



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

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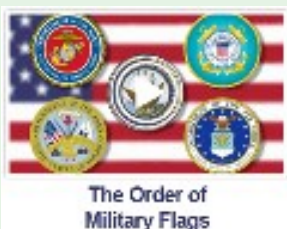
Volume 10, Issue 7

From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

July 2021

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Fellow Veterans.

At long last, our VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic opened this past week on Tuesday, 22 June 2021. The Leo C. Chase Jr. CBOC opened for veterans scheduled for their health care needs by appointment on Tuesday. The pursuit of this dream was a long time coming. The Veterans Council and your Chairman specifically has been pursuing the construction of a permanent home for our local veterans for approximately eleven years. Many meetings ensued in the pursuit of this CBOC including several town hall meetings with the VA, a Congressional hearing in Washington, and many letters written to our elected leaders including the POTUS, VA Secretary, and our Florida representatives.

But now the dream has become reality and the wait was worth all the effort. This beautiful state of the art health care facility will provide health care for our veterans for years to come. Currently, over 6500 veterans are receiving various forms of health care from our local CBOC with approximately 35 new veterans being added per week. The current facility

will accommodate approximately 10,000 veterans before an expansion project needs to be pursued. Fortunately, there is lots of room at the site to expand.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the VA was unable to have a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the occasion on opening day. However, the VA and Veterans Council are pursuing plans to conduct a joint ceremony on Nov. 11 to honor our veterans on Veterans Day and celebrate the opening of our CBOC. The event will be held on the grounds of the CBOC with invitations going out in October.

Our Veterans Council in collaboration with MOAA, Ancient City Chapter, conducted a Memorial Day Service on May 31, 2021 at Anastasia Baptist Church. The ceremony was well attended and featured Alison Simpson, FLANG Command Historian as our keynote speaker. The St. Augustine Sea Cadet Battalion posted the colors and provided other assistance. The rifle salute was conducted by the VFW Firing Detail and TAPS was sounded by CMDR. John Donlon, SJSO (ret).

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to conduct the



ceremony at the St. Augustine NATIONAL Cemetery again this year but volunteers did place flags on all the grave sights on Friday, 28 May and the Sea Cadets laid the ceremonial wreath after all the headstones had been adorned with a flag. HAPPY BIRTHDAY VETERANS COUNCIL....The Veterans Council of St. Johns County celebrates its 20th anniversary on 26 June 2021. A special edition of the Patriot Reader was published last month honoring the Veterans Council for its many years of service to our veterans and the community. Several historical items of interest reflecting the Veterans Council years of service will be placed in a time capsule in July when the County celebrates its 200th anniversary. The time capsule will be opened in 50 years. Thank you for your service. Bill Dudley, Chairman Veterans Council of St. Johns County

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



Veterans watching Memorial Day Parade on live streaming TV in the VA Cafe



A real classic car from the Antique Car Show that was held prior to the Memorial Day Ceremony



Lassen's retired flag being presented to our oldest living veteran (101 years young) Mr Edward Eisele by Joe Maltese, American Legion Commander of Post 372 Mandarin at the D Day Ceremony



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 6:00 pm

DATES OF 2021 SC at JNC MEETINGS

Not Available

+++++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 last Thursday of the month, all are invited to attend.

We meet at the County Administration Building,

500 San Sebastian View, at 7 pm

All SJC Health Guidelines will be followed.

Please stay safe, Bill Dudley, Chairman, VC of SJC



Upcoming Veterans Council Meetings Speakers

July 29: Ann McCulliss Johnson & Tracy Hejmanowski, First Responder Project

2021 Meeting Dates: July 29, August 26, September 30, October 28,

November 18, December 30

After nearly 11 years of pursuing a permanent home for the health care for our veterans in St. Johns County, the dream is nearing reality. On Tuesday, June 22, the new state of the art VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic will open it's doors to receive veterans who are in need of primary care and certain medical specialty needs.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is pleased to have played an important role in bringing this health care facility to fruition.





Years in the making, new Leo C. Chase Jr. VA clinic opens its doors in St. Augustine

Colleen Michele Jones, St. Augustine Record

On its first day of operation, the waiting room of the Leo C. Chase Jr. Veterans Affairs Clinic in St. Augustine was nearly full just after 10 a.m. Tuesday.

Long in coming, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' new outpatient medical clinic officially opened its doors and both staff and patients seemed pleased with the final results.

The new clinic, located at 100 Deerfield Preserve Blvd. off State Road 207, is 16,595 square feet with Spanish-style architecture. It replaces the Southpark Boulevard location, a series of makeshift modular buildings which served as an interim space after the complex previously located at 1955 U.S. 1 was closed in 2015.

Construction delays and the COVID-19 pandemic pushed off the timeline for completion of the new building, which broke ground in November 2019.

The facility currently serves about 6,145 area veterans within the Gainesville-based North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, according to Thomas McKenzie, chief medical officer for the St. Augustine VA clinic.

The complex opened at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, seeing those who had previously scheduled appointments for primary care, mental health, phlebotomy, podiatry, physical therapy and other specialty care.

Approximately 60 staff are employed at the St. Augustine facility.

The clinic is named after Private First-Class Leo C. Chase Jr., St. Johns County's first soldier to die in the Vietnam War.

Nationwide, new VA facilities, including the one in St. Augustine, are being built with a new model for delivery of health care. Community-based clinics are now focused around a system the VA is calling PACT (patient aligned care teams) which streamlines how a patient's individual care is handled.



For example, a client will now be seen by a team of four medical providers (a physician, nurse, licensed practical nurse and clerk) who assess a patient, doing everything from blood work to anecdotal reporting, and then make recommendations about the next course of action in managing that patient's care.

"It brings all the patients' needs together," said Craig Pasanen, clinic projects coordinator for the VA. "Instead of individual exam rooms, you go into one room and meet with a pod of providers at once."

"This is a great achievement for the NF/SGVHS," said Health System Director Thomas Wisnieski. "The modern facility is larger than our previous locations in St. Johns County and will provide the needed resources for us to continue to care for our nation's heroes."

Ronnie Higgins, an Army veteran who was scheduled for his first visit at the new facility Tuesday, told The Record he was impressed by the "amazing" upgrade to the St. Augustine VA clinic.

"It looks beautiful," said Higgins, 70, who suffers from cardiopulmonary and nerve damage issues. "Thank God for the VA; they have helped me so much in my life."

Dr. Donald Martin, a licensed social worker on staff at the St. Augustine clinic, said the facility would be a community asset "that all our vets can be proud of."

"It's going to be a treatment motivator," Martin told The Record.

The VA is holding off on an official grand opening ceremony until sometime in the fall, with a special tribute to Leo Chase Jr.'s family.

It's unclear what will happen to the temporary clinic at this time.

Bill Dudley, chair of the St. Johns County Veterans Council, has had ongoing discussions with the county about turning the structure into a space for homeless veterans housing once the VA leaves.

"We are looking at the plausibility of repurposing it as a shelter," Dudley said in an April 26 interview with The Record. "That, of course, would have to be done with the guidance of county officials."

Locals replacing 90-year-old St. Johns County veteran's roof

Roof was leaking by Sheldon Gardner, St. Augustine Record

St. Johns County Army veteran Paul Bass, 90, and his wife, Dolores, were living under a damaged roof in Flagler Estates without the means to fix it themselves.



But with the help of local volunteers and businesses, the Bass family won't have to worry about paying for it.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, a nonprofit, heard about Bass' situation and connected him with help. Matthew Reiter, who owns Reiter Roofing with his wife, Brittani, is donating labor to fix the roof. 1st Coast Metal Roofing Supply has donated materials, Reiter said.

"We want to give back," Matthew Reiter said.

On Wednesday, several workers stripped off shingles from the roof as Paul Bass sat on a swing in his front yard.



"We're on social security ... and I can't afford to put a roof on this house," Bass said.

Bass, who was born in Ohio, was a barber before he became a pastor in a family of pastors. He served a few years in the Army starting around 1950 and was a teacher, he said.

