



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

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From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

June 2024

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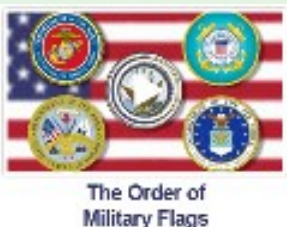
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Fellow Veterans,

Our local community turned out in a very big way this past weekend to honor our veterans who paid the supreme price for serving our Nation.

The Memorial Day ceremony conducted by our local MOAA chapter and the Veterans Council was attended by over 500 of our local citizens. Our keynote speaker, Brig. Gen. Richard Coffey III, Commander, Fla. Air National Guard, delivered an inspiring message highlighting the service of those who have worn the uniform of our Nation and paid the supreme price for their service. This year's ceremony saw the return of the massing of the colors by many local veterans organizations as well as many of our youth organizations. As has been the past custom, the names of all our fallen

comrades that have passed since last Memorial Day were read aloud by Alison Simpson and retired USA Maj. Lisa Merwin with the sounding of the bell. We are grateful for the many volunteers that came out to help place flags at each of the headstones on Saturday before Memorial Day and on Tuesday to pick up the flags and police the grounds. Our program has grown exponentially each year and we are very appreciative to our community for their support.

Our Veterans Village continues to flourish with many repairs and renovations taking place even as we are at near capacity. Painting, plumbing, cabinet installations, and electrical repairs in some rooms is ongoing. There has been an outpouring of generosity from our community with offers of bed linens, towels and toilet



articles, food, clothing, books, and other necessities. Many have volunteered their time to provide labor to help do many of the projects needed for repairs and such. We are very grateful for all the support we have received thus far. Soon you will see the sign out front changed to reflect our name... *Veterans Village* prominently displayed and an American flag flying in the front parking lot nearest the street.

The Veterans Council wishes everyone a safe and enjoyable summer. Thank you for your service.

Bill Dudley, Chairman
Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County meets on the last Thursday of the month, all are invited to attend.



We meet at the County Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View, at 7 pm in the Muscovy room.

Upcoming Speakers

June 27

**Carey Picklesimer, CorpsStrength
Angela Renner, VA, Suicide Prevention Supervisor**

July 25

**Vicky Oakes, SJC Supervisor of Elections
Al Kennedy, Provisions4Patriots**

August 29

**Kim Simon, Director of Programs, Yoga 4 Change
Shea Vela, Suicide Prevention, N FL/ S GA Veterans Health System**

September 26

Ashley Semerenko, Gratitude America

**VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

April 25, 2024



CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS: Chairman Dudley

PLEDGE: Chairman Dudley

INVOCATION: Bill Jefferson, Chaplain

INTRODUCTION OF NEW GUESTS: Chairman Dudley

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Minutes of last meeting conducted March 28, 2024, were presented by Chairman Dudley. Copies of the Minutes and Agenda are available on the sign-in table and were sent to members electronically by the Secretary. The minutes were approved by voice vote with no changes.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Mountcastle presented the Treasurer's Report to the Council. As of March 27, 2024, the cash balance was \$164,267.75. As of April 24, 2024, the balance is \$158,203.94. Available cash totals \$170,446.84. Treasurer Mountcastle went over the Treasurer's Report, explaining funds for the Dudley Foundation and Money Market accounts. Treasurer Mountcastle went through details and filing of the current income tax return with the IRS. Expenses that are incurred by the Veterans Council each month of the year were discussed. Details of the month's expenses were also covered. The Treasurer asked if there were any questions regarding the Treasurer's Report. The Report was approved by voice vote.

SPEAKERS:

TRISH DORAN, MILITARY LIASON WEKIVA SPRINGS

Wekiva Springs is a mental health and substance abuse facility. They participate in in-patient programs and daytime out-patient programs to help those within the NE Florida area. Wikiva Springs is a VA provider and was the first one the VA ever utilized for the local Veteran community care. Wekiva Springs not only services the Veterans but also others in the community. Ms. Doran went through the services that are provided for our Veterans at their Southside Facility. The floor was open for any questions and answers provided.

DEBBIE JOHNSON, K9s UNITED

Debbie Johnson introduced herself and Officer Lavon and K9 Raven. Officer Lavon spoke of the responsibilities of Raven at the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office. She is assigned the to Corrections Division and works at the jail as a narcotics detention canine.

Ms. Johnson explained how she started K9s United back in 2015 after being "moved" by the loss of the local K9, Barron, who was killed in the line of duty. She then went to the Sheriff's Office to inquire how she could help with the K9 unit. After a ride-a-long with the K9 unit, she discovered how expensive that unit can be. She started K9s United, a 501©3 to raise funds to go directly to the Sheriff's Office K9 Unit. Ms. Johnson went into detail how they supplement the K9 Unit and how the money is spent. She also discussed other needs for the K9 Unit. She spoke of how she currently pursues legislation for punishment for laws broken against K9 dogs. There have been laws passed for the medical care of dogs injured in the line of duty. Ms. Johnson also spoke of the new Florida license plate that has been approved for K9s United. The floor was open for questions and answers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Joseph McDermott and John Leslie were unable to attend this meeting due to other obligations. They will return at the next meeting.

Chairman Dudley turned the Committee time over to Derek Collins of The Fire Watch. Mr. Collins explained that The Fire Watch is the State of Florida's veterans suicide prevention program and gave the background of the organization. They currently are performing a workshop for a Crisis Intercept Map with the Sheriff's Department, Fire Department, Health and Human Services, VA Mental Health, and a few other local organizations, including the Veterans Council, to determine where the resource gaps are in St. Johns County. It is a day and a half exercise, and everyone was invited to attend day two of the workshop (April 26th) to share their experiences. The floor was open to questions and answers.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Dudley discussed the acquisition of the Veterans Village and gave an update on the changes starting to take place. There has been a logo decided upon and the new sign for "Veterans Village – Home of Heros" should be up soon. The American Flag will replace the current fountain, and all will be lit at night. Home Depot is providing all the paint for the facility and most of the rooms are now painted. Volunteers are working hard. Door dams will be placed at all the lower rooms to prevent flooding during the storms. The last few days have been spent interviewing Veterans applying to stay at Veterans Village. Seventeen (17) Veterans have applied for the twenty available rooms. Long term residents of the hotel have been provided 30 days to vacate the facility. Lots of things still to be done and Home Depot is providing the materials and the labor for the installation of the 6-foot fence that will be placed around the property. Veterans Village will be a temporary home for these Veterans and help will be provided to assist them in obtaining other long-term housing they

can afford. The floor was open for questions related to Veterans Village. St. Johns County had allotted funds for the Veterans Service Office to use to help Veterans with bills and mortgage payments, but it had strong stipulations. The funds were replaced in the general account and then returned to help with the Veterans Village expenses. The County Commissioner in attendance, Commissioner Alaimo, was recognized and thanked for his assistance in this matter.

The SR 16 project is now underway, and that facility is hoped to be available by the end of this year or early January 2025. Many services will be offered to all the homeless.

Chairman Dudley discussed the plans and events for upcoming Memorial Day Ceremony (May 27th) in St. Augustine. General Coffey will be the Keynote Speaker. Volunteers are needed on Saturday (May 25th) to help with “Flags In.” On Tuesday (May 28th) volunteers are also needed for “Flags Out.”

The floor was open to questions, answers and all others that had information to share with the Veterans Council.

Next Veterans Council meeting will be held on Thursday, May 30th beginning at 7:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Dudley, Chairman



Memorial Day at the St Augustine National Cemetery

From Mark Cubbedge:

There was a little extra sadness in the sustain of the bell that rang out across St. Augustine National Cemetery this Memorial Day.

This was the first Memorial Day Ceremony since Sgt. Maj. Ray Quinn passed away in November. His name was one of many that were read as we gave a final salute to St. Johns County veterans who have passed away in the last year.

After the names were read, Bell Salute Officer Cadet Jade Walker (St. Augustine High School JROTC) gave a solitary toll of the bell. As the tone made its way across this hallowed ground I could audibly hear Sgt. Maj. Quinn's voice in my head reciting his Tribute to a Fallen Comrade.

In Quinn's own words I say, "Rest, our comrade. Rest."



Memorial Day at the St Augustine National Cemetery

pictures by Bill Gradwell



2024 80th Anniversary of D Day

D-Day was the name given to the **June 6, 1944**, invasion of the beaches at Normandy in northern France by troops from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and other countries during World War II. France at the time was occupied by the armies



of Nazi Germany, and the amphibious assault—codenamed Operation Overlord—landed some 156,000 Allied soldiers on the beaches of Normandy by the end of the day.

Despite their success, some 4,000 Allied troops were killed by German soldiers defending the beaches. At the time, the D-Day invasion was the largest naval, air and land operation in history, and within a few days about 326,000 troops, more than 50,000 vehicles and some 100,000 tons of equipment had landed. By August 1944, all of northern France had been liberated, and in spring of 1945 the Allies had defeated the Germans. Historians often refer to D-Day as the beginning of the end of World War II.

By dawn on June 6, thousands of paratroopers and glider troops were already on the ground behind enemy lines, securing bridges and exit roads. The amphibious invasions began at 6:30 a.m. The British and Canadians overcame light opposition to capture beaches codenamed Gold, Juno and Sword, as did the Americans at Utah Beach. U.S. forces faced heavy resistance at Omaha Beach, where there were over 2,000 American casualties. However, by day's end, approximately 156,000 Allied troops had successfully stormed Normandy's beaches. According to some estimates, more than 4,000 Allied troops lost their lives in the D-Day invasion, with thousands more wounded or missing.

Less than a week later, on June 11, the beaches were fully secured and over 326,000 troops, more than 50,000 vehicles and some 100,000 tons of equipment had landed at Normandy.

Saint Augustine Sons Of the American Revolution

Compatriot Jerry Hanchett was presented the Patriot Medal in recognition of his many years of outstanding service to the FLSSAR and to the St. Augustine Chapter SAR. FLSSAR Past President (2018) Patrick Niemann made the presentation at the BOM banquet on 18 May 2024.

The Patriot Medal is the highest award presented to a Compatriot by a State Society and recognizes long, faithful, outstanding, and distinguished service at the state and/or chapter level.

Congratulations to Compatriot Jerry Hanchett for receiving this well deserved recognition!

Pictured are Compatriot Jerry Hanchett (blue jacket) and Compatriot Patrick Niemann (Colonel, U.S. Army, Retired) (white U.S. Army mess dress uniform).



Good afternoon, Community Partners, Patriots, and Veteran Supporters-



I hope this message finds you well. As we gear up for our 10th Annual Celebration of Women Veterans Recognition Week from June 9th to June 15th, we're excited to invite you to join us in spreading the word.

This week-long event is a special occasion dedicated to honoring the remarkable contributions and sacrifices of women veterans in our community. We have a series of engaging and meaningful activities planned throughout the week to celebrate and support our women veterans.

To ensure the success of this event and to reach as many women veterans as possible, we kindly ask for your support in sharing our flyer and event information with your network. Your assistance in spreading the word will greatly contribute to making this event a memorable and impactful one.

