



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

Bill Dudley, Publisher

Michael Rothfeld, Editor

Volume 9, Issue 11

Message from the Chairman

Veterans Day Special Issue Nov.2020

THE PATRIOT READER SPECIAL VETERANS DAY EDITION

Welcome Fellow Veterans:

The Veterans Council welcomes all our veterans and patriots to this special November edition of The Patriot Reader. This edition is dedicated to all our veterans who have served our nation and highlights the service of several local veterans who have served. Our veterans have helped preserve our nation. On Veterans Day, we honor those brave men and women who have served our country so well. To our Veterans we say "America is strong and proud because of you."

This Veterans Day will be different due to the effects the Corona virus has ravaged on our nation. Although we will not be able to conduct a Veterans Day program as we have done in years past, we will still honor our Veterans on this special day. To do that, the Veterans Council has produced a documentary that will be released on Veterans Day and featured in a special showing on WJCT PBS station in Jacksonville on the evening of November 11. Here's the broadcast information:

WJCT MORE Antenna channel 7.4
Comcast channel 212
7pm "Korean war remembered 2020"

This year being the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War, we are honoring the service of those who served in Korea. Featured in the documentary will be five local veterans whose service we have highlighted. Their service was videoed recently in interviews at the St. Francis Barracks Officer Club and will be a featured part of the documentary. Here is the link to the Korean War documentary:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUgNf_ryFPY

Flagler College is also recognizing our Veterans in November. 2020 being the final year of the 75th anniversary of WW II, the college has teamed with several institutions in the area to remember the war with displays of treasures from families, libraries, archives, and museums in the area. These displays will be seen at the Lightener Museum, Friday, Nov.6, 1-7 PM.

Here is the Link to the Exhibit:

<https://wwiinefl.omeka.net>



Don't forget our Wreaths Across America program in December. Although the ceremony this year will be different from years past due the COVID-19 restrictions, we will still place a wreath at every headstone and conduct a small ceremony to honor all our branches of the military and those who have honorably served. On Friday, Dec. 18 we are asking for 50 volunteers to help unload the truck at the St. Augustine National Cemetery and place the wreaths on the graves of each veteran interred in the cemetery. Then on Saturday, December 19 at noon, a small service comprised of 10 volunteers representing each of the service branches, a bugler and chaplain will conduct a special ceremony honoring all our veterans who have died in the service of our nation. If you or your organization would like to volunteer to assist with the unloading and placing a wreath on a grave, please contact Sgt.Maj. Ray Quinn at 904-540-1630 or email renegade1@bellsouth.net.

Bill Dudley Chairman,
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County



**The Veterans Council of St. Johns County Honors ALL Veterans on Veterans Day
In this Special Edition of the Patriot Reader we feature the military biographies
and stories of our friends and neighbors**

William Dudley, LTC USAF (Ret)

Duane Dewey, CPL USMC

Howard McGillin, Jr., COL USA (Ret)

Michael Fleming BG USA (Ret)

Ray Quinn, SGM USA (Ret)

Richard Capps, BG USA (Ret)

Robert A Hardwick SFC USA

John Leslie CDR USN (Ret)

D Blair Craig LTC USA (Ret)

Robert Buehn Capt USN (Ret)

Mark Miner CW3 USA

Ron Birchall LTC USA (Ret)

Rod Phillips SSGT USA

Anthony D'Aleo SSGT USMC

Tom Waskovich Major USAR

William Barclay MSGT USA (Ret)

Ann McCulliss Johnson COL USA (Ret)

John Sutherland CDR USN (Ret)

Jerry Domask LTC (P) USA (Ret)

Leo C Chase PFC USA

Claude Caviness CAPT USN (Ret)

David Shelton MSGT USAF

Roy Havekost PO3 USN

Henry Erkelens COL USA (Ret)

William Tatel Capt ARNG (Ret)

Donald Kabrich CW3 USA (Ret)

George Gaspard LTC USA (Ret)

Margaret Knight Navy Nurse

Gerald "Scott" Knight SGT USAF

Giles McCoy CPL USMC

Mario Patruno PFC USA

Chuck Willoughby SSGT USA

Terry Allan 1st SGT USA (Ret)

Marian Barnett (Stenger)

John Carmen Buckhalt



Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



Voting Day at Lassen



Pumpkin Painting Day



Halloween



Leigh Devane's mother donating 120 hats she and her friends knitted and Activities Director Jeanette Linn

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



To Celebrate Veterans Day 2020 the Veterans Council and the Clyde Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home are Honoring Duane E. Dewey, a resident at Lassen and a recipient of the Medal of Honor.

