on Battle of Midway anniversary

For almost an hour, a classroom full of sailors in uniform listened closely and sat in silence at Mayport Naval Station as five World War II veterans talked about the hardships they lived through while fighting for their country.

At times the group laughed when the stories of personal struggles took a turn toward the lighter side. Other times they clapped loudly out of respect for the men who wore the uniforms of the U.S. armed forces decades before those in attendance were born.

Wednesday was the 75th anniversary of the final day of the Battle of Midway — a conflict in the middle of the Pacific Ocean that changed the momentum of the war and allowed the United States to take a firm grip as the dominant sea power over the Japanese.

Seemingly constant air strikes from both sides resulted in the loss of four Japanese aircraft carriers, a cruiser, 292 aircraft and 2,500 casualties. The USS Yorktown was the only U.S. aircraft carrier lost during the battle along with the destroyer USS Hammann, 145 aircraft and 307 casualties.

“We are here to remember the Battle of Midway, but in reality, this occasion is one we are using to thank all World War II veterans,” said Command Master Chief Bill Houlihan during the event’s opening remarks. “They are Americans who sacrificed to keep this country safe against those who wished to suppress and oppress freedom, democracy and our way of life.”

The sailors in the crowd Wednesday got a clear idea of what life was like during the greatest conflict in American history.

Gifford “Whitey” Nevins joined the Navy right after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and spent four years at sea — including the Battle of Midway. He told the group the best decision of his life was when he chose to be a cook in the Navy, where he was much safer than the pilots who flew on and off the ships for about nine months at a time.

But his general quarters were topside, and he said the worst thing he saw during his time in the Navy was when two pilots got too close to a plane’s propeller one day in the early morning hours.

“It chopped them up like chopped meat,” Nevins told the captive audience. “I was there about three or four planes away.”

The sailors gasped collectively at the graphic details. Nevins told them how the pilots’ dog tags were sent home and they were classified as “lost at sea.”

“We lost men that you would never know about,” he said.

Nevins told them the battles all ran together for sailors working in the galley, but everyone on the ship had to get used to life on the ocean.

“We didn’t see land for nine months,” he said.

Another man on the panel recounted a time when land was much closer. John Francis Frank is a Navy veteran who participated in the Normandy invasion on Omaha Beach exactly 73 years ago Tuesday.

He talked about the role he played in an amphibious unit where they dropped off tanks and made trips back and forth to ships to transport German prisoners.

“There was so much smoke,” Frank said of the early hours of the invasion. “It was so thick you could chew it.”

He explained how he spoke a little German in those days, and there was a clear difference in some of the prisoners he conversed with.

“There were a lot of old guys and young guys,” he said. “The young guys were the rough ones. The old guys were glad it was over.”

Others on the panel talked about escaping from the clutches of German prisoner of war camps and serving in the merchant marines, delivering TNT to Navy personnel in the Pacific.

Among the sailors in the audience was the master chief petty officer of the Navy, Steven S. Giordano. He’s the senior enlisted person in the Navy and attended Wednesday’s discussion as part of a scheduled visit to Mayport.

“There is no way that you can ever measure the true effect of putting something like this together,” Giordano said of the interaction between veterans and active-duty sailors.

He was pleased by the answers he received when he asked the panel what got them through the hardest times during war.

“They worked through the fear, they worked through some of them being scared ... you are thinking more of others around you than you are of yourself sometimes,” Giordano said. “What a great message.”

Andy Ramotnik is the Army Air Corps veteran who told the tale of escaping from Germans twice during the war. He bristled at the idea of being afraid while fighting for his country.



“I didn’t have time to get scared ... being scared, that doesn’t help anyone,” he said.

Sentiments like that made quite an impact, said Jonathan Sanders, an electronics technician, second class.

Sanders said hearing from the panel helped remind him of the reason he signed up for the Navy. He said although the war today is a lot different than World War II, it felt good to hear from men from a different generation who share the same pride for their country.

“It made me proud,” he said. “It was good to talk to them and hear their stories.”

Joe Daraskevich: (904) 359-4308

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From the FLTimes Union

2017 EVE Award winner Shari Duval: Her rescue dogs help 'warriors' heal

When Shari Duval's son returned home from two tours of duty in Iraq, he was a broken man.

"I would have lost him to suicide," Duval said. "I have no doubt in my mind, just like the 22 veterans a day who take their own lives."



Brett Simon, her son, said he isolated himself and was unable to work. When he visited St. Augustine for the first time after his return, its narrow streets and alleys brought flashbacks to the dangers he faced in the Iraqi city of Mosul. He squatted in the street and started crying.

"His body came home, but he didn't," Duval said. "My son was still in Iraq."

Duval vowed to save her son. She sent him to doctors, to no avail. She researched post-traumatic stress disability and saw evidence that service dogs could help the healing process.

When Simon began working with a Belgian Malinois named Reagan, she saw the "old Brett" emerge, a light bulb came on and she decided to start a service dog agency.

She launched K9 for Warriors almost seven years ago when she had no financial resources except her own, no facility and no dogs. It is now the largest, most successful service dog program in the United States for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress, Duval said. Since then, 313 warriors have graduated from its program.

For her accomplishments, Duval is one of three EVE Award winners.

Duval began her program in a 1,000-square-foot house that she and her husband bought on an acre of land in Palm Valley. She rescued dogs from shelters, and Simon trained them. She started a Facebook page and got responses from one Army and two Navy veterans. They stayed at the house three weeks while

learning to train their dogs.

During the day, the veterans remained off site, going to the grocery store, the zoo, the theater and yes, to St. Augustine. She saw she was on to something as they began to relax and take their minds off their suffering. After two years, she moved to a second location in Palm Valley that enabled her to expand to five warriors.

The program outgrew it too, and benefactors came to her aid. The Davis and O'Steen families donated nine acres on which Summit Contracting and owners Bob Fleckenstine and Nicole and Marc Padgett constructed a living facility, offices, two large kennels and training grounds in Nocatee. Ashley Home Store provided furnishings at cost that Duval picked out. They moved in more than two years ago. Now they can train 12 warriors a month, though they have an 18-month waiting list.

To qualify, participants must be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury and have an honorable discharge post-9/11 because there are too many to go back further. They come from all over the country and all ranks. In addition to serving men, they hold two classes a year for women, some of whom may also be victims of military sexual trauma. The program, with an annual budget of \$5 million, relies on donations and grants from foundations and organizations.

Duval describes herself as very patriotic, and that shows through in the decor. There are numerous American flags made of materials ranging from fabric to metal. There are red, white and blue pillows and framed pictures of dogs and military emblems. On the day of the interview, Duval was wearing red-framed glasses and dressed in a red, white and blue pants outfit.

"I really fight hard for our first responders and our military," she said. "A lot of my family are police officers."

Simon, for example, was a K9 police officer in Cincinnati. In 2005 and in 2010, he went to Iraq as an independent contractor for the Department of Defense. His mission was to handle dogs searching for weapons of mass destruction. It

was an anxiety-laden environment with the fear of unseen threats around every corner.

With Reagan, he said, he has someone to focus on when he is in traveling or in public and feels nervous. His mother gave him the opportunity to do what he loves, said Simon, who trains the K9 division and is the organization's president.

"She gave me a purpose again. I'm a better husband and a better father for it."

The program has remained the same since the inception. Each warrior has his own bedroom while two share a bathroom. Their clubhouse has deep cushy brown leather sofas where they gather to watch TV and tease each other about which service branch is the best, talk about their families and discuss their goals. There are exercise and card rooms, a pantry and a kitchen, where they eat breakfast and dinner family style. Everything is pristine clean.

"I wanted it to feel safe, comfortable and like a home because the warriors that come here are so traumatized," Duval said. "We can just can see them let their guard down and a smile appear within 24 hours."

