



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

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St. Augustine, FL 32085

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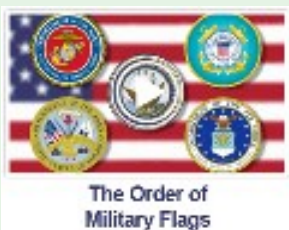
Volume 9, Issue 7

Message from the Chairman

July 2020

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Fellow Veterans,
 As Governor DeSantis is relaxing the grip on the State for meetings and public gatherings due to COVID-19, the Veterans Council has decided to resume live meetings. After a hiatus of 3 months, we will resume our meetings but at a different venue. Our next meeting will be at the Elks Lodge, 1420 A1A S, St. Augustine at 7 PM. Selena Hernandez-Haines will inform us about the recently formed First Coast Honor Flight and Jay Smith, Historian at the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum will speak about "Operation Drum Beat," the German U Boat attack on Ponte Vedra Beach during WW II. I think our attendees will find both speakers both interesting and informative. Seating will be in accordance with the Governor's guidelines for public meetings. Masks are optional.
 For the past 3 months, our Veterans Treatment Court has continued to conduct

ly scheduled basis by Zoom media. This has worked extremely well. Judge McGillin and the entire VTC team have proficiently conducted the sessions with the least amount of disruption and inconvenience to our veterans and still meet the requirements of the court. Hopefully, the VTC will soon resume live court sessions.
 Our new Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) is making great progress. Construction has begun on the main building. If there are no delays for hurricanes and the like, the facility should meet its scheduled completion by next summer to be operational.
 During this period of isolation due to COPID-19, your Veterans Council has continued to reach out to veterans in need. The Council has assisted with a veteran in need of a replacement HVAC system, one veteran in need of relocation to an assisted living facility and the disposal of household goods, another veteran who was in need of assistance to safety proof his home to



prevent falls, and a veteran's widow who needed some financial assistance. These are all things that the Veterans Council routinely does and have not been deterred by the Corona virus. A reminder that if you have not yet filled out your 2020 Census form to please do so. Our County response as of this week was just over 67% response with several zip codes in the low 30% range. This is critical to receive Federal dollars for programs in our County such as education, infrastructure, health care, and veteran assistance just to name a few. Please take the time to fill out your census questionnaire if you haven't already done so.
 Bill Dudley, Chairman
 Veterans Council of
 St. Johns County

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



**Things look a little different now at
Lassen but we're still celebrating
Birthdays!**



The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs operates six skilled nursing facilities and one assisted living facility.

Resident Admission: Basic admission requirements for all state veterans' homes include an honorable discharge, state residency prior to admission, and certification of need of assisted living or skilled nursing care as determined by a VA physician. A resident application package for each facility is available for view and downloading below. For specific questions regarding admissions, please contact the Admissions Coordinator at the numbers listed below. We are temporarily suspending admissions in our network of state veterans' homes. Thank you for your understanding.



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



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

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

**DATES OF 2020 SC at JNC MEETINGS, All on Mondays
Oct 5th, Nov 2nd, Dec 7th**

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA 2020 - Saturday, December 19th.

+++++2020 Officers of the SCJNC+++++

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

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County meets on the following dates, all are invited to attend.

NEW: We meet at the St. Augustine Elks Lodge 829, 1420 A1A, at 7 pm

**Future meeting Speaker Topics
SJC Homeless Veterans Initiative panel (tentative)
Fire Watch speaker (tentative)
Denise Olsen, Finding & Honoring your Military Ancestry
Housing Homeless Veterans**

How to avoid COVID-19 government imposter scams

by Lois Greisman, Associate Director, Division of Marketing Practices, FTC, Michael Herndon, CFPB, Acting Assistant Director, Office for Older Americans

Many of us are paying close attention to the guidance from federal, state, and local governments during this COVID-19 health emergency. Unfortunately, scammers are also paying attention. Some are even pretending to be affiliated with the government – just to scam you out of money.

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Here are three ways you can help protect yourself and others from these scammers:

- 1) Know that the government will never call, text, or contact you on social media saying you owe money, or to offer help getting your Economic Impact Payment (EIP) faster. If you get a message from someone claiming to be from a government agency through social media, it's a scam. Report it to the FTC at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint). If you are eligible and haven't yet gotten your Economic Impact Payment, visit [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov) and follow the guidance. Watch this CFPB video to learn more about your EIP. And read the FTC's information on spotting scams related to the EIP.
- 2) Visit government websites directly for trustworthy information. Don't click on links in an email or text message. Scammers often send fake links to websites that look like they're from the government. Instead of clicking on links in messages, open up a new window and search for the name of the government agency. And visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov) for the most up-to-date information on the pandemic.
- 3) Say NO to anyone claiming to be from a government agency asking for cash, gift cards, wire transfers, cryptocurrency, or personal and financial information, whether they contact you by phone, texts, email, or by showing up in person. Don't share your Social Security, Medicare ID, driver's license, bank account, or credit card numbers.

For the most up-to-date information on avoiding COVID-19 related scams, visit [ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams](https://www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams). And, for further help in protecting yourself financially during this pandemic, visit [consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus](https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus).



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

Centerstone and the Cohen Veterans Network have joined forces to offer compassionate, targeted behavioral health care for Post 9/11 veterans, National Guard, Reservists, their families and active duty family members at the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone, Jacksonville. <https://centerstone.org/cohen-military-family-clinic/jacksonville/>.

The clinic's skilled clinicians and staff have been trained to work specifically with veterans and their families, and some are veterans themselves. Services offered include individual therapy for children, adolescents and adults, couples therapy, family therapy, groups and workshops.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



St. Johns County
Board of County Commissioners

St. Johns County Veterans Council Resumes Meetings

- Thursday, June 25 | 7:00 p.m.
- St. Augustine Elks Lodge 829 | 1420 A1A, St. Augustine
- Speaker | Selena Hernandez-Haines, President, First Coast Honor Flight
- Speaker | Jay Smith, St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum
Speaking about "Operation Drum Beat" the German plan to attack Florida

For more information, please call 904.209.6160.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County has as its Mission, to help all Veterans who have served in the country's Armed Forces.

The Council believes the best way to do this is to connect via Social Media with all veterans.

Since 2008 the Veterans Council has produced five highly acclaimed and distributed Veterans Documentaries featuring the first hand stories of local NE FL Veterans.

All documentaries are featured on Youtube.com

Vietnam: Service, Sacrifice and Courage has over 273,500 views

Stolen Freedom, the story of 4 local ex POWs was seen by over 10,000

The Council's very active, informative website, www.veteranscouncilsjc.org has over 5,000 unique views a month

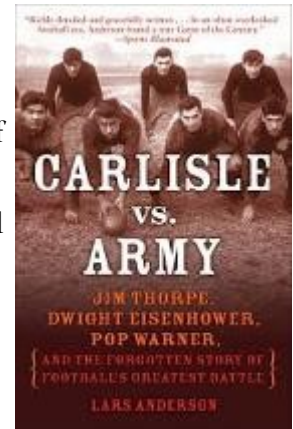
The Council's award winning monthly newsletter, the Patriot Reader is emailed out to over 8,000 followers

Please contact Secretary Michael Rothfeld, rothfeldm@gmail.com for more information



From the Gardner Report, History's Highlight, From Fort Marion to modern football

In the Report's History's Highlight (Report June 3) on Indians at Fort Marion who were later part of the Carlisle PA Indian School, we questioned author Jim Purdy that "At Carlisle, under Pratt and his athletic director, Glenn 'Pop' Warner, the modern game of American football was born and the 'Greatest Athlete in the World' would play. His name was Jim Thorpe." Thereby hangs a tale as America awaits a 'new normal' football season. I did not mean to imply that Jim Thorpe played at Carlisle while Pratt was superintendent, Purdy writes. Pratt retired in 1904 and Thorpe went to Carlisle in 1906. However, Pratt first started the football program at Carlisle, albeit reluctantly, in 1894. Pratt would then hire Pop Warner as the Athletic Director and head coach in 1899.



