



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

Bill Dudley, Publisher

Michael Rothfeld, Editor

Volume 5, Issue 5

Newsletter Date: May 2016

Inside this Issue

	page
Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home	2
Jax National Cemetery Support Committee	3
Vietnam Lapel Pins	4
Vietnam Commemoration St Augustine Ntl	5
Vietnam Commemoration Jacksonville Ntl	7
VC new website and Facebook page	8
VFW Post 12142 donates to Veterans	9
MIAP April 2016 update	10
Vets 4 Vets Meeting Minutes	12
Danique's in Wash. DC Helping Veterans	13
St Augustine Sea Cadets # 1	14
FL National Guard's Peter Jennison	15
Vietnam Wall of Faces	17
FDVA New Interim Director	18
Isam on Temporary CBOC	19
A Thank You from Kathy Church	20
K9s For Warriors Graduation	21
Rory Diamond testifies in Wash. DC	22
Ntl League of POW/MIA Families and VC	24
A personal note of loss from Bob Dinkins	25
"STOP" 22	26
Veterans Legal Clinic	27
K9s Help Veterans Cope with PTSD	28
Younger vets avoid joining vet organizations	29
The PAWS Act	31
"Honor" by Max Royale	33
The Ride Home	36
K9s for Warriors April Graduation	37
Agent Orange presumptives may be expanded	39
Marine dog earns British Military decoration	43
Camp Lejeune cancer fight	45
FL Ntl Guard Honors Desert Storm Vets	46
Vietnam Vet Radio	48
Camp Blanding	49
Veterans History Project	50
VA Memorial Benefits	55

Message from the Chairman

Fellow Veterans:

I am pleased to report we have had several meetings with St. Johns County Administration personnel about funding for a full time position for our Veterans Treatment Court. A job description has been written for a full time Coordinator position, a Program Overview developed to describe the position, with job duties detailed and salary range determined. On May 3, 2016. Judge Howard McGillin and I will appear before the Board of County Commissioners to put forth our official request for the position to be added and funded. We are nearing the launch date for this long awaited and needed program. We have mentors already trained and several candidates who are interested in applying for the full time Coordinator position. The VA has been made

aware of the VTC Program in order for them to be prepared for the medical needs of those veterans who are enrolled in the program.

On April 12, a very important milestone took place between the local VA and your Veterans Council. A quarterly meeting has been established with VA Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Thomas McKenzie, Joe McDermott from VSO office, Randy Stapleford from Congressman Ron DeSantis office and me. The meeting was for more than an hour in duration and many subjects concerning local veteran issues were discussed, many that Doc was not aware of. He took note of the issues with several already resolved. These meetings will be held on a continuing quarterly basis with frequency adjusted if necessary. We applaud the Doc's willingness to have an open dialogue with us and to take under advisement those



issues of importance to our veterans.

Don't forget Memorial Day services in May. Jacksonville National Cemetery will conduct services on Saturday, 28 May with guest speaker USN RADM George Ballance and the services in St. Augustine will be on Monday, 30 May at the St. Augustine National Cemetery. Guest speaker will be USAF BGEN James Eifert. A flyer with all the details will be forthcoming.

Please be mindful that our Veterans Council meeting venue has shifted back to the Elk's Lodge with the dates and time still the last Thursday of each month at 1900 (7 PM).

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



Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Where Patriotism is our Motto



Congratulations to Kay Maley and her staff at the Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home in St. Augustine. The 120-bed home has been notified by the American College of Health Care Administrators that it will receive the Eli Pick Facility Leadership Award, recognizing high performing skilled nursing facilities. Fewer than 9% of facilities nationwide qualify.



4H Rocket Club Members assisting our veterans in making their own rockets



Getting ready to shoot off the homemade rockets



Shooting off the rockets



Cooking out on the back porch...hamburgers and hot dogs



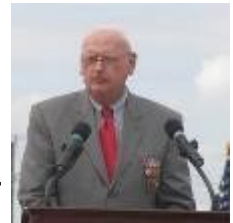
The Cascades Veterans Group conducted a Vietnam Veteran Commemoration service and presented each and every Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home Vietnam Veteran a pin and certificate.



Another Vietnam Veteran receiving his pin and certificate



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



JNC SC Chairman,
Ray Quinn

The Support Committee invites everyone to attend its **next scheduled meeting, on Monday, September 12, 2016.** The meeting will be at **7:00pm.** The meeting will take place at Community Hospice, **4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257 in Conference Room A.**

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

- Chairman: Ray Quinn
- Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley
- Treasurer: John Mountcastle
- Assistant Treasurer: Michael Rothfeld
- Secretary: Kathy Church
- Chaplain: Michael Halyard
- Master-At-Arms: Joe McDermott
- JAG Officer: Patrick Bennett
- Historian: Jody Raymond

VOLUNTEERS are needed! <http://jacksonvilleladies.org>

Membership in **The Jacksonville Ladies/Gentlemen** is strictly *voluntary* and is open to all Ladies and Gentlemen who have a sincere desire to pay final tribute to our Veterans. A Volunteer is there to attend every Service, not to "intrude" but to stand as a "silent witness" and give honor to the Veteran and condolences to their families. It is not a "typical" Volunteer position, it must come from the heart. It is an honor to be a part of these ceremonies that pay tribute to the everyday heroes that make up our armed forces. The Volunteers give back a little to those who have given so much for our great country.

How to Volunteer - <http://jacksonvilleladies.org>

The Jacksonville Ladies/Gentlemen are a very special group of *Volunteers* dedicated to being the "Silent Witness" for the Service of a Veteran and/or their Spouse. Especially important are those with no family present so they are not laid to rest alone. We also hope to provide some comfort to the family.

The only requirements are compassion, dedication and the sincere desire to honor our Veterans for their service to our country.

If you think you might be interested in becoming a Volunteer please contact Chair Gail Williams at 904-291-0604 or Vice Chair Kathy Cayton at 904-272-9489.

You can also fill out the form in the link below and one of us will get back to you as soon as possible.

<http://www.jacksonvilleladies.org/>

Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins:



The Vietnam War Commemoration is providing Vietnam veteran lapel pins to Commemorative Partners for presentation to U.S. military veterans who served during the Vietnam War period as a lasting memento of the nation's public thank you for which they have waited so long.

Living United States veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location, are eligible to receive one lapel pin.

The symbolism attached to these Vietnam veteran lapel pins is significant. The Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin Fact Sheet explains each of the elements incorporated into this pin.

For more information on the lapel pin, click the following link:

[http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/.../Veteran Lapel Pin Fact Shee...](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/.../Veteran_Lapel_Pin_Fact_Shee...)

For more information on [The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration](#), visit their official web site at www.vietnamwar50th.com

To all Vietnam Veterans and their families, thank you for your service.

Vietnam War Resources, "Websources"

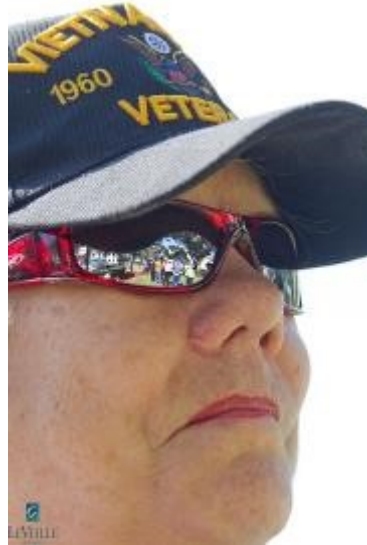
The definitive site on Vietnam info:

<http://www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html>



St. Augustine National Cemetery Vietnam 50th Commemoration

St. Augustine National Cemetery



Photos by Gary LeVeille and Michael Rothfeld

50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War Jacksonville National Cemetery

29 March 2016

A 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War was conducted at Jacksonville National Cemetery on Tuesday, March 29, 2016. The event was hosted by the staff of Jacksonville National Cemetery and the Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee.

Approximately 130 Vietnam veterans and family members were honored for their service. Messages of appreciation were delivered by staff members of Senator Marco Rubio and Congressman Ander Crenshaw. Of particular honor were keynote remarks delivered by Colonel Matt Johnson, Commander, Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Florida National Guard. Colonel Johnson a veteran of both the Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom expressed his appreciation for the manner in which his soldiers were welcomed home. His appreciation remarks included the fact that at every Welcome Home ceremony now Vietnam veterans are there.



Jacksonville National Cemetery Vietnam
50th Commemoration





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

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

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

Please join our group on Facebook at:
VeteransCouncilofStJohnsCounty,FL

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

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

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

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

VFW Post 12142
P.O. Box 2075
St. Augustine, FL 32085
www.VFWPost12142.org
6 April 2016



Press Release

On April 5th a call was received from the St. Johns County Service Office telling us that a Vietnam Veteran was in need of a Manual Wheelchair, that the VA nor his insurance company could get him one.

On April 6th, A. J. Sartin, Post Commander delivered a wheelchair for Stephen Cochran, who served with the U.S. Marines 1965 – 1968 in Vietnam.



Pictured with the wheelchair is Tammy Shirley, Veteran Service Officer, A. J. Sartin, and his Diabetic Service Dog, Gidget. (picture by Rick Rees, Veterans Service Officer)

VFW Post 12142 is on Vilano Beach (they are raising funds for a building – which can be sent to the above address).

Help Us With Our Post Building
<http://www.GoFundMe.com/hq2nzb4>

Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another

When you pass away...
Consider in lieu of flowers, have your friends
and family leave a donation to our Post.

Veterans Of Foreign Wars
“ No One Does More For Veterans “

MIAP REPORT – APRIL 2016



On Saturday, April 9, 2016 at the South Florida National Cemetery, the MIAP – FL in partnership with two Dignity Memorial Funeral Homes held its 9th “Call to Honor”. Included in this full military with honors service we interred our 1st female WWI veteran, our 1st female WWII veteran, along with 5 husband and wife couples, two of which were interred in the same urn. The longest that any of these sat on a funeral home shelf unclaimed dated back to 1962.

MIAP would like to graciously send out word of THANKS to all that participated in many ways to make this honorable service possible. We also want to THANK the members of the communities

that attended this service to honor these veteran and spouses. We can now say “YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN”.

If you would like to learn more about the Missing in America Project, which is a 501(c) 3 Non Profit Corporation please go to our website @ www.miap.us. Take a moment to read all about MIAP and what we are doing nation wide.

OUR NATIONWIDE PROGRESS AS OF 4/05/2016

Total Funeral Homes Visited - 1,963

Cremains Found - 13,037

Veterans Cremains Identified - 3,011

Veterans Interred - 2,740

One last note: MIAP – FL would like to further say THANK YOU to the St Johns Veteran Council and its members for their continued support to our project.