Attached to this email, you'll find our event flyer and details in PDF and JPG format for easy sharing. You can also locate our event on our social media pages by simply clicking on the social media icons in my signature below. We deeply appreciate your partnership and support in recognizing the incredible achievements of women veterans.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance. Together, let's make this year's Celebration of Women Veterans Recognition Week one to remember!

Sharleen Deary

2024 WOMEN VETERANS WEEK OF RECOGNITION

Igniting the Trailblazer in You

HOSTED BY NORTHEAST FLORIDA WOMEN VETERANS, INC.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Join us for our 10th Annual Women Veterans Recognition Week, running from June 9th to June 15th. This week is not just about acknowledging the extraordinary accomplishments of women veterans but also about shedding light on the unique obstacles they face as they transition back into civilian life. This year, we will continue our focus on self-care, recognizing that mental health challenges and suicidal tendencies often stem from neglecting one's own well-being. As veterans are ingrained with a mission-first mindset, our mission is to guide them toward embracing self-care and recognizing their intrinsic importance.

Below is the schedule of events, complete with details available on our website at www.forwomenvets.org. You can also scan the QR code for quick access.

Tuesday, June 4

Cocktails for a Cause
River Club
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
By invitation only

Sunday, June 9

Church Fellowship
Impact Church
8:00 am

Monday, June 10

Opening Ceremony
City Hall Atrium
10:00 am

Lunch & Learn
VyStar Veterans
Memorial Arena
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Paint & Sip
Flying Fish Tap House
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Wednesday, June 12

Women, Wealth, & Wine
1937 Spirits & Eatery
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Thursday, June 13

Self-Care Symposium
Location: TBD
8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Friday, June 14

VA Women's Health Fair
Jacksonville North VA OPC &
Domiciliary
9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Saturday, June 15

Women Veterans Recognition Gala
Southbank Hotel
Guest Speaker: Michelle C. Allen, State
Director, Florida Veterans'
Employment & Training Services
Reception at 6:00 pm
Program at 6:30 pm

Other Events:

- June 10-14: Women Veterans Documentary Display at City Hall
- HerVOICE video on [YouTube](#)
- Honoring Women on the Wall on [YouTube](#)
- Traveling Stories

SPONSORSHIP INFO

We invite you to join us in honoring and uplifting our women veterans by becoming a sponsor or donating towards Women Veterans Recognition Week events. Your contribution will not only enrich the lives of women veterans but also demonstrate your commitment to supporting those who have served our country bravely.

We welcome gift certificates, sponsor products/services, and other items suitable for door prizes and gift bag inclusions. We also encourage you to include a salute to "Women Veterans Recognition Week" in your media ads during that week.

FORWOMENVETS.ORG/SPONSOR

TICKETS & REGISTRATION

<https://bit.ly/2024wor>



For more information
(904) 862-6039
www.forwomenvets.org
wor@forwomenvets.org

Home Again St. Johns

Thank you to the St. Johns County Veterans Services office for donating this bicycle to a Veterans Village veteran. We hope to have full veteran occupancy by the first week of May. We are also working with those who are not veterans to find housing.

Home Again St. Johns Board President Troy Blevins and Board Member Bill Dudley, also from the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, accepted Andy Aschom's donation from SJC Veterans Services.

Together, we can change lives and end the cycle of homelessness and poverty in St. Johns County. If you can help or need help, please call Home Again St. Johns at (904) 436-5382



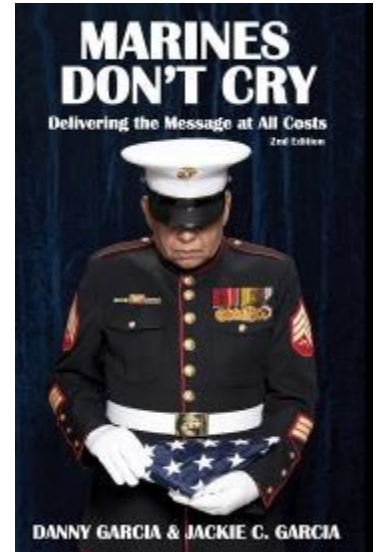
This is the first in a new series, local veterans who have written books

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN LOST -- REALLY LOST?

Danny and Jackie answer this question in *Marines Don't Cry* with stories of death to life, deep sorrow to joy, darkness to light, and freedom in Christ.

Danny recounts his early life in Spanish Harlem and describes conversion from a life of drugs and "the fast lane" to one consumed with knowing and serving God. This makes his journey of walking more than 52 million steps on six continents for children and world peace such an incredible story.

Marines Don't Cry is about the transformational power of God's love: how Danny found his calling and is delivering the message of Christ at all costs.



"THE WALKING MAN"

Danny Garcia, The Walking Man, was born and raised in New York's Spanish Harlem. He served as a United States Marine, law enforcement officer, and ordained minister. Since 1996, he has prayed and walked over 52,000,000 steps on six continents for children and world peace. During his journeys, Garcia met with dignitaries all over the world, ministering to the famous and to the poorest of the poor.

Garcia began his journey as a personal commitment to peace and children and continued walking and raising funds for multiple charitable organizations.

Danny walks for fellow veterans, first responders, and their families, thanking them for their service and sacrifices.

He is married to the former Jacqueline Charsagua of El Paso, TX, and they work side by side to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. For more information, visit Danny's legacy website.

**JACKIE CHARSAGUA GARCIA,
USAFA CLASS OF 1985, Co-Author**

Jackie Charsagua Garcia is CEO/President of Global Walk (Florida Not for Profit) and is married to Daniel Garcia.

She graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO, in 1985 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. Jackie holds a Bachelor of Science in Management and a Master of Science in Human Resources Management. While in the US Air Force, Jackie specialized in communications, acquisition, systems engineering, and information technology. She retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in the summer of 2006, having spent more than 21 years on active duty.

Since 2006, she has supported and advised on all aspects of her husband's walks and charitable initiatives within the United States and abroad. She joined Danny during his Africa Walk in 2007 and ministered in South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Southern Sudan.

Her vision is to spread the hope, love, and grace of Jesus Christ through her writing. She is a native of El Paso, TX, mother of one amazing daughter, and a breast cancer survivor..

"Scan QR code or visit marinesdontcry.com to learn more and buy the book."



Scan me

Dr. Robert A. Ernst is a retired orthodontist who practiced in central Connecticut for more than forty years. His education was interrupted when he joined the Air Force. He became a 1st lieutenant during the Vietnam era, before resuming his educational goals.



His early career as an author began in the form of a storyteller. Known as Dr. Bob, he created tales about the animals that lived around the pond at Foxhill Acres, his former home in Nova Scotia, Canada. He delighted neighboring children with the stories. In more recent years, his wife Ann convinced him to write down the stories in a series of books, and Dr. Bob's Pondville was created.

More tales are on the way from this award-winning author.

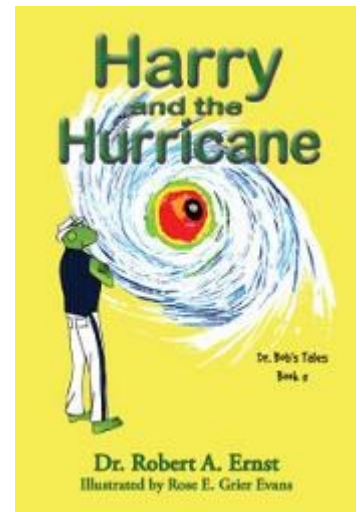
Dr. Bob and Ann reside in Florida.

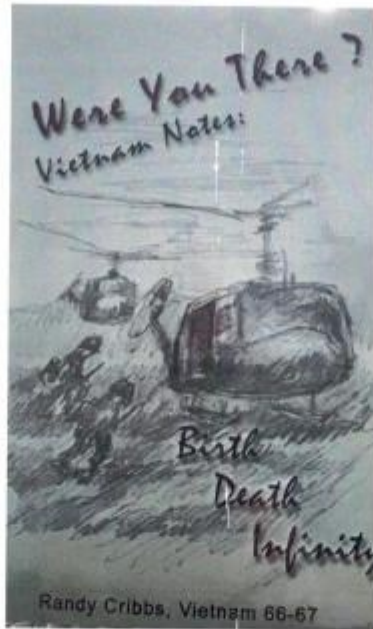
Thunderstorms, a hurricane's whirling winds, an earthquake . . .what next!?

Extreme weather takes friends in Florida by surprise as whipping winds carry them northward into Canada and land them—broken and bruised—in Pondville. There, a giant sinkhole caused by an earthquake is discovered. A beloved building is leaning toward the sinkhole. Harry and the other Pondville residents try a solution offered by their new Florida friends. Danger, more mishaps, and cooperation make for an exciting, fast-paced adventure. But will they succeed in preventing disaster?

Harry and the Hurricane is the 5th book in the Dr. Bob's Tales' series of illustrated chapter books.

The targeted age group is 8-12. His website is drbobstales.com.





Were You There? Vietnam Notes

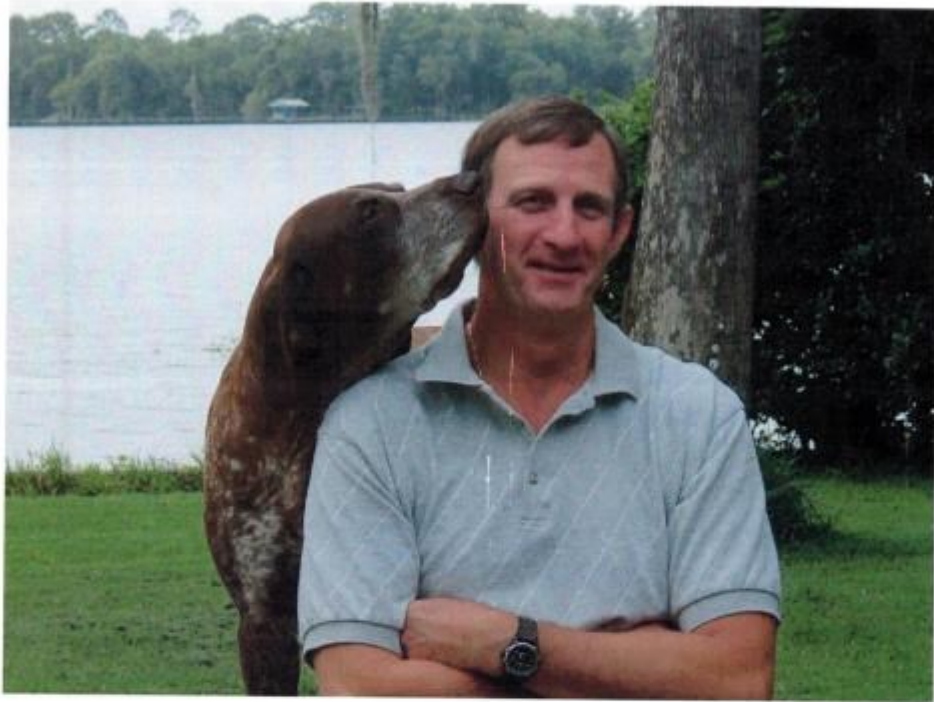
Randy Cribbs

In writing "Were You There", quite by accident, I discovered that I came to grips with a few issues and from e-mail responses received similar feedback from others. One of my proudest takeaways was the many comments of family members of vets who report that "we now understand." I realize now that my intent for the collection of poems and sketches was to give vets and family members a way to gain an understanding of the war.