You are correct that an early version of the game of American Football goes back to the 1870s. It would be Walter Camp, the Father of American Football, who developed the "downs and distance" rule in the early 1880s which first separated it from Rugby and Soccer by giving the offensive team 3 downs to go 5 yards to make a first down. Due to the smaller stature of the players at Carlisle (averaging 170 pounds vs. over 200 pounds for major college teams they played) Pop Warner created a game of speed and misdirection to overcome the size deficit. This innovation by Pop Warner at Carlisle began the "modern" game of American Football. He invented the single wing formation, reverse play, the double pass, the fake handoff, the body block and it was at Carlisle that the overhand spiral forward pass was perfected in 1906 (the first year the forward pass was legal).

Although the first completed overhand spiral forward pass occurred at St. Louis University one week before Carlisle started its 1906 season, the first "touchdown pass" was thrown by Carlisle halfback Pete Hauser to receiver Bill Gardner in the first set of downs of their first game of the 1906 season against The Number 1 ranked Penn Quakers. In her book, *The Real All Americans*, author Sally Jenkins states that "There are three or four signal moments in the evolution of football and this was one of them." She called this touchdown pass from Hauser to Gardner the "sporting equivalent to the Wright Brothers taking off at Kitty Hawk".

Carlisle would beat #1 ranked Penn 26 to 6 and would go on to a 10-1 season beating 6 "top 20" teams, all as the visiting team. Jim Thorpe was a freshman on that team. In 1912 Pop Warner invented the "double wing formation" at Carlisle which revolutionized the game forever and is still taught today in Pop Warner Youth Football. On Nov. 9, 1912, the "double wing formation" was used for the first time when the Carlisle Indian School went to West Point and played Army (it was billed as the Indians vs. the Cavalry all over again). West Point's team was led by a young Dwight D. Eisenhower. It was Ike vs. Thorpe on the gridiron and even Walter Camp took a train from his home in Connecticut to see that game. The next day the New York Times stated that Carlisle played "the most perfect brand of football ever seen in America." Carlisle won 27-6. This is why I say that the imprisonment of the Indians at Fort Marion led directly to the modern game of American Football. Without Lt. Pratt's successful experiment in education of the Indian prisoners at the fort in St. Augustine, there never would have been a Carlisle. Without Carlisle, we would never have heard of Jim Thorpe. He would have been an unknown Indian living on the Sauk and Fox Indian Reservation in Oklahoma, and the modern game of American Football would have evolved in a totally different manner. Image: Carlisle vs. Army poster

World War II on America's Coast

Part Two: The American Response: "Semper Paratus"

By Rick Cain

The reality of war on America's own East Coast was a shock to its residents, and it was no different for the people of St. Augustine. The United States Navy kept the news of the U-boat attacks under wraps while they scrambled to take defensive action, and action they did take. In February of 1942, the USS Roper (DD-147), a Wickes-class destroyer returned to Norfolk, VA, after successfully performing escort duty to Londonderry, Ireland. Shortly after midnight on April 14th she encountered, engaged, and sank German submarine U-85 off the coast of North Carolina. It was the first Nazi U-boat sunk in American waters. Lieutenant Commander Hamilton Howe received the Navy Cross for the successful engagement. This good news was very well received here at home and let the German Navy know that their "Happy Time" was not to last forever.



USS Roper (DD-147)

The old United States Lighthouse Service, initially founded in 1789, had formally merged with the United States Coast Guard in July of 1939. At the outbreak of hostilities with Germany in 1941, lighthouse keepers were given the option of putting on the Coast Guard uniform or retiring. Head Keeper Cardell D. Daniels of St. Augustine proudly accepted a position in the Coast Guard as the station transitioned into an active, wartime coastal watch station. Residents of the city would learn that St. Augustine was to become a U.S. Coast Guard training station. In the following months, hundreds of American men and women would report to St. Augustine for basic training. A headquarters for the Coast Guard was set up on the grounds of Henry Flagler's famous Ponce de Leon Hotel (now Flagler College) where recruits were processed, probed, prodded and prepared to begin the long days of acclimation for a life in sand and sea.



Coast Guardsmen entering the main gate of Flagler's famous hotel (above)

Below Left to Right: Recruits check in to receive initial briefing, supplies, and their first chow



All along America's East Coast, coastal lighthouses became observation platforms for Coast Guard spotters documenting all shipping and watching for Nazi U-boat activity. Other personnel would begin a beach patrol on foot with K-9's, on horseback, or in Jeeps. Construction began at the St. Augustine Light Station of a new Coastal Watch Building (barracks) to house four Guardsmen to perform these duties. A wireless radio was installed at the top of the lighthouse for constant communication with other lighthouses on the coast, as well as Port Command in downtown St. Augustine. It functioned in tandem with the Navy Radio Wireless Station that sat northeast of the tower. Today this Wireless Station is still standing and is a private residence. The old 1936 Keepers' garage at the station was converted into a beach patrol jeep maintenance garage. The U.S.C.G. Barracks building was completed in July 1942 and still sits just north of the 1876 Keepers' Quarters at the light station, with the garage still standing just across the main access road on the north side of the tower.

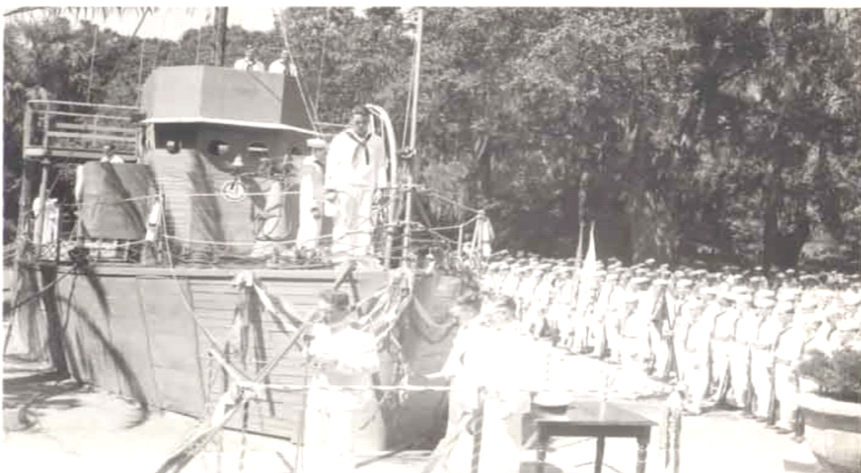


Left: Coastal Watch personnel and female friend with former Head Keeper C.D. Daniels back row, left

Below: Lighthouse looking east (left) and Jeep Maintenance Garage (right)



While the beach patrols got underway, training continued on the hotel grounds. A mock-up of a ship was built on the lawn and christened the “USS Neversail.” A “breeches buoy” was rigged to train sailors how to transfer between two vessels underway, as well as perform sea rescues. It was simply a suspended life ring with a pair of pants sewn in.



Left: USS Neversail on the grounds of the Hotel Ponce de Leon



What we now know as the area around the Conch House, north of the lighthouse, was used to train recruits in the use of anti-aircraft and shore batteries.



Everything was first learned on firm ground before transferring to the sea, but the long days spent in the heat and humidity of Northeast Florida prepared these brave, raw recruits for what was to come. The sand and sweat of coastal Florida would shape them into a disciplined force for America's first line of homeland defense as well as future service overseas.



