



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

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St. Augustine, FL 32085

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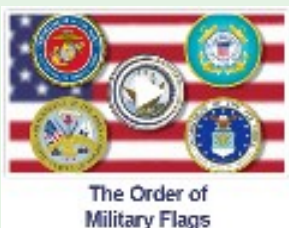
Volume 9, Issue 6

Message from the Chairman

June 2020

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MEMORIAL DAY HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED AND DIED FOR OUR NATION

Fellow Veterans,
As we pause this Memorial Day to give thanks and to honor those who paid the supreme price for our freedom, let us also celebrate their life as we honor their service. Americans have been taking great risks for the freedoms we Americans enjoy since the Revolutionary War. This is worth celebrating. It does not keep us from mourning the loss of a loved one nor should it. But it is in our DNA to fight for what we believe in and that is the price our men and women who have worn the cloth of this great nation have sacrificed for. Let us honor their memory as we celebrate their life in remembrance.

In years past, our local MOAA, ACC and the Veterans Council have joined together to remember and pay respects to those who have stood the last roll call. This year, due to the COVID-19 restrictions on large gatherings in public places, we are

prohibited from having a ceremony at our St. Augustine National Cemetery. However, we will pay our respects to those men and women who gave the last measure to our country by the laying of a ceremonial wreath at the SANC on Monday, 25 May 2020. The wreath laying ceremony will take place at 1 PM followed by the playing of TAPS by Sgt. John Donlon, SJSO. At the conclusion of TAPS, the Dream Squadron from Green Cove Springs under the command of Dennis "Dizzy" Gilliespie will fly overhead in a missing man formation. Unfortunately, the public is not permitted to participate in this ceremony as in years past. That will conclude our formal ceremony at the National Cemetery. The rest of the tribute to our deceased veterans will be featured in Monday's St. Augustine Record with the names of all the deceased over this past year as well as remarks from Allison Simpson who was to have been this year's speaker. It will also have a featured article concerning the history of Memorial Day. During this unusual time we are adjusting to new norms. It



has become increasingly important that we stay in touch in new ways until we can meet again in person. The Veterans Council of St. Johns County has a very active Facebook page that you can join and take advantage of where you can post your meetings, events, news and pictures. It has over 500 members who can be reached on a daily basis with each posting. The Council also has a widely distributed monthly newsletter, The Patriot Reader, with over 8000 recipients in the Veterans community. We also accept your stories, pictures, events and flyers at no cost for you to reach our vast followers.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Helping Veterans.

Bill Dudley, Chairman
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



Cookouts



Window Visit



Cinco de Mayo
Margaritas & Nachos



Mother's Day Tea



More Cotton Candy



Memorial Day ceremony
about to begin



**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. We meet at the county Health & Human Services building, 200 San Sebastian View, at 7 pm

Future meeting Speakers:

- June 25 SJC Homeless Veterans Initiative panel (tentative)**
- July 30 Fire Watch speaker (tentative)**
- Sept. 24 Denise Olsen, Finding & Honoring your Military Ancestry**



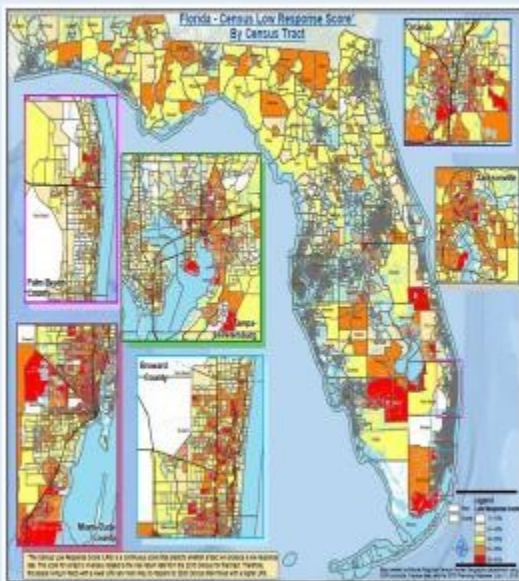
A head count is conducted every 10 years since 1790, as required by the U.S. Constitution.

- A Census count is constitutionally mandated for re-apportionment of Congress.
- Census results are used for Redistricting at national, state, and local levels.
- After 2010, FL gained 2 congressional seats.
- Over \$675 Billion/year is distributed to state and local governments using Census numbers (Over \$4 Trillion over the decade).
- Census data guide decision making on all levels of government and will determine the need for future government services over the next decade.

NEW INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO INCREASE ACCURATE, SELF-RESPONSE

Allowing people to respond anytime, anywhere, via phone or internet. Tests have shown internet self-response is the most cost effective and accurate way.

Reengineering Field Operations- The Census Bureau is eliminating paper and incorporating the use of handheld data collection devices.



- In 2010, 74 percent of households in the United States filled out and mailed back their 2010 Census questionnaires- **74 percent in FL** mailed back theirs.
- In 2010, 19 counties in FL had Mail Response Rates that were lower than 70 percent.
- The Census provides Low Response Scores by Census Tracts. This score is a tract's predicted **nonresponse rate**.
- The map of Low Response Scores allows us to identify areas likely to need additional targeted outreach and field follow-up.

- One way to ensure success and an accurate Count in the 2020 Census is by forming a Complete Count Committee (CCC).
- Local governments, businesses and community leaders form CCC's to encourage participation in their community. They develop an outreach plan tailored to the unique characteristics of their community. Then they work together to implement the plan.
- Form or join a CCC in your area and help us spread the word about Census jobs and our jobs website- <https://2020census.gov/jobs>

Contact the Census at Atlanta Partnership Staff 470-889-6530, atlanta.rcc.partnership@census.gov to schedule a CCC Workshop today.