However, Duval remains haunted by the statistics, which come from the Veterans Affairs' 2012 Suicide Data Report that analyzed death certificates from 21 states from 1999 to 2011. "We're losing 22 veterans a day to suicide," she said.

The trauma is ingrained in their brains and manifests itself in various ways, she said. One man was shot nine times and saw a sniper wherever he looked. He installed cameras along the perimeters of his home. Since he got his service dog, he's been able to open a martial arts studio.

Others were unable to pass a garbage can in the streets because of a latent fear that it contained a bomb. One Marine threw up every morning. They discovered it wasn't something he ate but was triggered by memories of not knowing if he or someone in his unit would return when they went on their morning missions.

"If we can identify their trigger, we can let them work through it," said Duval,

adding they are tethered to their dogs, except when they take a shower or sleep. “The dogs help them back into society with dignity and independence.”

A violinist who hadn’t picked up his instrument in eight years is playing again. A quarter of the graduates have now finished their college degrees. They have reduced the amount of medication they were on. For some it was 40 pills a day, though the average is 20. They join churches, get jobs and encourage other vets to get help, said Duval, who owns three labradoodles.

The woman they call Mom doesn’t forget about them when they leave. If their dog dies, they are given a new one. The organization provides legal support and partners with other agencies. Duval said the late Rear Adm. Kevin Delaney served as her mentor, and she owes him and his wife, Pat, who remains on her board, a great deal of credit.

Born in Cincinnati, Duval fell in love with St. Johns County after spending vacations here. When her son and daughter graduated from high school, she moved to the area 35 years ago. Her daughter, who now lives in Truckee, Calif., is married and has 2-year-old twins. Shari Duval has been married to Bobby Duval, a retired golfer and father of renowned golfer David Duval, for 22 years.

Since her teens, she’s held a variety of jobs. The 71-year-old worked in an ophthalmologist’s office and for Gibson Greeting Cards. She once owned a restaurant, the Players Cafe in Ponte Vedra Beach, and has been a perpetual volunteer.

Kelly Delaney, daughter of Adm. Delaney, former commanding officer of Jacksonville Naval Air Station and Navy Region Southeast, said Duval is passionate and determined in her efforts to help veterans in need and rescue dogs.

“It’s just extraordinary,” said Kelly Delaney, one of her nominators, of Duval’s accomplishments. “She’s changed so many lives, not only the veterans, but their families.”

Sandy Strickland: (904) 359-4128

The Veterans Council is publishing this as a public service as it may effect our readers.

There is no charge to you to make a claim if you were effected.

Since USAA members are Active-Duty, Veterans, and/or their families, this news may apply to you.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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50K Florida USAA Auto Policyholders to Receive Past-Due Sales Tax Averaging More Than \$450 Each if They Make a Claim

(Jacksonville, Fla.) USAA insurance companies agreed to pay an average of more than \$450 in past-due sales tax to approximately 50,000 Florida auto policyholders who experienced total loss claims, based on plaintiff's calculations in a class action lawsuit settlement.

The settlement provides for payments of up to approximately \$34 million. Notice of the settlement will be sent to more than 70,000 policyholders. Plaintiffs calculate that approximately 70% of these policyholders (approximately 50,000) will recover funds under the settlement if they timely submit pre-filled-in claim forms. USAA also agreed to no longer condition the payment of sales tax on the policyholder first purchasing a replacement vehicle.

Each class member will receive an email and mailing from Settlement Administrator Dahl Administration explaining how to make a claim. Claims can be made by mail or at the website USAAFloridaAutoSalesTaxSettlement.com.

All 70,000 total loss policyholders can submit a claim asking USAA to review their file to determine whether there was sales tax underpayment, and in turn USAA will pay the policyholder 108% of any sales tax that should have been paid.

The 2013 lawsuit claims USAA improperly withheld sales tax from total loss payments to auto policyholders. Class members include present and former USAA Florida policyholders who held auto insurance with a USAA company and were paid by USAA under their policy for a total loss to their automobile between October 13, 2008 and October 15, 2016.

Policyholders will receive payment only if they make a timely claim. Approximately 30% of policyholders with total loss claims received all sales tax due from USAA as part of their total loss, and will receive no payment even if they make a claim.

Plaintiffs are represented by Atlanta law firm Hall & Lampros, LLP, (404-876-8100) and St. Augustine, Fla. firm Avolio & Hanlon, PC (904-794-7005). More information can be found at USAAFloridaAutoSalesTaxSettlement.com. The lawsuit is Chantal Bastian, et al. v. USAA, et al., 3:13-cv-01454-TJC, USDC Middle District of Florida.

Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial and Center

Overview and Phasing Plan



MISSION STATEMENT:

Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial's mission is to preserve the memorial, honor the POW/MIA pilots and service members that were lost over the Vietnam and Desert Storm conflicts, and distinguish the history of NAS Cecil Field as a base, and the major support and combat roles it provided throughout the years.

BACKGROUND:

The only known POW/MIA Memorial in Jacksonville, Florida is located at the former NAS Cecil Field (now Cecil Commerce Center). The memorial is dedicated to those Naval Aviators stationed at NAS Cecil Field during the Vietnam and Desert Storm War eras. The site consists of markers and associated planted trees for each of the 16 POW/MIA pilots (known as Hero's Walk and Freedom Trees), pavilion, stage area, starburst (metal display of aircraft), and a granite base seal of NAS Cecil Field. The Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial was dedicated in 1974 by the families and service members who wanted to ensure these brave men would never be forgotten. A driving force behind the Memorial was Mary Hoff, the wife of MIA LCDR Michael G. Hoff. Mary was also very instrumental in the creation of the POW/MIA Flag, making her the "Betsy Ross" of the POW/MIA flag. This flag has become an important symbol for the POW/MIAs, and the enduring cause that they will never be forgotten. The existing memorial is owned by the City of Jacksonville (herein the "City"). An existing adjacent historic chapel is also owned by the City as well as an existing theatre (Building 333) across the street.

POW/MIA MEMORIAL AND POW/MIA MEMORIAL CENTER:

The Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. organization is proposing to acquire acreage for this area in a long-term land lease with the City. The vision is to preserve and enhance the existing memorial areas; renovate the Chapel back to use for ceremonies, weddings, and memorial services; initiate a memorial center in the existing theatre (Building 333) with related artifacts and memorabilia; fundraise for design and construction of a new memorial center; and construct a proposed 100,000 SF POW/MIA Memorial Center (reference *Exhibit A* for conceptual phasing plan). The organization is also proposing to relocate, restore, and repaint the F/A-18 Hornet (BuNo162462) located at Cecil Tower, A-7 Corsair (BuNo152650) located at Don Garlits Drag Racing Museum (same aircraft on display at front gate), along with other various aircraft stationed at Cecil for display at the Center. The Center will serve as a memorial for POW/MIAs and veterans with a memorial wall or high relief panels, provide educational programs (including American civics and STEM), and educate the public about POW/MIAs and the history of NAS Cecil Field.

This proposed Center will also provide the ability for veterans to connect with other fellow veterans, organizations and associations making this a premier military venue for Northeast Florida.

HISTORY OF THE POW/MIA FLAG



In 1970, an MIA wife and member of the National League of POW/MIA Families recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida, Times-Union, she contacted a flag manufacturing firm, Annin & Company, which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China (PRC) as part of their policy to provide flags to all UN member states. The VP of this firm was sympathetic and, working with an Annin-contracted advertising agency employee, Newt Heisley, designed a flag to represent America's missing men. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution. Wanting the greatest possible visibility of the symbol to advocate improved treatment for and answers on America's POW/MIAs, no trade mark or copyright was sought. Today's widespread use of the League's POW/MIA flag is not legally restricted and the League does not share in profits from commercial sales.

Other than "Old Glory," the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, having been displayed in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982. On March 9, 1989, a POW/MIA flag that had flown over White House on National POW/MIA Recognition Day in 1988 was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress. In a demonstration of bipartisan Congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony. On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation".