Vietnam was a strange time and a confusing conflict, particularly for the young soldier. The guerrilla combat environment where attacks came from all sides added to the confusion and, of course, the nation was very divided on whether we should have even been there.

The book is divided into eight sections that take one to the place, the job, good things, bad things... and so on. Shadowy sketches seek to capture the scenes --very effectively.

Those of us who were there belong to an exclusive club, and I hope these poems bring vets back to a time when we were all sweating in the clubhouse. For me, many verses recall images I had stored deep in the wells of memory and feared. But when they came out, they somehow felt like old friends.



Randy Cribbs and Murphy

Randy Cribbs is a native of Florida, a retired army officer, Vietnam Vet and Award-winning author.

He holds degrees from the University of Florida, Pacific Lutheran University, Jacksonville State University and is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College and FBI National Academy.

He has authored two books on Vietnam, eight others set in Saint Augustine and the surrounding area, and two other novels.

An advocate for youngsters to explore the benefits of reading physical books, Randy lectures, writes and lives in St Augustine.

Patricia Patten, US Navy

I'm one of the women veterans featured in the latest edition of She Served magazine. The photo shoot was a lot of fun. Thanks to Lynn Geiser and her Hope 4 Veterans organization for inviting me to be included. A big thanks also to the photographer, Martina Schmidt, Founder and Chairwoman of She Served - Celebrating Women Veterans Initiative, for creating the magazine to honor women veterans and for the complimentary photo shoot. Martina, her entire team, and Lynn Geiser were so very kind and made me feel like a celebrity. Thank you all for such a lovely gift and the terrific layout in the magazine.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"During times of darkness,
remember: you are the
light."

~ Pat. Patten



Patricia

BY MEL DEAN

Patricia Patten served in the United States Navy from 1976 to 1990 as a data processing technician, working with the Honeywell 6000 Computer System. Her duties included managing data processing tasks, facilitating communications with ships in the 6th Fleet through live chat, and administering a digital supply ordering system for the Navy. She notes that the computers she worked with in the late '70s took up half a floor in their banking and now all of that processing power is available on a typical smartphone.

Patricia met her husband, Bob Patten, during her service; they raised their daughters together before settling in a suburb of Orlando, Florida. After her husband's passing in January 2023, Patricia moved to live with her daughter and two artistic grandchildren, where she dedicates her time to being a super grandma.

In addition to her family responsibilities, Patricia serves as the executive director for Medically Challenged Children, a non-profit organization she founded to support families with special needs children. She is passionate about writing and is currently working on a novel inspired by the story of Deborah Simons, a Revolutionary War soldier who disguised herself as a man to serve in the Continental Army. Simons was the most successful soldier in her unit and was honored to be a Ranger in the Special Forces.

Patricia believes women Veterans bring a unique perspective and skill set to the workforce, serving as a catalyst for positive change. Their military experience fosters resilience, adaptability, and leadership. These qualities are invaluable in professional settings. As the role of women in the military continues to evolve, so does their potential to contribute to the growth and prosperity of our nation, paving the way for advancements that were once unimaginable.

For Pat's fellow Veterans she has this advice: transitioning to civilian life can be challenging, for many women Veterans, but establishing healthy self-care routines is essential to navigating this journey successfully. By prioritizing mental and physical well-being through activities such as therapy, exercise, and art, women Veterans can nurture their holistic health and cultivate a positive post-service life. These self-care practices not only promote personal growth and fulfillment but also empower women to embrace the opportunities and possibilities that await them beyond their military service.



Celebrating Women Veterans

St. Johns charity motorcycle ride gives boost to paralyzed Army retiree, other veterans

Beth Reese Cravey, Jacksonville Florida Times-Union
Recent 2024 Hometown Heroes charity motorcycle event in St. Johns County raised about \$63,000, portions of which will help an Army veteran rebuild his life after a training accident left him paralyzed from the waist down.



About \$20,000 will be used for scholarships at HorsePlay Therapy's RiseUp program, which has provided assisted equine therapy for retired Staff. Sgt. Karlton Berry and other veterans. Another \$18,000 of the proceeds will be used to make the bedroom and bathroom of Berry's St. Augustine home wheelchair-accessible and to provide therapeutic devices.

"Karlton's story is one that continues to inspire me," said ride organizer Mike Minter, a senior builder with MasterCraft Builder Group, one of the event sponsors. "We've seen him change and grow into someone full of life and hope, and that's what this is all about."

The remaining funds will pay for wheelchair ramps and other accessibility needs of first responders and military veterans injured on or off the job.

Berry, a signals intelligence analyst, fell from a 40-foot tower during a training exercise. He withdrew from life.

"It kind of hit me real hard. I didn't want to talk to anybody, I didn't want to be around anybody," he said in a video for the ride and RiseUp.

Equine therapy, he said, "has helped me a lot."

"I don't have to have that weight on my shoulders. It's OK to ask for help," he said. "It gave me a confidence boost and a connection with nature again."

About 320 riders participated in this year's Hometown Heroes Ride, which was sponsored by the Veteran Enforcers Motorcycle Association St. Johns County Chapter, Adamec Harley-Davidson of St. Augustine and Northeast Florida Builders Association's Builders Care.

Honor Flight Veterans at Reunion



DANIEL BEAN, Attorney, Veteran



The Jacksonville Bar Association recognized Daniel Bean as the 2024 Jacksonville Daily Record Lawyer of the Year at its annual meeting and Law Day luncheon May 1.

The award honors outstanding service to the community over and above the practice of law, at the meeting at the DoubleTree by Hilton Downtown.

“We are here to add another name to list the list of distinguished recipients,” Daily Record Publisher Angela Campbell said.

Bean’s professional life began in 1987 as a U.S. Navy officer after graduating from Vanderbilt University and its ROTC program.

After four years as a Surface Warfare Officer, he attended law school with a Navy scholarship and then joined the Judge Advocate General.

He concluded 25 years of military service with the rank of captain and numerous awards, including the Legion of Merit.

Like many Navy retirees, Bean decided to settle down in Jacksonville, where he went into private practice with Marks Gray.

He clerked for three federal judges before joining Holland & Knight, where he rose through the ranks to managing partner before striking out on his own and opening a boutique firm with a Holland & Knight colleague in 2018.

That firm merged recently with Smith, Gambrell & Russell so Bean can devote more of his time to community service.

His record in that field is long and varied.

Bean is chair of the Jacksonville Port Authority board of directors, chair of the Northeast Florida Mission United advisory board and chair of the Fresh Ministries board.

He is treasurer of the Five Star Veterans Center, vice chair of the Florida College Prepaid Foundation and former board chair of WJCT, the public broadcasting TV station and NPR radio station.

Two projects he helped to start, and that benefit Jacksonville and the veterans community, stand out on the list.

A military museum for Jacksonville

Bean began helping lead the effort to establish a naval museum Downtown in 2010 as he was ending his term as president of the Jacksonville Bar Association.

At the time, the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association was working to bring the USS Charles F. Adams, a Cold War-era guided-missile destroyer that was in the Philadelphia Navy Yard waiting to be scrapped, to Jacksonville.

The USS Orleck arrives in Downtown Jacksonville on March 26, 2022

When the Navy ultimately decided to scrap the warship, the association found another retired destroyer of the same era, the USS Orleck, a museum ship in Lake Charles, Louisiana, that needed a new home.

The association entered into an agreement in 2019 to take over the floating museum, then convinced City Council to approve moving it to a berth Downtown.

The warship was moved to a shipyard in Texas in late 2021 for initial refurbishment to prepare it for its journey to Jacksonville.

On March 26, 2022, the Orleck was towed on the St. Johns River and moored along the Northbank Riverwalk.

It has since moved to its permanent berth at the Shipyards property, where more than 70,000 people have toured Jacksonville warship museum.

It is the only warship attraction in Florida, and the anchor for the planned redevelopment of the Northbank west of the Four Seasons hotel and office complex under construction near EverBank Stadium.

Helping warriors heal

The nonprofit K9s For Warriors, established in 2011, helps end veteran suicide by providing trained service dogs to military veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, traumatic brain injury or military sexual trauma.

Daniel Bean is CEO of K9s For Warriors, which pairs veterans who need healing with res-

cued canine companions.

Bean was a charter member of the board. When the organization's CEO resigned in January, Bean, then board chair, took over as interim CEO.

On April 16, he dropped "interim" from the title when he was voted CEO by the board.

In addition to being the nation's largest provider of trained service dogs to military veterans, the nonprofit helps bring awareness to veterans' mental health issues and advocates for policy-level reform on their behalf.

With most of the dogs being rescues, the program allows the canine/veteran team to build a bond that facilitates their collective healing and recovery.

More than 1,000 dogs have been matched with veterans since the program began.

The organization's six facilities include: K9s For Warriors' Shari Duval National Headquarters and the Davis Family Mega Kennel in Ponte Vedra and the Petco Love K9 Center and Warrior Ranch in San Antonio, Texas.

Bean spoke of the organization's future challenge in March at the most recent graduation ceremony, which marked the 1,000th warrior/K9 team.

"While saving the next 1,000 lives is important, our vision is much bolder, as we are focused on saving all the lives of veterans suffering from trauma caused by their service defending you and me. We will not stop until that mission has been achieved," he said.



From the Veterans Council of Clay County, FL

The VA system has a care benefit that pays home care agencies contracted to provide care (Senior Helpers) and pays us directly. Initial care can range between 15-30 hours weekly and on occasion can include additional respite care to allow a spouse to get out and take care of business. When supported with additional information on care needs, Senior Helpers appeals to the VA on your behalf for additional care in the home. Veterans need to be seen at the Jacksonville VA Clinic: 1536 N Jefferson St, Jacksonville, FL 32209 Main phone: 904-475-5800 or Middleburg VA Clinic 400 College Drive Suite 200 Middleburg, FL 32068 Main number: 904-213-2700

- You can find them by going to <https://www.va.gov/north-florida-health-care/locations/>
- If your veteran has already signed up for VA health benefits, contact your social worker and ask for an appointment with a VA Primary for evaluation. Otherwise, a Geriatrics Social worker instructs us to take the family member to the front of the clinic and tell the representative your loved one is a veteran (take his/her discharge papers DD-214 and ID) and needs to be registered for VA medical services.
- The VA representative will make an appointment to see a VA Primary Physician. If asked what issues are being experienced; let them know the patient needs support for Activity of Daily Living (ADLS) which includes bathing, dressing, ambulation support due to fall risk, transfer assistance from and to chairs/bed, etc. It should be evident, but it helps to explain what issues need support and that you understand there is a service for Home Health Aides for several hours weekly.
- Once the physician examines the patient; he/she is assigned to team, and they assign the case to a social worker.
- The social worker, based on the physician's authorization, contacts a homecare agency on their contract list to support the patient.
- Of course, Senior Helpers wants to provide care for your family so let the social worker and physician know you want to use Senior Helpers West Jacksonville.
- If all this works as expected, we should get a call from the social worker that the patient has been assigned to Senior Helpers. They fax us the case file. We call the family and make an appointment. I will personally come and set up the care. In a couple days we have a caregiver working the care schedule.
- I was told this happens promptly once the veteran goes to the clinic and registers for services. He said two weeks. Even if it is a bit longer . . . , not bad.
- Important: The VA pays Senior Helpers directly for VA care services. There is no cost to your family. There may be some recurring recertification for care, but Senior Helpers has served some of these veterans for several years.