Rick Cain is the Director of the Museum Services Division of the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum.

Angels of the battlefield . . . A tribute to the nurses of WWII.

Ned Forney, Writer, Saluting America's Veterans



"They needed nurses badly and I just felt I had to do something."

Ellan Levitsky, WWII US Army nurse

Four days after Allied forces landed at Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944, the first wave of US Army nurses came ashore as members of the 42d and 45th Field Hospitals and the 91st and 128th Evacuation Hospitals.

Among the thousands of nurses who would serve in France at that time were Ellan and Dorothy Levitsky, two sisters from a Russian Jewish immigrant family who had quit their civilian nursing jobs in 1944 to join the US Army Nurse Corps.

Landing in Normandy, they were engulfed in the death and destruction of the largest amphibious operation in history and were soon treating young American soldiers suffering from bullet wounds, burns, severed limbs, and shrapnel-riddled bodies. It was a tough, life-changing ten months, but the "inseparable" sisters, despite the hardships, long hours, and constant stress, stayed positive and never wavered. "I loved the Army, loved everything about it," Ellan, the younger sister, told the LA Times.

The two siblings never forgot the images, sounds, and smells of the field hospital where they worked. Ellan recalled soldiers groaning in pain and crying themselves to sleep. "They were just kids, 18 or 19 years old. They were hurt and scared and they wanted to go home," she said in an interview.

When she returned to Normandy last year to mark the 75th anniversary of the historic invasion - her first visit without Dorothy, who died in 2015 - she said, "I'm happy to be here, but . . . my sister should be with me."



Postscript:

Ellan passed away peacefully on November 20, 2019, just five months after her visit to Normandy. She was 99.

Seven years earlier, in 2012, Ellan and Dorothy received the Legion d'Honneur, France's highest award for military and civil service. Interviewed by a French journalist, Dorothy recalled the horrors of what she'd witnessed so many years before: "We'd see kids who'd lost an arm, a leg," she remembered. "We had to give them hope, that was the only way to deal with it."

Today, we pay tribute to Ellan and Dorothy Levitsky, their families, and all the dedicated nurses who served, sacrificed, and died during WWII. We owe them so much!

Lest we forget.

WALKING ON SACRED GROUND

By Alison Simpson, command historian, Florida National Guard

In 2018, the world commemorated the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. Resting in this cemetery are 246 veterans of the war, including more than 100 African-American veterans and two veterans whose service continued through WWII and Korea.

One cannot visit the St. Augustine National Cemetery without noticing the Dade Pyramids.

These burial vaults contain the remains of hundreds of U.S. Soldiers who served and died in Florida's Second Seminole War.



In a formal ceremony on Aug. 15, 1842, the Florida War ended with the burial of 156 Soldiers in 10-foot square vaults that were soon covered by coquina pyramids. Today, these pyramids are believed to be the oldest memorial in any of the nation's national cemeteries.

The cemetery is the final resting place of many other veterans, and its use as a cemetery began in 1828.

Very near the Dade pyramids is possibly the cemetery's most famous veteran, Union Brig. Gen. Martin D. Hardin and his wife, Amelia McLaughlin Hardin (site B-427).



Following his father's death in the Mexican War Battle of Buena Vista, Hardin was mentored by then Col. Abraham Lincoln, a close family friend. It is believed that Lincoln first met Miss Mary Todd at the Hardin home.

A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Hardin was colonel of the 12th Pennsylvania Reserves during the Civil War. He participated in several major battles, including The Seven Days Battles, Second Bull Run, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania and Bethesda Church.

During the war he was recognized for gallant services five times. At the time of his death in 1923, the beloved general was 85 years old and the last member of the USMA Class of 1859. His funeral was attended by hundreds and received great attention in the local newspaper.

But there are hundreds of veterans here, while lesser known, who shared similar experiences of a life of service on America's frontiers.

Seven of them were Buffalo Soldiers of the U.S. 9th and 10th Cavalry and 24th and 25th Infantry Regi

ments, the U.S. African American regiments organized after the Civil War. All seven were veterans of the Spanish American War.

Three other Spanish American War burials here were members of Roosevelt's famed "Rough Riders," the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment.

In 2018, the world commemorated the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. Resting in this cemetery are 246 veterans of the war, including more than 100 African-American veterans and two veterans whose service continued through WWII and Korea.

Two of Florida's WWI veterans buried here had notable service.

Col. Jacob H. Spengler (site B-718) trained officers of the Quartermaster Corps school at Camp Joseph E. Johnston, today's Jacksonville Naval Air Station, before traveling to Europe on special assignment to collect arms and artifacts of the war for inclusion in the National Museum, which is today's Smithsonian.

Master Sgt. James W. Dell, (site C-205), a veteran of the Spanish American War and WWI, had the great honor of having served as one of the eight pallbearers of the Unknown Soldier when the Tomb at Arlington was first dedicated in 1921. During World War II, Dell was the superintendent of this cemetery.

Earlier this month the world remembered the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day marking the end of World War II in Europe. Many of those buried in the cemetery are World War II veterans. They represent all branches of service and all theaters of war. Of these, 84 are men who died of wounds received or who were killed in action.

Eight of the WWII veterans buried here had continued service in Korea, while four others had continued service in both Korea and Vietnam.

Three groups of WWII veterans are buried in common graves. All were victims of airplane crashes while in service in the United States. They include three members of the 398th Bomb Squadron, 21st Bomb Group (site B-544); five members of the U.S. Naval Reserve (site B-637); and four members of the 136th Air Base Unit, 1st Air Force (site C-67).

Other burials represent a connection deeper than those of comrades in arms.

Capt. Jere F. Palmes was from St. Augustine and a member of the 222nd Infantry, 42nd "Rainbow" Division (site D-94). He died on April 25, 1945, during a combat crossing of Danube River near Donauwoerth, Germany. Though his remains were re-interred from France in 1949, those of his brother were never recovered.

On the reverse of Palme's headstone is a memorial to his brother Russell B. Palmes Jr., U.S. Navy, Lost in the North Atlantic aboard the U.S.S. Frederick C. Davis. Russell died one day before his brother Jere.

Years later, in 1975, the boys' mother, Mrs. Russel B. Palmes, was honored during a ceremony to be the first to turn on the permanent light for the U.S. flag in the cemetery.

Lt. Col. Max Denton was a veteran of WWI, WWII and Korea. During the early stages of WWII, Denton commanded a company of the Florida National Guard before taking command at Keesler Field, Biloxi. He was a resident of St. Augustine for 25 years until his death in 1962 (site D-158).

Nearby, his son Sgt. Max Denton Jr., was buried in 1949 (site D-123) when his remains were re-interred from Hamm, Luxembourg Cemetery. Denton Jr. died on New Year's Day, 1945, while serving with Headquarters Company, 8th Infantry, 4th Division, U.S. Army.

Staff Sgt. Alvin L. "Bud" Moore was a veteran of World War II who served his country as a radio operator of the U.S. Army Air Corps. In 2005, he passed away and was buried at St. Augustine National Cemetery.

At the time of his death, his son, Lt. Col. Greg Moore, was then on active federal service deployed to Afghanistan with the 53rd Infantry Brigade, Florida National Guard.

Upon his return to the country, Moore resumed his civilian job as Florida National Guard historian guiding visitors to the St. Augustine Cemetery.

Moore participated in his first Memorial Day ceremony in his hometown of Muskegon, Michigan, in 1970.

A career soldier, teacher, author and historian, Greg was a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy Class of '74 and was retired from the Florida National Guard.