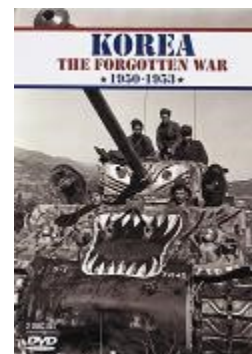
Passage by the 105th Congress of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act required that the League's POW/MIA flag fly six days each year: Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day. It must be displayed at the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the Selective Service System headquarters, major military installations as designated by the Secretary of Defense, all Federal cemeteries, and all offices of the U.S. Postal Service. In addition to the stipulated dates, Department of Veterans Affairs voluntarily displays our POW/MIA flag 24/7. The National Vietnam Veterans, Korean War Veterans and World War II Memorials are also now required by law to display the POW/MIA flag daily. All 50 States have adopted similar laws, as have local governments nationwide.

LEAGUE POLICY ON POW/MIA FLAG DISPLAY

At the October 7 2015 Board of Directors Meeting, it was reconfirmed by the unanimous SENSE OF THE BOARD that the League endorses Federal law requiring our POW/MIA flag to be displayed on the six specified days each year at all locations named and, further, appreciates, supports, and encourages actions taken by all states, counties and cities to display our flag 24/7

Korea: The Forgotten War Remembered By The Veterans Site

The Korean War is sometimes referred to as the Forgotten War, mainly because the conflict came shortly after the Allies' triumph and massive sacrifices of World War II but right before the tumultuous times of the Vietnam War. The Korean War's lasting effects are still felt by the U.S. military, with patrols along the border of the 38th Parallel still occurring 60 years after the end of the war. The Veterans History Project hopes to change people's perceptions of the men and women who served during that era.



Millions Who Served

More than 5.7 million members of the U.S. military served in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. The Veterans History Project, sponsored by the Library of Congress, hopes to document more of the stories of these brave men and women. In February 2016, the project reached a major milestone of 100,000 recorded stories ranging from World War I to Afghanistan.

More Stories Needed

A majority of the recordings, more than 58,000, come from World War II vets. The next-highest total, more than 18,400, are from Vietnam veterans. Compared to these figures, the Korean War seems to be forgotten. The Veterans History Project wants ordinary citizens to interview their loved ones who served in Korea so the nation can hear personal stories of struggle and sacrifice. Two examples of these veterans are Catherine E. Neville and Rutherford Vincent Brice.

A Nurse Notes No Parades

Neville served as an Army nurse in World War II and in Korea. She tended to injured soldiers in Tokyo and Osaka in Japan and at military hospitals in San Francisco. Neville told her interviewer that soldiers who came home in the Korean War did so without fanfare. Troops who returned from overseas action in World War II received parades and honors, but people came home to silence after Korea. Neville felt it was a sad state of affairs.

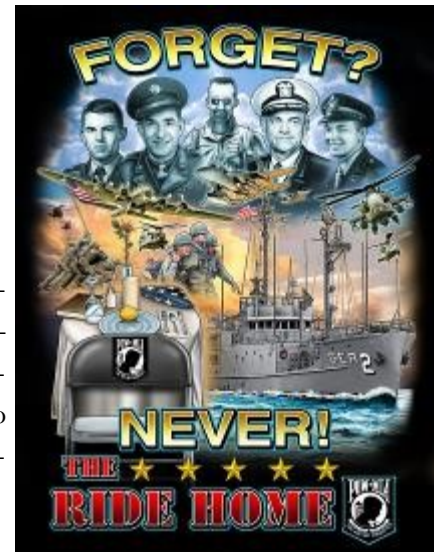
A Memory of Heartbreak Ridge

Brice went to Korea as a commissioned officer after serving as an aviation machinist in World War II. Brice saw action in three of the bloodiest battles of the Korean War as a company commander and platoon leader. One of his starkest moments came during the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge, a fierce fight at the top of a ridge that served as a vantage point to a broad valley. The well-fortified hill saw much back-and-forth fighting between American forces and the enemy. Climbing up the ridge was nearly impossible with all of the artillery placements built by the Koreans and Chinese. Brice's unit finally took care of the hill, but not until many of his fellow soldiers died trying to take the hill.

Both Neville and Brice saw the horrors of the Korean War from different vantage points. Neville tended to the wounded, while Brice saw death firsthand. These veterans deserve to be remembered with honor for their sacrifices during America's Forgotten War.

America owes the veterans of the Korean War many thanks and tributes before these people are gone forever.

HONOR –RELEASE –RETURN, Inc.
3818 Litchfield Loop Lake Wales, Florida 33859
www.honorreleasereturn.com



Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Inc. P.O. Box 440625 Jacksonville, Fl 32222

To whom it may concern, My name is Jim ‘moe’ Moyer and I am currently the National Co-Chairman of HONOR-RELEASE-RETURN, Inc. Our goal; act as a catalyst for the POW/MIA community through communication, organization and coordination of efforts to foster common success of all and nurture a universal will to account for all the missing. I have been a Prisoner of War/Missing in Action advocate full time since the 1990’s.

I am writing today to express my support of the project – Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial – under the leadership of Mr. Mike Cassata and Mr. Sam Houston. Why Cecil Field? Aviators have played a significant role in our military mission since before the beginning of World War II. This Naval base played a vital role in the training of Navy & Marine aviators from the late 1930’s until mid-1990’s when the federal government decommissioned the base and turn much of the property over to the City of Jacksonville. To note just a few of those aviators – McCain, Speicher and Hoff. If those three names are NOT familiar to you – then that alone would be reason enough to create this National POW/MIA Memorial on this site to Educate the public! (McCain – POW – October 1967 – March 1973; Hoff – date of incident, January 1970 – Still Unaccounted for: Speicher – date of incident, January 1991 – remains recovered August 2009). These are just three (3) aviators with direct ties to this special military installation and to the POW/MIA issue and there are many more.

Why This Issue – POW/MIA? For over two (2) centuries Americans have united to defend this Republic when threaten and for over one hundred years we have chosen to Honor those who died while defending our Liberties (Memorial Day) and we have chosen to Honor all who served in defense (Veterans Day). But, what have we done for those who have served – HONORABLY – but have yet to come home? The number is by no means small. The Department of Defense estimates more than 80,000 plus American Military since the beginning of World War II are unaccounted for. Their story deserves to be told, every day, until they all come home. The proposed venue, National POW/MIA Memorial, is the right way to do that. This venue will be proof to the families of those that are still unaccounted for, as well as the soldiers themselves that the American people mean what they say – ‘You are NOT Forgotten!’

Support – I will work with Mr. Cassata and Mr. Houston, their Directors and Staff to ensure that Veterans Service Organizations at the local, State and National level are informed and involved, physically and financially. I will work with the National Family Organizations to ensure that the story of their soldier is told with the utmost accuracy and work with the proposed POW/MIA Memorial Center to obtain significant artifacts for display as well as story-telling. Will work to garner their financial support as well I will work with the Former Prisoner of War organizations to ensure their involvement at the production level and the financial. I look forward to seeing the vision of Mr. Cassata and Mr. Houston coming to fruition in the near future. Until they all come home.....