UNF Division of Continuing Education

Animal-Assisted Services Information Sessions

Interested in learning more about our Animal-Assisted Services certification class? Register for one of our upcoming information sessions to see how we help you get certified! Each session is from 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm EST.

Register today! [https://
conta.cc/3wMvnr0](https://conta.cc/3wMvnr0)




SAVE THE DATE!

ANIMAL-ASSISTED SERVICES INFO SESSIONS

APRIL 17	MAY 22	JUNE 12	JULY 17	AUG. 21	SEPT. 4
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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS SALES TAX HOLIDAY JUNE 1 - JUNE 14

Purchase qualifying disaster preparedness supplies tax-free

\$10 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cans or pouches of wet pet food	\$25 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cat litter	\$60 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nonelectric food storage coolersPortable power banks	\$3,000 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Portable generators used to provide light or communications or to preserve food in a power outage (<i>Never use a generator indoors.</i>)
\$15 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Manual can openersCollapsible or travel-size food and water bowls for petsCat litter pansPet waste disposal bagsHamster or rabbit substrate	\$40 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Portable self-powered light sourcesPet Beds	\$70 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Smoke detectors or smoke alarmsFire extinguishersCarbon monoxide detectors	
\$20 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reusable iceLeashes, collars and muzzles for petsPet pads	\$50 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Portable self-powered radios, two-way radios or weather-band radiosGas or diesel fuel tanksBatteries, including rechargeable batteries:<ul style="list-style-type: none">AA-cellAAA-cellC-cellD-cell6-volt9-volt	\$100 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none">Tarpaulins or other flexible waterproof sheetingGround anchor systemsPortable pet kennelsOver the counter pet medicationsBags of dry dog or cat food	

Find a full list of tax-free items at FloridaRevenue.com/DisasterPrep and a complete disaster supply kit checklist at FloridaDisaster.org/Kit

Jacksonville University Alum Capt. Phil Castellano takes command of SUBRON 12

By ActionNewsJax.com News Staff

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A Jacksonville University alum and U.S. Naval Captain has been entrusted with the leadership of a decorated Naval squadron.



On Friday, April 19, Capt. Phil Castellano '00 took command of Submarine Squadron (SUBRON) 12 in a traditional change of command ceremony held pierside at Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut.

SUBRON 12's mission is to provide attack submarines that are ready, willing, and able to meet the unique challenges of undersea combat and deployed operations in unforgiving environments across the globe. It is one of two SUBRONs based out of SUBASE New London, alongside Submarine Squadron 4, commanded by Capt. Jason Grizzle.

"I take humility and pride knowing that I have been chosen to do this job," said Castellano during the ceremony.

Adm. William Houston, director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, served as guest speaker and Vice Adm. Robert Gaucher, commander of Naval Submarine Forces, presided over the ceremony. "When you talk about squadron twelve, it is more than just those submarines, it's the staff," Houston said. "It is a tough job being on the staff of a submarine squadron and this squadron has done an amazing job."

Castellano, a Tampa Bay native and graduate of Jacksonville University, arrives at

Squadron 12 after serving as a submarine perspective commanding officer instructor for the submarine force. His previous submarine tours include USS Asheville (SSN 758), USS Georgia (SSGN 729), USS Pasadena (SSN 752), and USS Toledo (SSN 769).

“Leading the world’s premier instrument of war on this waterfront is incredible,” Castellano added. “Squadron 12 has a storied legacy of excellent dedication from its sailors and officers and, moving forward, we will keep sustaining and building upon its legacy, ensuring we remain in the forefront of capabilities.”

CDR David Cordova, Executive Officer/Assistant Professor of Naval Science at Jacksonville University’s NROTC, highlighted Castellano’s achievement as a testament to the legacy of excellence the program’s graduates embody. “As we see one of our own be selected for such a prestigious role, along with similar achievements from alumni such as Vice Adm. Michael Boyle and Rear Adm. Lex Walker, it motivates us to continue to provide the highest caliber of training to our current students,” Cordova said.

Fast-attack submarines, which SUBRON 12 operates, are multi-mission platforms enabling five of the six Navy maritime strategy core capabilities: sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security, and deterrence. They excel in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, irregular warfare, and mine warfare.

Cordova emphasized the importance of the University’s NROTC program in preparing graduates like Castellano for leadership roles within the Navy. “We are confident that the training we offer to our students now will be critical to them accomplishing similar achievements,” he said.

Stories of Service: Operation New Uniform

Operation New Uniform is a Jacksonville-based nonprofit that helps military members transition into the business world.

Author: Rich Donnelly

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — There are thousands of members of the military who live on the First Coast, and while the region has one of the largest military populations in the country, our veteran population is even larger.

In this week's Stories of Service, we salute the latest graduates of the Jacksonville nonprofit Operation New Uniform, an organization with the mission to help servicemembers transition to the business world.

In an auditorium at Keiser University, they stand, not at attention, but proud of being graduates of Operation New Uniform. Before they walk across the stage, each of the 15 graduates delivers a speech about their journey.

"Operation New Uniform has helped me develop to have a more professional mindset in the business and corporate world," said Miguel Ambrocio, who served in the Marines for five years. "Especially transitioning from the military and I now have the tools to identify exactly what skills and what I can pull from my Marine Corps service into the business world."

A piece of the Marines will stay on Ambrocio's new uniform, his tie tack is the Marine emblem.

"Can't forget where you start," he said with a smile.

Adrienne McDonald hopes Operation New Uniform will help her utilize more than 20 years world of skills in the Army in a future career in media relations.

"The beautiful thing about Operation New Uniform is it reminds us that though we have certain missions we had to become passionate about, now we get to operate in our passion as a career," said McDonald.

City Councilman Chris Miller greeted each graduate. He was in their shoes as an Operation New Uniform graduate in 2014 after 30 years in the Army.

"I struggled when I transitioned back in 2014," said Miller, "and because they helped me so much in making a good transition, it's a matter of wanting to give back."

Operation New Uniform is provided free of charge to qualifying applicants thanks to corporate and donor support. Over the last 10 years, they've supported more than 500 veterans and military spouses across the country.

More information about Operation New Uniform and how to sign up can be found on their website.

If you have a Story of Service that you would like First Coast News to profile, send an email to:

storiesofservice@firstcoastnews.com.



Missing In America Project



Why We're Here

The purpose of the MIA Project is to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of American veterans through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations. To provide honor and respect to those who have served this country by securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes.

The Missing in America Veterans Recovery Program (MIAP) (EIN: 20-8408832) is a Federal recognized Non-Profit Veterans Organization for the identification, location, verification, and movement of Veterans and their Dependents.

Working Together to Accomplish Our Goals

The initial focus of the MIA Project will be a massive, nation-wide effort to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed remains of forgotten veterans. This task will be executed through the combined, cooperative efforts of members of the American Legion, other volunteer service and veteran organizations, local Funeral Homes, State Funeral Commissions, State and National Veterans Administration Agencies, and the State and National Veterans Cemetery Administrations. Local, state and national laws must be followed in the identification, claiming process and proper interment of the unclaimed remains of forgotten veterans.



The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Nominations are open for the Class of 2024 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. If you know a Veteran who has made a significant civic, business or public service contribution to our state, nominate them today.

The Class of 2024 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame nomination deadline has been extended to June 7. If you know a Veteran who has made a significant civic, business, or public service contribution to the state of Florida, nominate them today. More information and nomination forms are available at: <https://bit.ly/3IAgPP7> #FDVA #FLVets

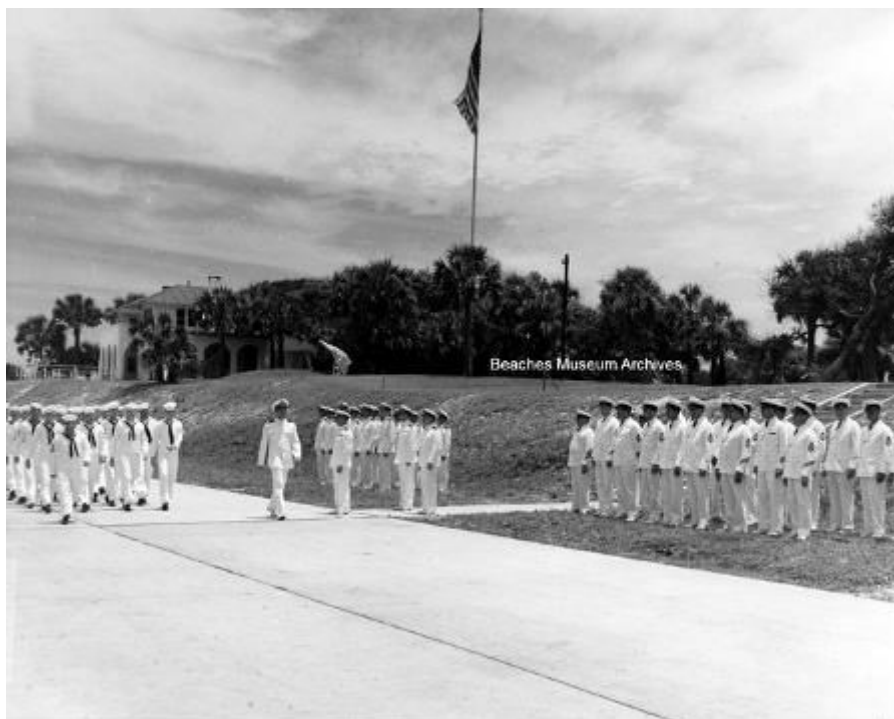


MAYPORT NAVAL STATION: On May 2, 1941 at 11:30 a.m. the base that would become Mayport was commissioned as Section Base Number 1, Inshore Patrol in the Seventh Naval District. The base was meant to counter the ever increasing German U-Boat activity and the threat it posed to America's east coast.

While the base was a needed and welcome addition to the Mayport community, it also brought much change. On the same day, in order to make room for the expansion of the Base, Ribault Bay was being dredged and the spoil was being pumped into the salt marshes between the Wonderwood Estate and the village of Mayport. Also, Miramar, Elizabeth Stark's mansion on her Wonderwood property was being transformed into an Officer's Club.

Many other homes of longtime residents were being demolished, including St. John the Evangelist Church. Two houses were left standing, one was used for a weapons storage area and the other was used as a Brig for the base.

Picture is circa 1955 of Navy sailors conducting inspection on Mayport Naval Station with the former Wonderwood Miramar mansion in the background, converted to the Officer's Club.



SEE HOW: North Florida group on a mission to honor veterans by identifying unmarked graves

By: Maya Sargent



Historic Cemetery Preservation of North Florida will install grave markers for 15 former unmarked veterans Saturday, May 11.

Ahead of the service, the team explain the work involved to bring these pieces of history to light.

Watch the video to see their process and why their mission is so important.

BROADCAST TRANSCRIPT:

Groups have been working diligently to identify veterans in unmarked graves.

But what does that process look like? Finding out about the many steps involved to complete this important task.