As Command Historian of the Florida National Guard, Moore hosted hundreds of visitors to the cemetery. His research of the cemetery and its veterans culminated in the publication of, "Sacred Ground: The Military Cemetery at St. Augustine."

In 2019, the day after Memorial Day, Moore joined his mother and father at St. Augustine National Cemetery. Now he rests in sacred ground beside those he loved and honored.

"For those whose final act of service to their nation confirmed that bitter-sweet refrain, 'Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori,'" Moore said during one Memorial Day ceremony. "Thank you for honoring all veterans."



A New Memorial Will Soon Honor the Heroism of Native American Veterans

For design ideas and funding, the National Museum of the American Indian turns to its community

U.S. senators Ben Nighthorse Campbell, dressed in ceremonial Northern Cheyenne regalia, and Daniel K. Inouye, a member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, stand with Native American Vietnam veterans during the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in 2004. (NMAI)



By Ryan P. Smith, SMITHSONIANMAG.COM

Reflecting on the service of Native Americans in the United States military, one is likely to picture the embattled Navajo code talkers of World War II, whose decryption-resistant communications stymied the Japanese and proved instrumental in securing key Allied victories in the fight for the Pacific.

A sterling example of Native American warriors' composure and commitment under pressure, the code talkers' story is but a small piece of a much larger narrative. Too often forgotten, the depth of sacrifice of all manner of Native American peoples across American history cannot be overstated.

As of now, 140,000 living Native Americans are veterans of the U.S. military—more than 16,000 of them female. This in addition to the 31,000 American Indian and Alaska Native servicemen and women who are currently fighting on behalf of this country abroad.

“We have so much to celebrate,” says Ben Nighthorse Campbell, an ambassador for the Cheyenne people who has served his country as both a Korean War combatant and Colorado senator. “Like so many others, I was compelled to serve to honor the warrior tradition that is inherent to most Native American societies—the pillars of strength, honor, pride, devotion and wisdom.”

The National Museum of the American Indian has announced that it will be soliciting designs for a Native American Veterans Memorial. The competition opens on November 11. Finalist submissions will be chosen by January 25, and the winning design will earn a prominent place on the National Mall.

Veteran's Day is an apt jumping-off point for the conceptualization of this tribute, which will honor Native American personnel who have served patriotically in all branches of the U.S. military dating back to the country's inception.:

Congress has declined to apportion federal funds for the memorial, but Kevin Gover, director of the National Museum of the American Indian, is unbowed. Vocal and radically optimistic, Gover does not doubt the resolve of the Native American community to see this project through to completion.

Addressing the museum-going public, Gover exhorted supporters to “participate in this historic moment—for our country, for veterans, and for the Native American communities whose loyalty and passion have helped make America what it is today.”

The Medal of Honor is the highest U.S. military decoration for valor. The medal “recognizes individual gallantry at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty.” Since Congress created it in 1861, around 3,500 servicemen out of 45 million who have served during wartime have received it (40 percent of the decorations were awarded to individuals who fought in the Civil War). During World War II, 464 Medals of Honor were awarded, 266 of them posthumously (57.3 percent). Those who receive the MOH join a fraternity of heroes that each branch of the service memorializes.

Surprisingly, there was a controversy about this medal during its first 60 years of existence. During World War I, it was discovered that individuals had received this award who did not merit it. In 1917, a special review board analyzed 2,625 Medal of Honor recipients, mostly from the Civil War, revoking 911 of them because they failed to meet the statutes. For example, many MOHs during the Civil War were simply given for re-enlistment and not heroic deeds, which blatantly violated the mandates. A few of the rejected Medal of Honor recipients’ cases were re-reviewed later, such as the case of the only female Medal of Honor recipient, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker. The award was then re-conferred in four cases, including Dr. Walker posthumously in 1977.

After a person is awarded the medal, the recipient receives many benefits, one of which is a monthly stipend tax free, currently around \$1,400 a month. Also, although not required by military regulations, it is understood that when a Medal of Honor recipient walks into the company of servicemen and women, every person in uniform, regardless of rank, renders honors by way of a salute to the person wearing the decoration.

During World War II, the men who received this award went through a thorough process whereby their award had to be sanctioned from top to bottom, starting at the company level and going all the way to the top brass, such as Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur or Commandant of the Marine Corps Alexander Vandegrift. Only then, when signed off by the respective heads of each service, was it placed in front of the President to be officially awarded.

From my study of World War II and the Pacific War, I have analyzed 30 out of the 139 Navy and Marine Corps Medals of Honor (37 of the 57 MOH awards for the Navy went to officers, whereas 52 of the 82 for the Marine Corps went to enlisted men) as well as countless others who were put in for the Medal of Honor, but then were downgraded to a Navy Cross. From my records, there were 4.5 million men in the Navy and almost 700,000 in the



Corps during this time, so with this in mind, one sees how rare and unique it was to receive the highest decoration for valor our nation can bestow.

The greatest number of Medals of Honor ever awarded for any engagement in American history since the Civil War took place during the 36-day battle for Iwo Jima (27 were given for this campaign). There was a reason Admiral Nimitz said, “Among the men who fought on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue.” Shockingly in reading through the files, I have found countless cases where the person, in my historical opinion, should have received the Medal of Honor from Iwo Jima, but did not because he did not have the necessary endorsements or witness statements for his medal package. Others did not receive the Medal simply because they did not have an officer to put them in for the award. A person can only receive a Medal of Honor when an officer endorses him for the decoration and since most line officers were dead or wounded after only a few weeks on Iwo Jima, most heroic acts by the vast majority of the enlisted men were never witnessed by the officers who could get their packages started. As a result, the 27 men who received the Medal of Honor for actions on Iwo Jima represent only a fraction of those who should have received this medal for their brave acts against the enemy, often acts that resulted in their deaths.

Shockingly, during my study I found out that there was at least one Medal of Honor recipient, USMC Cpl. Hershel “Woody” Williams, who probably should not have received the medal due to his package never being endorsed by Fleet Marine Force commander Lieutenant Roy S. Geiger and his board, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz and his board, or Marine Corps Commandant, General Alexander Vandegrift. Even more astonishingly, Williams’ own platoon leader, Lt. Howard Chambers, refused to endorse his package for the Medal of Honor although he witnessed much of what Williams did the day that seemed to warrant the Medal of Honor. It seems what bothered all these Marines, Admiral Nimitz and their boards of officers with Williams’ MOH package was that some of the information about his actions seemed to have come from William’s self-reporting, which violates the mandates. It appears his medal was pushed through politically, and not because his package merited it—as 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles C. Krulak remarked—he should have never received the Medal of Honor.

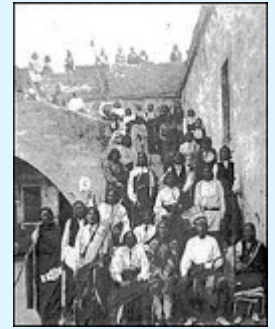
In later posts, I will explain more about Williams’ controversial award. In the meantime, please consider the importance of the integrity of the Medal of Honor and to whom it is bestowed. If this decoration is meant to symbolize America’s highest ideals, don’t we owe the nation and those who have sacrificed what is often their last full measure our fidelity to upholding its standards?



From *The Gardner Report: **The Prisoners of Fort Marion***, By James Purdy

On May 21, 1875, a train arrived in St. Augustine. Aboard the train were seventy dangerous prisoners wearing iron shackles.

This was their final destination following a thousand-mile odyssey ordered by Ulysses S. Grant, President of the United States. The prisoners' ordeal began on April 28th at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where these prisoners were placed in chains. They would travel by train to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, then across the Mississippi River at St. Louis.