His daughter, Arline Broome, wrote about her father, please see pages 8 and 9.

CORPORAL DUANE E. DEWEY
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:



For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Gunner in a Machine-Gun Platoon of Company E, Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), in action against enemy aggressor forces near Panmunjom, Korea, on April 16, 1952. When an enemy grenade landed close to this position while he and his assistant gunner were receiving medical attention for their wounds during a fierce night attack by numerically superior hostile forces, Corporal DEWEY, although suffering intense pain, immediately pulled the corpsman to the ground and, shouting a warning to the other Marines around him, bravely smothered the deadly missile with his body, personally absorbing the full force of the explosion to save his comrades from possible injury or death. His indomitable courage, outstanding initiative and valiant efforts in behalf of others in the face of almost certain death reflect the highest credit upon Corporal DEWEY and enhance the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

/S/ DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, President



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



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

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

DATES OF 2020 SC at JNC MEETINGS, All on Mondays, Dec 7th

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA 2020 - Saturday, December 19th.

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

Chairman: Steve Spickelmier

Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley, Treasurer: Pat Welch

Secretary: Kathy Church, Judge Advocate: Don Guthrie

Master-At-Arms: Mike Smith, Historian: Win Delpizzo

Chaplain: Pat Archuleta, Public Affairs: Pat Mulvihill

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County meets on the last Thursday of the month, all are invited to attend. We meet at the County Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, at 7 pm

*The Next Meetings of the Veterans Council will be
Thurs. Nov. 19 at 7 pm, Topic “Finding & Honoring Your Military Ancestors”*



*All County Safety Guidelines will be followed
Please stay safe.*

Bill Dudley, Chairman, VC of SJC



Celebrating Veterans Day 2020

Veterans Day 2020 will be celebrated like no other. The COVID 19 Pandemic has imposed limitations on crowd size and the Veterans Council and the rest of the country can not celebrate Veterans Day in the traditional ways.

For the past several years the Veterans Council has invited the St Augustine community to join us at Anastasia Baptist Churches magnificent edifice to celebrate, honor and recognize veterans from all services and eras.

Veterans Day, November 11, 2020 will be celebrated. It will take more than a Pandemic to stop us from showing our respect to all those who served.

This Special Edition of the November 2020 Patriot Reader is highlighting the stories of our local veterans, heroes all who have served their country in uniform with pride and distinction.



St. Johns County Veterans Council

Honors Its Veterans



Veterans Day (originally known as Armistice Day) is a federal holiday in the United States observed annually on November 11, for honoring military veterans, that is, persons who have served in the United States Armed Forces (and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable). Major hostilities of World War I were formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, when the Armistice with Germany went into effect. At the urging of major U.S. veteran organizations, Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954.

Veterans Day is distinct from Memorial Day, a U.S. public holiday in May. Veterans Day celebrates the service of all U.S. military veterans, while Memorial Day honors those who had died while in military service. Another military holiday that also occurs in May, Armed Forces Day, honors those currently serving in the U.S. military. Additionally, Women Veterans Day is recognized by a growing number of U.S. states that specifically honors women who have served in the U.S. military.



ADVOCATING FOR VETERANS WITH WILLIAM DUDLEY OF THE VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

After a lifetime of service, Bill Dudley had more to give; he stepped up and turned the St. Johns Veterans Council into the envy of the state.