Laura Bass, the couple's daughter, said they had wanted to have the roof repaired for about five years because it was leaking inside the house.

"I'm very appreciative on behalf of my parents," she said. "I think it's incredible what they're doing, and it's a blessing."

Reiter said the value of the work, which is a full roof replacement, is about \$13,500, and he expects the roof to be finished this week. His business helped a disabled veteran in 2018 in coordination with the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, and Reiter said he would like to provide more help to veterans in the future.

St. Johns County has about 23,000 veterans, and the Veterans Council of St. Johns County helps connect veterans in need with resources in the community, Dudley said.

Among other things, the Veterans Council helps with things such as rent and utility payments, transportation, cellphones and transportation to medical appointments. The Veterans Council is also involved in veterans drug treatment court in St. Johns County, Dudley said.

For information go to: <https://veteranscouncilsjc.org>

Meet The Team
The Ximenez-Fatio House Museum

**Rowing 3000 Miles to raise Awareness and Money for
Veterans Suicide and PTSD**

This event is an Open House in support of four Veterans (Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force) who will participate in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge to row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic from the Canary Islands to Antigua to raise awareness and funds (\$500,000) for K9 for Warriors and Firewatch, two Florida organizations that are seeking to help Veterans with PTSD and to prevent Veteran Suicide which is reaching epidemic proportions across the nation. The challenge will begin on Dec. 12, 2021, and take approximately 50-60 days. Look at their website (www.foarfromhome.org) for more information, a link to a great Youtube video, and ways to donate to the cause. Talisker offers an amazing web site to track the event with multiple data in real time.

The event is free and open to the public and will include meeting the Team, exploring their awesome high-tech craft, meeting representatives from Firewatch, K-9 for Warriors, and their dog in training, a special event for children to participate in the race, refreshments, and music. Tours of our museum will also be available. We are already partnered with the Office of Military Affairs in Jacksonville who are sending the flyer to their website and newsletter members and to the three military bases (NAS Jax, NS Mayport, and Kings Bay).

We look forward to this event not only raising awareness of the Veteran project and enhancing participation for donations, but also greatly expanding awareness of the Colonial Dames and their special missions of Historic Preservation, Patriotic Service, and Education.

We are planning the logistics for the day and I will get back to you soon with the possibilities of volunteer work. It will be wonderful to have you and any of the St. Augustine Dames who might be interested. Thank you again.

Payson Tilden, Interim Support Director
Ximenez-Fatio House, payson@xfhouse.org
904 829-3575 – Museum Office, 386-983-2156 – cell

Flyer on next page

COME MEET THE TEAM!

Join us for this family-friendly event

Saturday, July 24, 2021 • 10AM - 5PM

The Ximenez-Fatio House Museum

20 Aviles Street • St. Augustine

www.ximenezfatiohouse.org

FREE and open to the public.



Paul Lore
USMC Veteran



Billy Cimino
Army Veteran



Cameron Hansen
Air Force Veteran



Hupp Huppmann
Navy Veteran

FOAR FROM HOME

IS ROWING 3,000 MILES ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN!

The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Florida invite you to meet the team that is rowing the 2021 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge to raise donations for and awareness of veteran suicide and PTSD.

Courageous



- Meet the FOAR From Home Team
- View the seaworthy "Courageous"
- K-9 For Warriors Dog in Training
- Food, beverages & music
- Fun Children's activities

TALISKER WHISKY ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

What is The Talisker Whisky Challenge?

The Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge brings together teams from all walks of life, united by the same objective - to take on the unique challenge of crossing an ocean in a rowing boat for a life changing adventure across the Atlantic! There are **39** teams entered for 2021. They will set out rowing from La Gomera (one of the Canary Islands) in December, and will dock safely in Antigua almost **3** months later!



Last Blade Standing: Jacksonville veteran uses knife-making to help local warriors

Cutting-edge competition brings together country's best bladesmiths for charity

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – A Jacksonville Navy veteran is turning his unique hobby into potentially a big moneymaker for K9s for Warriors.

Matthew Martin has organized a cutting-edge competition called “Last Blade Standing,” where some of the best knife makers in the country will be in the River City showing off their skills.



Martin gained an interest in knife-making after watching the History Channel show “Forged in Fire,” where craftsmen design and test one-of-a-kind blades.

“I started watching it,” Martin said. “And I started becoming really involved in the show and telling him like, sort of yelling at the TV and what they should be doing. And then I thought, you know what, I should be doing this myself.”

It inspired Martin to build a forge in his backyard in Mandarin.

“You can buy most of the parts that you need off Amazon,” he said, laughing.

Steel, and meteorite, are heated to 2,300 degrees in the oven, hammered, shaved and shaped -- all by hand.

Martin, who’s gained a sharp following on social media, is hosting a showdown, which he’ll broadcast on his web channels, called Last Blade Standing.

Competitors must use recycled materials, some coming from junked cars, and hand tools to make masterpieces, hoping to “steel” the show. Submissions have been coming in from across the country.

Judges will put them to the test. Jacksonville 3D artist Ryan Rowe was on the History Channel show. He'll use his experience to judge.



“I’m gonna be doing the stabbing for the event,” Rowe said.

Yes, he’s testing the strength of the knives by stabbing things, like computer cases.

“It’s not just the very tip, it’s how far I go into the computer cases and the section behind it as well,” he said.

While there will be one clear winner, the real winners are with K9s For Warriors, a local nonprofit that helps pair service dogs with military veterans. Martin chose it because he is a veteran who retired from the U.S. Navy.

“People that have PTSD, or people that are missing limbs, sometimes the wounds are invisible,” he said. “And having a loyal service companion that you can take with you is hugely important.”

Each knife submitted will go on the auction block and the money goes to K9s for Warriors. Martin and Rowe hope their sharp idea makes a big difference and fetches thousands for the charity.

It started in mid-June as judges whittle down the competitors. The finale is July 17. You can watch it all online at <https://www.lastbladestanding.com/> or you can go to the July 17 event in person with a ticket.

It begins at 10 a.m. at 7018 AC Skinner Parkway on Jacksonville’s Southside.

Tickets are \$20

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

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

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

Thanks!

Nick Howland

Executive Director, The Fire Watch

www.thefirewatch.org

904.525.1761



Upcoming St. Augustine art exhibit to feature work of veterans from five decades of war

Jean Sealey, For Shorelines, FL Times Union

The healing power of art will be on display at the St. Augustine Art Association's exhibit "Then & Now: 50 Years of Veteran Experiences" from July 2 through Aug. 22. In paintings, sculptures, photographs, poetry and other creative outlets, eight veterans from across the United States open up about their experiences and demonstrate how their artistic creations enabled them to process the trauma, brokenness and distress that accompanied their service.



"When Jerry Domask, a local artist and veteran, approached me last year with the idea for this exhibit, I knew the Art Association had to host it," said Jennifer Flynt, association administrator. "The experiences these veterans have gone through are very real, and I felt a strong conviction to help them tell their stories, and tell them well."

Domask, a Vietnam Army veteran, is curator for the exhibit. In 2018, he was curator of another national exhibit, "Invisible Becoming Visible: An Exhibit of Veterans Art," hosted by the University of North Florida. Domask sees these events as more than art exhibits.

"It is an honest look at war, an important part of our past and an expression of survivors," Domask said. "This exhibit includes a shout-out to my 'foxhole buddy,' Ted Gostas. Ted spent five years in captivity, with four and half years in solitary confinement. We are constructing a museum-quality life-size replica of his cell that will be on display."

Ted Gostas was captured during the 1968 Tet offensive at Hue. He one of a few Americans held in captivity five years or more. He was awarded the Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts.

"I was sentenced to death, tortured daily and in solitary confinement for four and half years," Gostas, said. "There were no other prisoners on the other side of the walls of my cell, and every time I heard footsteps, I knew I would be killed or tortured."

After his release, Gostas wrote and illustrated a book of poems titled “Prisoner,” to purge and ease the pains of imprisonment and daily torture.