They travelled through Louisville, Nashville, and Atlanta, down to Jacksonville, Florida. Along their route, newspapers carried sensational stories about the prisoners. In Louisville, the newspaper reported how the prisoners "cut the heads off the women and girls after they had been killed" Initially, there were 72 prisoners. However, outside Nashville, one of the prisoners attempted suicide by slitting his own throat with a concealed penknife. This prisoner was pronounced dead but revived. He would be left in Nashville as the train carried the other prisoners south.

Outside Jacksonville, another prisoner slipped his chains, leapt from the train and hid among palmettos along the track. Two guards stayed behind to search for the escapee as the train rolled east. When he jumped from hiding, the guards shot him in the back and killed him.

At Jacksonville, the 70 remaining prisoners travelled by riverboat down the St. Johns River to Tocoí, where the St. Johns Railway carried the prisoners east to St. Augustine. Upon arrival, wagons carried the prisoners through the narrow streets of St. Augustine to their final destination, the old Spanish fort, now called Fort Marion by the Americans - their home for the next three years.

They were Plains Indians: Cheyenne, Kiowa and Comanche, exiled by President Grant from the Indian Territory following the Red River War. Their jailer was Lt. Richard H. Pratt, a progressive who believed in education and assimilation of the Indian into American Society.

He would use the next three years at Fort Marion as an experiment in Indian education. He was so successful that the Federal Government allowed Lt. Pratt to open an Indian School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

At Carlisle, under Pratt and his athletic director, Glenn "Pop" Warner, the modern game of American football was born and the "Greatest Athlete in the World" would play. His name was Jim Thorpe.

The author, James Purdy, is the Public Defender of the Seventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, which include St. Johns County. He has been a National Park Service volunteer at the Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine since 2013, where he gives educational presentations to visitors on the Castillo's "Fort Marion era". He has a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Florida and a law degree from Nova University. He has practiced law in Florida for 42 years.

Photo: Plains Indians at Fort Marion



Congratulations to Military Order of the Purple Heart Volusia County Chapter 316 for winning the Best Website and Best Social Media for a small Chapter. Chapter 316 goes above and beyond to keep their Patriots informed and involved.

Vietnam Veterans of America

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



Chapter/President/email/Location

1046	Tony D'Aleo	adaleo5579@gmail.com; Duval
1048	Rod Phillips	cobra101st@gmail.com; Daytona
1059	David Treffinger	dtreffinger433@msn.com; Clay
1084	John Leslie	john_leslie15@yahoo.com; St. Johns
1088	Roy (Corky) Rudd	corkstopper50@yahoo.com; Nassau
1092	Forest Hope	foresthope@usa.net; Gainesville
1134	Marvin Lagle	mdlagle@gmail.com; Baker



**From Selena Hernandez, CDR USN (Ret),
President, First Coast Honor Flight, Inc.**

The Honor Flight Network has been closely monitoring the COVID-19 public health situation, state-by-state group assembly and travel restrictions, and monument/memorial closures in the Washington, D.C. area. The HFN Board of Directors has authorized individual Hubs to cancel or delay planned Fall 2020 flights.

After careful consideration, First Coast Honor Flight has decided to delay its planned October 2020 trip to Washington D.C. until April 2021.

The safety of Veterans, Guardians, and Volunteers is of paramount importance to us.

Secondarily, but still important, is that we want Veterans to enjoy the full Honor Flight experience they deserve and should expect. Many of the activities that are normally part of an Honor Flight would not be possible under current restrictions.

The FCHF Board of Directors' consensus is that at this point in time, Fall 2020 public health conditions and gathering restrictions cannot be anticipated reliably enough to continue planning our October trip.

If you have submitted an application to travel as a Veteran or Guardian with FCHF, we will retain that application. It is not necessary to reapply.

All Veteran and Guardian applicants, and all Volunteers, will be contacted in the near term by the appropriate Director. Until then, questions may be sent to info@firstcoasthonorflight.org or posted here.

****Please do not post any personal, financial, or medical information on this page!**



First Coast Honor Flight to Serve Northeast Florida Veterans

By Selena Hernandez-Haines, CDR USN (Ret), President, First Coast Honor Flight, Inc.

First Coast Honor Flight, Inc. (FCHF) is the newest Hub in the nationwide Honor Flight Network and the first to serve Northeast Florida Veterans. Established in March 2020, FCHF will serve primarily Nassau, Duval, St Johns, Flagler, Putnam, Clay, Baker, Union, and Bradford counties, an area which is home to more than 150,000 veterans.

Since 2005 the nationwide Honor Flight Network has transported more than 245,000 elderly and ill military Veterans to Washington D.C. at no cost to them, to visit the memorials and monuments commemorating their service and sacrifices. Priority is given, in order, to seriously ill Veterans of any service era, then World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans.

FCHF is excited about the opportunity to provide local Veterans with their “trip of a lifetime”.

Our Honor Flights will depart from Jacksonville International airport and be completed in one extraordinary day. The group will include 25 Veterans, each of whom will be accompanied by a trained Guardian. Guardians may be a friend or a relative over the age of 18 (but not the spouse) of a Veteran, or a volunteer specifically matched to that Veteran’s background and support needs for travel. To ensure the safety and well-being of Veterans, Honor Flight groups include an M.D. and at least one EMT or RN. Staff members, usually from the Board of Directors, also accompany the group to coordinate with local support agencies and oversee execution of the trip itinerary.

FCHF hopes to conduct its first Honor Flight in October 2020 if it is safe for Veterans and Guardians to travel at that time, and if Washington-area airports, monuments, memorials, and Arlington National Cemetery will allow group travel/visits. FCHF and the Honor Flight Network staff are closely monitoring the public health situation and government policy developments, and will adjust flight schedules as appropriate.

Members of FCHF’s all-volunteer Board of Directors include a healthcare administration professional, a professional financial advisor, members of the Florida American Legion Auxiliary, two Navy retirees, and a Marine Corps veteran. All are working hard to complete the Hub’s administrative and legal requirements. FCHF is a registered Florida 501(c)3 nonprofit awaiting final IRS certification as a tax-exempt organization.

Some FCHF Board members share the reasons for their involvement:

Robbin Walker, an American Legion Auxiliary member currently working double-time as FCHF's Guardian Director and acting Programs Director, states: "Our Veterans and their families sacrificed so much. It is a privilege to assist in a successful and everlasting memory for our veterans on their trip to Washington, DC."

Marine Corps veteran John Reardon, FCHF's Operations Director, says "...we have the ability to give back to our Veterans and help them have a trip of a lifetime...many Veterans, as they get older, live on a fixed income and [are unable to visit] our key Memorials in Washington, DC. It is an honor to help them experience this."

Kendal Fordham, a financial advisor in Jacksonville, joined the FCHF Board as a result of her interactions with a military spouse client whose husband is a disabled veteran. Kendal was so impressed by the spouse's devotion to improving elderly, disabled veterans' lives that she joined FCHF in hopes of making a difference for these veterans and their families.

Retired Naval Officer Lena Heredia-Perez observes, "After getting out of the service and getting involved in other Veteran Organizations, and being a disabled veteran myself, I witnessed firsthand the many shortfalls that our government/society has when it comes to the overall care (physical, mental, emotional) and support of our Veterans. This is where you and I come into action. If we can do one thing to bring peace and joy to a Veteran and their family, we should do whatever it takes to make it a reality."

Every nonprofit organization succeeds only with the support of its local community, and there are a variety of opportunities available for anyone who would like to participate in First Coast Honor Flight: as Volunteers to help with events such as trip orientations, airport departures and arrivals; as Guardians; and as a member of the Board of Directors.

FCHF is seeking volunteers for the following Board positions: Treasurer; Programs; and Videographer. For details about the duties of each position, please email info@firstcoasthonorflight.org.