Moe, Jim ‘moe’ Moyer National Co-Chairman HONOR-RELEASE-RETURN, Inc

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

Friday, July 21, 2017
8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Schultz Center
4019 Boulevard Center Dr
Jacksonville, FL 32207

WOMEN AND GIRLS MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING SERIES
provided by **Mental Health America of Northeast Florida**
and the **Women's Giving Alliance**

WOMEN IN THE MILITARY



Presented by:

Dr. Tracy Hejmanowski, Ph.D

Naval Hospital Jacksonville Deployment Health Center

Paula Coughlin, retired Navy Lieutenant and Whistleblower

Che'ri Monger, LCSW, MST Coordinator, Jacksonville VA

Women in the Military Training

- Welcome and introduction to the issues specific to women in the military
- Pre-deployment for women and their families
- Deployment and military sexual trauma
- Post-deployment for women and their families
- Local treatment options, including wellness therapies and mind/body practices.
- Panel discussion with local experts

According to Northeast Florida Women Veterans, Florida has the 3rd largest population of female veterans and Duval County is home to the largest population in the state. By attending this training, participants will be able to:

- ◇ Gain an understanding of the issues that women and their families face as they serve our country.
- ◇ Identify common mental health issues amongst women in the military.
- ◇ Learn about effective strategies to help families cope while women are deployed.
- ◇ Identify resources for women veterans and their families.
- ◇ Describe symptoms of military sexual trauma and local resources for victims.

Who Should Attend:

Psychiatrists	Teachers	Social Workers
Nurses	Students	Religious leaders
Case Managers	Therapists	Military families
Active Military	Veterans	Nonprofit leaders



**LMHC, LCSW, LMFT
and RN's**

6 CEUs provided by
River Point Behavioral Health
and Wekiva Springs Hospital

Registration is \$10 per person

includes Breakfast & Lunch

Register at www.mhajax.org





**Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc.
Minutes of May 25, 2017**

Officers present: Chairman Bill Dudley; Vice Chairman Ray Quinn, Secretary Michael Rothfeld, John Mountcastle, Treas. Chairman Dudley called the meeting to order at 1900 hours

Chairman Dudley led the Pledge to the Flag
Vice Chairman Quinn gave the Invocation

Last month's Minutes were approved as presented at the meeting.
The Treasurer's Report was approved as presented at the meeting

Introduction of Guests: RADM Patty Wolfe, USN (Ret)

Chairman Dudley presented Council member Herb Naumann, a WW II Navy veteran with a certificate and plaque for his many years of service to nursing home and hospitalized veterans with his sock donations, numbering in the thousands.



The **Vilano Beach VFW** presented Herb with a sock containing a \$ 200. check honoring and recognizing Herb's tireless effort in the sock donations. Thank you SOCK MAN.

Speaker: RADM Patty Wolfe, representing NE FL Women Veterans

The NE FL Women Veterans helps military women transition to life back home. They offer assistance, guidance, counseling, schooling, housing, help with resumes, one on one counseling, etc. in achieving their mission. There are 1.5 million women veterans in the US, with over 12,000 living in FL. Today's women veterans are younger, more racially diverse and better educated than their predecessors. The NE FL Women Veterans wants to be the Advocate for Women Veterans.



The group has just been given a building in downtown Jax that is staffed by 100% volunteers.

Committee Reports:

Mac: spoke about the VA committing itself to speeding up the appeals process and going paperless across the country.

Michael: spoke about contacting the Duval School Board to donate the Council's documentary series and having its content integrated into the High School curriculum.



Ray: displayed his recently received Governor's Medal of Merit which was received with a standing ovation. The SGM invited all to the Jax and St Augustine Memorial Day Ceremonies.

Kathy: not present

Mike Cassata: invited all to the Jax City Hall to show support for the Bill that will grant the POW/MIA Memorial acreage to continue the project.

Chairman Dudley: He and Mac presented the veterans at the Westminster Home with a Proclamation and Governor's Award.

The FBI Convention to be held in the WGV on September 16 will present the VC with a donation of \$ 1500.00.

Chairman Dudley was appointed to the FL Defense Support Task Force for a term of 4 years.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

The next meeting of the Veterans Council will be on Thursday, June 29, 7 pm in the Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View.

Our speaker will be Megan Wall, Legal Aid Attorney (June 29)

Future speakers:

July 27, **Sara Slettebo**, Association of Veteran Employers

Jeff Robertson, VP Finding the Uniform Program

August 31, **Kimberly Gibbons**, Atlantic Coast Young Marines

Derek Boyd Hankerson, Fort Mose Historian, Author, Lecturer

September 28, **Bob Buehn**, Capt USN (Ret), Coordinator of the UNF Veterans Resource Center

From: Mike Fayette, St. Johns, Florida

On Veterans For Veterans



I retired from the Army after nearly 32 years, serving as both an enlisted Soldier and an Officer; with time on both active and reserve duty; in peacetime as well as war. I served at every level of the Army – from 3-man combat engineer “sapper” team to Senior Staff Executive Officer, Headquarters, Department of the Army. I deployed overseas multiple times; was wounded in combat and lucky to be alive. I met and admired some of the greatest Americans this country shall ever produce, and I served with real, no-sh*t heroes.

As an Army non-commissioned officer, an old grisly Sergeant Major mentor of mine once told me, “Son, you can either do well, or you can do good.”

Frankly, I didn’t fully comprehend his sage advice. In fact, it didn’t actually coalesce with me until I was about to assume command of a battalion-sized formation in combat, many years later.

As I prepared to lead an elite force of joint, multi-national warfighters, I completed a time-honored tradition of preparing my “command philosophy” for all to see. It was to be a simple one-page treatise of how I intended to lead, what I valued, what I expected, and what I wanted those serving with me to understand about my leadership “style.” As I wrote, the words of that hard-charging Sergeant Major came to me. “You can either do well, or you can do good.” I wanted those in my charge to “do good.”

You see, what the Sergeant Major taught me (eventually) was that my military career was within my own power to be either one where I was successful because I learned to navigate and work the career “process” or where I was successful because I could choose to do the “right thing” for the right reasons and not necessarily worry about career aspirations. In my mind and within my own philosophy, I chose to focus on doing right, and I wholly encouraged those within my command to do likewise. For me, “Good” was better than “Well.” “Good” could lead to “Well,” but that was not the point. “Good” in and of itself was how a professional military should conduct itself. “Good” would ensure the lives of my men, and our mission success.

As a veteran, I still believe in the philosophy, “You can either do well, or you can do good.” Over the past few years of serving veterans through various volunteer experiences, I have observed a number of veterans from all Services who never had the advantage of a salty Sergeant Major who saw something in them that they too couldn’t have seen. I see veterans competing for the attention of other veterans, politicizing veterans’ issues, campaigning for positions within veteran organizations, comparing themselves to other veterans, and in general, trying to “do well” for themselves versus “doing good” for their fellow veterans.

Today, only 7% of Americans ever served this country in the Armed Forces. Only 7% of us ever swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution, and signed a contract committing our lives to it. That leaves 93% of our fellow Americans to never know what it truly means to have served – to have sacrificed – to have shared a bond with perhaps a complete stranger that can never be severed. Yet, poll after poll of our neighbors consistently rate “Veteran” or “Service Member” as the most honorable and trusted profession in our country.

Those polls are correct; our friends, family and neighbors see it – we who serve and who have served are an honorable and trusted people because we gave our lives, our blood or were standing ready to do so for nothing but for the sake of doing so. We’re not robots or superheroes, and we’re not perfect, but we have kept faith on our watch and ensured our coun

tries way of life for the strangers sitting next to us on a plane, the worshippers in the next pew, the kids playing down the street, and anyone else who claims or will claim the title of “American.”

And while our country consistently supports us, there’s one group of Americans that doesn’t seem to quite grasp that message. And that group occupies the marbled outcroppings and symbols of liberty that you and I kept secure. While we fight each other – organization against organization, veteran against veteran, politicians and bureaucrats in Washington D.C. regularly ignore us, lie to us or even disavow us. What nonsense is this!? Why do we allow this?

We are veterans. We share values, we share goals, we share bonds, share burdens – why should we not share success?! We once said, “If not us, who?” We must say it again, but our words must be followed by deeds. We must join together – all of us – and place our sacred position among Americans ahead of petty issues and partisan politics. We must not worry about “doing well” for ourselves. We must “do good” for us all.