For Job information, contact Recruiting at Atlanta Recruiting 1-855-889-8932



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. AUGUSTINE
LIGHTHOUSE
& MARITIME MUSEUM

World War II on America's First Coast

Part One: Operation Drumbeat - The "Second Happy Time"

Rick Cain

On Sunday, December 7th, 1941, the Imperial Navy of Japan attacked the American Pacific Fleet at its base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The devastating loss of life and carnage that morning not only surprised Americans, it also surprised and delighted Adolph Hitler. Hitler was shocked, not only that the Japanese had attempted it, but that it had been, in his mind, so "successful."

Nazi Germany declared war on the United States four days later, and the very next day, on December 12th, Hitler picked up his phone and called Konteradmiral (Rear Admiral) Karl Dönitz, Commander of Nazi Germany's U-boat (submarine) fleet. Hitler ordered an immediate attack on the American homeland (by 1943 Dönitz would become Großadmiral or Grand Admiral of the Reich due to his strategic leadership of Nazi Germany's naval warfare success).



Rear Admiral Karl Dönitz

The fleet was stationed in the Port of Lorient on the west coast of Nazi occupied France, in the region of Brittany. Three massive submarine bunkers called K1, K2, and K3 were built in 1941 by Nazi Germany as part of the famous Atlantic Wall (an extensive system of defensive fortifications built all along coastal Europe) and would serve to protect up to thirty submarines from Allied aerial bombardment.



Admiral Dönitz quickly drew up a plan he called Unternehmen Paukenschlag or "Operation Drumbeat." He would strike the American homeland as quickly as the rapid strike of a kettle drum. But to accomplish this, his U-boats would have to cross three thousand miles of ocean and still have enough fuel to patrol and attack targets along America's East coast, the busiest and richest shipping lanes in the world. With some minor re-fitting to allow for extra fuel and torpedoes, his command determined that their Type IX, long-range submarines could do it.



The first Type IX departed Lorient on December 18th, 1941 and others followed quickly after during the next few days. British Intelligence picked up their movement and transmissions and were able to plot their course across the Atlantic. The British alerted the Royal Canadian Navy and the U.S. Command of large concentrations of enemy submarines off of the North American coast, but the warnings were largely ignored. For America, the war was in Europe and the Pacific, and very far from home. We were completely unprepared for what was about to happen.



The plan of attack was simple; stay submerged during the day and surface at night to attack coastal shipping. Normally during wartime, coastal lights are dimmed or even blacked out to prevent enemy bombers from targeting cities, or in this case, to prevent enemy submarines from silhouetting ships against the coastal lights. So, when Korvettenkapitan Reinhard Hardegen, commander of U-123 surfaced his vessel in January 1942, he was shocked. The entire American coast was lit up. Even merchant vessels sailing alone up and down the coast were lit like floating Christmas trees. It became a turkey shoot. Nazi U-boats all up and down the East coast began sinking ships at will and encountered little to no response from the enemy. Hardegen's first patrol left Lorient on December 23rd, 1941 and reached the U.S. coast on January 12th, 1942. He proceeded to sink nine vessels totaling 53,170 tons. His second patrol which began in March of the same year sank ten vessels for a total of 57,170 tons. His submarine was only one of twenty-one U-boats hunting in American waters.



Captain Reinhard Hardegen

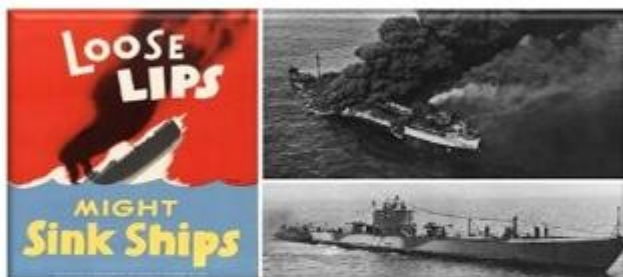


The sinking of the SS Gulf America by U-123 five miles off Jacksonville, FL on April 11, 1942. 8,081 tons, length 445 feet, beam 64 feet, carrying 101,500 barrels of furnace oil. She had a crew of 48. Residents all up and down Florida's First Coast, from Fernandina to St. Augustine, heard the explosion.

Hardegen recorded in his ship's log that when he surfaced his vessel on a Friday night off of Jacksonville, FL he went out on deck and he and his men could hear music playing and people partying at the Jacksonville Pier. He also recorded seeing people on the beach in St. Augustine and noted the large black and white striped tower that was the St. Augustine Lighthouse. Eventually, U-boats were so confident that they would patrol in broad daylight since America's fleet of sub-hunting destroyers was far away in the North Atlantic escorting convoys to help supply England's fight against Germany.

Operation Drumbeat lasted until August of 1942. In all, 609 vessels were sunk sending 3.1 million tons of vitally needed supplies to the bottom of the ocean from Nova Scotia to the Gulf of Mexico. Twenty-four ships were sunk off the coast of Florida. Nearly 5,000 men, mostly Merchant Marines (civilian professional sailors) lost their lives. It would be the most successful attack by Nazi Germany against America during the entire war and very few people even knew it happened. The U.S. military, out of fear of widespread panic, did not publicize it.

In 1939 when England declared war on Germany following the Nazi invasion of Poland, U-boats operating in the English Channel and North Sea had the same experience. The U-boat crews referred to that attack as "The Happy Time." Historian Michael Gannon has called Operation Drumbeat "America's Second Pearl Harbor." The U-boat crews called it simply, "The Second Happy Time."