By Meeka Anne, St. Augustine Social

The accolades of Lieutenant Colonel Bill Dudley are too many to list. He served ten years in the Air Force active duty flying and then moved on to the Active Reserve Force. He later pursued an Aerospace career in executive management positions both in the US and abroad. Even though Dudley has now retired, he has never slowed down. He served in various levels of the Navy League of the United States until

six years ago when he became the Chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County. “My responsibilities,” says Dudley about his position at the Council, “are to provide leadership and direction for the Council in support of our veterans and inform the public about our veteran’s service.” Under his guidance, the Council has grown and become the model for other chapters across the state to emulate.

One noteworthy accomplishment of the Council with the Lieutenant Colonel at the helm is the relationship with the Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). A man of action, Dudley says, “The Veterans Council was very instrumental in convincing the VA to share the plans for the future of the CBOC to provide healthcare for our St. Augustine veterans. We did this by hosting two town hall meetings, writing letters to the Secretary of the VA, members of Congress, the President, and others. We meet quarterly with the VA Chief Medical Officer and County Veteran Service Officer to discuss the continuing service of the clinic for our veterans.”

Dudley also assists in encouraging youth programs throughout the county. “Most of our youth programs that support veteran’s activities,” he says, “are organized through our high school programs such as JROTC. The exceptions are the Sea Cadets and the Young Marines.” These programs are essential as one of Dudley’s most significant challenges is getting younger veterans to volunteer in leadership roles in our veterans organizations.

An integral function of the Veterans Council is organizing events across the city like Wreaths Across America, Veterans Homeless Stand Down, and the Memorial Day Ceremony. “Our next event here in St. Augustine,” says Dudley, “is the annual Veterans Day Program to honor all veterans. For the past four years, we have celebrated with a Veterans Day Parade. In years past we have recognized our veterans at a program at Anastasia Baptist Church, which will featured our local St. Augustine HS Chorale singing patriotic songs, the traveling Vietnam Wall, the Quilt of Tears, and many other exhibits as well as a featured speaker to speak about the Centennial of Veterans Day since WW I.”

Dudley believes that knowledge is power and says, “The rewards of this position are assisting veterans in meeting the challenges of getting the care they are entitled to, educating youth groups in the community about veteran’s service, and creating an awareness in our community about those who have served our country.”

“St. Johns County is a veteran-friendly county, and the city and county commissioners are extremely supportive,” says Dudley. “Locals contribute to many of the veteran’s programs in a very benevolent way. I am honored to give back to all those who have served our country and worn the cloth of our nation.”

Learn more about the Veterans Council of St. Johns County at www.veteranscouncilsjc.org. Photography by Brian Miller.



DUANE E. DEWEY



Duane was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan on November 16, 1931. The family didn't have much, but they had what they needed. His father worked for the WPA and drove caissons, making about \$30 a month. His mother kept house and took care of the family. His father was a drinker but still a hard worker, his mother was deeply religious. His only sibling is a younger sister.

Their first home was 100 years old and had no running water or indoor plumbing; they would not experience such luxury until Duane was 12, when they moved into a one-bedroom apartment in a housing project in Muskegon. They might not have meat at every meal, but they always had good bread and beans. Duane had worked from the time he was six years old. His first job was carrying wood from a woodshed to his schoolhouse. He delivered newspapers and later telegrams. As a teenager, he worked in the orchards picking fruit, on the local farms harvesting crops, and as a grease monkey at an auto repair shop.

When nineteen-year-old Duane Dewey enlisted in the Marines soon after North Korean forces rolled into the South, it was an "indefinite" enlistment—the duration of the war plus six months. After training at Parris Island and Camp Pendleton, he was shipped to Korea.

Dewey was part of the 1st Marine Division, which was near Panmunjom in the spring of 1952. The command had established a series of outposts beyond the main American force. Corporal Dewey was the leader of a machine-gun squad in a reinforced platoon dug in at one of these positions when it was attacked by a battalion-size Chinese force around midnight on April 15.