Honoring veterans and their families through research, time, and dedication.

"Instead of a just piece of grass there, they'll be a marker that says this man was a soldier," said Kelly Crocker, President of the Historic Cemetery Preservation of North Florida.

The organization does this by identifying unmarked graves of veterans and law enforcement officers.

"Our personal responsibility to find these people and get them a proper marker to be remembered," said Mark R Bess, Project Manager of the Historic Cemetery Preservation of North Florida.

Building on research from other groups, it's a process that takes hours and hours

of research.

"What we're looking for is the death location, and burial location," said Crocker, explaining the mission when they dig through documents.

"Physical documents, we look at bound documents, we look at microfilm documents, and digitized documents," said Crocker.

Last year, they managed to identify 26 graves.

While they have many success stories, Crocker said it is difficult when they cannot find a name.

"It weighs on us, I have lists, I have lists of veterans that I have partial information on," said Crocker.

Crocker said every so often he will try to resolve those names.

However, Crocker said every day it is getting easier to find information as more becomes available online.

Bess said they are always keep a forward-thinking focus because there's always more to find.

"Okay, one down, what's the next one," said Bess, explaining his thought process.

15 unmarked veterans will receive grave markers this Saturday May 11, starting at 9:30AM, at the Roseland Cemetery of Monticello. According to Crocker, The City of Monticello provided records so they could mark these graves.

Hi, I wanted to share information about two of our no-cost 3 night retreats: Family & Friends of the Fallen Support Retreat and Military Support Retreat that have openings this year.

Family & Friends of the Fallen Support Retreat:

-This 3-night retreat supports those who lost a loved one in service to our nation and is open to all adult family members and/or those adults significantly impacted by the loss of the service member. The death can be from all conflicts/eras, all branches of service, and all circumstance of death.

-There is no cost to attend and hotel, meals, and activities are all provided.

-The retreat has a split focus on nature based recreation, creative arts, and interactive workshops and groups discussions with the goals of teaching supportive strategies & how to navigate challenges and to connect with others at the retreat.

-This program is recommended for those 1 year or more away from their loss.

-You can also find the details and application directly at: <https://gratitudeamerica.org/fallen/>

Military Support Retreat:

-Our Military Support Retreat program is held in various locations in Georgia and Florida once a month and is a 3 night retreat program that has 2 focuses:

-1 focus is on education through large and small group discussions led by mental health clinicians and military peer mentors and the 2nd focus is on Nature-based recreational activities focused on providing an opportunity for bonding, fun, and/or relaxation.

-Military Support Retreats provides education on coping skills, communication skills, and how to better understand oneself and also to connect with the person that is attending with them via group discussions and nature-based recreation.

-This program is available for any member of the military who deployed to combat anytime during service and is for the service member to attend WITH a support person of their choosing (friend, spouse, partner). Service member cannot attend alone.

-Information and application to attend can be found here: <https://gratitudeamerica.org/retreats/>

Both of these programs are for adults only - no children are permitted and childcare is not provided. We provide hotel, activities, and meals and we cannot assist with transportation.

Ashley Semerenko, GratitudeAmerica.org

Flyers on next 2 pages



MILITARY SUPPORT RETREATS

GratitudeAmerica Military Support Retreats (MSR) are a 4-day immersive and intensive program centered around nature-based recreational activities and education via interactive workshops and group discussions. MSRs are a breakthrough experience designed to enhance relationships and build connections between veterans, first responders, and their closest support person.

★ **All accommodations, food, and activities are provided at no cost** ★

Helen, Ga. June 27-30 | Sarasota, Fl. July 18-21 | Helen, Ga. Aug 8-11

Thursday at 5:00pm – Sunday at 2:00pm

If you are qualified and interested in applying for MSR, please visit our website at

[GratitudeAmerica.org](https://www.GratitudeAmerica.org)

Please note: You must be 18 to attend, and no childcare is provided. Veterans must bring a support person to attend.

THE
**Family and Friends
of the Fallen**
SUPPORT RETREAT



*It's hard to
forget
someone
who
gave you
so much to
remember.*



Family and Friends of the Fallen Support Retreat is a transformative three-night experience providing solace and resilience-building for those who have lost loved ones as a result of service to our nation. This program provides a meaningful experience for participants to forge connections with peers and learn essential coping mechanisms for their healing journey. The retreat has a split focus on inspiring outdoor activities, and education focused on healing and supportive strategies.

Facilitated by a dedicated team of subject matter experts who serve as compassionate guides and mentors. The program is open to adult family members who have been directly impacted by the loss of one who served our nation, including all conflicts, all branches of service, and all circumstances of death. The circumstance of death does not have to be service-related. This Program is recommended for participants more than one year out from their loss.



**All accommodations, food, and
activities are provided at no cost**



Please note: You must be 18 to attend, and no childcare is provided.

Amelia Island, Fl. June 6-9 **Amelia Island, Fl. Aug 1-4**

Thursday at 5:00pm – Sunday at 2:00pm

If you are qualified and interested in applying
for MSR, please visit our website at

GratitudeAmerica.org



The Fire Watch

With the release of our Annual Report, we'd like to thank ALL Watch Standers for getting #veterans to the help they need! In Northeast Florida, Veteran suicides decreased 25% below our 2019 baseline year for the 3rd straight year. Across all areas of #Florida where our Watch Standers are located, Veteran suicides decreased by 16% – in areas where they aren't, Veteran suicides actually increased by 8%.





FLORIDA'S NAVAL HISTORY



SHIPS



USS Florida (SSGN 728)

▲ USS Florida (SSBN 728/SSGN 728), an Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine, was commissioned with the hull designation of SSBN 728; with her conversion to a cruise missile submarine, she was re-designated SSGN 728. Home-based in Kings Bay, Ga., USS Florida operates in the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of responsibility.



At least 32 ships have been named after the state of Florida, its cities, places, and people.

- Florida I (Sloop), 1824
- Florida II (Side-wheel Steamer), 1861
- Florida III (Steam Frigate), 1867
- Florida IV (Monitor No. 9), 1903
- USS Florida (BB 30), 1911
- USS Florida (SSBN 728), 1983
- Tallahassee (Monitor No. 9), 1903
- USS Biscayne (AVP 11), 1941
- USS Brevard (AK 164), 1945
- Calhoun (Side-wheel Steamer), 1862
- USS Caloosahatchee (AD 98), 1945
- USS Dade (APA 99), 1944
- USS De Soto County (LST 1171), 1958
- USS Everglades (AD 24), 1951
- USS Flagler (AK 181), 1945
- USS Floridian (No. 3875), 1919
- USS Gadsden (AK 182), 1945
- USS Jacksonville (SSN 689), 1981
- USS Jefferson County (LST 845), 1945
- USS Key West (Stern-wheel Steamer), 1863
- USS Lafayette County (LST 859), 1945
- USS Lloyd (DE 208), 1944
- Miami I (Side-wheel Steamer), 1862
- USS Miami (CL 89), 1943
- USS Okaloosa (APA 218), 1944
- USS Orange County (LST 1068), 1945
- USS Orlando (PF 99), 1944
- Pensacola I (Screw Steamer), 1861
- USS Pensacola (Screw Steamer), 1917
- USS Pensacola (CA 24), 1930
- USS Pensacola (LSD 38), 1971
- USS Tortuga (LSD 28), 1945



◀ USS Tortuga was named after a group of small islands off the coast of Key West, Fla., and the naval base on Tortuga. Commissioned toward the end of World War II, she was en route to combat in the Pacific when she received news of Japan's surrender. Tortuga received five engagement stars for her service in the Korean War and eight for service during Vietnam.

PEOPLE



Capt. John W. Young
U.S. Navy (Ret.)
NASA Astronaut

Capt. John W. Young graduated from Orlando High School in Orlando, Fla. He is a highly decorated Navy captain and the longest serving U.S. astronaut.



Capt. Scott Speicher
U.S. Navy
Killed in Action

Capt. Scott Speicher was a graduate of Westside High School in Jacksonville, Fla., and Florida State University in Tallahassee, Fla. Speicher was shot down flying a combat mission in an F/A-18 Hornet during Operation Desert Storm.

DID YOU KNOW?



Manufacturing was the primary Floridian contribution to the WWII effort. More than 9,000 men and women worked in shipbuilding in Tampa Bay, Fla., during WWII. This woman is welding for the Saint Johns River Shipbuilding Company during WWII in Jacksonville, Fla.

PLACES



Navy Installations in Florida:

- NAS Jacksonville
- NAS Pensacola
- NAS Whiting Field
- NAS Key West
- Naval Station Mayport
- NSA Panama City
- NSA Orlando
- Corry Station Naval Technical Training Center



Sources: Naval History and Heritage Command; www.navy.mil; Florida Department of State; Commander, Naval Installations Command. Infographic by Annalisa Underwood and Cecilia Sequeira, Naval History and Heritage Command Communication and Outreach Division.

Women Veterans Resource Fair

Friday, June 14 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Jacksonville North VA Clinic and Domiciliary, 145 Heron Bay Road, Jacksonville, FL 32218

- Learn about VA health care options for women.
- Enroll for care.
- Exposed to toxins during service? Learn about your options.
- File and check the status of disability claims.
- Learn about VA education benefits.
- Explore Whole health, food and nutrition resources.
- And more!



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

2024 VVA National Leadership Conference
August 20 – 24, 2024 • Reno, Nevada
ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

The image shows a nighttime view of Reno, Nevada, with city lights and mountains in the background. Overlaid on the image is the logo for the Vietnam Veterans of America Reno 2024 National Leadership & Education Conference. The logo is circular with 'VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA' around the perimeter and 'RENO 2024 National Leadership & Education Conference' in the center. Below the logo, the text '2024 VVA National Leadership Conference August 20 – 24, 2024 • Reno, Nevada' is displayed in white, and 'ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!' is displayed in blue.

The Marine Corps Times

By Irene Loewenson

The reconstructed Tun Tavern, shown here in an architect's rendering, would serve as a functioning tavern and restaurant. (Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation Inc.)

When the Marine Corps turns 250, Marines may get to raise a pint to the Corps in the place where it supposedly all began.

The nonprofit Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation announced in a news release Monday it has acquired land to rebuild “an authentic reproduction” of the tavern where, as legend has it, the few and the proud got their start.

The plan is to establish the reconstructed Tun Tavern in time for the Marine Corps’ 250th birthday in November 2025, according to Sue Hamilton, a spokeswoman for the foundation.

Retired Lt. Gen. Charles Chiarotti, president and CEO of the Marine Corps Association, said in the release, “With the Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation leading the way, Marines of past, present and future will have their rightful gathering spot in the very city where the Marine Corps was formed.”

In November 1775, when Samuel Nicholas was tasked with raising two battalions of Continental Marines, he headed to Philadelphia’s Tun Tavern, according to traditional Marine Corps lore. Though Tun Tavern was destroyed in 1781, it has enjoyed a long afterlife as a symbol of the Marine Corps’ birth.

Tun Tavern has retained its title as the traditional birthplace of the Marine Corps despite doubts raised by one prominent Marine historian about in which bar, exactly, Nicholas launched his recruiting efforts. In his 1974 book “The United States Marines: A History,” Brig. Gen. Edwin Howard Simmons, then the director of Marine Corps history and museums, asserted that the Conestoga Waggon — a tavern owned by the Nicholas family — was more likely where Nicholas snagged his first recruits.