I am a recent transplant to northeast Florida. I came here because I needed the Mayo Hospital and its expert team of healers. I have stayed here because of them AND the heart-warming love I’ve received from fellow veterans. I am a member of many veteran organizations – I’m even on a National Board of Directors for one, and so I know that we veterans are not on the same page, and I know that I am not above reproach.

But I also know that within this community of heroes that has adopted me, there are so many of you that see this too. We are not working together to have our voice – our veterans voice – heard and honored in D.C. That’s why I believe in Veterans For Veterans or more officially, Veterans4Veterans (V4V) – not an organization – a MOVEMENT to assemble and grow our collective voice and actions that will make lawmakers at every level hear us - again.

Again? Yes! What is your last memory, or when was the last period of time you’re aware our country experienced a nation of its most secure well-being and unlimited optimism of prosperity? Would you agree that time was just after WWII? Ever wonder how many politicians and bureaucrats were veterans? A lot! Think I’m just being nostalgic – I’m too full of piss and vinegar for nostalgia folks. I’m being pragmatic. There’s little love for veterans in D.C., because there are a little number of veterans in D.C. Yet, we have an opportunity here – right in front of us – to begin anew – to regain our voice. But we have to work together. We must be all in. Veterans 4 Veterans – V4V. Are you with me?

Mike Fayette, St. Johns, Florida

National Board of Directors – American Military Retiree Association

Board of Directors – Uniform Law Commission, Veterans Committee, Observer

Former Member – Federal Bar Association, United States District Court for the District of Columbia

Founder and Former President, Voices of the Wounded Foundation, Inc.

Former Mentor and Mentor Coordinator, Alternative Sentencing - Veterans Treatment Court, 13th Judicial Circuit Court, Boone and Calloway Counties, Missouri

Former CEO/President – Global Reach Contracting and Consulting, Amman Jordan/Washington D.C.

Life Member – Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), US Army 101st Airborne Division Association, Inductee – The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, Inductee – The 101st Airborne Division Hall of Fame

Member – The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels

Lifetime Ban – Fort Bragg NCO Club, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina

Meet the country's most prominent "stolen valor" detective

In 2013 "American Idol" featured a contestant with a sympathetic story.

"We were on a mission in Ramadi, Iraq, and we came across an IED, and the IED exploded," Matt Farmer said on "American Idol." Farmer served in Iraq, but was never injured in battle and later admitted "it was all lies" in a letter to the website, Guardian of Valor. "When we outed the guy from 'American Idol', that pretty much started this whole thing," Guardian of Valor founder Anthony Anderson said.

Anderson may be the country's most prominent "stolen valor" detective. "Stolen valor" is a term applied to those who falsely claim military service, either to gain recognition or, in some cases, money. It's offensive for many Americans to think of, but it's real, and because the government often doesn't have the resources or time to investigate, private citizens pick up the slack, reports CBS News correspondent Jeff Glor. From his South Carolina basement, Anderson works day and night separating military fact from fiction.

"We've had family members turn their own family members in. It's crazy sometimes. I've had sons turn their dads in. I've had dads turn their sons in. It's wild," Anderson said. The website features a "Hall of Shame" and links to video confrontations.

One video shows a man claiming to be an Army ranger being challenged while shopping. It has been viewed nearly six million times on YouTube. "Do you get mad at these people? Do you feel sorry for them?" Glor asked.

"Originally in the beginning, I did. I felt angry and I felt sorry for some of them, but now it's just, I really don't feel anything. I just know that I'm protecting what our brothers and sisters have earned overseas," Anderson said.

False claims of battlefield glory have been made as long as there's been war, but confrontations now can easily escalate in intensity. "Some of it can come off as the work of vigilantes. It can even get dangerous if somebody's falsely accused," Glor pointed out.

"And we have never falsely accused anyone," Anderson said. "You don't consider yourself a vigilante?" Glor asked. "Not at all. No. We don't go chasing these people. We give them all a chance to explain themselves," Anderson said.

Joe Plenzler represents the 2.2 million veterans of the American Legion and sees Anderson's work as a service to the men and women who fought honorably.

"Honor is a very important concept to us. So we don't really look kindly on those who lie, cheat, steal," Plenzler said.

Anderson, who served more than 13 years in the Army, including a tour in Afghanistan, funds the site through donations. He can spend years on an investigation and says he won't expose someone unless he's 100 percent.

"I've got six or seven guys that are constantly working these emails," Anderson said.

"People never learn?" Glor asked. "They never learn," Anderson said. "The attraction of that glory is..." Glor said.

"It's just too great for some people. They would rather impersonate instead of actually go raise their hand and serve their country," Anderson said.

One of the issues is the services often don't talk to each other, so it can be very challenging to figure out whether someone did what they said. There is also no comprehensive list of medals awarded by the military. Anderson believes that should change.

Stars and Stripes Honor Flight will begin taking Vietnam veterans

Meg Jones , Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

(Editors note: please contact Honor Flight, links below, to see if they are taking FL Vietnam veterans at this time)



As the ranks of World War II and Korean War veterans dwindle, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight will begin taking Vietnam veterans to Washington, D.C.

The Honor Flight hub in southeastern Wisconsin announced Tuesday it will transition to Vietnam veterans for three flights this fall though World War II and Korean War veterans who haven't traveled on the free one-day trip yet will continue to get priority.

"We are ready to welcome our Vietnam veterans for their day of honor," Stars and Stripes Honor Flight President Paula Nelson said at the War Memorial Tuesday morning.

Applications by Vietnam veterans will open Monday either online or by mail with veterans chosen on a first-come, first-served basis. Terminally ill vets will go to the head of the line, Nelson said. As with all flights, every veteran will be assigned a guardian to help them throughout the day. Guardians pay \$500 for the trip. Veterans who want to travel with a specific guardian must apply together.

Vietnam veterans will begin traveling on the Port Washington-based Stars and Stripes Honor Flight leaving from Milwaukee's Mitchell International Airport this fall: Sept. 16, Oct. 14 and Nov. 4.

Vietnam veterans Mike Orban and Joe Campbell spoke at Tuesday's news conference about the difficulty military members experienced when they returned from Vietnam.

"That blasted Vietnam War has haunted us for so long because we were not welcomed home," said Campbell.

Added Orban: "I think this is going to be one of those healing events for Vietnam veterans ... to complete the circle of friends who didn't come home."

Nelson said Vietnam veterans who have previously traveled as honor flight guardians are welcome to apply to travel for free now that Vietnam veterans are being accepted on future flights.

Stars and Stripes Honor Flight has taken more than 4,900 veterans from southeastern Wisconsin to Washington, D.C., to visit monuments and connect with other veterans since 2008.

For more information: starsandstripeshonorflight.org

NEW PROGRAM - America's GREATEST Heroes Photographic Initiative.

Every day America loses numerous remarkable men and women, many of them among the last remaining veterans from World War II. However, while these heroes fall victim to time, their remarkable stories and lessons do not have to disappear into history with them.



The Greatest GENERATIONS Foundation has launched a new program titled “America's Greatest Heroes Photographic Initiative” to photo-document 10,000 American Veterans and Citizens over the next three years in their homes, retirement communities and assisted living facilities across our great nation. These portraits will reflect the person they are today at the end of their lives and ideally, will include the citizen holding a photo of themselves as they were in their youth.

As beneficiaries of their legacy, we must ensure that the achievements and sacrifices of those who served are never forgotten, which is why it’s important to remember them. Our goal is to make 100% certain their sacrifice in preserving the liberties we enjoy today is never forgotten or taken for granted and that their legacies are recorded and retold in perpetuity to future generations.

General Notes:

This project is free of charge to the veterans. TGGF will cover all costs to photo-document the veterans. All participants will receive a FREE framed portrait and commemorative album once completed.

If you know a Great American who served in World War II, Korean or Vietnam veteran that would like to partake in this photographic initiative, please write to the Foundation today and schedule your appointment to help be a part of this amazing Initiative. "Every day is Memorial Day."