The American outpost was quickly overrun. Carrying their machine guns, Dewey and his men fell back; now out of their foxholes and fighting on exposed ground, they tried to stabilize their position. Dewey worked his gun—firing so regularly that he feared the barrel might melt, and very soon running short on ammunition. He ran to another machine gun for additional ammo. As he was returning, a grenade exploded at his feet, knocking him down. Bleeding heavily from the thigh and groin, he lay on the ground trying to reorient himself. A medic appeared, and as he knelt over Dewey to remove his blood-soaked pants,

another grenade hit the ground beside them. Dewey grabbed it and for a second considered throwing it back. He decided he didn't have the time or the strength to get it away from his own men, so he tucked it underneath him while pulling the medic down with his other hand and yelling, "Hit the dirt Doc, I've got it in my hip pocket". The grenade detonated, lifting Dewey several inches off the ground and tearing up his hip. The corpsman was unharmed.

Dewey was taken back to the aid station. For an hour he lay outside waiting for treatment, not sure that he would make it. He was given a shot of morphine and taken to a trench filled with other wounded Americans. He spent the rest of the night wondering which side would win the battle raging outside. Shortly after dawn, when American troops relieved his company, he was evacuated. Doctors treating him in the field hospital found that in addition to the gaping shrapnel wounds throughout the lower part of his body, he had also taken a bullet in the stomach. He was hospitalized in Japan for a month, and then flown to the States, where he would spend three more months convalescing.

That night the 80 Marines of Easy Company would earn one Medal of Honor, one Silver Star, three Navy Crosses, and thirty six Purple Hearts.

On March 12, 1953, President Eisenhower presented the Medal of Honor to Corporal Duane E. Dewey at the White House. After reading his citation, the President said to him "You must have a body of steel".

Arline Broome

Duane Dewey's daughter



Biography of Howard O. McGillin, Jr., COL USA (Ret)

Circuit Judge

Seventh Judicial Circuit of Florida



Judge McGillin was born into an Army family while his father was stationed in his own hometown of Philadelphia, PA. When Judge McGillin was a year old, his father was transferred to Bonn, Germany, so his first memories are of Europe. The family returned to the Philadelphia area where Judge McGillin grew up attending Elementary and High School. Judge McGillin was admitted to the US Military Academy (West Point) in the summer of 1977. After graduation from West Point in 1981, Judge McGillin was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and began his Army career as a Field Artillery Officer. His first assignment was Fort Bragg, NC, where Judge McGillin was assigned to the 82d Airborne Division Artillery. In 1983 while assigned to the 82d, Judge McGillin deployed to combat on the Caribbean island of Grenada in Operation “Urgent Fury.”

Judge McGillin applied for, and was selected by the Army to attend, law school at the University of Florida. After graduating with Honors and being admitted to the Florida Bar, Judge McGillin was transferred to the Judge Advocate General’s Corps Officer (JAG) of the Army. As a lawyer Judge McGillin served in Georgia, Kansas, Hawaii and at several locations in Virginia. Judge McGillin travelled overseas for the Army and trained US and allied soldiers in Germany, Lithuania, Indonesia, Bosnia and the former Soviet Republic of Georgia. While in the Army Judge McGillin had a variety of legal “practices” including a tour as a law professor at the Army’s own Law School. Judge McGillin practiced administrative law, civil law and criminal law in the military. His awards and decorations include the Senior Parachutist Badge, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with 6 oak leaf clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with 3 oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, the Department of the Army Staff I

dentification Badge, and other service ribbons. Judge McGillin retired from the Army at the rank of Colonel in 2005 and his family settled in St. Johns County Florida.

Judge McGillin was “of counsel” at Brennan, Manna & Diamond in Jacksonville and then was in house counsel for a company in Ponte Vedra. Judge McGillin formed his own law practice in 2008 and practiced primarily in St. Johns County. He focused on estate planning, probate and veterans issues. In 2013 Judge McGillin formed Allegiance Law Group with two other attorneys. They added Family Law to their practice.

In November 2014, Governor Scott appointed him to fill a vacancy on the Seventh Circuit and Judge McGillin took office on December 30, 2014. In August 2016, he was elected to a full 6-year term. Judge McGillin was assigned to the Unified Family Court in St. Johns County for his first four years on the bench. Unified Family Court follows the model of “One Family - One Judge.” Unified Family Court Judges hear traditional family cases such as divorce and paternity. They also handle all related cases such as domestic violence injunctions, dependency (child abuse, neglect or abandonment), delinquency (criminal) as well as any related probate or civil matters tied to the family case (typically foreclosure and guardianship).