The Marine Corps is not the only organization that regards Tun Tavern as a hallowed site in its history.

Tun Tavern also is the birthplace of Freemasonry in Pennsylvania. The St. George, St. Andrew

and Friendly Sons of St. Patrick societies were founded or held meetings in the tavern, according to the foundation.

And Tun Tavern “purportedly” is where John Adams and the Naval Committee met in 1775 to write the documents structuring what is now the Navy, the foundation said in the release.

The Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation plans to create a functioning tavern and restaurant, with historical exhibits and special events geared toward educating visitors about the establishment’s history. Profits will go to the causes of the organizations founded at the tavern, according to the news release.

The land sits at 19 South 2nd Street in Philadelphia’s Old City neighborhood, within 250 yards of the original Tun Tavern site.

Acquiring the land was the first step, Rob Brink, the foundation’s board chair and deputy grand master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania Free and Accepted Masons, said in the release. The next step is fundraising.

Funds are coming from private donations, corporate partnerships, foundation support, and federal and state grants, according to the release.

The foundation plans to hold a groundbreaking ceremony in November 2024, according to the release.





NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF AMERICAN
PRISONERS & MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
5673 Columbis Pike, Suite 100, Falls Church, VA 22041

PH ---703/465-7432

www.pow-miafamilies.org

FAX ---703/465-7432

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A four-member Delegation, representing the National League of POW/MIA Families is headed to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia on February 25th.

Falls Church, Virginia (February 23, 2024) — The National League of POW/MIA Families a non-profit, 501(c) (3) organization whose threefold goal is the return of all prisoners, the fullest possible accounting of the missing, and the repatriation of all recoverable remains of those who died while serving our Nation during the Vietnam War, is proud to announce that another League Delegation is now headed to Hanoi. The purpose of the visit is to seek expanded efforts to bring home America's military and civilian Vietnam War Veterans still unreturned, thus ending the uncertainty of their families.

This is the first notable Vietnam War POW/MIA Delegation to visit Vietnam since the significant upgrade in bilateral relations to the level of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, announced last September when President Biden visited Hanoi. The stated purposes for the upgrade were peace, cooperation and sustainable development. The League believes the new relationship offers potential opportunities for both countries to increase and improve the pace and scope of unilateral and joint accounting efforts, before it is too late.

The League has pursued the fullest possible accounting for America's missing Vietnam War Veterans – unreturned POW/MIAs – since before the end of active US involvement, ended by the Paris Peace Accords on January 27, 1973. Such efforts became "a matter of highest national priority" in the mid-1980s, after President Reagan came into office with a personal commitment.

As Governor of California, he was in office when the listed POWs came home in 1973, recognizing then that not enough was being done to account for those still missing. The first League delegations to talks with Vietnam's leaders in Europe date back to before war's end and, since then, the League has participated in or led many delegations seeking answers for the families, and always with the single goal of bringing American servicemen and civilians home, to the country they served.

For additional information contact Michael Bamarni, Social Media Coordinator.



National League of POW/MIA Families

Hello everyone!

The League is always seeking out photos of POW/MIA flags, monuments, Missing Man Honors Tables, POW/MIA empty chairs, etc. from your community to feature on our social media pages and website.

Sharing with us is easy, just message your photos to our email -

nationalleague@pow-miafamilies.org

With your full name as well as a brief description of when & where the photo was taken.



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www.pow-miafamilies.org

FAX ---703/465-7433

2024 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Would you prefer to receive League material by email? Y__N__ Email: _____

_____ @\$20/member

_____ Total Amount: _____

IRS EIN# 23-7071242



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

5673 Columbia Pike, Suite 100, Falls Church, VA 22041

PH ---703/465-7432

www.pow-miafamilies.org

FAX ---703/465-7433

ABBREVIATED LEAGUE DELEGATION TRIP REPORT

March 26, 2024

The League Delegation's recent visit to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia took place from February 25 – March 14, 2024. We deeply appreciated the incredible policy and logistics support provided by the Defense Intelligence Agency and their Defense Attachés and Stony Beach Specialists in each country. Especially commendable is Stony Beach Operations Director & Cambodia Specialist Eric Phillips who was with us at every turn, in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

On the heels of upgraded bilateral relations with Vietnam to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, our visit to Hanoi was timely, as was the transition within the League and a new generation of leaders in Cambodia. The atmosphere and environment seemed to fall into place for utilizing League Advisor Dr. Jay Veith's Intelligence Assessment to get the attention of Vietnam and DPAA. It did – positively with Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security (MPS), Minister To Lam, his Deputy LTG Quang, and the Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP).

Not so with DPAA, though the League had requested such a study for years! Further, in-country DPAA personnel assigned to Detachments 1, 2 and 3 were instructed not to attend any League-scheduled meetings in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. This DPAA leadership decision undermined priority and visibility on the accounting mission, consistently recognized as foundational by the Vietnamese, and denied our on-the-ground DPAA personnel the opportunity to meet senior officials.

From MPS and VNOSMP, we obtained specific pledges of cooperation, including on our proposal of a three-man team (one each Stony Beach, VNOSMP and DPAA) working year-round to expand the planned quarterly Joint Field Activities (JFAs). This longtime DIA/League objective now has potential. During our very positive meeting on March 13th with MPS, Minister To Lam arrived unexpectedly and reinforced the positive pledges made. Until MPS's pledge to consider our proposal, cooperation by Vietnam had been disappointing despite their known control of 85-90% of loss sites of all still missing and unaccounted-for Vietnam War Veterans.

In Cambodia, new Prime Minister Hun Manet indicated full cooperation will continue, as will direction by long-time POW/MIA Committee Chairman General Pol Saroeun, aided by another old friend and supporter, H.E. Sieng Lapresse. We couldn't ask for more in Cambodia, including an ongoing underwater partnership recovery. We passed along our best wishes to PM Hun Manet's father, former PM Hun Sen, and the other familiar fathers whose sons are now also designated Ministers.

A cordial, productive meeting on March 4th with Lao Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Saleumxay Kommasith brought his pledge to quickly issue a simple legal document to protect our DPAA and DIA/Stony Beach POW/MIA accounting specialists. This small corrective step has yet to be taken, likely due to too low-level staff policy attention, but we're cautiously optimistic about positive results coming soon. New US Ambassador to Laos Heather Variava has meetings this week with Deputy Minister Saleumxay and the Lao Deputy Minister of Defense. Laos already has set ongoing Stony Beach investigations year-round to take advantage of opportunities that arise during DPAA-scheduled Joint Field Activities.

A fuller, more descriptive League Delegation Trip Report will be completed soon, posted online and distributed by USPS mail to all League members.

Military Order of the Purple Heart 91st Annual National Convention



The Year of the Family



July 15-18, 2024

Auxiliary Symposium
July 15-17, 2024

Rosen Plaza Hotel 9700 International Blvd. Orlando, Florida



JUNE 8, 2024
REGISTRATION 9:30 & KSU 11:00 AT
AMERICAN LEGION POST 88
3662 SPRING PARK RD, JACKSONVILLE
MOOSE LODGE 42 - 4450 LOSCO RD JACKSONVILLE
FLEET RESERVE 91 - 5391 COLLINS RD, JACKSONVILLE

An American flag is shown on the left side of the page, partially cut off by the edge. The stars and stripes are clearly visible.

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE



ARMED FORCES DAY

For those who currently wear
the uniform

VETERANS DAY

For those who used to wear the
uniform

MEMORIAL DAY

For those who never made it out
of the uniform



Join Our Team of Volunteers

We're currently looking for individuals who would be committed to restoring, maintaining, and being a docent on the USS Orleck.



Requirements

- Veteran, Active Duty, Retired
- Minimum of 18 Years Old
- Healthy physically and mentally
- Youth groups with advisors
- Willing to volunteer where and when needed

Registration On

www.jaxnavalmuseum.org/volunteer

Skills Needed

- Welders & Electricians
- Docents & Office
- Painting, Cleaning, Events

For More Info

volunteer@jaxnavalmuseum.org

USS Orleck's Address

610 East Bay Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202

NARRATIVE OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY



**SUNDAY, JUNE 9
2 - 5PM**

**WATER WORKS
184 SAN MARCO AVENUE
ST. AUGUSTINE, FL 32084**

Sponsored in part by:



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT for the ARTS**

2:00-2:30 PM: SHE SERVED- DISPLAY OF 20
INSPIRING WOMEN VETERANS AND THEIR STORIES

2:30-3:30 PM: ACT 1 - SINGLE BLACK FEMALE IN
NAVY THEATRE/ PLAY - WRITTEN AND PERFORMED
BY KIM MULLINS

3:35-3:45 PM: LADY STRUT - WOMEN VETERANS
WALKING WITH A PURPOSE

3:45-4:00 PM: INTERMISSION- REPRESENT STA
VETERAN HISTORICAL PROJECT AND H4V MILITARY
WOMEN

4:00-5:00 PM: ACT 2 - SINGLE BLACK FEMALE IN
NAVY THEATRE/ PLAY - WRITTEN AND PERFORMED
BY KIM MULLINS

Get your
tickets here:



HOPE4VETERANS.ORG

SAVE THE DATE

Mayor Donna Deegan and the City of Jacksonville Military Affairs and Veterans Department invite you to the 7th Annual

MILITARY SPOUSES NIGHT OUT

JUNE 20, 2024 | 5 - 8 PM

VYSTAR VETERANS
MEMORIAL ARENA

300 A PHILIP RANDOLPH BLVD.
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202



SCAN ME

REGISTER AT [JACKSONVILLE.GOV/MSNO](https://jacksonville.gov/msno)

Open to U.S. and allied military spouses of active-duty, guard, reserve, and retired service members. Valid ID required. No childcare provided. For more information, call Tiffany Morales at (904) 255-5524 or email tmorales@coj.net.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. PLEASE CONTACT DISABLED SERVICES AT VM 255-5466, TTY 255-5475, OR EMAIL YOUR REQUEST TO KARAT@COJ.NET.



YOUR JOURNEY STARTS TODAY.

- 1 Go to ONUVets.org
- 2 Learn more about our training program, our Alumni, our team, etc.
- 3 Check the "Calendar" on our "Events" tab for our upcoming class schedule
- 4 Select "Apply Now" and fill out all of the required information
- 5 You will hear from a member of our team within two (2) business days
- 6 We will schedule a time to discuss your specific transition needs and how ONU can help!

VETERANS & MILITARY SPOUSES, YOUR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION JOURNEY STARTS HERE.

Operation New Uniform is powered by: **SANDLER™**




APPLY

How much does the program cost?
ONU is **FREE** to qualifying applicants.



904.328.1600
info@onuvets.org
www.ONUVets.org
[operation-new-uniform](#)
 OperationNewUniform

Headquarters:
 8825 Perimeter Park Blvd., Suite 503
 Jacksonville, FL 32216



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
(7.1.22 - 6.30.23)

VETERAN IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL TRAINING
 Operation New Uniform provided six (6) proprietary transition training to Veterans from all branches of service. Training was conducted in-person and virtually. Classes are consistently reaching capacity. This increased demand requires additional program staff and corresponding office space.