Email: info@tggf.org Remember Those Who Served

The Greatest GENERATIONS Foundation

Web: www.TGGF.org | Email: info@TGGF.org

From the Florida Times Union, by Joe Daraskevich

Military K-9 to receive full military honors at Saturday funeral in Jacksonville

Military K-9s put their lives on the line just like the men and women who work alongside them, but in death they rarely get the same type of honor as their human counterparts.

A ceremony Saturday will feature plenty of prestige when the life of Dingo — a Belgian Malinois based at Mayport Naval Station until retiring in 2012 — is celebrated with full military honors.



Instead of working for paychecks or accolades, Dingo completed his missions hoping for one thing in return: unconditional love from his handler.

That bond between handler and K-9 was so strong that when Dingo retired, Nick Converso decided to adopt his longtime companion.

“They always refer to it as when you work with a dog it’s kind of like a dance,” Converso said. “That fluid movement, the way we trained, the way we searched for explosives, it was always easy with him.”

Converso recalled one occasion in Iraq when they were clearing a roadside and Dingo located a massive amount of hidden explosives.

“If this wasn’t located by Dingo, it could of gone off in the middle of the convoy,” he said.

Converso will salute his comrade one last time when he receives a folded American flag at the Jacksonville Pet Funeral Home, Pet Cremation Center and Pet Cemetery at 4969 Beach Blvd.

“I’m going to be happy that his service wasn’t overlooked and that people actually acknowledge what they do,” Converso said of military K-9s.

He retired shortly after Dingo and now works with K-9s at the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office. He said the decision to put Dingo down was one of the hardest things he's had to do in life.

"Spiritually he was there. He was still the young pup I remember," Converso said.

But Dingo's 14-year-old body was breaking down after a long career.

Dingo was born in Holland in January 2003 and then trained at Lackland Air Force Base before he was assigned to Mayport. The explosive detection and apprehension K-9 completed two tours of duty in Iraq and one in Africa.

"If the president or vice president comes to the area, they always ask for military dogs," Converso said. Dingo's name was called quite often, and the team completed about 50 presidential protection sweeps.

Jimmy Hughey is the founder and director of the pet cremation facility, and he said this is the first time an event of this magnitude has been conducted for a military dog. The facility features separate sections for police K-9s and military K-9s to be memorialized, and a permanent memorial for Dingo will be installed in the military area.

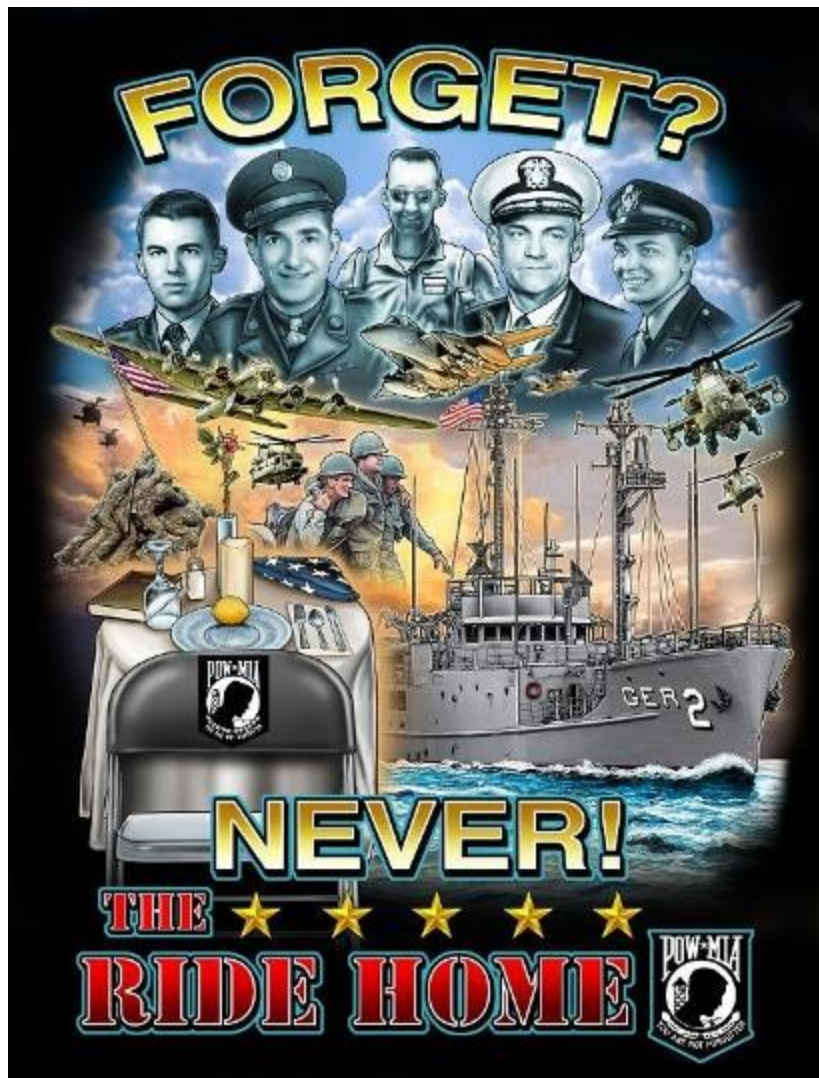
Saturday's ceremony starts at 11 a.m., and the public is welcome to attend.

"If you're going to come, you better get there early," Hughey said, because parking is at a premium.

Honor guards from Mayport and Jacksonville Beach will present the colors as motorcyclists from the Patriot Guard Riders and the American Legion Riders form a flag line. The Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department Pipes and Drums team will close the ceremony with a rendition of taps.

"He worked for a rubber toy, and he was happy with it," Converso said of his beloved dog. "He didn't ask for anything back except unconditional love and a rubber toy."

Joe Daraskevich: (904) 359-4308



Florida National Guard

1951 - May 15 - Florida's Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 227th Antiaircraft Artillery Group of Jacksonville was mobilized and ordered into active federal service for the Korean War. If you have any photos of Florida's Soldiers during the Korean War that you would be willing to share with the Florida National Guard archives, please contact us at 904-823-0696. Thanks in advance.



National POW/MIA Recognition Day The RIDE HOME 2017



Did you know that there are only two (2) days on our Julian Calendar that we set aside to recognize all Americans, civilian and military, who have been held against their will by enemies of the United States?

The first date is 9 April, Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. Why 9 April you ask, because that is the day the largest number of American Military were taken captive by an enemy during combat operations. After a three-month heroic battle in the Philippines, Major General King, Jr. surrendered all troops under his command to Colonel Mootoo Nakayama of the 14th Imperial Japanese Army. The total number varies by reporting source but it is safe to say the total exceeded sixty thousand (60,000) combat troops, at least, were taken as Prisoners of War. The second date, The Third Friday of September, came about more as a compromise than any historical significance to the date. It was Commander in Chief Jimmy Carter who initially requested a Joint Resolution from Congress annually to which he provided a Presidential Proclamation. The Recognition Day was held in April, to the liking of the American Ex-POW organization, or in July from 1978 through 1985. The debating parties, American Ex-POW and the Vietnam POW/MIA Families reached a compromise and starting in 1986 the day has been the Third Friday of September in which we recognize all former Prisoners of War (POW) as well as those who are still classified as Missing in Action (MIA).

For well over a decade a small group of POW/MIA advocates from across the country have been extending an invitation to Former Prisoners of War, civilian & military, and to the Families of those who are still classified as Missing in Action with the goal of fulfilling the Commander in Chief's proclamation, which notes:

"I call upon the people of the United States to join me in honoring and remembering all former American prisoners of war and those missing in action who valiantly served our great country. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities."