*All photos used in this article are in public domain

Rick Cain is the Director of Museum Services at the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum. His research on Operation Drumbeat and the sinking of the S.S. Gulf America will appear in the Museum's upcoming exhibition entitled "Veterans of WWII: Guardians of the Coast," taking visitors from World War I through early 1942.

North Florida/ South Georgia Veterans Health System

Dear Veteran,

As of March 18, the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System does not have any patients confirmed positive with the Coronavirus (COVID-19). We have had several patients whom we have sent their specimen sample off for testing. As of today, our designated COVID-19 testing lab has returned negative results for presence of the virus.

As the number of confirmed cases continue to rise throughout our nation and locally, we are all taking significant actions in our workplaces, at home and in our community to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Our top priority is the safety and care of our Veteran patients and employees. Our objective is slowing the spread of the disease. There are several actions we have taken to assist with meeting this objective:

We implemented the COVID-19 telephone support line for patients enrolled in VISN 8. The VISN Clinical Contact Center, 1-877-741-3400, is available 24/7 to support identification of COVID-19 patients that need to stay home, be evaluated by telehealth or visit a hospital.

We limited access points and implemented active screenings at our clinical care delivery locations. We are following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for these screenings.

We restricted admissions and visits to the most vulnerable patient populations, our Nursing Homes. Visitation is still occurring within our hospice.

We placed the Disabled American Veteran (DAV) patient transportation system on hold.

We engaged with National, State and Community organizations to learn and coordinate our responses to this pandemic.

Over the next couple of days, we will continue to strengthen our initiatives to keep patients and employees who have COVID-19 symptoms out of the facilities, unless inpatient hospitalization is required. In effort to do this we will clinically review routine clinical screenings, elective surgeries and routine appointments that can be deferred until the pandemic has passed.

All face-to-face clinical outpatient appointments will be clinically reviewed to determine the feasibility to utilize telehealth modalities to include telephone, VA Video Connect, and MyHealthVet. Our care management teams will contact patients to communicate their personalized care plan and address any concern they might have related to the change. All plans will include consistent communication between the patient and the care team to address clinical needs and provide updates. We asked that for services that are direct scheduled (physical therapy, optometry, etc.) or a part of a walk-in clinics, that Veterans call before reporting to these appointments. We have further restricted our visitation policy that limits one visitor with a patient, if applicable.

I encourage our patients and staff to take every day preventative actions to avoid being exposed to the virus:

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Stay home if you are sick or becoming sick.

Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

If you have symptoms or have been exposed to someone with symptoms, call the VA before going to the facility.

Our team at NF/SGVHS is prepared for the long haul. I take comfort in knowing that our health system has dynamic, professional, and responsive staff who take pride in taking care of our patients.

One behalf of our Leadership team and employees, I thank you for entrusting us with your health care.

Thomas Wisnieski, MPA, FACHE, Director, North Florida/ South Georgia Veterans Health System

Sign-up for automatic email updates by filling in your email address in the "Emergency Email Updates" section, located at the top right corner of our page. Also, for information on emergencies, and various Veteran related events/topics "like" the NF/SGVHS Facebook Page.



Phase I Order for Memorial Bricks Received!

This past week we received the first order of more than 200 memorial bricks that will be placed in Phase I. The bricks will be placed at the Benefactor Plaza. For those orders that included mini-bricks, we will be working over the next several weeks to get them shipped out.



Due to the impacts of COVID-19 we will have a delay in the timetable of when the bricks will be placed. We are working hard to get this information updated and will provide a new date once finalized. At this time, we are still anticipating and expecting to have installation and a dedication ceremony in the Fall. We will let everyone know if this changes.

Due to high demand, we are happy to announce that there will be another opportunity to order a brick in 2020. We will be placing another order on July 1, 2020. Please visit our Website for pricing, placement location, or to order.

<https://www.powmiamemorial.org/support-the-memorial/memorial-brick-campaign/>

St. Johns County Military Records

Brandon Patty, Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller and Mark P. Miner, Chief Deputy Clerk met with Bill Dudley, Chair of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, to share and discuss our county's military records. For over 100 years, the clerk's office as the county recorder has maintained important military documents—such as DD-214s and registration cards—from our residents. Many of our neighbors and friends have their and their family's military records with us. It is a high honor for us to keep and preserve these treasures!



MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBER AND HONOR



By George Linardos, CPT USA (Fmr)
Consolidated and condensed from various historical on-line sites

Memorial Day, an American holiday, is observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades.

Early Observances of Memorial Day

The Civil War, which ended in the spring of 1865, claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history and required the establishment of the country's first national cemeteries.

By the late 1860s, Americans in various towns and cities had begun holding springtime tributes to these countless fallen soldiers, decorating their graves with flowers and reciting prayers.

Each year on Memorial Day a national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time. It is unclear where exactly this tradition originated. Numerous different communities may have independently initiated the memorial gatherings. And some records show that one of the earliest Memorial Day commemoration was organized by a group of freed slaves in Charleston, South Carolina less than a month after the Confederacy surrendered in 1865.

More than 20 towns claim to be the holiday's "birthplace", but only one has federal recognition. For almost as long as there's been a holiday, there's been a rivalry about who celebrated it first. Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, bases its claim on an 1864 gathering of women to mourn those recently killed at Gettysburg. In Carbondale, Illinois, they claim that they were first, thanks to an 1866 parade led, in part, by John Logan who two years later would lead the charge for an official holiday. There are two dueling Columbus challengers (one in Mississippi, the other in Georgia) who have battled it out for Memorial Day supremacy for decades. Only one town, however, has received the official seal of approval from the U.S. government. 100 years after the town of Waterloo, New York, first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866 by closing its businesses and took to the streets for the first of many continuous, community-wide celebrations, culminating in decorating the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags, President Lyndon Johnson signed legislation, passed by the U.S. Congress, declaring the tiny upstate village the "official" birthplace of Memorial Day.