For veteran artists, their art is not only self-healing but offers healing to others—one of the objectives of the “Then & Now” exhibit.

As a young adult, Saori Murphy joined the Army in 1993 to serve her country and help further her education. “Through my work and practice with creativity and energy healing, I continually feel the deep awareness of the threads that propelled me here and the medicine they carried,” she said. “Each still serves its purpose, and I am forever grateful for their wisdom that guides me to serve and support others.”

Murphy is now a certified Advanced Intuitive Healer and a certified Arts Facilitator. She is the founder of Soulhana and is active in helping veterans in the St. Petersburg area.

Telling their stories is critical to healing but difficult, if not impossible, for some veterans. Creative outlets that engage both the left and right hemispheres of the brain have a healing effect for many.

“The creative arts allow patients to get in touch with feelings difficult to express verbally,” said Dr. John Tanner, a psychiatrist at Tanner Medical Practices and affiliated with Baptist Medical Center Beaches. “By expressing feelings through art, patients can begin to reconcile and resolve the stress that impedes their progress to restored health.” Tanner treats patients with psychological disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder.

“PTSD was recognized as a psychological disorder in the 1980s with its inclusion in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual by the American Psychiatric Association,” he said. “Before that time, veterans suffering from the same constellation of symptoms were often diagnosed with ‘shell shock.’”

PTSD describes disorders of individuals who have been exposed to a major trauma event or have been abused over a period of time and suffer stress-related illness as a result. Examples include being involved in a violent event or witnessing one (major trauma event) and living in an abusive environment (abuse over a period of time).



“A few drugs have been shown effective for specific symptoms but as yet, no drugs have FDA approval for treating overall symptoms,” Tanner said. “I believe the most efficacious treatment is a combination of carefully administered talk therapy and creative activities that draw on both hemispheres of the brain.”

The five men and three women veterans who have contributed to the “Then & Now” exhibit include those who served in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps during U.S. involvement in the Cold War, Vietnam, Middle East and conflicts up to the present. Some were artists before their military enlistment, and others discovered art as a pathway to healing after their military experiences. They all say art helped them heal and sharing it with others adds to that ongoing healing process.

“Then & Now” is an important commentary on history. It also is a personal excursion into the lives of eight veterans who participated in military actions to resolve conflicts around the world and protect the United States’ interests here and abroad. While this exhibit contains images some will find disturbing, it also illustrates the resilience and deep-seated hope of the human spirit and the healing power of art.

The exhibit will be on display from July 2 through Aug. 22 at the St. Augustine Art Association, 22 Marine St., St. Augustine. The exhibit is open to the public free of charge.

Artists participating in “Then & Now: 50 Years of Veteran Experiences”

Ron Camarda, Navy, Middle East Hostilities

Jerome Domask, Army, Vietnam

Theodore Gostas, Army, Vietnam

Cliff Leonard, Marine Corps, Vietnam

Phyllis T. Miller, Navy, Vietnam

Saori Murphy, Army, Middle East

Skip Rohde, Navy, Cold War and Middle East

Maria Salazar, Marine Corps, Iraq

For more, go to StAAA.org or call the St. Augustine Art Association at (904) 824-2310.



Then & Now: 50 Years of Veterans Experiences - Art Exhibit Coming This Summer to the St. Augustine Art Association

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL, March 10, 2021 - The St. Augustine Art Association is proud to provide a voice and stage for Veterans with a riveting, sometimes raw, emotionally-charged exhibition, entitled Then & Now: 50 Years of Veterans Experiences, on display July 2 through August 22, 2021. This exhibit demonstrates the healing power of art by showcasing eight individuals who use painting, sculpture, photography, poetry and other creative outlets. These Veterans share their experiences from subtle murmurs of anguish to cries for support and understanding. Then and Now merges St. Augustine's art and history with today's global military awareness and experiences, providing both an educational narrative and outreach.

During the exhibit, the Art Association will open its gallery for Veterans and military groups to host meetings or workshops, field trips, lectures and other special events. "It is our hope that through this exhibit we raise awareness and sensitivity to our veterans' service and the importance of their mental health, while demonstrating how the power of creativity can be used as a tool for some to help heal a broken spirit," said Jerome Domask, artist, guest curator and member of the St. Augustine Art Association.

A focal point of the exhibit will be a replicated five-by-eight-foot holding cell. This is a special "shout out" to American Hero, Army Major (RET) Theodore Gostas, a former POW held in captivity for over five years, four-and-a-half spent in solitary confinement. The cell will be surrounded by a visual narrative of two Vietnam veterans, Gostas and exhibit curator Jerome Domask, supporting each other for over 50 years as Foxhole Buddies after Gostas' return to active duty.

"When Jerry [Domask] came to me last year with the idea for this exhibit, I knew that the Art Association had to host it," said Jennifer Flynt, Administrator at the St. Augustine Art Association. "The experiences these Veterans have gone through are very real, and I felt a strong conviction to help them tell their stories and tell them well."

With eight Veteran artists—five men and three women—the exhibit exudes a powerful message of support, strength and self-help. Together, these artists represent more than 50 years of military history from the Cold War to recent Middle East hostilities. They have served around the world—Europe, Vietnam, Cuba, Iraq, Afghanistan, Japan, Bosnia to name a few, and they're backgrounds are diverse in both civilian life and military service.

"Strong Women Warriors," a series by Barbara Barnett, will speak to screams of anguish, rejuvenation and molding of mind and soul, and USNR- (RET) Chaplain Ron Moses Camarda will bring his personal observations of life and death in a combat zone. The exhibit is further enriched by individual creations from "then and now" experiences filled with emotion, challenging perspectives and an undeniable support for each other's well-being as the artists explore a path forward with enlightenment and hope.

There are numerous ways for our St. Augustine community to get involved in Veteran support, and this exhibit is just one of those. If this is something you'd be interested in supporting, let us know! Details on the exhibit, artists, and ways you can get involved, can be found at staaa.org/then-and-now-2021 or by contacting the St. Augustine Art Association at (904) 824-2310 or info@staaa.org.

The St. Augustine Art Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization founded in 1924. The Gallery is open free to the public and located at 22 Marine Street in historic downtown.

THEN & NOW

50 Years of Veteran Experiences



**July 2
through
August 22, 2021**

at the
St. Augustine
Art Association



The Healing Power of Art

The St. Augustine Art Association is proud to provide a voice and stage for Veterans with a riveting, sometimes raw, emotionally-charged exhibition, entitled **Then & Now: 50 Years of Veterans Experiences**, on display July 2 through August 22, 2021. This exhibit will demonstrate the power of healing through art by showcasing eight veteran artists' creations working through the trauma and grief sometimes incurred through military service. This exhibit merges St. Augustine's art and history with today's global military awareness and experiences, providing both an educational narrative and outreach.

A focal point of the exhibit will be a replicated five-by-eight-foot cell. This is a special "shout out" to American Hero, Army Major (RET) Theodore Gostas, a former POW held in captivity for over five years—4.5 spent in solitary confinement. The cell will be surrounded by a visual narrative of two Vietnam veterans, Gostas and exhibit curator Jerome Domask, supporting each other for over a half century as "Foxhole Buddies" after Gostas' return to active duty.



• ST. AUGUSTINE •
ART ASSOCIATION

22 Marine Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084
(904) 824-2310 | www.staaa.org



“Death”
By Jerome Domask



“Lament”
By Skip Rohde



“Werewolf”
By Ted Gostas



“Holy Carburetor”
By Maria Mia Salazar

PARTNER & SPONSORSHIPS

The St. Augustine Art Association (STAAA) is a nonprofit organization. We cannot successfully produce an exhibit of this importance without the help of financial donors and community partners. Costs incurred for the exhibit include, but not be limited to, the **shipping and installation of artwork, accommodations for out-of-town Veterans whose work is in he exhibit, marking, and special events. See details below.**

Your generous support assists us in providing our Veterans a platform to tell their stories, and offers an outlet for current or recently returned military personnel to cope with their own experiences and hardships through the healing power of art.