FOR GOD & COUNTRY

Kathy Church, MIAP, FL State Coordinator



Vets 4 Vets Minutes of last gathering...
Next gathering in July Saturday date TBD based on arena schedule.



We had great turnout on April 2nd; 180 in attendance with 134 new attendees. We had 46 previous Vets attend, but there were several other events going on the same day. Imagine the turnout of all those who have attended before attended and brought another Veteran with them. Numbers matter and if Veterans are going to make a difference when it comes to Veterans issues, we need to show we have the numbers. "Move dispersed, but fight concentrated"... We are spread out all over Jacksonville, but there has to come a time when we show solidarity with our fellow Veterans and unite.

With over 150,000 Veterans in NE Florida there needs to be a better dialog between the Veterans community and those we elect to represent us. United Veterans/V4V is a start in attracting the attention of those who respond to money and numbers and seek to maintain power. We don't have the money, but we certainly have the numbers and we need to start using them to influence change.

Appreciate Sheriff Mike Williams taking time from his schedule to address the Veterans, also in attendance were State Attorney Angela Corey, Public Defender Matt Shirk and a representative from Ander Crenshaw's office. There is an open invitation for the Mayor to address the Veterans; he has not done so thus far despite repeated inquiries from Veterans as to where is the Mayor. Numbers matter!

We are now reaching out to the active duty military leadership in the community to provide an update on mission capabilities and base status.

Pass the word and plan on joining us at the July gathering. We will get the Saturday date out ASAP.

"Nation (and a city) is judged by how well it treats its veterans."

Danique Massingill, A good friend of the Veterans Council is now working in Wash., DC.

I work for **American Humane Association** managing their **Military and Veterans Programs** nationwide.

Please extend the information that we give out small grants to assist in receiving a Service Dog from an agency. This includes Vietnam Veterans. I know how often they get overlooked when it comes to benefits nowadays, so I am very excited to be able to help them in a small way.



I have included the link to the Military Section of our Website. We also give grants for Retired Military Working Dog healthcare, we assist in paying and facilitating reunification between Dog handlers and their K9s. We are developing a grant program to assist with the cost of K9 funerals and memorials for working dogs, retired and active duty. We have also developed the Medal of Courage to be awarded to 3 working dogs annually for their valor. I have included the application as an attachment.

<http://www.americanhumane.org/interaction/programs/military/>

<http://www.americanhumane.org/interaction/programs/military/wags4patriots.html>

<https://secure.jotform.us/americanhumane/wags4patriots>

Thank you for helping me spread the word about these resources.

Danique

**St. Augustine Sea Cadet Battalion ranked
Number 1 in the Region:**



The 2015 inspection scores have been announced. I am proud to report that St. Augustine Battalion achieved the top score of 3.72 and is therefore now ranked number 1 in our region.

Inspection scores take in to account all aspects of our unit effectiveness to include cadet training, cadet correspondence coursework completion, cadet military bearing and knowledge as well as the effectiveness and quality of our unit drills and administrative documentation maintained by instructors.

BZ to cadets and officers who worked so hard this year to make our 2015 inspection a great success!

LTJG Eric Johnson, NSCC Commanding Officer, St. Augustine Battalion
US Naval Sea Cadet Corps

Capt. LaRoche, Congratulations to the Nease NJROTC cadets on winning first place in Area 12. I'm sure this is just a stepping stone to winning the National First Place again this year.

Please convey my congratulations to Team Nease.

BRAVO ZULU--ST. AUGUSTINE SEA CADETS

Please join me in congratulating our St. Augustine-Palm Coast Sea Cadets for outstanding performance in taking top score in the Region on their recent inspection. Well done, cadets.

Bill Dudley

President / National Director St. Augustine-Palm Coast Council Navy
League of the United States

This article is reprinted in its entirety with permission of its author Charlie Patton and the FL Times Union

One of Us: Florida National Guard helicopter pilot composes music while deployed

It was on the second of his three deployments to the Middle East as a helicopter pilot with the Florida National Guard that Peter Jennison began composing the songs that would eventually become his first album, "Longing for Home: Songs of War."

Jennison, 45, who spent about a year in Kuwait and Iraq on that deployment, had a Yamaha keyboard he kept under his bed. During down time, he would get it out and begin composing as an act of therapy.

That deployment began in 2006 and ended in 2007, a period when civil war raged in Iraq and the U.S. committed to a military "surge" in an effort to bring peace to the war-torn country.

In his songs, Jennison tried to capture the experiences of young men and women, far from home, fighting an elusive enemy.

The album's opening song, "War," "is about a young soldier running through the battlefield," Jennison said. "... He wants to fight his fear but he's running through this mine field and it's really taking a toll on him."

Working with Will Ackerman, a Grammy-winning producer, Jennison recorded "Longing for Home," which was released in 2010. The album is all instrumental. Jennison doesn't write lyrics or sing.

He went on his third and last Middle East deployment in 2011-2012 to Kuwait



Provided by Peter Jennison, Peter Jennison, a major in the Florida National Guard who lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, began composing music while deployed in Kuwait and Iraq. The songs he wrote became "Long for Home: Songs of War," an instrumental album released in 2010.

and Afghanistan.

While there he composed the songs for a second album, “Coming Home,” released in 2014. He takes great pride in the fact that The C.A.R.E. Channel, a musical service used by many hospitals to help calm patients, plays his music.

“I like taking care of people,” he said. “I’ll do whatever it takes to touch people.”

Jennison joined the Florida National Guard in 1993 and made his first deployment in 2000 to Kuwait.

From 2002-2004, he earned a law degree from the University of Florida. He spent several months with the State Attorney’s Office in Jacksonville but then went back on full-time status with the Guard. He still has his law license, but most of his clients are friends and colleagues with relatively minor legal issues and he gets paid more often with a bottle of whiskey than with a check.

“I tell my wife I practice law for liquor,” he joked.

He said he may go back to the full-time practice of law once he retires from the Florida National Guard. But that’s a few years off. He is currently deputy commander for recruiting in the state of Florida. He makes a daily commute from Ponte Vedra Beach where he lives with his wife, Kathy, and his son, Morgan, to St. Augustine, where the Guard’s state headquarters are located.

He also continues to write music and occasionally perform with a group of fellow musicians who call themselves The Gathering.

“I’d like to perform more,” he said “Music speaks every language. Music is one of the forces that can really save the world.”

charlie.patton@jacksonville.com,

(904) 359-4413

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall

There are 58,000+ names on The Wall. Every one has a story worth sharing and worth seeing.

Virtual Wall of Faces: <http://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/>

ABOUT THE VIRTUAL WALL OF FACES (TYPE IN A NAME AND A PICTURE OF THAT VETERAN APPEARS)

In an effort to further preserve the legacy of those who sacrificed all in Vietnam, VVMF is committed to finding a photo to go with each of the more than 58,000 names on The Wall. The Wall of Faces allows family and friends to share memories, post pictures and connect with each other.

[Explore the Virtual Wall of Faces](#)

If you have a picture of a loved one or fellow veteran whose name is on The Wall, please help the Memorial Fund honor these individuals by putting a face with a name. Regardless of whether or not the Memorial Fund has a photo of the individual already, we encourage you to submit it anyway. We are trying to collect as many photos of each individual as possible.

[TO SUBMIT A PHOTO OR TO LEARN MORE ON HOW-TO SUBMIT A PHOTO, CLICK HERE.](#)

ENSURING THESE FACES ARE NEVER FORGOTTEN

To accomplish this, the VVMF is in the midst of fundraising campaign to construct and open the Education Center at The Wall.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EDUCATION CENTER AT THE WALL CAMPAIGN](#)

FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND YOUTH SERVICE GROUPS

Hometown Heroes is a unique service learning project that encourages students to learn more about local veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice and to send the pictures and stories of those on The Wall to VVMF for use in the Education Center on the National Mall.

[View the Hometown Heroes Service Learning Project](#)

- See more at: <http://www.vvmf.org/about-the-wall-of-faces#sthash.HykrCBV8.dpuf>





Colleagues -- Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Executive Director Mike Prendergast tendered his resignation during Tuesday's Cabinet Meeting in Tallahassee in order to run for the office of Sheriff of Citrus County, Fla. The retired Army Colonel was appointed FDVA Executive Director by Gov. Rick Scott and the Cabinet June 22, 2011.

FDVA Deputy Executive Director Al Carter assumes his duties until an interim executive director is selected by the governor and Cabinet.

Regards, Steve R. Murray, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (Ret)

Communications Director, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Office (850) 487-1533, Ext. 7714

Visit www.FloridaVets.org Facebook www.facebook.com/floridaveterans

FOR MILITARY SPOUSES: Jacksonville's Military Affairs and Veterans Dept. hosts a Military Spouse Night Out from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, May 6, at Veterans Memorial Arena.

The event, which will honor the area's hard-working military spouses, is free. It will include self-defense, fitness and cooking demonstrations, while the local chapter of the USO will provide more than 800 Ann Taylor dresses for female spouses with a valid military spouse ID card.

The event is open to all active duty, reserve, guard and retired spouses with valid ID, which will be verified at the door.

For more information or to register for the free event, go to:

bit.ly/1XvuSVj

From Michael Isam, reporting on his evaluation of the new CBOC



To All:

Michael Rothfeld asked me to say a few word about life with the new CBOC.

For the most part, I find it better than the old location in the areas of better lighting, better parking, and layout.

I hear via the grapevine it is much cleaner than the old one.

There has been a real problem with the phones.

At the point when the message "transferring to the next...." came on, the sound went totally dead.

It left me wondering what the heck happened. Of course, I hung up and tried again... several times to no better avail.

At one point I waited over 15 minutes hearing dead air before I got a pre-recorded message "We send you the best wishes for the season and a Happy New Year" ... in March.

At least that was an improvement over dead air.

Of course this happened when I was attempting to get the results of a Cat Scan regarding my heart attack and the multiple aneurisms just brought to my attention.

To say I was a tad bit edgy is a minor understatement.

I have tried the phone system since that time and things seem to be immensely better.

Some folks have told me of not being able to get through on the phones,

but the additional no response by their primary or staff to secure messaging available via MyHealtheVet.

Other than the above, I give the building an 'A' and I give the staff I deal with an 'A+'.

I can't speak for everyone.



THANK YOU – THANK YOU – THANK YOU

There are not enough words to say THANK YOU for the very generous donation of car, a 2002 Buick Century, the St Johns County Veterans Council purchased for me for my travels with the

Missing In America Project – FL as the State Coordinator.

I know this all started with MIAP Field Operations Coordinator, Steve Spicklemier, reaching out to the Council and its members asking for assistance with this donation.