On May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance later that month. "The 30th of May 1868 is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land". The date of Decoration Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle. On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there.

Many Northern states held similar commemorative events and reprised the tradition in subsequent years; by 1890 each one had made Decoration Day an official state holiday. Southern states, on the other hand, continued to honor their dead on separate days until after World War I.

Even before the Civil War ended, women's groups across much of the South were gathering informally to decorate the graves of Confederate dead. In April 1886, the Ladies Memorial Association of Columbus, Georgia resolved to commemorate the fallen once a year. However, southern commemorations were rarely held on one standard day, with observations differing by state and spread out across much of the spring and early summer. It's a tradition that continues today. Nine southern states officially recognize a Confederate Memorial Day, with events held on Confederate President Jefferson Davis' birthday, the day on which General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson was killed, or to commemorate other symbolic events. Confederate Memorial Day is still celebrated in several states and will be on Sunday, April 26, 2020 in Florida; on Monday, April 27, 2020 in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi and on May 11, 2020, in parts of South Carolina.

History of Memorial Day

Memorial Day, as Decoration Day gradually came to be known, originally honored only those lost while fighting in the Civil War. But during World War I the United States found itself embroiled in another major conflict, and the holiday evolved to commemorate American military personnel who died in all wars, including World War II, The Vietnam War, The Korean War and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For decades, Memorial Day continued to be observed on May 30, the date Logan had selected for the first Decoration Day. But in 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees; the change went into effect in 1971. The same law also declared Memorial Day a federal holiday.

Memorial Day Traditions

Cities and towns across the United States host Memorial Day parades each year, often incorporating military personnel and members of veterans' organizations. Some of the largest parades take place in Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C.

Americans also observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries and memorials. Some people wear a red poppy in remembrance of those fallen in war, a tradition that began with a World War I poem, "In Flanders Field":

"In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly*

*Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

Many people take weekend trips or throw parties and barbecues on the holiday, perhaps because Memorial Day weekend, the long weekend comprising the Saturday and Sunday before Memorial Day and Memorial Day itself, unofficially marks the beginning of summer.

Although the term Memorial Day was used beginning in the 1880s, the holiday was officially known as Decoration Day for more than a century, when it was changed by federal law. Four years later, the Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1968 finally went into effect, moving Memorial Day from its traditional observance on May 30 (regardless of the day of the week), to a set day, the last Monday in May. The move has not been without controversy. Veterans groups, concerned that more Americans associate the holiday with first long weekend of the summer and not its intended purpose to honor the nation's war dead, continue to lobby for a return to the May 30 observances. For more than 20 years, their cause was championed by Hawaiian Senator, and decorated World War II veteran, Daniel Inouye, who until his 2012 death reintroduced legislation in support of the change at the start of every Congressional term.



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."



Memorial Day 2020

St. Augustine National Cemetery



*Photos by Mark Cubbedge
Friday, May 22*

Memorial Day ceremonies

By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla (May 25, 2020)

St. Augustine National Cemetery

The annual Memorial Day observance sponsored, and led by, The Veterans Council of St. Johns County and the Military Officers Association of America presented a wreath honoring veterans who have given their last full measure of devotion to their country.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic guidelines, the public was not invited as in previous years. However, visitation of the cemetery was encouraged. There were many people on the grounds paying respects to veterans resting there.

One person in particular was Ernie Johnson who placed blooms from his own flower beds on graves as his way of paying his respects.

The weather brought to mind an observance held several years ago when, just as a Rabbi was to begin a prayer, the skies opened up and a deluge of rain fell from the skies. He referred to the rain as "God's Tears" shed in recognition of our sadness.

The rain was not of great magnitude, but it was continuous throughout the observance.

Special thanks to Mr. Bill Dudley, President of the Veterans Council; Mr. Ron Birchall, Past President Ancient City Chapter, MOAA, and Trooper John Donley, Taps



Memorial Day ceremonies

Photos submitted by Steve Spickelmier

Jacksonville National Cemetery (May 25, 2020)



From News4Jax, WJCT TV

Nease NJROTC named #No. 1 program in Area 12

Jacksonville's powerhouse program takes top spot

PONTE VEDRA, Fla. – For the seventh time in the past eight years, Allen D. Nease High School has been named the Most Outstanding Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps program in Area-12, a region that encompasses 60 schools covering northeastern Florida and the entire state of Georgia.



Nease earned the title as Most Outstanding Unit during an announcement by Commander Rustie Hibbard, NJROTC Area-12 manager. The award is based on the total achievement of the program, which includes academic performance, community outreach, campus leadership, graduation plans, overall physical fitness and competition results.

“We (seniors) came into JROTC as the number one program back in 2015,” said former Battalion Commander Erin Sass, who will be attending the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Scholars Program. “And our goal was to leave on top. Mission accomplished.”

Among Nease’s noteworthy achievements this past year – first place championships at McFarland Drill Meet, Mandarin Drill Meet, Terry Parker Drill Meet, Area-12 Drill Championship, Middleburg Pentathlon and Lee Ultimate Challenge; qualifying for both drill and orienteering national championships, graduating six seniors with Service Academy appointments or ROTC Scholarships; and the completion of more than 7,000 hours of community service.

“We’re a cadet run unit – and these cadets like to stay active,” said Command Master Chief Petty Officer Duane Spears, one of the three naval science instructors.

Nease was the number one program in Area-12 from 2012-2016 and again in 2018. Nease is currently the No. 5 - ranked program in the nation out of more than 600 schools.

“This achievement is the result of a total Nease family effort put forth by disciplined and hard-working cadets, engaged parents and a supportive school administration,” said Captain Scott LaRochelle, senior naval science instructor.