THE GENERAL - TITLE SPONSOR • \$3,000

Funds to defray costs of exhibit production, marketing, artwork shipping, hospitality, special events. The General Title Sponsor will receive: A Full Page Ad Gallery Guide • A 150px x 300px Banner Ad w/Link on the website • Social Media Mentions on all posts for exhibit • Logo on print and digital advertising • Signage and Literature displayed in the gallery during the exhibit • An opportunity to speak and FOUR Invitations to the Opening Reception and Artist Meet-n-Greet on July 1, 2021.

COLONEL SPONSOR • \$1,000+

Funds to defray costs of exhibit production, marketing, artwork shipping, hospitality, special events. Colonel sponsors will receive: A 1/2 page ad gallery guide • A 150px x 300px Banner Ad w/Link on the Website • Social Media Mentions • Two Invitations the Opening Reception and Artist Meet-n-Greet on July 1, 2021.

MAJOR SPONSOR • \$500+

Funds to defray costs of exhibit production, marketing, artwork shipping, hospitality, special events. Major Sponsors will receive: A 1/4 Page Ad in the exhibit guide • A 150px x 300px Banner Ad w/Link on the Website • Two Invitations the Opening Reception and Artist Meet-n-Greet on July 1, 2021.

CAPTAIN SPONSOR • \$300+

Funds to defray costs of exhibit production, marketing, artwork shipping, hospitality, special events. Captain Sponsors will be: Listed with their logo in the Exhibit Gallery Guide • Receive a Link on the Website • One Invitation to the Opening Reception and Artist Meet-n-Greet on July 1, 2021.

LIEUTENANT SPONSOR • \$200+

Funds to defray costs of exhibit production, marketing, artwork shipping, hospitality, special events. Lieutenant Sponsors will be: Listed in the Exhibit Gallery Guide • Receive a Text Link on the Website • One Invitation to the Opening Reception and Artist Meet-n-Greet on July 1, 2021.

ENLISTED SUPPORT SPONSORS • \$25 - \$199

Funds to defray costs of exhibit production, marketing, artwork shipping, hospitality, special events. Enlisted Support Sponsors will be listed in the exhibit gallery guide unless they wish to remain anonymous. Donations of any amount in support for this exhibit will be greatly appreciated.

IN-KIND PARTNER

In-kind or discounted services to reduce costs of exhibit production, marketing, artwork shipping, and hospitality. In-kind partners will be listed in the exhibit gallery guide and on signage displayed in the gallery during the exhibit.

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

Facebook - 5,280+ likes • 5,860+ follows
Instagram - 1,850+ follows
Google Searches - 14,000/mo



WEBSITE VISITS
Average 3,000 - 5,000/mo

GALLERY VISITORS
Average - 600/mo

VA plans expansion of benefits for disability claims for conditions related to certain toxic exposures

New evaluation process to be applied in identifying future presumptive condition



The VA recently announced two major decisions related to presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange and particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia.

Agent Orange

VA will begin implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-283), adding three conditions to the list of those presumptively associated with exposure to herbicide agents, more commonly known as Agent Orange. Those conditions are bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism.

“Many of our Nation’s Veterans have waited a long time for these benefits,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough. “VA will not make them wait any longer. This is absolutely the right thing to do for Veterans and their families.”

VA will apply the provisions of court orders related to *Nehmer v. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, which may result in an earlier date for entitlement to benefits for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Vietnam War era Veterans and their survivors who previously filed and were denied benefits for one of these three new presumptive conditions will have their cases automatically reviewed without the need to refile a claim. VA will send letters to impacted Veterans and survivors.

Particulate Matter Exposures

The Secretary recently concluded the first iteration of a newly formed internal VA process to review scientific evidence to support rulemaking, resulting in the recommendation to consider creation of new presumptions of service connection for respiratory conditions based on VA’s evaluation of a National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine report and other evidence. VA’s review supports initiation of rulemaking to address the role that particulate matter pollution plays in generating chronic respiratory conditions, which may include asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis for Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War and/or after September 19, 2001, or in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan during the Persian Gulf War.

“VA is establishing a holistic approach to determining toxic exposure presumption going forward. We are moving out smartly in initiating action to consider these and other potential new presumptions, grounded in science and in keeping with my authority as Secretary of VA,” said Secretary McDonough.

VA is initiating rulemaking to consider adding respiratory conditions, which may include asthma, sinusitis and rhinitis, to the list of chronic disabilities based on an association with military service in Southwest Asia, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan during the covered periods of conflict. VA will conduct broad outreach efforts to reach impacted Veterans and it encourages them to participate in the rulemaking process.

For more information, visit our website at [Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures – Public Health](#).



The 4th Annual Vietnam Veterans of America Leo C. Chase Jr. Chapter 1084 Golf Tournament was held on Monday, May 24, 2021 at the Palencia Club.

Proceeds benefit Veterans, Youth Programs, and other in-need residents of St Johns County. Please join us in thanking the Sponsors, Golfers, and Volunteers who made it such a success.

FIRST PLACE OVERALL



Team David (L to R)
Ken Staton, Ken David,
Bill Byrne and Quinn
Guzman

SECOND PLACE OVERALL



Team McCabe (L to R)
Jeff Klauk, Ariel Rodriguez,
Rob Cronk and
Marc McCabe

THIRD PLACE OVERALL



Team Kelley (L to R):
Andy Sovia, Rich Glover,
Heather Thompson and
Larry Kelley

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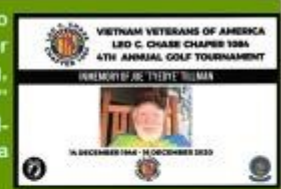
GOLF PARTNERSHIPS



HOLE RECOGNITION SPONSORS



No one is really dead until they are forgotten, and so it our responsibility to keep their memory alive. Join us at our next Tournament on 23 May 2022 for golf, and purchase your own "In Memory Of" Pin Flag, suitable for framing, of a Veteran you would not want to be forgotten. One of our "In Memory Of" Pin Flags from this year is shown here. His name is Joseph "TyeDye" Tillman, USMC, 3rd Marine Recon. May his memory live forever! Contact us via mail address listed below or email at john_lelie15@yahoo.com



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The VVA Leo C. Chase Jr. Chapter 1084 is an IRS 501(C)(19) Florida Not-for-Profit Corporation , FEIN 46-3758864. For additional information please visit our website www.vva1084.com, or mail your request to VVA-1084, PO Box 860151, St Augustine, FL 32086-0151.



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Shelter for Florida Women Veterans Opens

The opening ceremony for *HerSpace*. *HerSpace*, an emergency temporary shelter for Florida women veterans and their children had its ceremonial opening Thursday morning, April 15, 2021, at its Beach Blvd. location in Jacksonville Beach. The 3,000-square-foot house is owned by nearby St. Andrews Lutheran Church by the Sea and is being operated by the nonprofit Northeast Florida Women Veterans and starting this summer, will house up to eight women veterans and their children.

BOB SELF/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION



From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

Subject: VA Transportation Assistance

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

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

From Michael Isam

DAV van service to Gainesville returning on a limited basis.

Begins on Monday, 23 March 2021

The van will run on Monday and Wednesday ONLY

3 passenger limit

Masks are required to and from VAMC



V4V

VETS4VETS

Inform ★ Connect ★ Unite ★ Organize

Save the Date

August 21st

Veterans Memorial Arena

Join Us!

World War II in St. Augustine: Advanced Training, Down Time and the Arrival of the SPARS

By Rick Cain

In a very short few weeks, the Nation's Oldest City of St. Augustine was inundated with Coast Guard recruits who made their presence known in a big way just in sheer numbers. The locals were not certain what to make of it with service personnel flooding Mr. Flagler's fancy hotel with its gold-gilded ceilings, fine wooden railings, and imported marble floors. Rumors at the time speculated the structure would be destroyed, but that didn't happen. Many of the sailors fell in love with the ancient town and payed it the respect it deserved.