I want to say that this car is a very comfortable car to drive and it has many features my previous car did not have. It is also a heavier car so I don't find myself speeding as I did (oops maybe I should not say this).

I have now sold my other car and I will be making a donation to the STJCVS for their Wreaths Across America Program at the April meeting.

Once again THANK YOU to Chairman Bill Dudley and everyone that voted to make this all happen for me for the Missing In America Project. All Florida MIAP volunteers want to extend words of thanks for the continued support that is extended to MIAP not only from the STJCVS but all the many other veterans organizations.

FOR GOD & COUNTRY

Kathy Church, MIAP – FL State Coordinator



Receiving car and keys from Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley



Decals on car are show Kathy's support for MIAP, American Legion Auxiliary and American Legion Riders

K-9 program gives warriors hope for a bright future

By EMELIA HITCHNER emelia.hitchner@staugustine.com

This article reprinted with permission of its author and the St. Augustine Record

Five veterans and their service dogs graduated Thursday evening after three weeks of hard work through the K9 for Warriors program in Ponte Vedra Beach.



Graduate and veteran Rob Montminy said he's thankful he made it through the program with his dog, Cameron

The program, which has 218 graduates to date, was founded in 2011 by Shari Duval and is designed to help military members cope with post-traumatic stress disability related to war, injury or sexual abuse.

After her son, Brett, returned from Iraq with PTSD, Duval said she recognized the need for a treatment program specially designed for traumatized military members.

“They’re scared to death when they come in, I can tell you that,” Duval said.

Every month, a handful of veterans spend three weeks at K9 for Warriors working with trainers to master coping skills. Each individual is paired with a dog suited to their personality on the second day of the program.

For many of the participants, the program is one final opportunity to start fresh.

“On the first night, one of the warriors stood behind the couch and said, ‘This is my last hope, I wouldn’t be alive if it weren’t for my wife and child, and I’m here to try one more thing,’” Duval said. “I can promise you he’s a different man today, and he’s going to go home full of hope and a future.”

According to statistics gathered by the Veterans Administration in 2012, an average of 22 veterans commit suicide every day. But upon completing the live-in program, veterans return back into civilian life with reduced suicide risk and a service dog to help manage stress.

Past graduate and special guest speaker Joe Swoboda said the program has worked wonders in his life.

“I would not be here without the love and support of everyone here,” Swoboda said.

Since graduating in 2012 with his dog, Lilly, Swoboda has connected with veterans during their darkest times and encouraged them to join the program.

“There’s nothing telling us how to come out of war and go into society. Some of us are scared to come out of our rooms,” Swoboda said. “There are people who love and care about veterans. They just don’t know that.”

March graduate and Navy corpsman Christian Giraldo has big goals for his future, knowing he can move forward. He plans on completing nursing school while minoring in music. Eventually, he’d like to become a pediatric nurse.

“She made this whole thing pretty easy; I didn’t have to do much,” Giraldo said about his service dog, Faith.

All of the dogs at K9 for Warriors are rescues and donations from across the nation. Each dog is trained for several months before being paired with a veteran.

Warrior and K-9 trainer Matt Gregory said every veteran’s application is reviewed so they’re placed with the perfect partner.

Gregory is a graduate who served in special operations for four years. He said the program significantly changed his outlook.

“Before this, I was extremely angry and lost,” Gregory said. “I was probably one of the angriest people you’d ever meet.”

Now, Gregory and his service dog live on-site and train new veterans and dogs.

“This program gave me hope, and I wanted to share that hope with other guys,” Gregory said.

From Congressman Ron DeSantis:

Dear Friend,

In 2010, Congress instructed the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the benefits of providing service dogs to veterans afflicted with post-traumatic stress. Perhaps not surprisingly, the VA study has been mired in bureaucracy and has so far failed to provide any actionable results, wasting taxpayer money but more importantly, failing to provide an effective treatment option to our veterans. With an endemic of suicides plaguing our veterans, this has been a costly misstep by the VA, which continues to reject the idea that service dogs can be helpful for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress. That is why as Chairman of the National Security Subcommittee, I called the VA to testify in front of Congress to account for this wasteful study.

I have seen first hand the success of non-profits when it comes to this issue. In fact, Florida's 6th district is home to K9s for Warriors, one of the largest non-profits providing service dogs to veterans with post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries, and military sexual trauma. They have the capacity to pair sixteen warriors with service dogs every month.

While the VA asserts that that "there is not enough research" on the benefits of service dogs, there is ample anecdotal and scientific evidence that service dogs do help veterans with post-traumatic stress. Rory Diamond, the Executive Director for K9s for Warriors, testified that the average warrior they treat is on 10-15 medications at the beginning of their program and 92% see those medications reduced or eliminated after graduation. As Rory told Congress, a service dog helps hurting veterans "become more like they people they were before they went off to war."



Former Marine Cole Lyle delivered powerful testimony before the committee sharing his personal struggles with post-traumatic stress and how his service dog Kaya has been an invaluable lifeline.

Cole put it best: "Service dogs WILL save lives."

In an email addressed to Bill Dudley and myself:

Dear Mr. Rothfeld, I regret the delay in following up your thoughtful note with reference to the documentary you and Bill Dudley produced for the Veterans Council. **We will be delighted to advertise the merits of your film that has been reviewed by individuals far more expert than I on such matters and all felt public exposure of this production would be educationally beneficial.**

We deeply appreciate your bringing this to our attention and availability will be posted to our Facebook page and on our web site, along with contact information. For that purpose, I'm copying Leslie Swindells, League Administrator.

Sincerely, Ann Mills-Griffiths

Chairman & CEO

National League of POW / MIA Families

5673 Columbia Pike, Suite 100

Falls Church, VA 22041

703-465-7432

Website: www.pow-miafamilies.org

Facebook: National League of POW / MIA Families

To the Patriot Reader

I attended Stranahan high school in Ft. Lauderdale, Fl. (Class of 67) with James Alley and he was a friend of mine for many years.

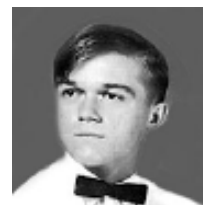
I noticed that you saw this article on FB, so hear is the rest of the story.

Bob Dinkins - Chaplain, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1084, St. Johns County, Fl
bobdinkins@bellsouth.net

"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."



James Harold Alley Panel W2 Line 130



Six Vietnam War Airmen Buried

By Mike Householder Associated Press Writer, Nov.1997



WASHINGTON (AP) -- With a helicopter flyby, the sounds of an Air Force band and Arlington National Cemetery as a backdrop, six airmen whose remains were missing in Vietnam have finally been honored.

More than 100 people turned out Wednesday for the service for the six, missing in action for 25 years. They were part of a rescue attempt that was recounted in the 1988 movie ``Bat 21,`` starring Gene Hackman and Danny Glover.

Lt. John Call, Potomac, Md.; Capt. Peter Chapman, Centerburg, Ohio; Sgt. James Alley, Plantation, Fla.; Sgt. Allen Avery, Auburn, Mass.; Sgt. Roy Prater, Tiffin, Ohio; and Sgt. William Pearson, Webster, N.H., were on a search-and-rescue operation aboard a Sikorsky HH-53 helicopter, named the ``Jolly Green 67,`` near Dong Ha, South Vietnam, on April 6, 1972. The crew was trying to rescue two downed airmen when the helicopter was shot down.

The airmen the crew was trying to rescue were later found alive.

One of the men saved in the operation, retired Lt. Col. Iceal

"Gene" Hambleton, sent a letter to be read at the service.

``It was the most terrible day I had ever lived,`` Hambleton wrote.

``I had to stand by and watch six young men die trying to save my life. Heroes, you bet they were.``

The other downed airman, retired Col. Mark Clark, who attended the service, echoed Hambleton's sentiments about those who died.

"Have no doubt,`` Clark said.``Those men were heroes.``

As a footnote, James Alley graduated from Stranahan High School in 1967.



Did you know 22 veterans will commit suicide every day?

Join the "Stop 22" movement to raise awareness and stand with K9s for Warriors as they help veterans with PTSD and brain injuries.

On the 22nd of every month, use the hashtag #Stop22 on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and show your support. Watch below how people are "outdoing 22's" all over social media.

Learn more by visiting the Stop 22 website: <http://www.stop22.org/>

And check out K9s for Warriors for regular updates on their mission: <http://www.k9sforwarriors.org/>

Attention Veterans:

Do you have a family law case, housing issue, or other civil matter to discuss with an attorney?

Jacksonville Collaborative Veterans Legal Clinic at JOPC

Unless otherwise posted, the Veterans Legal Clinic will be held at the Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic 1536 N. Jefferson Street in room 2L103 (large conference room on second floor) the below dates.

Services beyond legal consultation are subject to income guidelines.

To ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak with an attorney, please be there by noon to register.

May 13

For more information, please contact Florida Coastal School of Law at (904)256-1207 or veteranslaw@fcsl.edu

Florida Coastal School of Law, Inc., Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Three Rivers Legal Services and the Jacksonville Veterans Legal Collaborative are not an agency, contractor, employee or other entity of the US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). Furthermore, VA assumes no responsibility for the professional integrity of the organizations whose names appear on this list, and the organizations' presence in the Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by VA.

The Official Vietnam War Commemoration Site

<http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/>

PAWS Act seeks to help veterans with PTSD get service dogs, By Stephen Gutowski

Published March 21, 2016 , Washington Free Beacon

A bill introduced to the House of Representatives on Wednesday would create a program to help connect veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with service dogs.



The Puppies Assisting Wounded Service members (PAWS) Act, introduced by Rep.

Ron DeSantis (R., Fla.), would establish a pilot program within the Veterans Administration. That program would provide a trained service dog to veterans who have severe levels of PTSD, and whose symptoms persist despite treatment. Under the bill the Veterans Administration would pay third-party dog training organizations for the dogs they provide to veterans in the program.

To maintain eligibility for the program, the veteran must see a VA primary care doctor or mental health professional quarterly.

The bill would authorize \$27,000 for the VA to spend on each dog from an organization accredited by Assistance Dog International. It also includes VA health insurance for the dog. In total the PAWS Act allocates \$10 million to fund the pilot program.

Corporal Cole Lyle, a major proponent of the bill who served six years in the Marine Corps, said Kaya, his service dog, helps him overcome the struggles of PTSD on a daily basis. “I deployed out of Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, and served with ISAF forces in Helmand province,” he told the Washington Free Beacon. “The difficulties I had transitioning back into civilian life stemmed out of roughly the last two months of the deployment, when I was volunteering at an understaffed trauma hospital in my spare time on base. When I got home, I would have recurring nightmares and anxiety attacks.”