In their effort to meet the President's request this group, appropriately named "*The RIDE*

HOME” will be working in conjunction with; The National Prisoner of War Museum, located on the grounds of Andersonville Historical Site, Andersonville Georgia, Central Georgia Technical College, Warner Robins Campus, corporations, private organizations as well as individual patriots from the communities of Warner Robins, Perry, Georgia, and Andersonville Georgia.

The Itinerary for this national event begins on Thursday, 14 September 2017, with honored guest checking in early afternoon followed by a Recognition Day Service, open to the public, at the Museum of Aviation located at Warner Robins Air Force Base. Friday morning, 15 September, following a Law Enforcement escorted ride, service at the National Prisoner of War Museum, open to the public, also. Friday evening the Hero’s Banquet on the Central Georgia Technical College campus. (Dinner requires pre-paid reservation for everyone except the Honored guest.) KEEPING the PROMISE and Candlelight Services follow the dinner and are open to the public. Saturday, 16 September, Recognition Service followed by the FLY-BOY – GROUND-POUNDER Lunch, open to the public, followed by open socials at participating hotels/motels in the Perry/Warner Robins market.

For all the former Prisoner of War Honoree’s, the Next of Kin of our Missing in Action Honorees who wish to attend the RIDE HOME 2017, below we have included an invitation Letter as well as the registration form for this year’s event. Due to the fact this is a National event all registration applications will be vetted prior to acceptance. If you mail your application to the RIDE HOME Corporate address noted at the top of the form, we will start the process and you’ll be contacted acknowledging your participation at this year’s event. Due to popularity of the event all applications will be addressed on a first come first served basis. If you wish to have some of your family or friends join you at the event the RIDE HOME Team will be happy to help you obtain/arrange room accommodations as well as reservations for the two meals for your guest/friends.

We look forward to saying ‘Thank YOU!’ face to face, for not just your service to this great Republic, but for the sacrifices you have made and continue to make on our behalf.

For Questions or Concerns feel free to contact; moe – 407 448 1181 or moehog@verizon.net

Until they all come home.....

Vietnam War Hero With 37 Medals

Barely Remembered

The Veterans Site



Many people have heard about Alvin C. York and Audie Murphy. Both men were portrayed in feature films as the most decorated soldiers of World War I and World War II, respectively. But what about Joe Ronnie Hooper?

Hooper joined the U.S. Army at age 19 and served two tours in Vietnam from 1966 to 1968 as part of the 501st Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, also known as the Delta Raiders. He earned 37 medals for his bravery on the battlefield, more than any other soldier in the history of the U.S. military. Somehow, American history seems to have forgotten the sacrifice of this soldier, even as the United States remembers the 50th anniversary of the unpopular conflict.

The Army noticed Hooper's uncommon valor during the Battle of Hue on Feb. 21, 1968, part of the Tet Offensive. Hooper single-handedly destroyed three enemy bunkers using grenades. He killed enemies in four more bunkers with grenades before killing more enemies with his rifle and bayonet during the six-hour battle. All the while, Hooper was wounded 11 times, and he refused any medical help until he knew the rest of his unit was safe. By the end of the battle, Hooper killed 24 enemies and somehow evaded machine gun fire to rescue his fellow troops.

Just 14 out of 189 men survived the battle, mostly due to Hooper's actions, before the hero passed out from loss of blood. One day later, he left the hospital and rejoined his unit still wearing his hospital gown. However, two days after he returned to duty, Hooper was wounded again. On March 17, 1969, President Richard Nixon awarded Hooper the Congressional Medal of Honor. As the most decorated American soldier, he also earned eight Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars and six Bronze Stars to go along with 115 confirmed enemy kills.

Even with all of his heroism, bravery and decoration, Hooper remains a forgotten soldier. Sebastian Moraga of the Quad City Herald wrote in 2004 that Hooper's legacy hasn't received the recognition he deserves because he fought in an unpopular war. Hooper also suffered from alcoholism. However, neither of those circumstances should detract from his sacrifices to save his fellow soldiers. Hooper died in 1979 at the age of 40.

Hooper's actions deserve just as much recognition as those of other soldiers who earned medals for bravery. Hopefully, Hollywood rectifies this situation as the nation remembers Vietnam 25 years after it happened. Do your part to honor Hooper's memory by signing this petition to help our soldiers with PTSD.



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From Bob Adelhelm, LTC USMC, (Ret)

Below is an article written by the late Matt Blakely an Iwo Jima Veteran...He passed away in March of this year...He was a member of Semper Fidelis Society. One of the forgotten heroes who lived among us...



We so often forget about those amongst us that have stepped up and made a difference. It's important for us to keep the spirit of Marines and their sacrifices alive and in the minds of those of us who still care and know what it takes to keep this country free. So, we decided to look a little closer to home and identified one of our own...Matt Blakely.

Matt participated in the landings and battles on the Island of Iwo Jima where he was the recipient of the Silver Star. Matt passed away this year; thought sharing his article about his experience on Iwo Jima is appropriate. He was a proud Marine and an American who stepped up to help make a difference. SEMPER FI, Matt

Reflection, a Remembrance: Iwo Jima 1945, by Matt Blakely

In 1942, I was a civil engineer employed by Boeing Aircraft doing research work. Through an odd circumstance, I enlisted in the Navy and was cleared into the Office of Naval Intelligence. After 14 intense months at the US Navy Oriental Language School in Boulder, Colorado learning the Japanese language and being educated in their culture, I graduated and selected the Marines for intelligence service. After finishing the Basic School, aboard Quantico, I was commissioned a 2nd Lt and was immediately ordered to the FMF, 4th Marine Division on Hawaii.

My assignment to the 4th Marine Division was around the time the division was preparing for its fourth island invasion since being activated at Camp Pendleton only two and a half years earlier. I was assigned to the Division D-2 (later called G-2 in Marine lexicon) between operations. There were approximately 10 officer interpreters and half dozen enlisted linguists that practiced speaking, reading and translating radio broadcasts daily to maintain proficiency in the Japanese language. The enlisted personnel eventually were assigned to the RCT's (Regimental Combat Teams) during operations along with 2 officers. The remaining officers were assigned to the division to translate and interrogate. Those assigned to the RCT's were assigned to the S-2 where they would conduct prisoner snatches and conduct spot interrogations and forward the information up to division for additional analysis. Between operations some of us were ordered TAD on Hawaii for prisoner interrogation work at the POW installation. This duty was considered prized not only for the training experience, but also for the liberty associated with the area.

Operation "Detachment" and the 4th Marine Division involvement was soon underway for the assault on the Island of Iwo Jima by the 5th Amphibious Corps. D-Day came on February 19th, 1945. I hit the beach shortly after 0900 in the first wave with RCT 25. We encountered only sporadic resistance at the beginning; the Japanese were holding back major actions until the entire east landing beach became jammed with troops and equipment.

Shortly after the landing a top secret “red bordered” Japanese document was found by the RCT’s S-2 and I was ordered to deliver the document to the division command back aboard ship for D-2 analysis. After commandeering a boat and getting aside the ship, I nearly didn't make it up to the ship's deck from the boat via the rope ladders. Climbing from the bouncing small landing craft with full combat gear and weapons I became exhausted, but was gratefully dragged over the ship's rail by two very helpful and welcomed sailors. I delivered the captured document and prepared to return to the beach. I was probably the only Marine to make 2 landings on Iwo before noon on D-Day.

The conquest of this sulfur island was made extremely costly for the Marines by the Japanese defenders. The defenders had the advantage in terms of assets, manpower, armored equipment, artillery and supplies. Iwo was an island fortress with a determined enemy and heavy resistance was underway by mid- morning. I was with the 4th Marine Division, RCT 25 at Blue Beach 2. The 4th was the northern most unit of the attacking force of the 5th and 4th Divisions with the 3rd in reserve. Blue Beach 2 was directly under enfilade fire from the rock quarry cliff area. The going was rough.