Above: United States Coast Guardsmen rowing in bay in St. Augustine

Soon training moved from land to sea where nautical skills, boat handling, sailing, and vessel operations became a reality in the unpredictable currents and winds off the seaside town.

Rowing teams were organized and would compete against each other on the Intracoastal Waterway south of the Bridge of Lions. This basic exercise taught the fundamentals of seamanship and teamwork as the long boats were towed out and positioned in an east-west line waiting for the starting gun to fire.



Above: Coast Guard rowing teams competing on the intercoastal waterway to train in seamanship

These simple exercises were done routinely until the teams were tanned and well-honed, working together to control their vessels. They then advanced to motorized patrol boats and PT (patrol torpedo) boats.

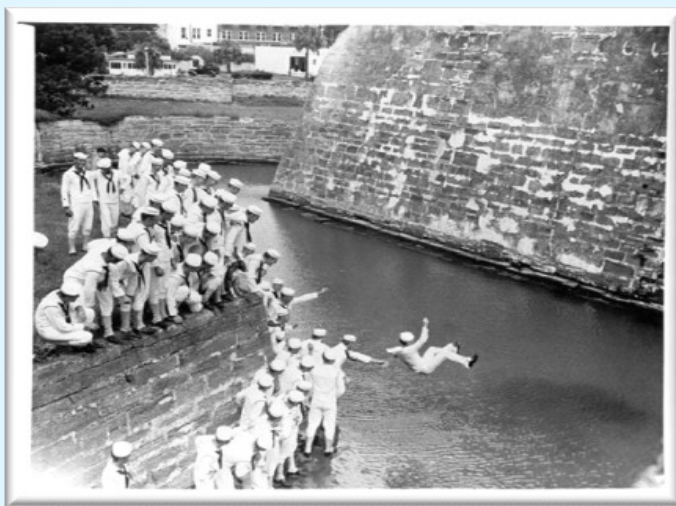


Photos Above: Motorized patrol boat training

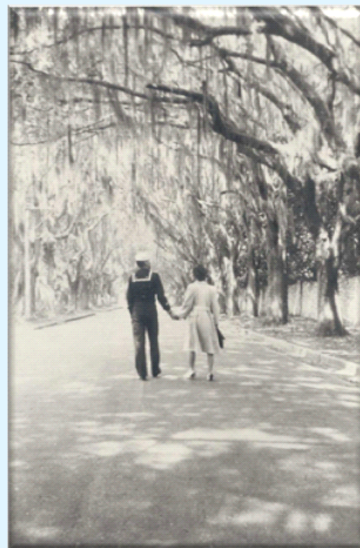
But men were not the only ones to arrive in St. Augustine for their Coast Guard training. Women reported as well, eager to share and do their part in defense of their country. They were referred to as “SPARS,” an acronym for the Coast Guard motto, a Latin phrase, “Semper Paratus,” meaning, “Always Ready.” So, SPARS simply is “Semper Paratus Always Ready.” And ready they were, to serve in any capacity the Coast Guard could find for them. Recruitment was heavy and women were eager to do their part. They arrived by train from all over the country for their basic training. Children were even allowed to assist in the recruitment program. This war was against all Americans and it would require effort and sacrifice from everyone.



But things weren't always hard work and training. The troops enjoyed much needed R&R, and St. Augustine was a great place to make that happen. Singer Bobby Hackett sang with the base's Coast Guard Band and performances were broadcast throughout NE Florida. Romance and life-long friendships were formed here that those who served carried with them the rest of their days. It is even rumored that the recruits discovered a previously unknown Menorcan dish that captured their hearts and palates, and they spread news of it to the rest of the country after the war. It was called, "Fried Shrimp."



*Photos Above: Bobby Hatchet and the Coast Guard Band
& seaside shenanigans at the Castillo de San Marcos*



*Photos Above: Well-deserved down time in downtown St. Augustine
& budding romance at the Fountain of Youth on Magnolia Avenue*

About the Author: Rick Cain

Rick Cain has worked for the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum for 18 years after a 20-year career as a health care professional. He serves on the Board of Directors of the American Lighthouse Council and is Immediate Past Chair of the Florida Attractions Association. He also works closely with the United States Coast Guard to maintain their historic ties to the Museum.



**ST. AUGUSTINE
LIGHTHOUSE
& MARITIME MUSEUM**



MISSING MAN TABLE AND HONORS CEREMONY

As you entered the room, you may have noticed a special table; it is reserved to honor our missing men.

Set for six, the empty chairs represent Americans who were or are missing from each of the services – Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard – and civilians, all with us in spirit.



Some here were very young, or not yet born, when the Vietnam War began; however, all Americans should never forget the brave men and women who answered our nation's call and served the cause of freedom in a special way.

Let me explain the meaning of this table, and then join me for a moment of silent prayer.

The table is round – to show our everlasting concern.

The cloth is white – symbolizing the purity of their motives when answering the call to serve.

The single red rose reminds us of the lives of these Americans...and their loved ones and friends who keep the faith, while seeking answers.

The yellow ribbon symbolizes our continued uncertainty, hope for their return and determination to account for them.

A slice of lemon reminds us of their bitter fate, captured or missing in a foreign land.

A pinch of salt symbolizes the tears of our missing and their families.

The lighted candle reflects our hope for their return.

The Bible represents the strength gained through faith to sustain us and those lost from our country, founded as one nation under God.

The glass is inverted – to symbolize their inability to share a toast.

The chairs are/chair is empty – they are missing..... (moment of silence)

Let us now raise our water glasses in a toast to honor America's POW/MIA's, to the success of our efforts to account for them, and to the safety of all now serving our nation!

Monument honoring Gold Star families set to be built by fall

By Bill Thompson, Daily Sun Staff Writer

On the west side of the Florida National Cemetery, crews are preparing a virgin 40-acre parcel to be the eventual eternal resting place for thousands of military veterans.

This \$42.1 million federal project is expected to be complete in 2025, officials said.

But by this fall, visitors to the Bushnell site will see a more immediate and conspicuous tribute to those who served and sacrificed in defense of our nation. The Joint Veterans Support Committee, or JVSC, which works with staff to improve amenities at the cemetery, received approval last month to erect a Gold Star Families monument at the front of the facility.



That memorial is the first step in a broader initiative called Freedom Memorial Plaza. The plaza will sit on 2 acres about a quarter-mile from the cemetery entrance, at a fork in the roads that lead into the heart of the facility.

The project will consume a small fraction of the 591-acre site. But committee members believe it will be an outsized addition in paying homage to veterans and educating the public on military history, including Central Florida's contribution to that.

What? No Monuments?

Doug Gardener, chairman of the JVSC monument committee, said the inspiration for the project was Tony Thomas, the cemetery's former director. About three years ago, Gardener recalled, Thomas offered a simple observation: Where are the monuments?

At the time, the Florida National Cemetery was the second-busiest among the National Cemetery Administration's 155 facilities. But, as Thomas noticed, prominent memorials, so common to other cemeteries, were absent.

One issue was that federal law bars the cemetery from asking the public directly to fund such projects, said Gardener, of the Village of Gilchrist and an Army veteran of the Vietnam War. Thus, the JVSC formed as a nonprofit to help raise money.

"One of our biggest missions is beautification of the cemetery and helping them with ceremonies,

” Gardener noted.

This project fit that.

COVID-19 impeded efforts to get the project going last year. But, Gardener said, that was when the group learned about the Hershel “Woody” Williams Foundation.

Help From a Hero

Williams, the sole surviving Congressional Medal of Honor recipient from World War II, dedicated the foundation to honoring Gold Star families. It does so in part by erecting monuments to families whose loved ones have been killed in combat.

The group’s website notes that its endeavors can be found in all 50 states. It has built 85 monuments, and has another 75 in progress, including at the Florida National Cemetery.

The foundation’s black-granite memorial has a standard design: two large panels with a silhouette of a saluting soldier cut into the middle, and two additional, smaller panels set to one side.