“Kaya is trained specifically to jump up in bed and wake me up from nightmares or to lick my hand or face to remind me to remain calm in the early stages of an anxiety attack, effectively neutralizing their ability to snowball.”

Why are the younger Veterans avoiding the Veteran Service Organizations?

By Les Davis, MA

National Recruiter at AMVETS National Headquarters



https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-younger-veterans-avoiding-veteran-service-les-davis-ma?trk=pulse_spock-articles

Before I researched why the post-Vietnam generation of Veterans were not joining Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), I asked myself, “Why wouldn’t veterans want to be around other veterans?” Truly, participating in a VSO provides a unique opportunity to serve our community with people from all walks of life, and also offers the opportunity to share the bond and comradery that melds us together as proud United States Veterans.

After months of research, most of which involved visiting many VSOs in several states, the answer became obvious: In all of the VSOs that I had the pleasure of visiting, I found that VSOs are standing by and waiting for this younger generation of veterans to just walk in and join like their fathers and grandfathers before them. And this appeared to be the “marketing strategy” to bolster membership in many, if not all, of the VSOs. Many VSOs rely solely on their names to entice these young veterans to show up and join, and most have a marketing campaign that hasn’t quite made it into the 21st Century. And quite frankly, some of the messaging is a little misleading. For example, I remember getting a package from a VSO that looked like an official government envelope until I opened it and discovered much to my dismay that this official-looking correspondence was in fact a membership package. I thought the **BOLD RED** ink demanding some type of action was a little over the top. When I read “send money along with application and you will receive a multi-tool with your new membership”, I decided to throw the whole envelope away.

The current VSO image and what the younger veteran generation think about local VSOs is real; they see a building with a couple windows, a dimly lit smoke-filled room with a pool table or darts with “Bingo Night” being boldly advertised as the biggest event happening at that particular location. How do we get the younger veterans to be part of that? The answer is we don’t. WE MUST CHANGE. The thought that eventually the younger veterans will join because they are missing the comradery is a false notion. There are too many newer and younger VSOs that have popped-up in the recent years for them to join leaving a vast number of VSOs competing for membership from a much smaller pool of veterans.

The one positive aspect from the VSOs, one that no one can take away, is that they have held firm in the support of the various veteran issues in Washington, D.C. for decades, and have dedicated much of their efforts in resolving very troubling veteran issues involving the Veterans Administration that have surfaced in recent years. The more established veteran service organizations have a voice with the Congress and President regardless of the dominant political party. Senators, Representatives, and Presidents have made speeches at VSO national conventions because politicians know that they need the support of these Veteran Service Organizations. Politicians listen to them because of the membership numbers which unfortunately are

declining.

What positive actions can the VSOs take to build membership? After talking to Desert Storm, OEF and OIF veterans over the past 9 years, I suggest the following 12 common sense steps to appeal to that younger generation of veterans who are the very life-blood of the existing VSOs:

1. Be honest and transparent when sending out material to attract new members. Educate the younger veteran generation by conveying to them what you have accomplished locally and nationally to ensure that veteran issues stay at the forefront of the discussion. Show them that you are making a difference. Let them know about your whole organization, not just a narrow scope of membership and money.
2. Treat all veterans equally. Both men and women have served honorable in the Armed Forces. To assume only men deployed or served is backwards thinking, and has no room in today's VSO.
3. Update posts with free WIFI, offer video gaming like an XBOX or PlayStation 4, and install flat screen TVs, and select programming, such as sports programming, that would appeal to all veterans
4. I know the more seasoned veterans have life experience and perhaps a different frame of reference. But we should never think that the younger generation is any different. As a leader, I've always welcomed new ideas from everyone, and the younger veterans are full of ideas-just as we were at that age. You should embrace their energy and let them share their ideas about improving your post; you will be pleasantly surprised with the innovative ideas that they come up with. Be open to these new ideas.
5. Welcome all veterans into your post. When you see someone new walk in, welcome them with open arms, make them feel like they are part of your post and have found a new family and friends. And don't criticize the younger generation, especially the millennials like to solve problems by working and teaming with a group. This is a prime opportunity for the VSO leadership to mentor those younger veterans. Be patient. Some of these young veterans suffer from a malady of challenges, such as Traumatic Brain Injury.
6. Turn your post or part of your post into a community type of center. Our younger veterans want a place to network, drop their child off for daycare, or do homework.
7. Turn your post into a place where veterans can network with the community. Invite local business owners, company executives, your local college Veteran's Representatives, or members of the local Chamber of Commerce to speak at your meetings.
8. Don't be afraid to work with other veteran organizations within your community. Build a strong support network for all veterans.
9. If you have a post close to a military base, begin working with the base transition office or AW2/AF2/USMC Wound Warrior Regiment or the Navy's Safe Harbor Program. These once flourishing programs have had their share of budget cuts, but the mission remains the same. This is where VSOs could make a positive impact with the base leadership as well as the surrounding veteran population.
10. Introduce yourself and your post to your local Guard and Reserve centers. Most of the members live, work, and shop in your community.

Sign up for and attend every veteran event that you can. Make sure the people in your community know that you are the person and post to contact when it comes to supporting veterans. Talk the talk and walk the walk.

Guest Column: The PAWS Act will help more veterans heal

By U.S. Rep Ron DeSantis Mon, Mar 21, 2016

Our military is the most advanced fighting force in the world, yet in the campaign against post-traumatic stress the government isn't utilizing an incredibly potent weapon: puppies.

Thousands of veterans have been assisted by the specialized care that a service dog provides, Congress should expand access by passing the Puppies Assisting Wounded Service members (PAWS) Act, which authorizes service dogs through the VA.

War can leave behind physical scars, from the horrors that our troops face on the battlefield. Yet thousands of our servicemen and women also bear invisible wounds and face a chronic struggle with the symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

The threat to our service members does not end when they return home, as evidenced by the tragic rates of veteran suicides. We must make sure that all veterans are honored and taken care of.

ONE VET'S BATTLE TO HEAL

For former Marine Cpl. Cole Thomas Lyle, the transition from Afghanistan to the home front was difficult. A Post-Deployment Health Assessment indicated that he needed to seek help for depression, post-traumatic stress and anxiety.

The VA suggested counseling at a local vet center and prescribed prescription medications to combat symptoms.

A few years later, Lyle's personal life had deteriorated, the medications were failing to help and two of his friends had committed suicide, partially due to worsened symptoms caused by opioids.

With no job, no support system and no sense of purpose, Lyle quit the drugs cold turkey and inquired with the VA about service dogs.

Except there was just one problem: while the VA provides service dogs for physical disabilities such as blindness, it does not provide them specifically for post-traumatic stress.

Thankfully with the financial support of his family — a resource that many veterans lack — Lyle was able to acquire a German Shepard named Kaya and have her certified through an As-

sistance Dogs International-accredited trainer.

Without Kaya, Lyle would likely not be where he is today: attending college and working tirelessly as an advocate for fellow veterans. So why is this not an option available to more veterans?

During my active-duty Naval service and throughout my work in Congress, I have seen firsthand the toll that post-traumatic stress can take. And I have come to realize that there is an overwhelming need to expand the treatment options available to our veterans.

While medication and therapy may work well for many patients, every veteran has a unique experience and many would benefit from a service dog.

The PAWS Act will match veterans suffering from severe post-traumatic stress who remain symptomatic even after traditional treatment with certified service dogs.

This is a simple program that could have a dramatic — and potentially life-saving — effect on many lives.

While a number of non-profits that provide service dogs for post-traumatic stress — such as K9s for Warriors, based in Ponte Vedra — private organizations have extremely long waiting lists.

In order to take the fight to post-traumatic stress and work toward getting our struggling veterans back on their feet, the VA should be assisting in the effort.

This is sound policy, because offering more effective treatments to a greater number of veterans can help reduce dependence on costly medications and smoothly acclimate more combat veterans to civilian life.

There is no silver bullet for everyone afflicted by post-traumatic stress, but the option to have a service dog is one that needs to be put on the table.

As Americans, we are grateful for the sacrifices made by our troops.

Let's make good on our promises to care for them and help save lives.

U.S. Rep. Ron DeSantis, a Republican, represents Florida's 6th District.

HONOR by Max Royale, City Manager, St Augustine Beach

It must be admitted that many of the daily routines of local government work are far from the enthralling excitement of a “reality” TV show. I suppose that if a show were done of those local government activities not related to law enforcement, emergency medical rescues or firefighting, the effect of it would be to help insomniacs finally fall into a deep and refreshing sleep. But now and then something happens that momentarily and memorably changes in a positive way a local government’s humdrum routines.

So how did it all start? Amid the demands and interruptions that shred one’s attention during a normal workday, it’s hard to recall that first step. Still, I would like to pinpoint a beginning, because an event so unique must have one. But as the memory is hazy, I’ll have to guess that it was a visit to the office in early November 2015 by Ms. Anne-Marie Laine of Les Amis Francophones de St. Augustine, which I believe translates as “The French-Speaking Friends of St. Augustine.” She wanted to know if the city could host a ceremony in December to honor local veterans. I replied that such was possible, but I would need more information. That came soon after in a letter from Mr. Philippe Letrilliart, Consul General of the French Consulate in Miami, in which he wrote:

“On the 60th anniversary [2004] of the Normandy landings, President Jacques Chirac decided to grant the Legion of Honor, which is France’s highest distinction recognizing acts of exceptional service to France to all the American veterans, who as part of the Allied forces, fought on French soil during the Second World War.” Mr. Letrilliart continued that the Legion of Honor had been presented to over 1,400 veterans in Florida since 2008. After that letter, I exchanged emails and phone calls with Mr. Letrilliart’s press attaché, Ms. Nathalie Cluzet-Bertot, who spoke English with that delightful French accent that transforms sentences into harmonious melodies.

What Nathalie and I arranged were the basics of a ceremony for Mr. Letrilliart to present the Legion of Honor to twelve local veterans who had fought in France in World War II. The presentation would take place at 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 10, 2015, in the commission meeting room at city hall. Nathalie said she’d have food provided, and, she asked, could wine be served? Of course, I said yes. What would an occasion presented by representatives from France be without wine? The event would be open to the public. End of story, except for the ceremony itself, right?

Well, not quite. There were details that needed attention. Then Mayor-Andrea Samuels was a font of useful ideas. She said there should be cloths for the tables on which the food would be arrayed and the medals displayed; bunting with the French national colors, blue over white over red, should be purchased and hung on the room's walls; the large podium in the meeting room had to be disconnected from its electronic tethers and moved back to the dais, to create a large open space where each veteran would receive the Legion of Honor; a portable speaker system had to be found (it was provided by Chief Hardwick of the Police Department). Ms. Lori Parker, a florist and the wife of our city's Police Commander James Parker, generously made attractive floral arrangements for the tables. Thanks to the Mayor's suggestions, Ms. Parker's flowers, and the work done by city staff, the bare functionality of a government meeting room was transformed into a warm and welcoming space.