VETERAN ONLINE/SELF-PACED TRAINING
 Operation New Uniform held two (2) online, self-paced training sessions and created new learning modules designed to meet Veterans where they are in their military transition.

MILITARY SPOUSE IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL TRAINING
 Operation New Uniform held its second Military Spouse transition training program with the goal of supporting the entire family unit. Classes are consistently reaching capacity. This increased demand requires additional program staff and corresponding office space.

EXPANSION
 Operation New Uniform held its second Veteran transition training in Tampa. This expansion allowed for an in-person experience for students who would otherwise have to learn virtually. Continued growth requires additional program staff and office space.

Michèle McManamon
 Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder
 Cell: 904.426.4684; Email: michele@onuvets.org
 Florida Headquarters:
 8825 Perimeter Park Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32216

561
GRADUATES:
 Number of graduates since the program's inception (86 within this measurement period)

97%
EMPLOYMENT:
 Percentage of Veteran graduates that secured employment within four (4) months

\$81k
SALARY:
 Average starting salary of Veteran graduates

96%
SATISFACTION:
 Percentage of Veteran graduates who say "ONU fills the gap" left by other programs

6 OUT OF 10
SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY:
 Number of Veteran graduates with a service disability

VETERAN DEMOGRAPHICS:

Male: 60%
 Female: 40%

Hispanic 9%
 Black 20%
 White American 68%
 Other 3%

OUR MISSION: Empower Veterans and Military Spouses to successfully transition to a purposeful, stable career.



2024 CALENDAR BUILDING VETERANS' FUTURES. SAVING VETERANS' LIVES.

ONU MISSION: EMPOWER ACTIVE DUTY SERVICEMEMBERS, VETERANS, AND MILITARY SPOUSES TO SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITION FROM MILITARY LIFE TO PURPOSEFUL STABLE CAREERS.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS:

- April 5, 2024 (Veterans Cup Clay Shoot; Jacksonville, FL)
- September 21, 2024 (Patriot Games; Ponte Vedra Beach, FL)

ACTIVE DUTY SERVICEMEMBER & VETERAN CLASS SCHEDULE:

- January 8 - March 8, 2024 (online/e-learning)
- January 17 - February 1, 2024 (in-person/virtual; Jacksonville, FL)
- March 18 - 28, 2024 (in-person/virtual; Tampa, FL)
- April 1 - June 14, 2024 (online/e-learning)
- April 10 - 26, 2024 (in-person/virtual; Jacksonville, FL)
- July 1 - September 13, 2024 (online/e-learning)
- July 10 - 26, 2024 (in-person/virtual; Jacksonville, FL)
- August 12 - 22, 2024 (in-person/virtual; Tampa, FL)
- September 30 - December 13, 2024 (online/e-learning)
- October 16 - November 1, 2024 (in-person/virtual; Jacksonville, FL)

MILITARY SPOUSE CLASS SCHEDULE:

- February 6 - 29, 2024 (in-person/virtual)
- September 3 - 26, 2024 (in-person/virtual)

GRADUATION EVENTS:

- February 2, 2024 (Veteran Class; Jacksonville, FL)
- February 29, 2024 (Spouse Class; Jacksonville, FL)
- March 28, 2024 (Veteran Class; Tampa, FL)
- April 26, 2024 (Veteran Class; Jacksonville, FL)
- July 26, 2024 (Veteran Class; Jacksonville, FL)
- August 22, 2024 (Veteran Class; Tampa, FL)
- September 26, 2024 (Spouse Class; Jacksonville, FL)
- November 1, 2024 (Veteran Class; Jacksonville, FL)

Headquarters: 8825 Perimeter Park Boulevard, Suite 502, Jacksonville, FL 32216
Tel: 904.328.1600; Email: info@onuvets.org; Website: ONUVets.org.



WEBSITE



LINKEDIN



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She Served so YOU could Live FREE

Military Women FREE With ID



Sponsorship Opportunities info@avet-project.org

Sponsor a Table \$500

Sponsor a Military Women \$50

Land of the FREE Because of the BRAVE

Celebrate our Military Women On Women Veterans Recognition Day Luncheon Wednesday June 12 11:30am-1:30pm Nyami Nyami River Lodge at the ZOO 8225 N Wickham Rd, Melbourne, FL 32940

Guest Speakers

Guest Speakers



*Retired Army Michelle Blackwood



*Marine Vet Kimberly Benton



*Army Vet Kadey Bogart CEO KB Solutions



*USCG Commander Sarah Brennan



Jamie Brock weVenture Womens Business Center



*Army Major PA, Leah Bucholz Prestige Veterans Medical Consulting



*AF Vet Courtney Butler Yoga Instructor



*AF Vet Elizabeth Cassidy Future Home Loan



*Navy Vet Dr. Lindsey Davy Psychologist Baytree Behavioral Health



*AF Vet Susan Glasgow CEO Kegman Inc



*AF Vet Karen Gregory Gov Contracts



*AF OMSgt Karissa Gunter Space Launch Delta 45 PSFB



*AF Vet Erin Kelly Realtor Investor Exit Realty



*AF Col Susan Romano Director Public Affairs AFTAC



Retired Army Milissent Jerneen Ray Career Source Brevard



AF Vet Crystal Turman WellSpring Counseling BVMC Women Outreach



**"MY MOTHER TOLD ME TO BE A LADY. AND FOR HER, THAT MEANT
BE YOUR OWN PERSON, BE INDEPENDENT."
— RUTH BADER GINSBURG**



NARRATIVES OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

- Hope4Veterans will present *She Served*, a photography exhibition by Martina Schmidt to showcase women veterans, and produce *Single Black Female in the Navy*, an original play by Kim Mullins, a Navy veteran and theater teacher, about her experiences as a woman in the Navy.
- June 9, 2024 - Waterworks in St. Augustine 2-5PM
 - 184 San Marco Avenue, St. Augustine, Florida 32084

Sponsored in part by:



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

VETERAN SPOTLIGHT: KIM MULLINS



K.E. Mullins is a Florida native, an accomplished author, poet, upcoming playwright, and director. Her full-length play, "Single Black Female in the Navy," was selected out of hundreds of submission. The play was one of six in the Tampa Bay Festival competition in September 2023.

She's also been accepted in Women Writing for Change Showcase, April 22, 2022. Her play, mini-version of "Single Black Female in the Navy," was selected by Acrosstown Repertory Theatre for a zoom reading with live actors, January 2022. Her short story - "I'm Toni and I Approve this Message" was accepted in Lolwe's Online Magazine for publication in May 2021. February 1, 2021. Ms. Mullins' monologue, "Black by Unpopular Demand," was published in the "8:46 Collection - The New World of Theatre" available on Amazon.

Additionally, her novel excerpt - "Iben...I've been through some sh!e!" was accepted by Writer's Launch and published February 2021. She's also a Harness Magazine - Contributor. In March 2021, she was selected to participate in Hermitage Retreat as one of five artists in Florida for the Florida Alliance of Arts and Education. During COVID, Ms. Mullins participated in the Kaz Comedy Writing for Women - Workshop in February 2020. K.E. Mullins is the author of four fiction novels, "7475 Samona Drive," "The Friends and Family Connection: Get Unplugged," "In the Company of Strangers," "Murder: Another Name for Revenge, and "7475 Samona Drive." She also published a book of poetry, "Thinking Aloud: Dimension of Free-Verse," all available on Amazon, Barnes and Nobles, and Walmart online.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- P2P Therapeutic Art Program in Duval - Steve A. Cohen Center from 5:30-7:30, February 6th and 20th
- P2P Therapeutic Art Program in Clay - 108 Kingsley Ave. Room 210 from 6-8 PM, February 8th and 22nd
- P2P Therapeutic Art Program in St. John's - The Link in Nocatee 6-8 PM February 15th and 29th
- She Served and Narratives of Women in the Military, June 9th 2-5 PM Waterworks in St. Augustine
- Submit your upcoming events for us to share to our readers by clicking the "Submit Events" button at the bottom of the newsletter

Become a H4V Sponsor and see your business listed here!



The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone



CONTACT US

- hope4veterans.org
- lgeiser@hope4veterans.org
- (904) 430-2388



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Military Museum of North Florida

Wednesday-Saturday

10am-3pm

1 Bunker Ave
Green Cove Springs FL,
32043

Call or email the Military
Museum @
(904) 863-3527
militarymuseumnf@ol.com



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WHAT WAS YOUR UNIT IN VIETNAM?



Burials and Memorials

VA honors the service and sacrifice of Veterans and their family members.

How to Apply

To find out in advance if a Veteran or family member is eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery, click “Apply for Pre-Need Burial Eligibility” to fill out and submit the application.

Apply for Pre-Need Burial Eligibility

If pre-need eligibility has not been determined, upon the death of the Veteran or his or her spouse or dependent (also called the time of need), family members should locate the Veteran’s DD-214 or other discharge papers if readily available and click “Schedule a Burial” to begin the process. Then make arrangements with a funeral home, National Cemetery Scheduling Office, or directly with a VA national cemetery.

VA Memorial Benefits

VA takes special care to pay lasting tribute to the memory of Veterans who served and sacrificed and that of their families. VA meticulously maintains 155 VA national cemeteries in 44 states and Puerto Rico and is working to increase access to accommodate Veterans and eligible family members close to home. Currently, more than 94 percent of Veterans have a burial option in an open VA, state or tribal veterans cemetery located within 75 miles of their home.

Note that most if not all of these benefits may be provided for Veterans who are interred in a State, Territorial or Tribal Veterans cemetery. Check with the cemetery to ensure coverage. Some benefits are also available for Veterans who choose burial in a private cemetery.

Veterans with a qualifying discharge are entitled to VA burial benefits. Spouses and dependent children are eligible too, even if they predecease the Veteran.

The following burial benefits may be provided:

Burial in a VA national cemetery

Opening and closing of the grave for burial of casketed or cremated remains, or placement of cremated remains in an above-ground vault, also called a columbarium

A government furnished grave liner

Perpetual care of the gravesite

A headstone or marker with an inscription

A burial flag

A Presidential Memorial Certificate

A dedicated memorial page on the Veterans Legacy Memorial site where friends and family can upload photos and remembrances

Burial in a private cemetery

A government headstone, marker, or medallion

A burial flag

A Presidential Memorial Certificate

Some survivors may also be entitled to VA burial allowances as partial reimbursement for the costs of funerals and burials for eligible Veterans

Please note that gravesites in a VA national cemetery cannot be reserved in advance. To prepare for a private cemetery burial, VA suggests families review these questions and complete required forms in advance.

VA Requirements

Discharge papers to establish your eligibility for burial services



You've made our country
A BETTER PLACE.

Enjoy your well-earned retirement at Silver Creek.

Thank you veterans for your service and sacrifice! At Silver Creek, you can live life as you choose with greater freedom, comfort and independence through the unique living options at our community - including independent concierge living, assisted living, enhanced assisted living and memory care.

Discover first-class amenities, holistic wellness programming, gourmet all-day dining and vibrant activities while enjoying camaraderie and friendship at our close-knit community.

Call **800-821-8170** to schedule a tour and learn more.