For the JVSC, Gardener said, the cemetery is the “perfect place” for such a monument. Additionally, the JVSC sought to partner with Williams’ foundation because its design is already approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which reduced the bureaucratic hurdles that had to be overcome. Gardener said the front of the memorial must adhere to the foundation’s design and message.

While the reverse side of each panel has its own mandated theme — homeland, family, patriot and sacrifice — the community can localize them.

Staff at the cemetery said they welcome the addition.

“These physical reminders of the sacrifices that ordinary Americans made to ensure our way of life, to defend our Constitution and republic, will inspire those who see them to act extraordinarily in the cause of freedom and liberty for all,” said Gerard Lyons, assistant director of the cemetery.

Localizing Valor

The JVSC intends to use the following images:

- Patriot: the Marines raising the flag on Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima during World War II;
- Homeland: a map of Florida with additional images of Osceola, the historic Seminole war chief, a space shuttle lifting off and the flags of nations that have governed the state;
- Sacrifice: the cemetery itself with American flags planted by the grave headstones and a bald eagle passing over; and

- Family: a young widow being presented the folded flag of a fallen soldier at a funeral

Bob Mills, the JVSC treasurer and communications director, said the group is hoping to dedicate the Gold Star Families monument around Oct. 1.

Yet that is just the beginning. The JVSC master plan includes two other displays.

More to Come

One, known as the “Burial with Honors” memorial, will actually anchor Freedom Memorial Plaza.

The setting, according to the master plan, will feature two bronze, lifesize statues of soldiers folding a flag above a bronze casket. Flanking that scene will be eight gray granite columns depicting iconic military-funeral images: a riderless horse, a caisson, a rifle salute, the “missing man” formation, an honor guard, a bugler blowing taps, the folding of the flag and a flag presentation.

Freedom Memorial Plaza’s third element is known as “Defenders of Freedom Wall.” An existing 470-foot-long wall at the back of the plaza property will be covered with 68 panels featuring images of veterans or military history spanning the American Revolution to today, the JVSC plan indicates.

Gardener said the panels cost \$3,500 each to create and install. The concept, he added, is to seek sponsors for each. In fact, he said, a local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution already has claimed the first panel.

Mills noted that the panels can be embedded with QR codes that will link to the story behind each individual panel.

The overall project is expected to take a few years, Gardener said. But once complete, committee members think it will a destination site, particularly for the young.

“We should make it very educational, especially for kids,” said Mills, a Vietnam-era Marine Corps veteran who lives in the Village of LaBelle. Mills said there is potential to bring busloads of kids in.

“It’s something that appears to be getting lost. They have no concept that other people died for their freedom,” Mills said. “The more we can get people to think beyond their own generation, the world will be a better place. That’s something we can all feel proud of, whether you served or not.”

Staff writer Bill Thompson can be reached at: william.thompson@thevillagesmedia.com.

REQUIREMENTS

MILITARY

SERVED MINIMUM 90 DAYS ACTIVE DUTY,
1 DAY DURING WARTIME, WITH AN
HONORABLE DISCHARGE

MEDICAL

NEED FOR ASSISTANCE WITH ACTIVITIES OF DAILY
LIVING (ADLS) DUE TO A NON-SERVICE CONNECTED
DISABILITY

FINANCIAL

INCOME AND EXPENSES IN RELATION
TO MEDICAL EXPENSES

VA RECOGNIZED WAR PERIODS	BEGINNING	ENDING
WORLD WAR II	Dec 7, 1941	Dec. 31, 1946
KOREAN CONFLICT	June 27, 1950	Jan. 31, 1955
VIETNAM ERA	Aug. 5, 1964	May 7, 1975
PERSIAN GULF WAR	Aug 2, 1990	End date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation

MEDICAL SCREENING

The Veteran or surviving spouse must have a medical condition causing the need for assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs), such as bathing, dressing, grooming, using the toilet, preparing meals, and moving about safely).

MONETARY SCREENING

The veteran and or veteran plus spouse can have a maximum of \$129,094 in liquid assets. A primary residence and auto are not counted as part of the total liquid assets. Ongoing non-reimbursable medical expenses may reduce the annual countable income.

MAXIMUM PENSION AMOUNTS	PER MONTH	ANNUALLY
SURVIVING SPOUSE	\$1,244	\$14,928
VETERAN	\$1,936	\$23,232
COUPLE	\$2,295	\$27,540

From Lynn M Geiser
Here are the Aid & Attendance requirements and qualifications for 2021. This is for veterans and their spouses who qualify and need assistance with their Activities of Daily Living (ADL's).

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc.

Minutes of May 20, 2021

**Officers Present: Chairman Bill Dudley, Treasurer
John Mountcastle**



Chairman Bill Dudley called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Chairman Bill Dudley led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, and
Don Kabrich gave the Invocation.**

**The minutes of the April 2021 meeting were approved as presented.
The Treasurer's Report was approved as presented.**

**Speaker: Donald Earl, Director, United Way of NE Florida spoke on
United Way's "Helping Veterans" program 2.1.1.**

Committee Reports:

**Travis Neidig (VSO) provided updates on the 2021 Homeless
Standdown, to be held at the Elks Lodge, Anastasia Island on Saturday,
September 11, 2021. As usual, the set up will occur on the day prior,
Friday, September 10, 2021. Details to follow on dates and volunteer
solicitation.**

**John Leslie provided updates on the Veterans Treatment Court
(VTC) and VVA-1084. The Court is still being held via Zoom until fur-
ther notice. VVA-1084's 4th Annual Memorial Golf Tournament will be
held the following Monday, 24 May 2021 at the Palencia Club. The
tournament has a full house of 108 golfers.**

**Bill Dudley provided updates on the new CBOC, which will have
its soft opening on 22 June 2021 following the closing of the present**

CBOC on 18 June 2021. The Grand Opening is planned for November 11, 2021, pending official approval by the VA. Current planning involves a joint

Grand Opening with our annual Veterans Day Ceremony. Bill mentioned that there are 6133 Veterans currently using the St Augustine CBOC.

The VCSJC Veterans Day Committee will hold its first planning session soon. If approved by the VA, depending on COVID protocols, the event will be held in the Parking Lot of the CBOC and include the moving Vietnam Memorial Wall and the War on Terror Wall, provided by the State of Florida Patriotic Guard Riders, as it has been in years past.

Bill is working closely with city and county entities on a Homeless Veterans Initiative effort to convert the emptied CBOC on the facility on the south-east corner of the intersection of Old Moultrie Road and Southpark Blvd into a temporary housing facility for Homeless Veterans. Bill further discussed the plans for a Memorial Day Ceremony at the Anastasia Baptist Church; doors open at 9:00 am with a formal program beginning at 10:00 am. The Military Officers Association of America is co-host with VCSJC.

After all that, Bill also won \$5 in the 50/50 Raffle.

Future Speakers:

June 24, Ken Moreland, Navy Gold Star Program and Suzanne Garrow, Housing Attorney, Jax Legal Aid

**July 29, Ann McCulliss & Tracy Hejmanowski
Beth Heath, We Can Be Heroes, Special Presentation**

Home on the Huey: Vietnam medical battalion vets take flight on restored helicopter

Carson Gerber Kokomo Tribune, Photo by Kelly Lafferty Gerber | Kokomo Tribune

BUNKER HILL — Maurice “Corky” Walsh stepped off the Huey helicopter and onto the tarmac at Grissom Air Reserve Base as the deep thumping of the blades subsided. The 75-year-old Vietnam veteran was grinning ear to ear. “That’s the sound we heard 365 days a year, 24 hours a day,” he said. It was a sound Walsh came to love when he served for a year as a crew chief and gunner in 1967 in the 15th Medical Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division in the U.S. Army.



And it was sound that brought back poignant memories for the around 30 Vietnam vets who on Saturday gathered at the American Huey Museum, which restores and commemorates the very same helicopters that were used in the 15th Medical Battalion.

Since 1998, veterans who served in that battalion have met every year at different locations around the country to swap stories, see old friends and remember their time serving in the war. But this year's reunion in Kokomo was extra special. That’s because they all had a chance to watch or fly in the Huey medical evacuation helicopters in which many of them served as pilots, medics or gunners.