On the morning of December 10th that room quickly filled to overflowing with the honored veterans, their families and friends, the French officials, veterans of other wars, members of the public, the media, and city officials. Members of Les Amis Francophones de St. Augustine--Ms. Laine, Mr. Jean Claude Mantion, Ms. Nicole Rapicault and Ms. Linda Hoonton--brought in trays of food that members had prepared. Pastries were donated by Les Petits Pleasures. There was also a wooden box with perhaps a dozen bottles of red wine--from France, of course. On a table in front of the room each medal was displayed in its decorative case.

The ceremony could have been an excuse for pompous platitudes about service and sacrifice. It was much the opposite: simple, direct, dignified and moving. Opening remarks were made by Mr. Francois Kloc, Honorary Consul for France in Jacksonville; the French and U.S. national anthems were sung; on behalf of the city, Mayor Samuels welcomed the crowd; Mr. Letrilliart explained the background of the Legion of Honor medal: that it was created in 1802 by Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte to recognize persons who had given outstanding service to France in either military or civilian endeavors.

Ten of the twelve honored veterans to receive the medal were in the room. Two medals would be awarded posthumously to surviving family members. The veterans present showed by facial wrinkles and thinning, white hair the effects of time's passage, and that what they were being honored for had happened many years ago. As each stood for Mr. Letrilliart to pin the Legion of Honor on his left lapel, I wondered at the contrast between how the veteran appeared now and what he must have looked like in France in 1944: young, perhaps bare

ly out of his teen years, in a strange and frightening world far from family and home, experiencing life in combat as soldiers, ancient and modern, have experienced it: the daily, primal, brutal struggle for survival with the weather, filth, lack of sleep, illness, constant uncertainty, the loss of comrades, fear of injury or death caused by accident or inflicted by a ruthless, determined enemy, who had to be confronted, uprooted and pushed back across France in skirmishes and ambushes and battles large and small, crossroads by crossroads, town by town, into Germany itself, until that enemy was so thoroughly defeated that raised arms and the white flag of surrender were its only options.

As each veteran received his Legion of Honor, Mr. Richard Williamson, the husband of Ms. Anne-Marie Laine, read aloud a brief biography about when and where the veteran was born, his rank in the Army, where he had fought in France and Germany, and the other medals and honors he had received. It was the recitation of these personal details that made the ceremony so memorable and made the rest of us in the room aware that we were in the presence of men, who, though now elderly and ordinary in appearance, had done extraordinary acts of endurance and bravery.

Throughout this essay, I've used the rather generic term "veterans" to refer to these honored men. As they are distinct individuals, and as they deserve to be remembered as individuals, their names should be provided. The age that each was in 1944, when he fought in France, is also provided.

Philip R. Allen, 18; Jerome B. Barshov, 20; Edward C. Daniels, 21; Bill W. Eberle, 20; Michael M. Goodyear, 23; Don E. Holmes, 22; John W. Johnson, 19; Reynaldo Lebron, 19; Richard B. Lewis, 22; Edward J. McCarthy, 18; Raymond A. Mitchell, 20; Nicholas A. Stein, 20.

Florida State Veterans Benefits

<http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-state-benefits/florida-state-veterans-benefits.html>



Support The Ride Home - it is the largest gathering of former Prisoners Of War and still Missing In Action families tribute event held in the United States. Go to our website to sponsor a former POW or MIA family member. Corporate sponsorships available.

www.theridehome.com

The RIDE HOME Inc. is a Non Profit Corporation paying tribute to Former American Prisoners of War and the families of those Americans still Missing in Action. National POW/MIA Recognition Day reminds us of the sacrifices our soldiers and their families make for our great country every day and our responsibility to let them all know that we Will NOT Forget. Combined Conflict totals in the last century equate to more than 120,000 Prisoners Of War repatriated and over 83,000 still listed as Missing in Action. To pay tribute to the Former Prisoners of War and The Families of those Still Missing In Action, we host The RIDE HOME. This annual event takes place in and around the cities of Americus and Andersonville, Georgia, home of the National Prisoners of War Museum. With the support of American Patriots, like you, we are able to provide dinner and lunch, as well as lodging for over 200 Honored Guest. This annual event is open to the public and we strongly encourage you to join us as we show our gratitude for the sacrifices these former POWs and MIA families have made for Our Great Country.





Yet another successful graduation for 6 Army veterans and their service dogs! Thanks [Dogzaz](#) for sending the class these sweet caps! [#K9Strong](#)

Election of Officers for VVA Chapter 1046, Jacksonville.

Election was April 8, 2016, Officers are for Two Years

1046 Chapter Officers

President Anthony (Tony) D'Aleo

1st VP Ralph Sevelius

2nd VP Carl (C.J.) Gauthier

Secretary John (Doc) Prevette

Treasurer Carl (Mike) Petry

1046 Chapter Directors

Joseph Tavares, Raymond Breault

Bill Tosca, Dow Peters



Contact: Lee Ann Sferrazza-Rios, sferrazza-riosl@fdva.state.fl.us

(727) 518-3202, Ext. 5572 office, (727) 831-1805 cell

Nominations Open for 2016 Class of the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council is currently accepting nominations for the fourth annual class of inductees into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. The nomination period is open until May 31, 2016. Anyone is permitted to nominate a military veteran.

The Florida Legislature established the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame to honor and recognize veterans, both living and deceased, for their post-military service to the state.

Those nominating a veteran will need to complete a nomination packet that can be downloaded from www.FloridaVeteransHallofFame.org. Nominations are based on established criteria including recognizing veterans who, through their works and lives during or after military service, have made a significant contribution to the state of Florida through civic, business, public service or other pursuits. It is not a traditional military hall of fame, as it focuses on post-military contributions to the State of Florida.

Up to 20 individuals may be selected for induction into the hall each year.

“We are privileged to be one of only nine other states that can honor its veterans for heeding the call to public service after they leave the military,” said retired Army National Guard Sgt. Maj. Ray A. Quinn, chairman of the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Council. “As we roll into our fourth class, we are reaching far and wide to get nominations for those who exemplify continued service, sacrifice and commitment to a greater cause throughout their lifetime so that we can honor them by inducting them into the next Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.”

Names honoring selected inductees are commemorated on a plaque in the Capitol Rotunda in Tallahassee. Since 2013, nineteen Florida veterans have been inducted into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

“With nearly 1.6 million veterans and a proven track record of service to the country, the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame is honored to recognize those who have taken the passion of service one step further to make Florida a great state not only for veterans but for each and every Floridian,” said State Rep. Jimmie T. Smith, an Army veteran and vice chairman for the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council.”

The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council, a seven-member advisory panel, is responsible for accepting nominations to be considered for induction into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. In selecting its nominees for submission, the council gives preference to veterans who were either born in Florida or adopted Florida as their home state. Each year, the council transmits its recommended list of nominees to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, which submits the nominations to the Governor and Cabinet, who will select the nominees to be inducted.

“Let us never forget our veterans, through whose selfless service and sacrifice we enjoy freedom and liberty,” said Mike Prendergast, executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. “Help us recognize the contributions and talents of America's finest.”

For nomination information, visit <http://www.FloridaVeteransHallofFame.org>.

List of Agent Orange-related diseases may expand

Patricia Kime, Military Times

The Veterans Affairs Department is weighing whether to add several diseases to the list of health conditions presumed in Vietnam veterans to be caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

A VA working group is studying a report issued in March by the Institute of Medicine to determine whether bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson's-like symptoms — illnesses the IOM said may be more strongly linked to exposure than previously thought — should automatically make a Vietnam veteran eligible for VA disability benefits and health care.

According to Dr. Ralph Erickson, VA's chief consultant for post-deployment health services, the group will make a recommendations to VA Secretary Robert McDonald on whether the diseases should be added to a list of 15 already in place.

“We are in the midst of a deliberative process, carefully looking at all the IOM committee put in the report and additional information that has come out since,” Erickson said. “We will be putting tougher a VA response that will be brought before senior leaders and ultimately brought before the secretary.”

The process could take up to two years, a VA spokeswoman added.

Agent Orange exposure has been linked to bladder cancer, hypothyroidism.

Roughly 1 million Vietnam veterans are enrolled in the VA health system, according to the department. Based on a review of data for one year, 5,484 of these veterans have been diagnosed with bladder cancer, 15,983 suffer from hypothyroidism and an estimated 1,833 have Parkinson's-like symptoms.

The working group also is looking into the role, if any, Agent Orange exposure has played in the development of hypertension in Vietnam veterans. According to VA, 307,324 Vietnam veterans in the Veterans Health Administration have high blood pressure.

“Hypertension has been a question that has been asked,” Erickson said. “The cohort of men and women who heroically served their country in uniform and went to Vietnam are in their 60s, 70s and 80s, and these individuals, merely because of their age, are starting to accrue chronic diseases that come with aging. It’s a delicate matter to tease out whether someone has hypertension because of their age or whether it would be related to an exposure to Agent Orange.”

VA began recognizing diseases associated with herbicide exposure in Vietnam beginning in 1991, naming 15 diseases as presumed to be related, including Hodgkin’s disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, early-onset peripheral neuropathy, porphyria cutanea tarda, prostate cancer, respiratory cancers, soft-tissue sarcoma, chloracne, type-2 diabetes mellitus, light chain amyloidosis, ischemic heart disease, chronic B-cell leukemias, Parkinson’s disease, and spina bifida in offspring of veterans.

The most recent IOM report actually downgraded spina bifida in the children of Vietnam veterans, saying research does not support a previously held belief that the disease occurred in offspring of exposed veterans at higher rates.

But the change of spina bifida from "limited or suggestive evidence" it is related to exposure to “inadequate or insufficient” evidence should not affect disability payments to the 1,153 descendants of Vietnam veterans who receive them, Veterans Benefits Administration senior adviser for compensation services Brad Flohr said.

VA recommends that veterans who have an illness they believe is related to Agent Orange exposure file a claim; they are considered on a case-by-case basis if the illness is not on the presumptive condition list.

Should new diseases be added to the list, the regulation would go into effect 30 days after it is published in the Federal Register.

If a veteran dies of a condition determined to be a presumptive condition after the veteran’s death, VA will provide dependency and indemnity compensation benefits to eligible spouses, children and parents of that veteran.