Visit firstcoasthonorflight.org to learn more about FCHF, to apply for travel on an Honor Flight as a Veteran or Guardian, or to serve as a Volunteer.

The Fire Watch

Just released! Our new wallet card with simple instructions for recognizing Veterans in crisis and getting them help they need.


St. Johns County police are the 1st recipients but this will get to all First (Coast) Responders and Fire Watch volunteers by summer!

Together, we can end Veteran suicide and SAVE lives.



FW
THE FIRE WATCH

S Look for **Signs** that a Veteran is in crisis
A Ask if the Veteran is thinking of hurting himself
V Validate the Veteran's experience
E Expedite getting the Veteran help



*Signs of a
Veteran
in Crisis*


- Thinking about hurting or killing herself
- Looking for ways to kill himself
- Thinking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior

Veteran in Crisis

When crisis signs are present, call:

9-1-1

Next step is to call the Veterans Crisis Line, designed to help Veterans in Crisis with caring, qualified VA mental health professionals, 24 hours/day:




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

Veteran Resources

When a Veteran needs support, call:

2-1-1

Find a Resource Guide for Active Duty, Veterans & Military Families at:



FW
THE FIRE WATCH

www.thefirewatch.org



Michael P. Fleming, Brigadier General (ret), Chair Fire Watch

Colleagues and friends, over 6,000 U.S. veterans take their lives each year with more than 500 of those occurring in Florida. Almost 1 in 4 Northeast Florida citizens have a connection to the military and as a community we must act on behalf of our veterans and their families. The Fire Watch Council (www.thefirewatch.org) was established by the Counties of Baker, Clay, Nassau, St. Johns and City of Jacksonville as a multi-jurisdictional government entity to address veteran suicide prevention in Northeast Florida. We are uniting our War Fighters and allies to swiftly activate local assets, stand watch, and build a life-saving network.

We need military members, veterans, military families, non-veterans, political leaders, faith leaders, businesses, schools, community leaders, and citizens across Northeast Florida to work together to end veterans suicide. Here is how you take a stand for veterans:

Become a Watch Stander. The Fire Watch's mission is to build the Watch Stander program, a peer-to-peer, early intervention, mutual aid network that will mobilize and train the Northeast Florida community to be vigilant to the concerns of veterans, to watch out for risk signs in veterans, and to direct veterans in crisis to the help or support they need. Anyone can volunteer to be a Watch Stander, either as a Veteran/Military Member or Veteran Champion (civilian). Watch Stander training is "60 Minutes to SAVE a Life." Take 60 minutes to become a Watch Stander at <https://www.thefirewatch.org/watch-standers>

Faith Leader Webinars. Active duty members, veterans and military families across Northeast Florida are members of all religious faiths and look to their faith leaders for guidance and support. However, many faith leaders have a limited understanding of the essential issues common to the military community. With greater understanding, faith communities might better use their resources to support veterans and family members who otherwise may feel isolated, alienated and helpless. Educating faith communities will also reduce the stigma of mental health needs that further complicate the problems. To enhance the understanding of the military by our faith community, please encourage your faith leaders to register for one of the Faith Leader Military/Veteran Awareness Webinars at 10:00am on May 7, 2020 https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AUjURjJHTQu8JYsji1wpAg or 10:00am on May 14, 2020 https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_2zxmkJACSAuYQjaemIClIvw or at www.thefirewatch.org.

Each of you can make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families. The more of us who stand watch the quicker we can eliminate veteran suicide. Please take the time to give back to those who have given so much to us.

Dear Volunteer,

You are invited to become an inaugural member of our innovative new Watch Stander program!



Over 6,000 U.S. veterans take their lives each year. More than 500 of those occur in Florida. To us, even one suicide is too many.

The Watch Stander program is the first of its kind in the country. The program mobilizes 10,000+ veterans and allies in Northeast Florida to watch for risk signs in veterans and to direct veterans to the resources they need. The objective is to keep veterans from slipping into crisis in the first place.

Anyone can be a Watch Stander. All it takes is a commitment to view a selection of learning videos, to explore our veteran resources guide and to “stand watch” for veterans. The process takes just 60 minutes. Start by clicking here.

Once you have qualified for the Watch, we ask that you get out into the veteran community a few times per year - 5Ks, parades, career fairs, concerts, etc. When safe and feasible, of course!

Veterans are family members, friends, co-workers and neighbors. They are heroes who have risked their lives to protect our community. Our community is now coming together to protect them.

Join us!

Nick Howland, Executive Director

The Fire Watch, nhowland@thefirewatch.org

The Three Soldiers Statue

The Three Servicemen Statue is a slightly larger-than-life depiction of three infantrymen cast in bronze. Born out of controversy surrounding The Wall's design, the statue was meant to provide a realistic depiction of three Vietnam servicemen and a symbol of their courage and devotion to their country. The statue and a flagpole were added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial site in 1984. The figures represent American racial and ethnic diversity. Their uniforms are representative of all branches of the military and each figure wears a variety of gear.

The sculptor, Frederick Hart, said this in describing the three figures: "They are young. The contrast between the innocence of their youth and the weapons of war underscores the poignancy of their sacrifice. There is about them the physical contact and sense of unity that bespeaks the bonds of love and sacrifice that is the nature of men at war. . . Their strength and their vulnerability are both evident."

Read more about the statue: <https://bit.ly/2zniXsa>

Watch a video about the Three Servicemen Statue: <https://youtu.be/rSBhOGZkgKw>



Merchant Marine Veterans of World War 11

Recently Congress passed and the president signed The Congressional Medal Act for Merchant



Marine Veterans of World War 11.

Those merchant seaman who served honorably on ocean going ships from Dec. 7th 1941 to August 15, 1945 and have a DD214 honora-

ble discharge form are eligible to receive this medal. Also a closest surviving relative of the deceased Merchant Marine veteran may also receive the medal on behalf of the veteran.

We are reaching out to any and all local Merchant Marine veterans to keep you informed on this matter. For information you may contact:

Ed Trester Merchant Marine Veteran W.W.11

(904) 471-8897

E- mail-- trestere@bellsouth.net

We Should Never Lose Hope on Finding MIAs, By Robert Zapesochny,
NEWSMAX

According to the Department of Defense, there are 81,899 Americans missing in action (MIA). Most of them are from World War II (72,593). There are still 7,587 American MIAs from the Korean War and 1,587 from the Vietnam War.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is responsible for finding as many of these people as possible and returning them home. As I went on their website, I was amazed to find stories of bodies identified over 70 years later.



On May 15, 2020, the agency announced that they were able to identify the remains of Navy Seaman 2nd Class Floyd D. Helton. This man was killed on board the USS Oklahoma during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

That ship lost 429 crewmen, which was more casualties than any other ship at Pearl Harbor except for the USS Arizona.

Following World War II, 405,399 Americans were killed and 78,750 were missing. In the last 75 years, we have only found 8 percent of the MIAs from World War II.

Over 41,000 of the MIAs are presumed to be lost at sea from sunken ships and planes shot down. As for MIAs lost on land, recovering these bodies has required skillful diplomacy against some of our worst enemies.

For example, in the 1954, the North Koreans returned the remains of 3,000 American soldiers. In the 1990s, American diplomats were able to make further progress on this issue with the North Koreans. From 1990 to 1994, the North Koreans gave the United States 208 boxes of remains. DoD scientists estimated that the remains of approximately 400 people were in those boxes.

From 1996 to 2005, the United States government conducted 33 missions in North Korea to find the remains of American soldiers killed in the war. The United States has also conducted joint field missions with Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to find MIAs lost in the Vietnam War.