Since 2005, the museum has fully restored two Hueys, which are flown during special events, and turned another of the medivac aircraft into a static exhibit at its facility located at 1697 W. Hoosier Blvd.

But for 79-year-old Larry Hatch, it wasn’t a chance to fly in just any Huey. The museum in 2009 actually restored the very chopper which he piloted during his year of service in the battalion. In fact, when the museum acquired it, it still had the logo Hatch painted on it.

Museum founder John Walker eventually contacted Hatch about the restored medical helicopter and asked if he wanted to fly it. “I couldn’t believe it,” Hatch said. “I couldn’t believe I had the opportunity, 50 years later, to have the chance to get in and fly the same Huey.” Since then, the Olympia, Washington, resident has been flying it every year during the museum’s annual Patriot’s Weekend at Grissom. Now, Hatch said, he’s glad the reunion of the 15th Medical Battalion has finally made it’s way to Kokomo so all the veterans could have a chance to fly in choppers that played an integral role during their service. “This keeps the spirit alive of those members who lost their lives so we could live free,” he said.

Richard Medlock, 72, of Georgia, said it was exciting to be around the helicopters for the first time since he served in Vietnam in 1970s, but he didn’t have any desire to get back into one. Medlock served in the battalion as a radio telephone operator, communicating with the helicopters from the ground before they landed in camp. The time he did ride in a Huey, they came under attack and a bullet nearly

struck Medlock.

“Yeah, I wasn’t too excited about getting back in a helicopter,” he said. “They’ve been trying and trying to get me back on the bird, but I have no desire to. Plus, I told my wife I promised I’d stay on the ground.”

But for pilot and gunner Walsh, dealing with enemy fire while making runs to pick up injured soldiers just came with the territory. He said that on one mission, when they were attacked, they landed back at camp to find 93 bullet holes in the chopper.

Hatch said that what really set the 15th Medical Battalion apart, though, was the 98.5% survival rate they had for all the people they picked up on the battlefield. He said that’s one of the highest of any medical unit that served in the war.

“We had a phenomenal success rate” Hatch said. “It’s unbelievable.” Walsh credited their success to the fact that every medivac chopper had a tight-knit crew that knew how to work together to complete the mission.

“It had to be that way, because each one of us depended on each other,” he said. “But you didn’t think about that. Your main function was to get the aircraft airborne and get the guys back to the med station to get them treated.”

Throughout the afternoon, veterans and their families hopped on board one of the restored Huey helicopters stationed at the museum. Many walked away with smiles or tears in their eyes. Walsh said it was amazing to be around the Hueys, but what’s even more special is seeing the men who served on the aircrafts during the group’s annual reunion in Kokomo, where the veterans stayed from Thursday to Sunday.

“We’re a pretty close-knit bunch,” he said. “The reason I come to these is to see these guys, because we’re not guaranteed tomorrow. I want to cherish what time I do have and see these guys.” Radio operator Medlock said for him, the reunion has been a great way for his wife to learn about his experiences in Vietnam. The two are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this year.

“From coming to these, she’s learned the reason of why I am the way I am,” he said. Medlock said the reunions give him a chance to not only swap war stories, but also remember the comrades they lost and the lives they saved during their service.

“We didn’t just serve the U.S. forces,” he said. “We served our allies and sick or injured civilians. We even served the enemy sometimes. We looked after everyone who needed us, no matter what side they were on. As it says on our banner, we did this so others may live.”

Walsh said that experience has created a deeply felt connection among all the men who served in 15th Medical Battalion, and the annual reunion is their way to keep that connection alive. “It’s a brotherhood,” he said. “We have a bond that can’t be broken.”

Jacksonville's 'Grandma Gunner,' a Gulf War vet, honored on Women Veterans Day in Washington, by Matt Soergel, Florida Times-Union

Everyone called her "Grandma Gunner," which made perfect sense: Sandy Mitten, at 49, was indeed a grandmother, and her job aboard a U.S. Coast Guard patrol boat in the Persian Gulf put her right behind a .50-caliber machine gun. She never had to fire it in combat, but she would have if her boat were to be attacked as the war went on.



She made that clear in a letter she wrote to her stepmother in January 1991.

Before this all came about, I wondered if I would really be able to use my weapon against someone else. I have no question now. You know, like so many others, I prayed for a peaceful end before this. But, now that it isn't peaceful & it won't be, I just want to do whatever has to be done to get this whole damn mess over with. Mitten is 79 now, living in Jacksonville, near her three children. She has "nine or 10" grandchildren and two great-grandchildren as well.

Her letter home is a key part of a huge collection of the Center for American War Letters, which numbers more than 175,000 and ranges from the Revolutionary War to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Andrew Carroll, who heads the project from his home in Washington, D.C., prizes Mitten's letter, both for its immediacy and its relative rarity. It's written by a woman in combat, and it's from the Gulf War, from which he had few letters. And it's dramatic — stopping in mid-sentence during a Scud missile attack, only to pick up again the next evening.

Carroll, who's 51, has known Mitten for 20 years. Her letter was among the earliest in the collection he has amassed. He brought her to Washington over the weekend for Women Veterans Day on June 12. She donated two Coast Guard tropical camo uniforms from the Gulf War to be displayed at the Military Women's Memorial near the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery (she's keeping her dress blues, which still fit her, to be buried in).

And she was honored — a surprise to her — with both a memorial "Living Legend" award and custom brooch representing the Coast Guard.

She deserves it, Carroll said. "She's feisty. She's tough."

Two nights ago, the Patriots went off right from our Port which is about 1 mile from our compound. I thought that the missiles landed right in our courtyard. A terrible BOOM when it took off and a second BOOM when it broke the sound barrier. There was debris all over.

Next P.M.

Back again. In the middle of the sentence, we had a Skud attack. You should have seen it. One of my

people called me outside to tell them what was coming toward our tower. I ran outside and when I looked I saw these flashes in the sky.

Letters from War

Carroll's collection of letters is now housed at the Center for American War Letters at Chapman University. The project has evolved into a podcast, several books, a virtual museum and a play, "If All the Sky Were Paper." In a preview for the play that can be found on YouTube, Oscar-winning actress Laura Dern reads part of Mitten's letter.



The earliest letter in the collection is from 1775, as a young man encourages another to join the revolution.

Some are from non-combatants caught up in conflict. There's a letter from a man who was in Ford's Theatre when Abraham Lincoln was shot. And there's a 14-page letter from a woman who was at Ground Zero on 9/11, a letter whose writing is blurred by her tears.

Another is from a sailor who was trapped inside a ship in Pearl Harbor during the 1941 attack, writing a letter to his sister in what Carroll calls a "stream of consciousness" account.

"They humanize warfare," Carroll said of the letters. "These are not statistics that go and fight."

At war in the Persian Gulf

Mitten was born and raised in Milwaukee and joined the Navy in 1959, months out of high school, so she could get away from home.

She left the Navy in December 1960; she'd gotten married and was pregnant, and her husband, a sailor, thought pregnant women shouldn't be in the Navy.

By 1974 she was divorced and living back in Milwaukee, working in a Briggs & Stratton factory that made small engines. She decided to join the Navy again — she was thinking ahead and looking for a pension.

But the recruiter, noting that she had three children under 18, suggested the Coast Guard Reserve. That way she could be home much of the time.

She was soon sworn into the Reserve program and worked in port security in Milwaukee. She stayed at the factory on the floor and in union leadership, positions that had historically been held by men.

In September 1990 her unit was sent to the Persian Gulf where it became the first in the Coast Guard Reserve to be activated in a time of war. She arrived in Saudi Arabia on Sept. 18 as a first-class petty officer, one day after turning 49.

She was one of four women in her unit who served as gunners on boats patrolling the harbor of Damman. She witnessed frequent Scud missile attacks, one of which sent chunks of an intercepted missile into the compound where she lived.