Congratulations to the March 2016 class of K9s For Warriors! You have worked so hard these past 3 weeks and we are so proud. [#K9Strong](#) [#servicedogs](#)

The winter 2016 issue of the Gulf War Newsletter marks the 25th anniversary of the start of Operation Desert Storm. Inside you will find:

- Personal reflections on the Gulf War from VA employees, many of whom are also Gulf War Veterans
 - Information on VA research related to Gulf War Veterans, including how to participate in upcoming studies
 - Results from a recent survey on the physical and mental health of Gulf War and Gulf War Era Veterans
 - A list of Gulf War illnesses that are presumed by VA to be caused by military service
- Tips on how to get a disability compensation claim decision fast

Start reading today at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/publications/gulf-war/gulf-war-



North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System

Veterans Health Library

Since 2013, the Veterans Health Library has been offering Veterans, family members, and caregivers 24/7 access to comprehensive, Veteran-focused health information. The online Library is a one-stop source for health information to help Veterans stay well and well-informed.

There are over 1,500 health sheets, more than 150 videos, plus Go-to-Guides with audio, video and interactive quizzes, and Flipbooks that have been approved by VA experts, and include topics specific to Veterans, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat-related Traumatic Brain Injury, Agent Orange, and Cold Injury.

All health information is available to Veterans, their family and the public, no matter where the Veteran receives care. Information is presented in English and Spanish.

Today, the Veterans Health Library has a fresh, new look and feel that improves the users' experience to make it more responsive to your needs. Come on in...browse around...and see for yourself.

Stay Healthy! Visit www.veteranshealthlibrary.org

For more articles on health and wellness, read the latest issue of Veterans Health Matters magazine at www.visn8.va.gov/VISN8/news/publications.asp.

- See more at: <http://www.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/features/library.asp#sthash.hhn2CQrf.dpuf>



SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES

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

Contact Keith Ham

Survivor Outreach Services Support Coordinator, HRCI Contractor

310 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084

Office: 904-823-0157 Cell: 904-472-7689

Email: keith.e.ham.ctr@mail.mil



First US Marine Dog to Win English Honor

A retired U.S. Marine dog was honored today with the PDSA Dickin Medal, the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross which is the highest British military decoration awarded for valor.

Lucca, a German Shepherd, received the award after completing 400 missions in six years of active service with allied troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and losing a leg on the battlefield.

"It's an incredible honor to be part of this award ceremony today," said her handler Gunnery Sergeant Christopher Willingham.

Willingham deployed to Iraq with Lucca twice after training her for more than a year and says her personality is what made her so perfect for the job.

"She's incredibly intelligent and loyal," Willingham told ABC News. "You can really see her processing information, applying what she learned in a combat environment and be successful. I feel extremely fortunate."

"We really got in sync," Willingham added. "She almost knew what I wanted before I had to ask. Her drive and overall character were absolutely amazing."

In 2012 Lucca lost her leg and suffered severe burns to her chest after discovering an improvised explosive device (IED) in Afghanistan.

"She had her surgery and amazingly within 10 days she was walking around again," Willingham said. "The best part is that she has the same personality as she had before the blast."

Former commanding generals of the U.S. Army Public Health Command addressed Lucca directly at the event.

"I know you don't understand the words but I hope you sense the human warmth, gratitude and pride that we all feel for your heroism and for a job extremely well done," said Retired Maj. Gen. Dean G. Sienko.

The U.S. military has used dogs since World War II, said Willingham, and while they've had a variety of jobs, "it's about saving lives," said Willingham.

"Thousands of service members have come home because of the capabilities of our dogs," Willingham said, "so it's always great to see their actions on the battlefield being recognized."

Combat Vets Association Chapter 20-1 presents

COMBAT VETS ASSOCIATION

State



Rally

11th- Free Beer
Liquor Bar
Carving Station
UFC Fight Night

12th- Pig Roast
Ride Games, 50/50
Prize Wheel, Cornhole
Door Prizes & Auction

Florida

November 2016



Friday 11th Welcome Buffet

Saturday 12th Pig Roast

*Sunday 13th Farewell
Breakfast*

All Here at



13th- Pancake, Bacon & Egg Breakfast,
Bloody Mary's, then **Hasta La Vista Baby!**

LIVE MUSIC, FOOD, VENDORS, SLOW RIDE GAMES, 50/50

Call David at

for More Information

8 On Your Side helps Pasco veteran in Camp Lejeune fight

By Steve Andrews



ZEPHYRHILLS, Fla. (WFLA) – Joe Zambito of Zephyrhills is like many other former Marines. He was exposed to cancer-causing chemicals right here on U.S. soil. He and his wife fought a losing battle with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, that is until, he called 8 On Your Side.

“It was just a fight all the way through,” Joe said. In this fight there were no bombs or bullets, just a desperate struggle between Marines and the Department of Veterans Affairs over medical and disability benefits for exposure to toxic water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Following a series of 8 On Your Side reports that began in December, Joe and Judy Zambito finally received word they’d won the battle they’ve waged with the VA since 2012. Joe will receive 100 percent medical and disability benefits.

“You have no idea how big, much of a relief it is to not worry about any of that stuff anymore,” Judy said.

From 1953 to 1987, nearly one million Marines, their family members and civilian employees were exposed to cancer-causing chemicals from Camp Lejeune’s water supply.

Last year we told you, Joe joined the Marines in 1964. He’s lost both kidneys and his bladder to cancer. “Dialysis three times a week, four hours at a session,” he pointed out.

“Our life revolves around dialysis now,” Judy said. The VA decided in 2012 that Joe’s kidney cancer was not related to Camp Lejuene. His bladder cancer was, though. The VA denied Joe benefits, claiming since his bladder was gone, so was his cancer. 8 On Your Side took this flawed reasoning to US Senator Bill Nelson, D-Fla.

“This is illogical. It’s idiotic that, that a veteran would get an answer like that,” Senator Nelson said. Nelson’s office looked into Joe’s case. The VA just reversed itself. Joe is entitled to medical, disability and more.

“Without you and Senator Nelson, we wouldn’t be where we are now,” Judy explained. The benefits will make quite a difference. For Joe and Judy, this fight is over.

“Just want to know how to thank you, that’s all I can say,” Joe said.

“We thank you a lot,” Judy added.

Florida National Guard honors 25th Gulf War Anniversary Veterans reunite together in shared experiences

107th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Story by Staff Sgt. Carmen Fleischmann

Florida State Representative Jimmie T. Smith, representing District 34, and chair of the Veterans of Military Affairs Subcommittee, who served in Operation Desert Storm with the 101st Airborne Division, pointed out the opportunity for reflection that came with the ceremony and the new Gulf War monument.

“It gives you a chance to really reflect on a part of history and your part in history. So when you come here and see the changes of the world and you can know that you were a part of that, that means a lot,” said Smith. “To know that you can also reflect back on the fact that you stood for liberty and stood for your country and actually projected force for America across the world; I mean that’s a very big thing to have, to have an event like this to remember that. A lot of the time we forget the effect we as individuals have had.”

A figure known by many both present and past within the Florida National Guard was yesterday’s keynote speaker for the ceremony, Brig. Gen. (Ret) Spessard Boatwright, a man who was a leader and role model for many Soldiers over the course of his career.

For Operation Desert Storm, an era marked by an all-volunteer force, implementing Guard and Reserve forces would serve as that connection to mainstream America. Boatwright, who served in the Gulf War as the commander of the 202nd Medical Group, recalled how former Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Creighton Abrams, expressed his wish to never send the nation to war without the support of mainstream America, something Abrams felt contributed to a national cultural disconnect throughout the nation in regards to war.



Maj. Gen. (Ret) Marianne-Mathewson Chapman and her daughter Helena Chapman, interview with public affairs Soldiers, Saturday, at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, about their experience as family members during the Gulf War. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Karen Kozub, 107th MPAD)

“Desert Storm was the first time since WWII that we had a major mobilization of Guard or Reserve nationwide. So it was a real chance to be involved and to be a part of a retooling; a relearning experience for the entire nation as to how to gear up and go to war.”

The Gulf War not only fostered a connection between the American people and the military, it began a history of rapport between people who had to leave their families and homes to support their nation.

Maj. Gen. (Ret) Marianne Mathewson-Chapman also deployed with the 202nd Medical Group as a nurse in the medical corps. Like many women who serve, she left behind her two young daughters and her husband who was retired military. Chapman’s experiences, despite having occurred over a decade prior to 9/11, strongly mirror the same struggles and experiences of citizen-Soldiers who deploy today. These struggles are shared not just from the perspective of Service members but as family members who miss being able to participate in those special life events.

“My husband was retired, so he was there to be the mom for the girls while I was gone; very supportive,” said Chapman. “I used to get care packages from all of them; they would have a piano recital and he would tape it on a little disc and send it to me so I could listen to them play.”

Col. Daniel “Matt” Johnson, Camp Blanding Joint Training Center post commander and host for yesterday’s ceremony, made a point to thank the Soldiers who served in the Gulf War. One-by-one, he called out each unit’s name that deployed to Desert Storm asking those who served in that unit to stand so the audience could recognize them with applause.

The ceremony concluded with retired Command Sgt Maj. (Ret) Gary Wingard who performed an acoustic rendition of God Bless the USA as a final tribute, before former and current Soldiers dispersed to their respective unit reunions on Camp Blanding.

Vietnamvetradio.com



Vietnam Vet Radio is an internet only radio station dedicated to the men and women who served in the Vietnam War, their families, and friends. We are incorporated as a non-profit veterans ministry organization. With a few exceptions all the songs played are from the Vietnam War era. We also play the authentic jingles and public service announcements that were played on AFVN (American Forces Vietnam Network) Radio.

While Vietnam Vet Radio is neither political or religious, in the normal sense of the word, it is most certainly a pro-America and pro-military radio station that acknowledges that we are a blessed people. No anti-war rhetoric or anti-war songs; there are other sites on the internet for that. Our mission is to heal, not open old wounds.

Please contact us with suggestions on how Vietnam Vet Radio can better serve you.

Welcome Home!

Bennie P. Blount

SFC, US Army, Retired

Chu Lai 1969, Long Binh 1970, Vung Tau 1971-72

text and images by Luke Barber
published in cooperation with One Tank Media

Camp Blanding: History and Handgrenades

“Welcome to Camp Blanding,” a sign greets as you approach what appeared to be an abandoned battlefield on the side of a paved country road. A well-kept patch of grass decorated with restored tanks, planes and military-style humvees could be seen from the road — badges of honor worn by the historic National Guard training camp on the edge of Bradford County near Starke.



A building directly next to the display of wartime vehicles houses an organized display of photographs, weapons, newspaper articles, uniforms, medals and other memorabilia, the bulk of which were collected and preserved from WWII.

That building, the Camp Blanding Museum, is a nonprofit organization that was opened by the Florida National Guard in 1991. The museum’s goal is to share information about Camp Blanding and its paramount role in training soldiers — hundreds of thousands of them — for combat since 1939.