The defenders were determined and had previously dug in and set up in preparation for the coming invasion. They had pre-registered targets and established fields of fire covering every square meter of the island. The Japanese fire was deadly, right on and highly accurate, except for 320MM Spigot Mortars that floated through the air and with a demoralizing affect.

The advancing off the beach to take the high ground was terribly slow, but the 4th Division was able to proceed inland wheeling to the north than to the east through the territory of Japanese 2nd Mixed Brigade. For 25 days until March 16th, officer and enlisted Marine interpreters handled the translator and interrogation duties involving the few captured Japanese, translation of documents and analysis of maps.

Prisoners remained the best source of intel and a Japanese officer was the “cream”, but they were scare. Documents were fairly plentiful, but did not provide the level of intel needed. One day melted into another with varying successes in intelligence gathering that started to provide greater value. Continuous scouting and patrolling for any intel assets was the order of the day. RCT 25 Commanding Officer, Col, Lanigan, was especially intel conscious and encouraged aggressive actions. During these actions, we encountered areas of stubborn defense held by fanatically dedicated Japanese defenders. Some of these actions are now part of Marine Corps History and fill the annals of epic battles – Hill 382, Turkey Knob, The Amphitheater, The Meat Grinder and Charlie Dog Ridge.

We got a prisoner here and a prisoner there and after interrogation would cross checked the information against their comrades. In an atmosphere of deadly combat, we continually tried to affect a live capture. The intelligence we gathered for the infantry units was eventually extended to include the air, artillery and armor assets. Intel demand increased.

We conducted these intelligence operations under the continual and deadly mortar, rocket, artillery,

grenade and sniper fire; suicide attempts and booby traps were always present, but the intelligence gathering was vital.

I had civil engineering training in land surveying and map making that became useful in developing the use of enemy maps. The maps the Marines used were developed from aerial recon photos which hardly defined the true topography in any detail. The terrain in the north and parts of the east were made up of a high plateau with a myriad of alley ways or corridors formed by the deep crevices in the rocky heights. Man-made inter-connecting tunnels with cave openings were everywhere and armed with every possible type of weapon. Captured Japanese maps were detailed and up to date; interpreting from these Japanese contour maps eventually allowed our troops to more easily, locate and identify positions and possible enemy defensive locations.

I witnessed exceptional and extraordinary acts of selflessness and courage on the part of Marines and Corpsmen throughout the agonizingly and exhaustingly slow progress of the division. We were able to take ground and proceeded to wheel right to the east coast of the island to defeat Japanese troops who were diabolically concealed and highly effective.

For three days starting on March 13th, the 4th Division was held at a standstill by a final “last ditch” effort of the Japanese. We were unable penetrate and advance. On the 15th, while in enemy territory searching for possible prisoners or material information, I was able to convince 2 Japanese officers to “give up” despite their decision to commit seppuku in the Samurai way. As a result, they eventually supplied the information we needed to finish off the Japanese 2nd Mixed Brigade. Mop-up actions followed to the east coast through the 16th. I was eventually cited for this action.

The 4th Marine Division boarded sea transport back to Hawaii. VJ Day came in August after the Okinawa success and this interpreter headed north to China for duty with 3/7/1.

In retrospect, a remembrance - As Dwight D. Eisenhower so aptly said regarding personal military honors, “Humility must always be a portion of any man who receives acclaim earned in the blood of his followers and the sacrifice of his friends.” It was the Brotherhood of Marines that contributed to our success and continues to contribute to the success of the Marine Corps. There is no room in Marine lexicon for the pronoun “I”; the Marines are and have always been about “WE”...The Team!

CITATION:

“For Conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy on Iwo Jima, VOLCANO ISLANDS, on 15 March 1945. First Lieutenant Blakely was given the task of going ahead of friendly lines and into enemy territory to accomplish a particularly hazardous mission. While under heavy enemy fire from mortars, rockets and grenades, he operated with complete disregard for his own safety. Through his heroic efforts, the further movement of friendly troops in the pockets of resistance was facilitated. His courage and conduct throughout were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval service”, H.M. Smith LtGen USMC.

May 9, 2017 VA Announces Adoption of American Cancer Society Mammogram Screening Guidelines

WASHINGTON – Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is adopting American Cancer Society (ACS) breast cancer screening guidelines that give women a choice to begin screening at age 40. The guidelines also recommend starting yearly mammograms by age 45 and then every other year from age 55. The guidelines apply to women at average risk for breast cancer and complement VA’s already-extensive program for breast care for Veterans.

“It is important for our women Veterans to know that they are in control of their care and the care they receive from VA is consistent with or exceeds care in the private sector,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “Adopting American Cancer Society standards gives Veterans further assurances that their care aligns with other health-care systems. Currently, 76 percent of women Veterans age 40-49 receive mammograms through VA.”

In addition to adopting ACS guidelines for breast cancer screening, other notable achievements include:

- Expanded access to onsite mammograms by 62 percent;
- All eligible women Veterans have access to mammograms either onsite or through care in the community;
- VA quality scores from the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS), show that women Veterans are much more likely to receive age-appropriate breast cancer screening than women in private sector health care;
- In 2015, VA provided mammogram screenings to 86 percent of its women Veteran patients age 50-74, compared with the private sector at 73 percent; and
- VA has established a state of the art information technology Breast Cancer Registry (BCR). The BCR integrates data from several VA sources to provide comprehensive patient specific information about breast cancer screening, test results, past and current breast cancer treatment, and population surveillance of breast care (both in the community and within the VA). “Engaging and better servicing the unique health-care needs of our women Veterans is one of VA most important priorities,” said Dr. Poonam Alaigh, Acting Under Secretary for Health. “When it comes to their care, we want them to be in control of it every day and in every way.”

For more information about VA’s commitment to women Veterans, visit <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/> or call Women Veterans can also call 855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636) for information about VA services and resources.

</groups/VCSJC/permalink/1326956850685434/>



The term **Gold Star family** is a modern reference that comes from the Service Flag. These flags/banners were first flown by families during World War I. The flag included a blue star for every immediate family member serving in the armed forces of the United States, during any period of war or hostilities in which the armed forces of the United States were engaged. If that loved one died, the blue star was replaced by a gold star. This allowed members of the community to know the price that the family had paid in the cause of freedom.



The United States began observing Gold Star Mother's Day on the last Sunday of September, in 1936. The Gold Star Wives was formed before the end of World War II. The Gold Star Lapel Button was established in August 1947.

Today, the nation recognizes the sacrifice that all Gold Star Family members make when a father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, or other loved one dies in service to the nation. Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day is the last Sunday of September and Gold Star Spouses Day is April 5. The strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. The Army recognizes that no one has given more for the nation than the families of the fallen.



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**FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT SHARON LYNN UNGER
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The Timothy J. Seamans Memorial Foundation is based in the beautiful city of Jacksonville, Florida and was founded by the family of Jacksonville fallen soldier, Timothy J. Seamans, in August 2006. The purpose and mission of this foundation is to create, establish, and help maintain the Fallen Soldier Monument at each hometown high school of a Florida graduates who have lost their lives defending the United States of America in our war against terrorism. The Timothy J. Seamans Memorial Foundation, (Doing Business as Florida Fallen Heroes) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit exempt organization, registered (# CH34311) with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Contributions are deductible from federal income as charitable donations under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code. Bequests, devises, transfers and gifts made in accordance with section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Internal Revenue Code are also tax deductible.

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



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:

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

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

Please join our group on Facebook at:
VeteransCouncilofStJohnsCounty,FL

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

Send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org

Please send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org



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

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

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

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

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

The Veterans Council will meet at the St. Johns County Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View Muscovy Room, 1st floor

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

(physical location)

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

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

*Service is by appointment.
Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161
Joseph McDermott, CVSO
Rick Rees, Assistant VSO
Tammy Shirley, Assistant VSO
Lashonda Burns, Office Specialist*

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