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 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



From a former classmate of Chairman Bill Dudley

The following "Argentine bit" is added by friends...

This reminded me of the day that Rod and I sat in a Spitfire just outside BA. It must have been about 1947 or shortly after. An Anglo Argentine named Jim Storey flew with the RAF. After the war he bought a Spitfire which were being decommissioned. He stripped all the armaments and fitted extra fuel tanks. He then flew it back to

Argentina alongside a BSAA airliner, probably a converted AVRO Lancaster bomber.

See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_South_American_Airways

Sitting in a Spitfire was an absolute thrill and I will never forget that experience. I was amazed how small the joystick was, only about 6 inches diameter with the trigger button at the top.

He planned to use the Spitfire for aerial photography. Unfortunately, his plans were destroyed when Peron confiscated it. I heard recently that there is a Supermarine Spitfire in a museum in La Plata. I wonder if that is Jim Storey's.

An 18 year-old just out of high school was trained to take pictures of damage done to German targets by B-17s. He flew in a British Spitfire fitted with extra fuel tanks where the guns were. In other words, he flew over Germany unarmed. This is probably one of the best WWII film clips out there. Stored for 61 years in two suitcases of 16 mm home movies that were inherited by filmmaker William Lorton from his great uncle who served as a Flight Surgeon. Those suitcases contained 3 hours of war footage that included a compelling crash landing of a Spitfire in 1944

Filmed in a 2005 interview with the now 83 year old pilot and seeing the expression on his face when he realizes it is him in the cockpit, is something you won't soon forget.

At 18 years old, he was all alone, behind enemy lines, with no guns, no escort, and he gladly did it.

They just don't make them like that anymore. It was truly the greatest generation and we owe them so much.

Click the link below to see American Spitfire Pilot in WWII

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/ie3SrjLlcUY>



Greetings All

We have fought a heroic battle against Covid-19 Virus! You have stood strong and resilient against its constant attacks and threats. Covid-19 takes the first round, however we are stills standing and planning the counter attack. The Veterans Art Exhibit has been postpone approximately one year to the day. It is now scheduled for July 2 - Aug 22, 2021 with the full support and commitment of the STAAA Administrator, Jennifer Flynt, and the Board of Directors (BOD).

I am committed to supporting the STAAA Veterans Art Exhibit come hell or high water! We will never give up! It is also my intention and desire to be surrounded by you, the same eclectic winners and highly talented veteran artists as before. Unless informed individually by you, we will all join in St. Augustine, FL in early July 2021 to celebrate our victory over Covid-19 Virus! You are a team with many talents that have spent many, many months in creating an exhibit of national importance that will never be forgotten by the St. Augustine community and our Country's veterans. The elimination of travel and social distancing restrictions to defeat Covid-19 will be another cause for celebration!

The planning steps laid out in preparation for the 2020 exhibition will serve as a solid point of departure for the 2021 show. The learning curve will be significantly reduced for the 2021 exhibit, plus permit STAAA adequate time to fully implement planned fund raising efforts to off-set costs for travel, housing and day-to day expenses for each of you.

Thank you all for your support in these most trying times! As veterans, you have all experienced disruptions and constant changes to yourselves and families in times of peace and hostilities! It doesn't necessarily make it easier, but you have a better understanding of chaos, confusion and conflicts. Thank you for hanging in there above and beyond the call of duty! Questions, comments, clarifications? Please give me a shout. Thank you all again for your understanding and support!

Warmest of regards,
Jerry Domask

Merchant Marine Veterans of World War 11

Recently Congress passed and the president signed The Con-



gressional 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

Who was “Colonel Maggie”?

For Mother’s Day, I thought it appropriate to repost an earlier article from 2015 about Martha Raye. At the time, I was surprised to find out that many of my readers were not aware of Ms. Raye’s many visits to Vietnam and what she did while there...many times at her own expense. So happy Mother’s Day to the “Meanest Mother” of the Vietnam War.



***Martha Raye*, known as “The Big Mouth” was considered the female equivalent to Bob Hope, *Martha Raye* was an American icon. It was well recognized that Martha Raye endured less comfort and more danger than any other Vietnam entertainer.**

“Colonel Maggie,” Martha Raye, was an honorary member of the Special Forces. She had received her prized Green Beret and the title of Lieutenant Colonel from President Lyndon B. Johnson, himself.

From 1964 to 1973, Martha traveled from camp to camp in isolated areas throughout Vietnam making eight (8) visits. She would stay “in-country” from four to six months at a time—usually at her own expense—to be with the troops she so dearly loved. She used the nurse’s aide skills she learned back in the 1930s, and surgical techniques she picked up during World War II to help treat the wounded. Whatever her official nursing qualifications, her assistance was often needed and very much appreciated. Her presence, whether as an entertainer or as a nurse, helped to make life bearable for so many enlisted troops and officers.

Martha was wounded twice during her visits with the Green Berets.

In May 1965 Martha began the first of her eight USO tours of Vietnam, visiting military camps and outposts. She was accompanied by Earl Colbert, a guitarist, and Ollie Harris, a bass fiddle player. During one of her visits, she was performed with Johnny Grant, Eddie Fisher, and John Bubbles.



...to entertain our armed personnel wherever they needed a laugh, a song and a touch of home.

In October that year, Martha was back in Vietnam with the USO for another six weeks. Until America's withdrawal in 1974, Martha toured in Vietnam at least annually, sometimes with the USO (1965-1970) but most often on her own and at her own expense.

She was reported to have made several jumps from planes and helicopters. She received an Airborne Beret. BUT the Green Beret was what she wore the most.