Camp Blanding itself is situated on 72,000 acres of lush green, along the shore of Kingsley Lake. To active and retired military personnel, the camp offers recreational opportunities such as camping, fishing and swimming. The museum, which is open every day from noon to 4, is free to enjoy. The wealth of knowledge found in the museum is priceless.

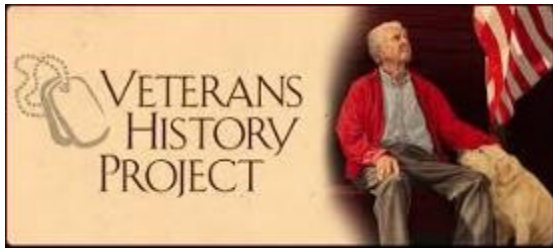
Photographic displays cluster just about every inch of the walls, with supplemental descriptions of each artifact’s purpose. Additionally, there are always informed and friendly volunteers on duty to open up a dialogue with, like front-desk greeter and veteran Roger MacEwen.

“I retired from the Air Force,” MacEwen said. “The military was really good to me. This is just one way I can give back.”

“It’s particularly interesting because many, many of the people we see here trained here [during WWII]. They’re in their nineties now; they’re truly the world’s greatest generation.”

Medals, guns, uniforms, photographs and other memorabilia provide visuals for stories and information shared by volunteers or placards.

One exhibit that piqued my curiosity was labeled “HALL OF HONOR.” This display denoted Blanding-trained soldiers who were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest and most respected military award.



The Veterans History Project (VHP) joins the U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration Committee, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and a grateful nation

in thanking all Vietnam-era veterans and their families for their service, valor and sacrifice to our country. The Veterans History Project (VHP) joins the U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration Committee, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and a grateful nation in thanking all Vietnam-era veterans and their families for their service, valor and sacrifice to our country.

As part of the ongoing Vietnam 50th commemoration, a series of events is occurring across the country today, including in Washington, DC, such as a wreath laying commemoration ceremony at the Vietnam Wall, a reception for Vietnam-era veterans at the VA and a special recognition event at the DC regional office of the VA.

Check with your local VA facility or click here to search for Vietnam 50th commemoration events happening near you <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/events/>.

Access VHP's four-part Experiencing War web feature, "Vietnam War: Looking Back" here:

Part 1: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-vietnam50.html>

Part 2: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-vietnam50-part2.html>

Part 3: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-vietnam50-part3.html>

Part 4: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-vietnam50-part4.html>

The Mission of the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center is to collect, preserve and make accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war. Learn more at www.loc.gov/vets. Share your exciting VHP initiatives, programs, events` and news stories with VHP to be considered for a future RSS. Email vohp@loc.gov and place "My VHP RSS Story" in the subject line.



CONNECT. EXPERIENCE. ACHIEVE.

- Administrative Office Specialist
- Aircraft Fabrication
- Automotive Technology
- Barbering
- Commercial Foods & Culinary Arts
- Compressed Natural Gas
- Cosmetology
- Dental Assistant
- Diesel Technology
- Digital Design
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Facials Specialty
- Fire Fighting
- HVAC
- Landscape & Turf Management
- Legal Administrative Specialist
- Licensed Practical Nursing
- Massage Therapy
- Medical Administrative Specialist
- Medical Assistant
- Nails Specialty
- Nursery Management
- Nursing Assistant
- Paramedic
- Patient Care Technician
- Pest Control Operations
- Pharmacy Technician
- Welding Technology



FIRST COAST. FIRST CHOICE.



Jennifer Wills
Student Recruiter

First Coast Technical College
2980 Collins Ave.
St. Augustine, FL 32084
904-547-3354 • 904-547-3376(fax)
jennifer.wills@fctc.edu • www.fctc.edu



These are the only 5 Star Generals

General of the Army George C. Marshall: December 16, 1944

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur: December 18, 1944

General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower: December 20, 1944

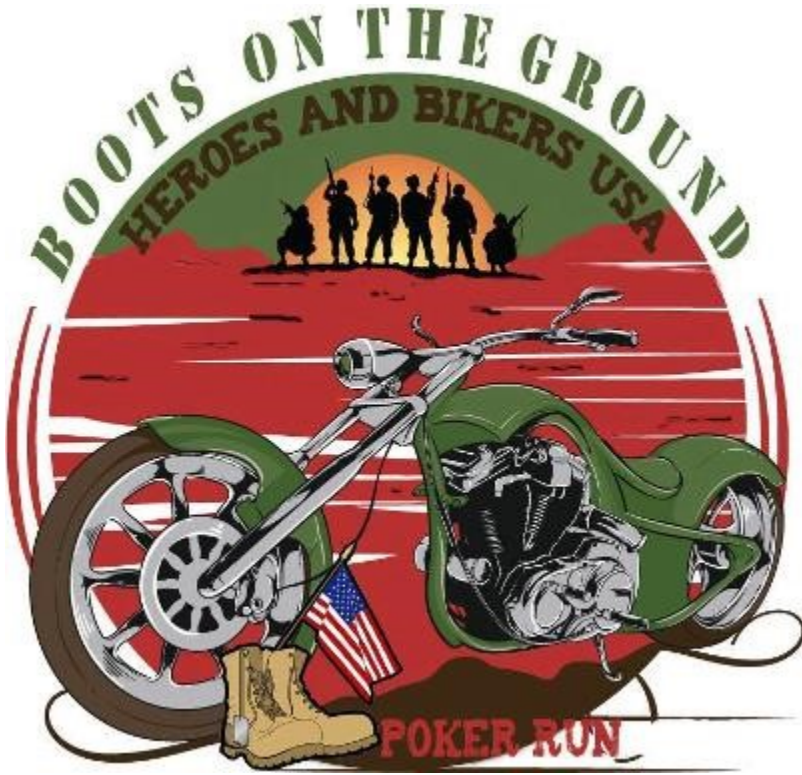
General of the Army Henry H. Arnold: December 21, 1944

(Redesignated General of the Air Force pursuant to Public Law 58, 81st Congress, approved May 7, 1949)

General of the Army Omar N. Bradley: September 20, 1950

Source: <http://www.history.army.mil/html/faq/5star.html>





May 7, 2016-Hosted by American Legion Riders Chapter 9 and Flamingo Lake RV Resort 3640 Newcomb Road, Jacksonville FL 32218. This is the largest Poker Run in the State of Florida. To support American Gold Star Mothers Inc. and their financial partnership with the Vietnam Memorial Fund for the construction of the new Education Center at the Vietnam Wall in D.C. Come out and honor and memorialize your Fallen Heroes while supporting this great cause.

Registration at Flamingo Lake: 8:30 A.M. KSU at 11:00AM LBI 5:00PM

Live Music By: Don't Call Me Shirley at 8:30AM, Ghost Rider at 4PM and Blistur at 7PM.

We are anticipating over 1,000 bikes this year.

\$20/ rider; \$5/passenger.

\$300 Best Hand (if on one of the 11 suggested routes)

\$200 Best Hand (if on your own route to poker stops)

Raffle Items Auction items and 50/50. Last year's 50/50 paid out \$908 to the winner.

Dinner included in registration; Ice Cold Beer for sale and some of the best vendors with the best apparel, gear and offerings out there. Military Vehicle Display provided by the American Military Historical Society and an event Flyover from our friends in the Dreamland Squadron. Come out and enjoy the largest Poker Run (non-escorted) in the State of Florida in the Best and most Beautiful RV Resort in the Country.

Veteran ID Cards: What your options are now and in the future

On July 20, 2015, the president signed into law the Veterans Identification Card Act of 2015. This act allows Veterans to apply for an identification card directly from VA. The VA identification card will allow Veterans to demonstrate proof of service for discounts at private restaurants and businesses.

It should be noted that the identification card is different from a [Veteran Health Identification card](#) or a [DoD Uniformed Services or retiree ID card](#). As such, the VA identification cards cannot be used as proof of eligibility to any federal benefits and does not grant access to military installations.

When available, Veterans will be able to request an ID card from VA for a fee. VA is currently making plans to implement the new law in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible while protecting Veterans' personal information. We estimate that VA will be able to implement the program in 2017. The cost of each card has not yet been determined.

In the meantime, Veterans who would like an identification card that displays their military service do not have to wait until VA implements the new law. You have several options:

You can access and print a free Veterans identification card through the joint VA/DoD web portal, eBenefits. This paper identification card serves as proof of honorable service in the Uniformed Services, as defined in laws about the Department of Defense (DoD). Veterans can get a free eBenefits account by going to <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>.

Your driver's license or state identification card can carry a Veteran designation. This option is currently available in 49 states, along with Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. We expect the 50th state, Washington, to offer this service in August 2017. Veterans wanting more information should contact their state department of motor vehicles or state department of Veterans affairs at <http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>

Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care can obtain a free [Veterans Health Identification Card \(VHIC\)](#). For more information, please go to <http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vhic/index.asp>.

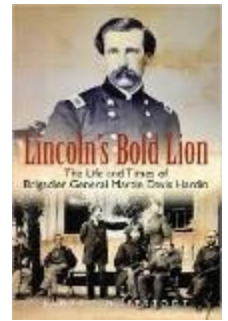
Veterans who have retired from military service can receive an identification card from DoD. For information on obtaining or renewing such a card, please contact your nearest DoD identification card facility. You can find the location of these facilities through this link: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/appj/site>.



FIRSTCOAST.TV

General Hardin was a protégé of President Abraham Lincoln,

son of Lincoln's good friend killed in the Mexican War, Gettysburg veteran, Roman Catholic convert, defender of Washington during the 1864 Confederate Raid, and a 40-year winter resident of St. Augustine where he lies today in the National Cemetery.



His widow, Amelia Hardin, refurbished and dedicated the historic chapel of Our Lady of La Leche to his memory in 1925. General Hardin's step-brother, Father Clarence Walworth of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., was a missionary priest, author and donor of the sun dial affixed to the front wall of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine. Come and learn more about the life of this distinguished general and his connection to our ancient city and the historic chapel of Our Lady of La Leche.

First Coast.TV got a chance to speak with the author of this remarkable book, James Huffstodt.

<http://firstcoast.tv/life-times-brigadier-general-martin-davis-hardin-james-huffstodt/>

It's official; DD-214s are NOW Online. Please pass on to other vets. The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov/> or try <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time. Please pass this information on to former military personnel you may know and their dependents

VA Memorial Benefits

How to Apply

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 and click 'get started' to schedule a burial in a VA national cemetery. 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 134 VA national cemeteries in 39 states and is adding new cemeteries to accommodate Veterans and loved ones in their time of need. In a few years, 95 percent of Veterans will have a burial option in an open VA, state or tribal veterans cemetery located within an hour's drive of their home. 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 or burial of cremated remains or placement 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

Transportation of flower arrangements from the committal service shelter to the gravesite

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

Burials in a national cemetery take place during the week and cannot be conducted on a federal holiday.