Everyone was scared during those attacks, man or woman, she said. They huddled together; some prayed, some cried.

She remembers her six months in Saudi Arabia: searing temperatures topping 120, drenching humidity, the smell of burning trash and oil on the beach, the sound of Scud missiles overhead and the Patriot missiles launched to destroy them.

Recently she wrote another letter, this one for Carroll at the war letters project after he requested a biography from her. In it she wrote about her clear memories of the war.

It has been 30 years since that experience and sometimes thinking back on it, you can still hear the sounds, smell the smells and feel the emotions of what all of us endured. Would I do it again? You bet your sweet ass I would!!

A groundbreaker

Mitten has been married and divorced three times and remained friends with all three men, she said. She was even part-time caretaker for her last husband. All three have passed away.

"You see, they couldn't live without me," she said with a chuckle.

She moved from Milwaukee to Jacksonville's Mandarin neighborhood 11 years ago to be close to family. It's been a good life, she said.

"I feel so much gratitude. Yes, I did give my life to the military, and yes, I sometimes lived away from my family, but I think I raised my kids to know that was just something that had to be done, that I had to do," she said.

Some have called her a groundbreaker, for moving into male-dominated positions in the factory where she worked, for manning a machine gun in the Persian Gulf, with grandchildren at home.

Mitten is reluctant to take on that title.

"I didn't look at it like that, and I said many times and I'll continue to say many times over, that I'm just an ordinary person, I really am. An ordinary person.

"I had a friend say to me years ago, 'Sandy, you're an ordinary person who did extraordinary things.' I don't look at myself like that," she said. "I didn't do it intentionally, but the opportunity came and I thought, OK, I'll go ahead and try it. What can they say? No?"



REMEMBER WHAT OUR MEDAL STANDS FOR:

RED: REPRESENTS THE THREE ANCIENT
VIETNAMESE EMPIRES OF TONKIN,
ANNAM AND COCHIN.

YELLOW: THE IMPERIAL COLOR OF VIET NAM.

GREEN: SURROUNDED BY EXPANSIVE JUNGLE.

TED PIECKO, The NAM.

Great video about service, bravery & family. Really worth the time to watch.

<https://chriswoodsdirector.com/gray-eagles-documentary/>

**From a June 16, 2021 IRS' Exempt Organizations Notice
Information on Notices Received After Paper Filing Form 990-EZ
or Form 8868**

The IRS is experiencing delays in processing paper returns, including Form 990-EZ, Short Form Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, and Form 8868, Application for Extension of Time To File an Exempt Organization Return.

The IRS encourages organizations to file these forms electronically. If you file Form 990-EZ on paper, you may receive a prematurely-issued CP259A notice of non-filing. If you file Form 8868 on paper, there may be a delay in receiving CP211A notice confirming approval of your extension request. If you filed your return or extension request on paper, you do not need to take any further action. Please don't file a second return or contact the IRS about the status of your filing. We appreciate your patience.

Note: this DOES NOT APPLY to exempt organizations filing annual information reports electronically. ALL exempt organizations must file annual information reports (990-N, 990-EZ or 990) electronically for tax years ending on or after July 31, 2021.

John Mountcastle,

Treasurer

The Veterans' Council of St. Johns County, Inc.



Legal Aid for Veterans

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

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

1.866.486.6161

Call Today!

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



We Can Help With

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

Supported by the: **FDVA**
FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Become a Watch Stander with The Fire Watch



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Disaster Resources Available to Veterans

“Veterans and their families should be focused on their health and safety during the natural disasters,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “VA is taking action to give those with pending debts greater flexibility during these challenging times.”

Health Care Assistance

If you have questions such as where to go for care or how to receive prescribed medications, VA has established a toll-free number for assistance in areas that have been impacted by disasters. Veterans or their families can call the VA Veterans Disaster Response line 24 hours, seven days a week at 1-800-507-4571.

Debt Relief

If you are affected by a natural disaster, have a VBA benefit debt and need temporary financial relief, please contact VA's Debt Management Center at 1-800-827-0648 to request assistance.

If you have questions on Compensation or Pension benefits: Call toll-free 1-800-827-1000 Monday - Friday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. CST.

Other Resources

Find a VA Vet Center near you 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387) or <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

Mobile Vet Centers and Vet Center teams are actively responding to disaster-affected areas to offer counseling and grief support as well as connection and referral services to other VA and community resources.

Find a VA facility near you <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

Call the White House VA Hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-855-948-2311.

Apply for \$500 grant for your damaged primary residence (on a first come, first serve basis subject to funding) from PenFed Foundation.

National Resource Directory - Search for local resources for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

FEMA - FEMA helps with temporary housing, repair or replacement of existing homes.

American Red Cross - The American Red Cross offers emergency financial assistance to the most impacted counties. Please call 1-800-733-2767 to see if you qualify.

Disaster Assistance – An easy way to determine if your zip code has been declared a disaster and eligible for assistance. The website also allows users to complete an online application and the ability to check FEMA application status.



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.



You sacrificed for our country.

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

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

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

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

SILVER CREEK

THE FUTURE OF SENIOR LIVING

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



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

Assisted Living Facility #12928

Vietnam Veterans of America

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



Chapter/President/email/Location

1046	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



First Coast Honor Flight Donation

I would like to donate \$ _____ to honor Veterans.

Please make check payable to: First Coast Honor Flight, Inc.

Mail to: First Coast Honor Flight, Inc.
P.O. Box 600785
Saint Johns, FL 32260

To make a donation by credit card please visit our website at:

www.firstcoasthonorflight.org

Click on "Help Our Cause" and then Click on "Donate Now" and submit your donation through PayPal. *Thank you!*

Name of Organization _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email _____ Email _____

This donation is: In Honor of _____ In Memory of _____

Name _____

Address _____

Veteran? Yes _____ No _____ Relationship _____

Branch _____ Dates Served _____

First Coast Honor Flight warrants that the information contained on this form is for internal use only and will not be shared, transmitted, or used for any purposes other than recording and acknowledging the donation. Donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. First Coast Honor Flight is a registered 501(c)3 Not for Profit EIN:84-4667182 For questions please Call: 888-400-1185 or email: info@firstcoasthonorflight.org.



PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET VETERANS' UNIQUE NEEDS

Advance Care Planning

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

Palliative Care

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

Hospice Care

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

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

Complementary Therapies

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

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

We Need Volunteers

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

WE HONOR VETERANS
Partner

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

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

★ 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



SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES

Strength
built on
Sacrifice

Your Florida SOS Team

St. Augustine Area

Keith Ham
Support Coordinator
310 Charlotte Street
St. Augustine, FL 32085
(904) 823-0157 (desk)
(904) 472-7689 (cell)
keith.c.ham.ctr@mail.mil

Tallahassee Area

Matthew Reeves
Support Coordinator
1225 Easterwood Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32311-3599
(850) 617-0192 (desk)
(850) 459-6630 (cell)
matthew.p.reeves.ctr@mail.mil

Orlando Area

Shinekqua Baines
Support Coordinator
9500 Armed Forces Reserve Drive
Orlando, FL 32827
(407) 240-5939 ext. 1743
shinekqua.l.baines.ctr@mail.mil

Tampa Bay Area

LaShawnda S. Strother
Support Coordinator
2801 Grand Avenue
Pinellas Park, FL 33782
(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.



Mission Statement:

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



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

What the Council has done:

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

SA-0003147064-01

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

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

STAND BY THEM
Confidential help for Veterans and their families

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

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

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

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

Confidential chat at MilitaryCrisisLine.net or text 838255

Veterans Councils of Northeast Florida



BAKER COUNTY

President: Larry Porterfield

Meetings:

Second Thursday of each month

Location:

MacClenny Primitive Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall on North Boulevard

Time : 1800 (6pm)

CLAY COUNTY

President: Harry Silvers

Meetings:

First Wednesday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1400 (2pm)

DUVAL COUNTY

President 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)

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.

*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 Administration Building
500 San Sebastian View
Auditorium, 1st floor***

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

(physical location)

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

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

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