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



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

Assisted Living Facility #12928

Skip the trip: More military ID cardholders can now renew online

By Karen Jowers, from the *Military Times*

Most retirees and family members living within the United States are now eligible for online renewal of their Uniformed Services Identification card. Pictured here, the ID Card office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. (Wesley Farnsworth/ Air Force)



About 1 million people with Uniformed Services Identification cards are now eligible to renew their ID cards online, rather than visiting an office in person.

Most USID cardholders — including military retirees, reservists, spouses and dependents of U.S. service members — can file their requests online and receive new IDs by mail, defense officials said Jan. 16. The move expands a pilot program that began in February 2023 to allow uniformed sponsors with a common access card to request online renewals of USID cards.

The IDs are used to enter Defense Department facilities and to access benefits like health care.

DOD issues about 4.5 million ID cards each year, about 2.5 million of which are USID cards. Of those, around 1 million USIDs are eligible for online renewal.

For now, online renewal is limited to those who live in the United States, but officials are working to expand it to non-U.S. addresses as well. People whose IDs have expired and those seeking their first ID card are also ineligible for online services.

Allowing more beneficiaries to renew their IDs online frees up the pass and ID offices for active duty military and civilian government employees who need to apply for or

renew a CAC, officials said.

To request an online renewal, the sponsor must be able to log into the ID Card Office Online as a CAC holder or have a DOD Self-Service Logon username and password. Make sure to read the instructions on how to set up a DS Logon account when creating a new profile. Sponsors will request the renewal by clicking the “Family ID Cards” tab on the ID Card Office Online landing page.

According to DOD, other requirements include:

The USID card being renewed must be active, not expired. Children are eligible for online USID renewal if they have an active USID card.

The sponsor and the cardholder must have email addresses listed in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). You can check your data in DEERS to make sure it’s up to date.

The cardholder must have a photo saved in DEERS that was taken within the last 12 years.

The cardholder must have a current U.S. address in DEERS. Cards can’t be mailed to P.O. boxes.

Once the request is processed, a new card will be created and mailed to the card recipient at the address listed in DEERS. The sponsor and the cardholder will receive an email once the card is shipped, directing the sponsor to acknowledge when they’ve received the card. Once the sponsor acknowledges receipt, the new USID card will be activated and the old one will be deactivated.

The deactivated card should be returned to the government, to the nearest Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification System (RAPIDS) site, or mailed to: DMDC-DSC, Attn: USID Card Returns, 2102 E. 21st Street N, Wichita, KS 67214.



Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation provides college scholarships and educational counseling to military children, from all branches, who lost a parent in the line of duty.

We cover all college-related costs and there is a big need for our services as the VA does not cover the full cost of college. There is a \$25,000 average gap to cover one student for four years and we need your help.



Scan here to support the children of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

To mail a contribution, please send checks to:

Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation
ATTN: Courtney Nyren
1818 Library Street, Suite 500
Reston, VA 20190

FALLENPATRIOTS.ORG

Thank you for your support of our mission. CFC #69859



CFP is among top <1% of charities to receive a 100% rating in 2022



Stories of Service

St. Johns County Veterans Oral History Project



Stories of Service is an oral history project focused on the veterans of St. Johns County. The goal of this project was to collect, document, and preserve the memories of local veterans for future generations.

Materials collected by the Society for this project have allowed for the creation of two exhibits, one physical at the Oldest House Museum Complex at 14 St. Francis Street on display until January, one digital, accessible below and through our main website under the LEARN tab.

Items on display in both the digital and physical exhibits tell the stories of our local veterans, placing them proudly within the long and storied histories of St. Augustine and St. Johns County.

A sincere thanks to them all.



View the Digital Exhibit:

<https://sahsstoriesofservice.omeka.net/>



Main: 904-824-2872

Research Library: 904-825-2333

271 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084

Research Library located at 6 Artillery Lane, St. Augustine FL 32084

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS VETERAN HOMEOWNERS SAINT JOHNS COUNTY

FREE HOME REHAB

We believe everyone deserves to live in a healthy home. At Operation Lifeline Inc., we feel particularly indebted to those who served in the Armed Forces and have committed to helping as many struggling veterans as possible. Our program provides home rehabilitation services at no charge to eligible veterans to address accessibility and HUD's Eight Healthy Homes Principles.

QUALIFICATIONS

Participant Eligibility:

- Verifiable veteran status
- Gross income below 80% of the area's median income
- Occupy the property as a principal residence and have proof of ownership
- Be in compliance with any existing mortgage on the property
- Be current with utility accounts and property taxes

Property Eligibility:

- Must be a single-family residence
- Must be the applicant's homestead
- Applicant must own the property by fee simple title
- Must be free of any encumbrances other than a first mortgage
- Located within the unincorporated portion of Saint Johns County or the City of Saint Augustine Beach

* Please review full eligibility criteria on our website *

CONTACT US TODAY

*Funding is Limited and Restricted
to Saint Johns County Homes*

Please visit our website to fill
out an application

WWW.OPLIFELINE.ORG



**OPERATION
LIFELINE INC.**

RESERVE COMPONENT TRANSITION ASSISTANCE ADVISORS



Are you a member of a Reserve Component? Have you served 180 or more consecutive days on Title 10? Do you have a service-related injury or health care issue? Perhaps you're about to retire from service and need someone to show you how to get back into the swing of civilian life. Getting to know your Reserve Component Transition Assistance Advisor (RCTAA) means you'll have reliable, professional support when you need it.

I am here to help with the following benefits:

- State and Local Benefits
- VA Assistance for Physical and Mental Health
- Disabled Veterans Program Assistance
- Education and Training Assistance
- Employment Assistance
- Health and Life Insurance
- Financial Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Relocation Assistance
- Effects of a Career Change

Since 2005, RCTAAs have assisted Reserve Component service members with 180 days or more T-10 AD service obtain their federal benefits and entitlements. You could save an average of:

- Employment Counseling (\$75/hour)
- Health Insurance (\$1430/Service Member)
- Legal Assistance (\$255/hour)
- VHA DAV Benefit Received (\$15,034/Service Member)
- VA Benefit Received (\$5786/Service Member)
- Education Benefits Received (\$15,285/Service Member)

Average benefit per eligible Reserve Component service member across all benefits areas=\$11,970.

If you or someone you know needs assistance with federal benefits and entitlements, don't hesitate to contact me. You can either scan this QR code and fill out the attached form or contact me directly using the information below.



Thank you for serving, now let me serve you.

According to the National Defense Authorization Act 2013, [Reserve Component] transition assistance advisors "serve as points of contact to assist eligible members of the reserve components in accessing benefits and health care furnished under laws administered by the Secretary of Defense and benefits and health care furnished under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs" (Sec. 513).

David "Dave" Kennett

Reserve Component
Transition Assistance Advisor
Federal Contractor
202-987-3864
DKennett@gapsi.com

DIRECTION | BENEFITS | COMPASSION



VA SURVIVOR BENEFITS & THE PACT ACT

ESGR4U

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



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

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

How to Apply for DIC and/or Accrued Benefits

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



Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

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



Accrued Benefits

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

Additional Survivor Benefits Available:



Burials and Burial Allowance

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



Final Monthly Payment

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



Home Loan Guaranty

Certificate of Eligibility is available for surviving spouses receiving DIC.



Education and Training

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



Health Care

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

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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

Surviving Spouse Milestones

Not all milestones apply to every persons situation

One Year Mark:

- Moving out of quarters (if applicable)
- Storage at government expense expires
- Apply for Home of Selection (HOS) extension
- HEART Act (one year from date SGLI/DG received)

Two Year Mark:

- Loss of Spouse's VA Transitional DIC Benefits (\$250 per family per month)

only applies to spouse with one or more minor children in household

- Apply for Home of Selection (HOS) extension

Three Year Mark:

- TRICARE Healthcare and Dental benefits transitions to retiree rate for spouse
- Home of Selection (HOS) entitlement expires

Spouse Turns 52:

- If disabled, can remain and retain SSA Survivor Benefits

Spouse Turns 55:

- Can remarry and not lose SBP eligibility

Spouse Turns 57:

- Can remarry not lose DIC eligibility

Spouse Turns 60:

- Can remarry and retain SSA Survivor Benefits

Surviving Youth Milestones

Not all milestones apply to every persons situation

Child Turns 16:

- Elimination of SSA entitlement for adult receiving Child in Care benefits

Child Turns 18:

- College - Fry Scholarship *Line of Duty Cases only*
- College - Dependence Education Assistance *VA Service Connected Death*
- Loss of annuities (SSA, DIC, SBP) unless enrolled in school full time. SSA depends on age when graduating High School
- Loss of annual benefit report
- If DG/SGLI beneficiary - If not already received

Child Turns 21:

- Loss of DFFRS/TRICARE unless enrolled in school full time
- Enrollment in TRICARE Young Adult

Child Turns 22:

- Loss of Child-Only SBP regardless of school enrollment

Child Turns 23:

- Loss of DFFRS/TRICARE transitional Survivor unless incapacitated
- Enrollment in TRICARE Young Adult

Child Turns 26:

- Loss of TRICARE Young Adult

Child Turns 33:

- Loss of Fry Scholarship eligibility

FLORIDA SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Thanks!

Nick Howland

Executive Director, The Fire Watch

www.thefirewatch.org

904.525.1761



Vietnam Veterans of America



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

Chapter/President/email/Location

1046	Albert White	
1048	Bob Adkins	adk123robert@outlook.com
1059	Dave Treffinger	dtreffinger433@msn.com
1084	Bill Jefferson	bill_jefferson@comcast.net
1088	Roy (Corky) Rudd	corkstopper50@yahoo.com; Nassau
1092	Forest Hope	foresthope@usa.net; Gainesville
1134	Marvin Lagle	mdlagle@gmail.com; Baker



REMEMBER WHAT OUR MEDAL STANDS FOR:

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

Veterans Council of Clay County:

President: Ansil Lewis

Meeting day is the same, first Wednesday of the month, but the location is changed to Clay County Administration Building, 1st floor conference room, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. Meeting start at 11 a.m.

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



Legal Aid for Veterans

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

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

1.866.486.6161

Call Today!

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



We Can Help With

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

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

Become a Watch Stander with The Fire Watch

Veterans Councils of Northeast Florida



BAKER COUNTY

President: Larry Porterfield

Meetings:

Second Thursday of each month

Location:

MacClenny Primitive Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall on North Boulevard

Time : 1800 (6pm)

CLAY COUNTY

President: Harry Silvers

Meetings:

First Wednesday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1400 (2pm)

DUVAL COUNTY

President

Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 37
Main Building
San Juan Avenue

Time: 1900 (7 pm)

NASSAU COUNTY

President: Mike Doran

Meetings:

First Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

St. Johns County

President: Bill Dudley

Meetings:

Last Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

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



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:

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

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

Please join our group on Facebook at:

<http://veteranscouncilsjc.org>

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

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

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

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

He can be contacted at webmaster@veteranscouncilsjc.org

*Veterans Council of St. Johns County,
“Helping All Veterans”*

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

Send to: rothfeldm@gmail.com



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Service is by appointment.
Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161*

*Joseph D. McDermott Director
Lori Chapman Assistant VSO
Andrew Ashcom Assistant VSO
Shauna Holton Assistant VSO
April Manner Office Specialist*

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