VA
 U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

 Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

 Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 2016

VA Announces Community Care Call Center to Help Veterans with Choice Program Billing Issues

WASHINGTON – Veterans can now work directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to resolve debt collection issues resulting from inappropriate or delayed Choice Program billing. In step with MyVA’s efforts to modernize VA’s customer-focused, Veteran-centered services capabilities, a Community Care Call Center has been set up for Veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time) for assistance.

“As a result of the Veterans Choice Program, community providers have seen thousands of Veterans. We continue to work to make the program more Veteran-friendly,” said Dr. David Shulkin, Under Secretary for Health. “There should be no bureaucratic burden that stands in the way of Veterans getting care.”

The new call center will work to resolve instances of improper Veteran billing and assist community care medical providers with delayed payments. VA staff are also trained and ready to work with the medical providers to expunge adverse credit reporting on Veterans resulting from delayed payments to providers. VA is urging Veterans to continue working with their VA primary care team to obtain necessary health care services regardless of adverse credit reporting or debt collection activity.

VA acknowledges that delayed payments and inappropriately billed claims are unacceptable and have caused stress for Veterans and providers alike. The new call center is the first step in addressing these issues. VA presented [The Plan to Consolidate Community Care](#) in October of 2015 that outlines additional solutions to streamline processes and improve timely provider payment.

For more details about the Veterans Choice Program and VA’s progress, visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact. Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program can call 1-866-606-8198 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time) to find out more about the program, confirm their eligibility and schedule an appointment.

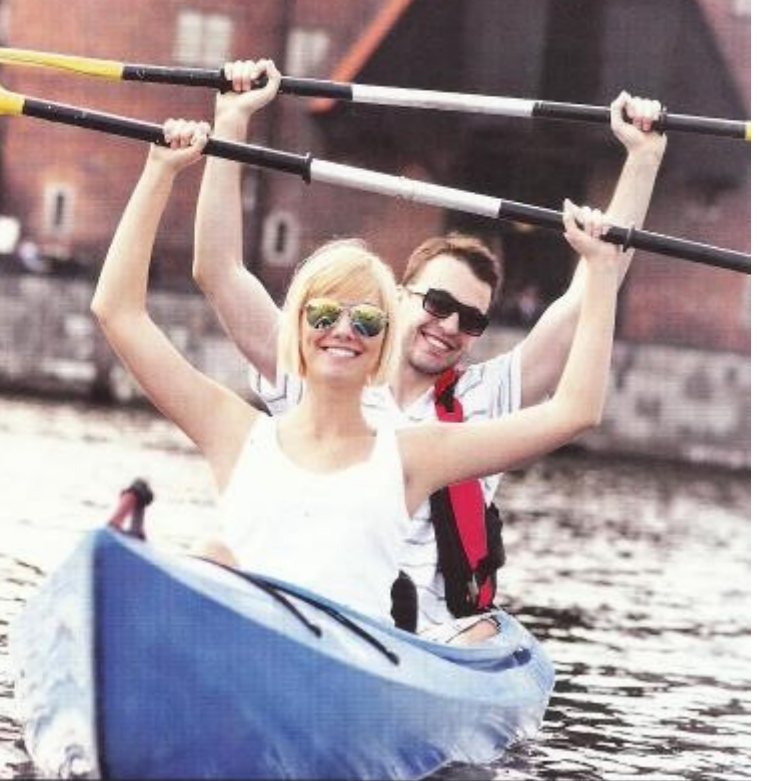
###

For several years, D.A.V. Fl Chapter 6 has furnished the passenger vans for the delivery of Veterans between the St. Augustine Clinic and the Gainesville, V.A. Hospital, and back, Monday – Friday. The Van departs the Clinic every weekday at 0600. Phone (904) 209-3710 to schedule a ride. Drivers furnished by the COA are:



Monday – Lonnie Woodard
 Tuesday – Jack LaLonde
 Wednesday – Floyd Bubba
 Thursday – Bob Garlander
 Friday – Robert “Butch” Harrison

ARE YOU inTANDEM WITH YOUR TYPE 1 DIABETES OPTIONS?



A new clinical research trial is now studying an investigational oral product inTANDEM with your current insulin regimen.

YOU MAY QUALIFY IF YOU:

- Are 18 years old or older
- Have a confirmed diagnosis of Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus
- Have A1C levels 7 - 10%



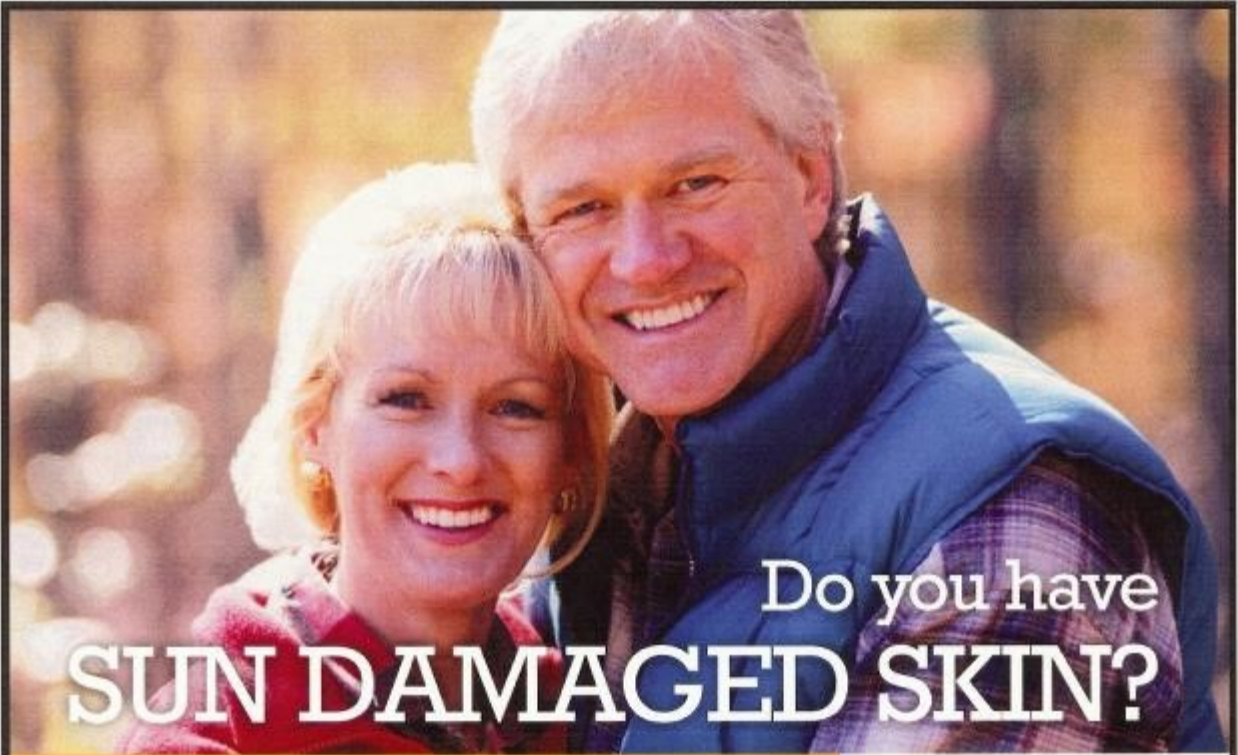
Lisa Thomas, BS, CCRC
President

Telephone (904) 619-8157
Facsimile (904) 683-4916
Mobile (904) 755-1374

lisa.thomas@jaxadvresearch.com
www.jaxadvresearch.com

Solutions Through Advanced Research, Inc.
10175 Fortune Parkway, Suite 1201, Jacksonville, Florida 32256

www.inTANDEM4trial.com



Do you have SUN DAMAGED SKIN?

Are you in the SUN a lot?

We are now conducting a clinical research study to evaluate an investigational cream and its effect on sun damaged skin (Actinic Keratosis).

Do you have scaly or rough lesions on your face or scalp?

Qualified participants will receive at no cost:
• Study related exams • Study cream or placebo

Qualifying participants will receive financial compensation for their time and travel.

You may be eligible to participate in a clinical research study if you:

- Are you 18 years or age or older
- Have scaly or rough lesions on your face or scalp
- Can visit our office 4 times in 20 weeks

For more information, or to schedule a screening, please contact us at :
Solutions Through Advanced Research, Inc.
12086 Fort Caroline Road
Jacksonville, FL 32225
904-619-8157

**THANK
YOU!**



www.petparadiseresort.com



A job for you; a vacation for your pets!



BOZARD



LINCOLN

**Voted #1 in the United States
in Customer Reviews**



**2013 Ford Dealer of the Year
2013 Lincoln Dealer of the Year**



400 N. Ponce de Leon Blvd.—St. Augustine, FL 32084-3587

904-829-2201— fax 904-829-2020— 800-997-1961

www.herbiewiles.com

The House That Trust Built

CRAIG

Funeral Home* Crematory* Memorial Park

Pamela J. Smith
Prearrangement Counselor
psmith@craigfuneralhome.com

1475 Old Dixie Highway

St. Augustine, FL 32084

(904) 824-1672

(904) 824-4862

www.CRAIGFUNERALHOME.COM

*Our Family Serving Your Family
Since 1915*

“Veterans and Family
Memorial Care”

Homeowners 62 or older...

Learn how you can enjoy your retirement years with a Reverse Mortgage.



Call for a quote
JOHN REARDON

Mortgage Consultant &
Reverse Mortgage Specialist
Serving all of Florida



community
mortgage

904-982-2210

NMLS 555210

www.floridareversemortgagesmadeeasy.com



Pycraft **LAW** LLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Foreclosure Defense • Bankruptcy • Debt Defense
Estate Planning • Wills • Trusts • Advanced Directives • Probate
Family Law • Criminal Defense • Civil Defense

www.pycraftlaw.com • (904) 940-0060

Thomas R. Pycraft, Jr. • John J. Spence
Michael J. Pelkowski • David D. Naples, Jr.

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

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

Send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org

Please send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org



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

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

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

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

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

***The Veterans Council meetings are
conducted at the the Elks Lodge
829, 1420 A1A S., St. Augustine.***



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

(physical location)

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

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

Service is by appointment.

Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161

Joseph McDermott, CVSO

Rick Rees, Assistant VSO

Tammy Shirley, Assistant VSO

Lashonda Burns, Office Specialist

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