In 1973, there were 2,646 Americans that were MIA from the Vietnam War. Over the next 40 years, our government has been able to identify, and repatriate, over one thousand Americans.

In addition to the wars in Korea and Vietnam, there are a total of 126 personnel missing from 14 reconnaissance missions conducted between 1950 to 1969. The most deadly incident occurred in 1969 when a U.S. Navy EC-121 plane was shot down by two North Korean MIG-21 fighters over the Sea of Japan. Of the 31 Americans killed in this incident, only two Americans were found.

In the most recent conflicts, there are another six missing. During the 1986 bombing of Libya (Operation El Dorado Canyon), Air Force Captain Paul F. Lorence was shot down and lost.

From the 1991 Gulf War, two U.S. Navy pilots, Lieutenant Commander Barry T. Cooke and Lieutenant Robert J. Dwyer remain unaccounted for in Iraq. In 2009, the body of a third Navy pilot, Lieutenant Commander Michael Scott Speicher, was found in al-Anbar province after 18 years.

In Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003-2010), three contractors from the Department of Defense are still missing (Kirk Von Ackermann, Timothy E. Bell, and Adnan al-Hilawi).

I think we should all be very proud of the efforts from our government to find these people and bring them home. No matter how long it takes, we cannot give up hope.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE

VIETNAM WALL



There are 58,267 names on the wall.

39,996 were just 22 or younger.

8,283 were 19. 33,103 were 18.

12 were 17 years old.

5 soldiers were 16.

There are 3 sets of fathers and sons on the wall.

31 sets of parents lost 2 of their sons.

997 were killed their first day.

1,448 were killed on their last day.

8 women were on the wall, nurses.

244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the war and 153 of them are on the wall.



Court Rules That Burn Pits Overseas Responsible For Lung Disease In Veterans

A court decision has helped open the door for thousands of veterans to sue for health-related issues after being exposed to open burn pits while serving overseas. The long-awaited decision by a judge under the U.S. Department of Labor's Office for Workers' Compensation Programs legally confirms what thousands of veterans and military contractors already knew — that open-air burn pits caused lung disease.



That comes as a huge step forward for the nearly 125,000 service members and veterans who have listed themselves and their symptoms on the VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. The Registry is open to veterans and service members who were exposed to toxic fumes from the burn pits while serving from Operation Desert Storm through Operation Enduring Freedom.

"This case has legitimized the disease," former contractor Veronica Landry of Colorado Springs, whose case was a part of the recent ruling, told Fox News. "There are many people out there who are still not getting the treatment they need. This ruling changes that."

Open-air burn pits have been used by the military in the Middle East and Africa as a means of disposing everything from vehicles and explosives to garbage and human waste by burning it all in large pits. The smoke that comes out of the pits, according to thousands of veterans and active service members, has caused health issues ranging from respiratory disease to cancer. Veterans have suffered from symptoms for years after being exposed to the smoke from burn pits, and others have died waiting for treatment.

By acknowledging the fact that burn pits are connected to lung disease, the courts have helped veterans get one step closer to treatment coverage.

Burn pits, and the health issues resulting from them, have been called the modern equivalent to Agent Orange. Rosie Torres, founder of the advocacy group Burn Pits 360, saw her husband Army Reserve Capt. LeRoy Torres become extremely ill immediately after returning from a deployment to Iraq.

Rosie told Fox News, "It's killing soldiers at a much higher rate than Agent Orange did in the Vietnam Era. Soldiers from that war were seen dying in their 50s, 60s or 70s. Now with the soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, we are seeing them die in their early 20s, 30s, and 40s."

The Supreme Court ruled in early 2015 to allow lawsuits against military contractors related to health issues from burn pit exposure. Those lawsuits, however, have been stalled repeatedly by lower courts where U.S. District Court Judge Roger W. Titus has twice dismissed lawsuits against KBR Inc., one of America's largest military contractors.

The recent court ruling, however, made it clear that KBR's insurance company, AIG, is responsible for paying for medical treatments related to open-air burn pit exposure. For Veronica Landry, a former contractor with KBR whose case was part of the ruling, it is a huge victory. The ruling said, in part, that "This evidence is sufficient to establish Ms. Landry suffers from deployment-related lung disease... Employer [KBR] and Carrier [AIG] are liable for all past, present, and future reasonable and necessary medical treatment related to claimant's work-related post-traumatic stress disorder and deployment-related lung disease."

"Thousands of Veterans have lost their careers, some have taken their own lives and their widows are left without benefits," Rosie Torres told Fox News following the court's decision. "I believe this is a case of common sense and victory for military contractors and we can only hope that the same common sense is applied to our military war heroes and their widows."



*This photo is the design for a pin flag for individuals to purchase for a veteran of their choice.
Email john_leslie15@yahoo.com for details.*

Vietnam Veterans of America Leo C. Chase Jr. Chapter 1084

THIRD ANNUAL MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

July 20, 2020

The Palencia Club



JOIN US FOR THE THIRD ANNUAL
Vietnam Veterans of America Golf Tournament
to support the Vietnam Veterans of America Leo C. Chase Jr. Chapter 1084

- \$100 per player, \$400 per team
- Limited to 112 Players
- 8:30 am Shotgun Start

Tournament Committee Honorary Chairmen
Pete Banaszak (NFL) And Jeff Klauk (PGA)



Featuring:

- 4-Person Scramble
- Team Prizes of Top 3 Teams
- Pebble Beach or \$10,000 Hole in One Contest
- Additional Hole in One Contests
- Guaranteed Winner Putting Contest
- Guaranteed Winner Long Drive Contest for VIP Ticket Package
- Guaranteed Winner Closest to the Pin Contest for VIP Ticket Contest



Register for Golf at <http://www.vva1084golf.com>

The Vietnam of America (VVA) Chapter 1084 is a 501(c) (19) Corporation with 86 members, a subset of the Florida State Council (4,500 members), under the umbrella of the National VVA with a membership of 82,000.

An important part of VVA Chapter 1084's purpose is to give back to our veterans and our community. We are involved in many ongoing, seasonal and special programs that our VVA and AVVA members give their time, talent and treasure. Although we are all Vietnam Veterans, we do not limit our volunteer time and available funds to our own generation of veterans. The guiding principle of the VVA is "Never again will our generation of veterans abandon another".

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS OF ALL GENERATIONS AND FOR THE GOOD OF OUR COMMUNITY OF ST JOHNS COUNTY AND NORTHEAST FLORIDA

Vietnam Veterans of America Leo C. Chase Jr. Chapter 1084

THIRD ANNUAL MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

July 20, 2020

The Palencia Club



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Sample Hole Sponsor Sign

Sample Pin Flag Sponsor

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ALL GAVE SOME - SOME GAVE ALL

GOLD STAR FAMILY



VIETNAM WAR



**ALWAYS REMEMBERED
NEVER FORGOTTEN**



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Symbols of Honor

When you see someone wearing these pins, know that he or she has lost a loved one who selflessly served our nation.



Gold Star Lapel Pin

It is designated for eligible Survivors of service members who lost their lives during any armed hostilities in which the United States is engaged, dating back to World War I. This includes service members who lost their lives while deployed in support of military operations against the enemy or during an international terrorist attack.