I did not know this. Don't let the sun go down without reading this about Martha Raye. The most unforgivable oversight of TV is that her shows were not taped. I was unaware of her credentials or where she is buried. Somehow I just can't see Brittany Spears, Paris Hilton, or Jessica Simpson doing what this woman and the other USO women, including Ann Margaret & Joey Heatherton did for our troops in past wars. Most of the old-time entertainers were made of a lot of sterner stuff than today's crop of activist bland whiners. The following is from an Army Aviator who takes a trip down memory lane:



“It was just before Thanksgiving '67 and we were ferrying dead and wounded from a large GRF west of Pleiku. We had run out of body bags by noon, so the Hook (CH-47 CHINOOK) was pretty rough in the back. All of a sudden, we heard a ‘take-charge’ woman’s voice in the rear. There was the singer and actress, Martha Raye, with a Special Forces beret and jungle fatigues, with subdued markings, helping the wounded into the Chinook, and carrying the dead aboard. ‘Maggie’ had been visiting her SF ‘heroes’ out ‘west’. We took off, short of fuel, and headed to the USAF hospital pad at Pleiku. As we all started unloading our sad pax’s, a USAF Captain said to Martha.... “Ms Raye, with all these dead and wounded to process, there would not be time for your show!” To all of our surprise, she pulled on her right collar and said “Captain, see this eagle? I am a full ‘Bird’ in the US Army Reserve, and on this is a ‘Caduceus’ which means I am a Nurse, with a surgical specialty.... now, take me to your wounded!” He said, “Yes ma’am.... follow me.”

Meet The Most Decorated Single Unit In The Vietnam War

BY DAN DOYLE

In June of 1966 Marine Reconnaissance teams were being sent out to look for enemy movements in the area west of the Chu Lai Marine Base. One of those teams was an 18-man patrol from Charlie Co. 1st Recon, lead by then Staff Sgt. Jimmie Howard. They were inserted by helicopter to the top of Hill 488, some 20 miles west of Chu Lai.

They didn't know it then, but this patrol would become the most highly decorated single unit in the Vietnam War.

On June 13, shortly after they had been inserted on top of Hill 488, they began to spot enemy activity. They were supported by an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) 105mm howitzer battery. They called in artillery missions on those movements. Two days later, they spotted even more enemy movements and again began calling in artillery missions. It became obvious to the enemy troops that they were being observed and they had a fair idea as to where they were being observed from as well.



It was shortly after that when Staff Sgt. Howard reported on the radio that there were squads of NVA force, later identified as being from the 3rd NVA Regiment, that were beginning to move toward his position on top of Hill 488.

In the total darkness, just after midnight on June 15th, 1966 the NVA began probing the Recon team's position. One of the Navy Hospital Corpsman with the team, B.C. Holmes, recalled, "They were within 20 feet of us. Suddenly there were grenades all over the place. People started hollering. Guys were getting hit at the same time."

In other words, all hell broke loose for this 18 man Recon team, which was clearly outnumbered. But they fought back with a ferocity that would later be recognized by the Marines that were air-lifted out to help them get out of that mess.

The 3rd NVA regiment forces were coming at them with everything they had. The Recon Marines' position was being swept by AK-47 and heavy machine gun fire from everywhere. Howard got on the radio and reported to Lt. Col. Arthur Sullivan.

"You've got to get us out of here," he told Sullivan. "There are too many of them for my people."

Sullivan immediately called in Marine and Air Force air support. Marine Huey gunships began strafing runs to within 20 feet of the Recon perimeters and Marine and Air Force fighter jets were

dropping bombs as close as 100 meters from their position. This helped to slow down the NVA assault on Howard's Recon Marines, but the enemy stayed in the fight throughout the night, firing AK-47 rifle fire at the Reconners all night.



Things couldn't have been worse for Howards Recon team. They were running out of ammo. In fact, they started throwing rocks at the enemy, hoping that they would think that they were grenades.

During the night, Howard himself was hit in the back by AK-47 rifle fire. This temporarily paralyzed his legs, but not his spirit. He dragged himself from position to position throughout the night, encouraging his men, keeping them in the fight, even though every last one of them had been wounded.

At Dawn, UH-34 helicopters from Marine Aircraft Group 36 (MAG 36) flew in Marines from Charlie Co. 1st Bn, 5th Marines out of Chu Lai. They were led by 1st Lt. Marshall Darling. They were inserted at the base of Hill 488 and began to assault the NVA 3rd Regiment forces from below in the effort to help break the siege on the Reconners at the top of the hill. As they got to the top of Hill 488, they reported that when they approached the Recon Marines, nearly all of them were armed with AK-47s they had taken from the enemy dead.



Every one of the Recon Marines and Corpsmen had been wounded, most more than one time. The Marines from C/1/5 counted 42 dead NVA around the Recon position. In this fight, the Marines suffered 10 KIA, including 2 from C/1/5 and 2 from one of the Huey squadrons, meaning that 6 of the 18 Charlie, 1st Recon team members were among those KIA.

When it was all over, Staff Sgt, Jimmie Howard would be awarded the Medal of Honor; Ricardo Binns and Hospital Corpsman, B.C. Holmes would receive the Navy Cross; J.T. Adams and J.R. Thompson would be awarded the Navy Cross posthumously; Charles Bosley, Hospital Corpsman R.J. Fitzpatrick, Raymond Hildreth, Joseph Kosoglow, Robert Martinez, Daniel Mulvihill, William Norman, Thomas Powells, and Ralph Victor, would be awarded Silver Stars; And Ignatius Carlisi, T.D. Glawe, J.C. McKinney and A.N. Mascarenas would receive the Silver Star posthumously.