Next of Kin Lapel Pin

It is designated for eligible Survivors of service members who lost their lives while serving under circumstances not defined by the Gold Star Lapel Pin. This includes service members who lost their lives while assigned to a Reserve or National Guard unit in a drill status. It is authorized for issue retroactive to March 29, 1973.

www.NavyGoldStar.com

www.facebook.com/NavyGoldStar • 1-888-509-8759





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keith.c.ham.ctr@mail.mil

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(727)-563-3647
lashawnda.s.strother.ctr@mail.mil

Miami Area

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

Scholarships & Application Deadlines

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

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

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

Application Deadlines for surviving children

Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation

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

Freedom Alliance

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

Fisher House Foundation/ Heroes Legacy Scholarship

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

Special Ops Warrior Foundation

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

Deadline for multiple relationships

Army Emergency Relief Fund

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

Application Deadlines: For surviving spouses

Aspire

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

National Military Family Association

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

Pat Tillman Foundation

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

Application Deadlines: For surviving siblings

Matthew Freeman Project

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

Deadline for multiple relationships

Folds of Honor

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

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

FLORIDA SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY



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

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



PURPLE HEART SCHOLARSHIP

DUE TO COVID-19 WE HAVE EXTENDED OUR DEADLINE
FOR APPLICATIONS UNTIL JULY 17, 2020.



Here is a good resource for vets who may be experiencing Covid 19 or flu like symptoms. The call center can be reached 24/7 and the vet will be able to reach a nurse. Also for Vets who qualify for the Vet Center they also have a 24/7 call center War Vets 877-927-8387. One of the Vet Center staff will be notified by both text and email to contact and follow-up with the veteran.

Ann McCulliss Johnson LCSW, USA COL (ret)
Clinical Director, 904-864-2885

VA HealthNow^{24/7}
YOUR CLINICAL CONTACT CENTER
1-877-741-3400

VA HEALTH CARE WHERE AND WHEN YOU NEED IT.

24
Around the Clock Support
Call us at 1-877-741-3400 to receive immediate clinical and administrative support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

No Co-Pays
Veterans who are eligible for VA Care are not subject to co-pays when using the Clinical Contact Center.

Nurse Triage
Connect with a nurse to discuss your health concerns and to determine the best course of action for your care.

Connect with a Provider
Connect with a doctor or nurse practitioner over the phone or by secure video to discuss your care.

***Pharmacy**
Pharmacists are available to assist you and your care team to support your path to healing.

VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center

The VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center is a service of the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8) - providing 24/7, virtual urgent care to Veterans enrolled for VA Health Care in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Veterans who receive care in the network can call us around the clock to get their health questions or concerns answered from the comfort and convenience of their home, or wherever they may be.

Services include general administrative support, nurse advice and triage, virtual visits with a doctor or nurse practitioner via telephone or VA Video Connect.

There are no co-payments for using the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center!

Note: The Clinical Contact Center should not be used for emergency situations. In the event of a life-threatening emergency, please dial 911 or visit your closest emergency room.

**Prescription medications may be subject to co-pays.*

To learn more, visit www.visn8.va.gov/ccc.asp.

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8)

Please contact the organization or POC of the event below to see if it is still scheduled or has been cancelled, or postponed.



2020

Save the Date

26 Sept 2020

Alton Green Memorial
Post 194
2nd Annual
Anniversary Golf
Tournament

More info to follow
derrygreene1@hotmail.com

Cimarrone Golf Club
2800 Cimarrone Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32259





Jose' Concha, DPM * Richard Johnson, DPM
Board Certified by
the American Board of Foot & Ankle Surgery

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FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS ANYONE BUT REGISTERED USERS WITH HEARING LOSS FROM USING INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) CAPTIONED TELEPHONES WITH THE CAPTIONS TURNED ON.

IP Captioned Telephone Service may use a live operator. The operator generates captions of what the other party to the call says.

These captions are then sent to your phone. There is a cost for each minute of captions generated, paid from a federally administered fund.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Hearing loss
- Home phone service
- High-speed internet
For home phone
- iPhone® 5s or newer
For mobile app

Contact me today!
Anas Benjelloun
904-568-4562
clearcaptions.com

Available to present to groups!



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The logo consists of the letters 'V4V' in a bold, serif font. The 'V's are filled with a pattern of white stars on a dark blue background, while the '4' is solid black.

Together We are Stronger

**Keeping our Veterans
Informed, Connected, United, and Organized**

V4VFlorida.org

Vets4VetsNJax@gmail.com

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @Vets4VetsNJax

#vets4vetsjax #Jointhevetsmovement #Togetherwearestronger



Mission Statement:

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



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

What the Council has done:

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

SA-0003147064-01

rans
s Line



**Veterans
Crisis Line**

73-8255
PRESS 1

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

**Veterans
Crisis Line**
00-273-8255 PRESS 1



STAND BY THEM

Confidential help for
Veterans and their families

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

..... Confidential chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net) or text to 838255

NATIONAL
**SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
www.suicideline.org

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

Confidential chat at [MilitaryCrisisLine.net](https://www.MilitaryCrisisLine.net) or text 838255



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

Veterans Councils of Northeast Florida



BAKER COUNTY

President: Larry Porterfield

Meetings:

Second Thursday of each month

Location:

MacClenny Primitive Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall on North Boulevard

Time : 1800 (6pm)

CLAY COUNTY

President: Harry Silvers

Meetings:

First Wednesday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1400 (2pm)

DUVAL COUNTY

President Steve Spickelmier

Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 37
Main Building
San Juan Avenue

Tome: 1900 (7 pm)

NASSAU COUNTY

President: Mike Doran

Meetings:

First Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

St. Johns County

President: Bill Dudley

Meetings:

Last Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)



SERVING VETERANS SINCE 1979



PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET VETERANS' UNIQUE NEEDS

Advance Care Planning

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

Palliative Care

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

Hospice Care

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

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

Complementary Therapies

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

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

We Need Volunteers

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



WE HONOR VETERANS
Partner

Community Hospice & Palliative Care

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

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



Along with traditional reimbursement for hospice services, we offer payment options to veterans with TRICARE. As with all Community Hospice & Palliative Care patients, we provide care and support to all who need it, regardless of their ability to pay.

VET 007 5/20



COMMUNITY HOSPICE
VETERANS PARTNERSHIP

Salute Our Heroes in Their Final Days: Support Flags & Pins for Veterans in Hospice Care

Honor our local veterans in hospice care with a dignified tradition when you support funding for flags and pins through Community Hospice & Palliative Care.

Since 2008, the Jacksonville-based organization has presented all veterans admitted to its hospice program with a commemorative pin to honor their service, as well as a certificate of appreciation. For veterans who get care at one of our eight inpatient centers, staff and volunteers erect the flag of the service branch in which they served outside their rooms. Flags are then presented to veterans' families following the death.



The need for funding is great as up to 25 percent of patients who receive hospice care at Community Hospice & Palliative Care are veterans. The nonprofit organization, which provides hospice care to nearly 1,300 patients each day, raises funds through individual support and community organizations who believe in serving those who have served our country so honorably.

If you or your organization would like to support our Flags & Pins Initiative and honor our warriors one last time, please contact

Toula Wootan, director of community programs at Community Hospice & Palliative Care, at 904.407.6211 or twootan@communityhospice.com.

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



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:
NEW <http://www.veteranscouncilsjc.org>

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

Please join our group on Facebook at:
<http://veteranscouncilsjc.org>

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

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

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

You may have noticed the Veterans Council's new logo, it was created by Roy Havekost and his web design company PageAuthors. The VC strongly recommends that you contact Roy, 727-487-6252, 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.



**SURVIVOR
OUTREACH SERVICES**

Survivor Outreach Offers Free Services to
Surviving Spouses and Family Members of Military Retirees

Contact Keith Ham

Survivor Outreach Services Support Coordinator, HRCI Contractor
310 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084
Office: 904-823-0157 Cell: 904-472-7689
Email: keith.e.ham.ctr@mail.mil

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

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

Send to: rothfeldm@gmail.com



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

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

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

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

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

***The Veterans Council will meet at the 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 St. Johns County Health and
Human Services Building.*

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

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

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