All 18 men were awarded for their valor that night on top of Hill 488.



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





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
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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.



**The Special Forces Tiger. Forwarded by Tom Waskovich
from Facebook**

**Credit to helicopter pilot Dennis Winningstad
who posted this on Facebook**



Tom Waskovich

We lived with and flew in support of these Green Berets out of Forward Operating Base (FOB)-2 in Kontum, Vietnam 1967-1968.

Here is a re-post on Bubba. We got him in Laos after his mom tramped on a land mine. He was only two days old, but I had him in my jungle jacket wrapped in a towel and when we were extracted we fed him milk and got him on his way.

He did well because he got much larger than an Asian Tiger usually grew to. His weakness was real beer (He had two cans a day) which he slurped down, went to a corner of the hooch, rolled on his back, showed his junk and snored like the last day! If the "Bubster" wanted to get in your bunk with you, you just rolled over and dealt with it.

It's such a shame so many tigers were killed over there because most were killed for sport and not in human defense. When we cycled out, the question was what the hell do with Bubba?

He couldn't survive because he only knew SOG (Special Operation Group), Special Forces, Seals etc. Here is where we got creative. We had access to things normal military didn't.

A phone call was made to a research zoo in Sidney, Australia and we asked if they wanted a free tiger. When the lady at the other end realized we were for real she pissed her pants and said, "Yes, but how do we get him?"

I don't want to reference Air America, but we flew the "Bubster" to his new home and I got off the airplane with him walking beside me like a dog on a leash. They all went nuts when he walked to the lady and heeled by her side looking at her for instructions. He must have had a very good time and life there because he sired tons of babies.

When I was back to Sidney in 1987, I saw a bronze plaque telling about the SF Tiger that came to them in 1969 and made lots of great baby tigers. That part of my life is gone like

Bubba who lasted to 1985, but every time I hear a Tiger make those special noises my head and heart goes back to a tiny little baby we found in Laos in 1968.



God I miss him! By The Way, the “Bubster” never lived in a cage. He was always shown love from a bunch of very dangerous men whose hearts melted when they met him. To discipline him you grabbed a handful of hair and flesh on his shoulder and simply said, "no". He never retaliated. He just complied.

When I said he never lived in a cage, the decision about the zoo where he ended up was a research zoo that was very excited because of gene diversity. It also had the new concept of no animals in cages. People were the ones in cages or behind glass.

It took a bit for him to get back to being a tiger, but after he figured out the male female thing, nature took its course and he was off to the races and made a ton of tiger babies who are in zoos around the world. God Bless. To my knowledge, he was the only Special Forces tiger in the history books.

An interesting side note is that SF and MACV were in many ways involved with the CIA, the coats and ties back in Langley, VA couldn't understand how our Intel was so accurate.

Picture a NVA prisoner strapped into a chair and questioned. Also picture the prisoner telling us in multiple languages to go "F" ourselves. So, a hood goes back on and the prisoner was told to spill the beans or we were going to feed the zip to our tiger.

They all laughed their asses off and said we were crazy. Enter the “Bubster” and have his head about two feet from the prisoner and pull the hood off. At the same time I would pinch the back of Bubba's neck. The prisoner pissed in his pants or worse while Bubba roared in the dink's face with his extremely nasty tiger breath. The POW would sing like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

God I miss that stuff. BTW, our Intel was so accurate the pencil necks were amazed and never found out why!

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)

One of only three US Navy SEALs to be awarded the Medal of Honor in Vietnam . . .

By Ned Forney, Writer, Saluting America's Veterans

"I lost an eye and part of my head and brain and had some other bodily injuries. I have another eye. You just go on."

- Tommy Norris, US Navy SEAL and Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient



From April 10-13, 1972, Thomas "Tommy" Norris, a 28-year old native of Jacksonville, Florida, who was an Eagle Scout and had joined the Navy in 1967, became one of only three SEALs to be awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War.

In early April 1972, after USAF pilot Lt. Col. Icaal "Gene" Hambleton was shot down over enemy territory, the Air Force launched what would become the longest and most intense rescue operation of the Vietnam War.

In repeated attempts to save the pilot, fourteen Americans were killed, eight additional aircraft were shot down, and two Airmen became stranded behind enemy lines.

On April 10, with the situation rapidly deteriorating, Norris and his five-man team were sent into North Vietnamese territory to rescue the downed crewmen.

Over the next three days, Norris and his men, hit by mortar and rocket attacks and engaged in intense fire fights, repeatedly risked their lives to search for the missing Americans.

At one point in the harrowing ordeal, Lt. Norris and South Vietnamese commando Nguyen Van Kiet left their forward base, swam more than a mile down an enemy river, and after fighting off multiple attacks from communist forces, rescued Hambleton and another downed Airman.

For his "outstanding display of decisive leadership and undaunted courage," Norris was awarded the Medal of Honor.

“I don’t feel like I was anybody special,” he later said. “It was a mission that needed to be accomplished. Anyone else in my position would have done the same thing.”

Postscript:

Six months later, while on a intelligence gathering mission, Norris was again hit by enemy forces. During a four-hour firefight, Norris and his men, surrounded by nearly 200 enemy soldiers, held their position and killed countless communist attackers.

But as the SEALs attempted to make their way to a beach extraction point, Norris, covering his team’s withdrawal, was shot in the head and presumed dead.

Fellow SEAL Michael E. Thornton, however, refused to abandon his comrade. Dashing through enemy fire, he recovered his unconscious buddy, carried him to the beach, and ran into the ocean.

For the next two hours, the 23-year-old Greenville, South Carolina native, who was also wounded, kept Norris and another injured man afloat until they were picked up by a friendly boat.

Norris survived the ordeal. After returning to the States, spending three years in the hospital, and undergoing numerous surgeries (his first one lasted 19 hours), he was medically retired from the Navy. As a result of his nearly-fatal head wound, Norris lost his left eye and part of his skull.

For his actions on October 31, 1972, Thornton was awarded the Medal of Honor, becoming the first MOH recipient to be recognized for saving the life of a fellow MOH recipient. Thornton retired from the Navy in 1992. The two men frequently attend MOH events together and co-authored a book, "By Honor Bound."

Today we pay tribute to Tommy Norris, Michael Thornton, their families, and all those who served, sacrificed, and died in Vietnam. We will never forget you!

Thirteen prisons and prison camps were used to house U.S. prisoners in North Vietnam, the most widely known of which was HỒa Lò Prison (nicknamed the "Hanoi Hilton"). The treatment and ultimate fate of U.S. prisoners of war in Vietnam became a subject of widespread concern in the United States, and hundreds of thousands of Americans wore POW bracelets with the name and capture date of imprisoned U.S. service members.



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





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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**




STAND BY THEM

Confidential help for
Veterans and their families

00-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

**NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

..... 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

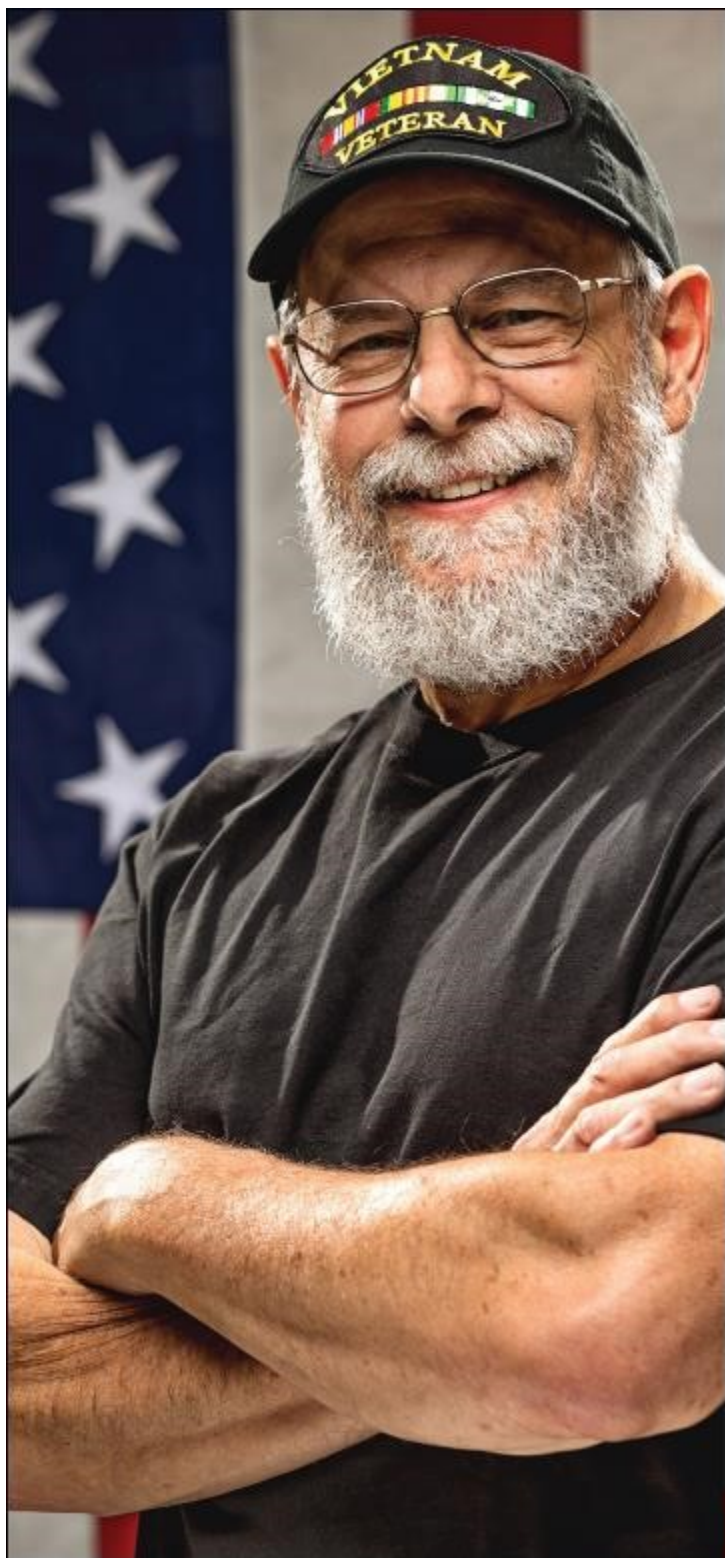
Meetings:

Last Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)



SERVING VETERANS SINCE 1979

At Community Hospice & Palliative Care, we are honored to serve veterans and their caregivers by providing specialized programs to meet their unique needs now and at the end of life.

- ★ Advance Care Planning
- ★ Bereavement & Grief Support
- ★ Caregiver Education
- ★ Hospice Care
- ★ Palliative Care
- ★ We Honor Veterans Program

For more information about our We Honor Veterans program, any of our services or to become a veteran volunteer, call toll-free **866.253.6681** or go to **Veterans.CommunityHospice.com**.



"I've proudly served as Chairman of the Community Hospice Veterans Partnership (CHVP) since 2011. CHVP partners with veterans service groups throughout the community to listen and learn how Community Hospice & Palliative Care can best serve our unique needs."

Bob Buehn, Captain, United States Navy (Ret.)
Chairman, Community Hospice Veterans Partnership
(2011 - present)





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.