In January 2019 Judge McGillin was assigned to the felony criminal bench in Putnam County (part of the Seventh Circuit). He presides over all felony criminal trials in Putnam County. Judge McGillin also presides over Veterans Treatment Court in St. Johns County. That court uses an enhanced drug treatment court model to assist eligible veterans to overcome criminal charges and obtain treatment they need for service-connected injuries.

Judge McGillin lives in St. Johns County with his wife of 38 years, Anne McGillin. They have four daughters and one granddaughter.

In his free time Judge McGillin likes to read and plays guitar with his church choir. He is a self-educated computer geek and wishes he had time to use his private pilot license and golf clubs.

Michael Fleming, BG, USA (Ret)



Mike is a prominent Northeast Florida military veteran leader who has served in significant leadership positions in the military, business and education sectors. He currently serves as the Outreach Director for the Stephen A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone in Jacksonville. Mike previously served as the Senior Vice President of University Relations and Development for Jacksonville University with responsibility for developing and maintaining effective relations with key government, military and community leaders to enhance achievement of the University's strategic goals. He was a Managing Director for Deutsche Bank, serving as the Site Lead in Jacksonville while also serving as the Co-Chair of Veterans on Wall Street, an initiative dedicated to honoring and employing veterans. Before joining Deutsche Bank,

Mike was a career military officer with over 30 years of service including nine years of service in the U.S. Marine Corps and 27 years in the Army National Guard; where he ultimately retired as a Brigadier General. He has also held positions at American National Bank of Florida and General Electric Credit Corporation. Mike holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Jacksonville State University, Master of Business Administration degree from the University of North Florida, and Master of Arts from the United States Naval War College. He served as a Congressional Fellow, National Security Fellow at Harvard University, and Foreign Affairs Fellow at Johns Hopkins University. Mike was a member of the United States (CIOR) Military Pentathlon Team for eight years and represented the United States in international competitions. He is the founder and Chair of the Jacksonville Military Veterans Coalition ([http://www.coj.net/departments/military-affairs,-veterans-and-disabled-services/jobs-for-vets-\(1\)/jmvc.aspx](http://www.coj.net/departments/military-affairs,-veterans-and-disabled-services/jobs-for-vets-(1)/jmvc.aspx)), a Public/Private Partnership with the City of Jacksonville and business community to provide employment opportunities for veterans; and the Northeast Florida Military Veteran College Network (<http://earnup.org/veteran-service-resources>). Mike also chairs The Fire Watch (www.thefirewatch.org), a Northeast Florida initiative to end veterans' suicide. Mike earned military awards that include the Legion of Merit and Florida Cross; and civilian honors that include the Florida Governor's Business Ambassador Award, Rear Admiral Kevin Delaney Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce Military Hall of Fame, Florida National Guard Distinguished Service Award; and Jacksonville Business Journal's Veterans of Influence.

Florida Dept. of Veterans Affairs

Governor Awards Sgt. Maj. Ray Quinn with Medal of Merit

TALLAHASSEE – Gov. Rick Scott recognized retired Sgt. Maj. Ray A. Quinn with the Governor’s Medal of Merit during a meeting of the Florida Cabinet, May 23. Sergeant Major Quinn served in the U.S. Army and Florida National Guard for 30 years.

“I’d like to thank Sergeant Major Quinn for his dedication to the safety of families in Florida and the nation,” said Governor Scott. “I am incredibly humbled by his lifelong service, first as a member of the Army National Guard and then as a community leader in local government. I’m honored to present him with the Medal of Merit today for his service and positive impact on the lives of Florida veterans.”

Sergeant Major Ray A. Quinn enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1965 and transitioned to the Florida Army National Guard in 1973. He was an infantry soldier, First Sergeant, Operations Sergeant and Personnel Noncommissioned Officer. After he retired, he went on to serve on the staff of the Adjutant General of Florida as the Director of Executive Services. In 2010, Quinn was appointed by the Governor of Florida to serve as an interim County Commissioner for District 3 in St. Johns County. He served in that position from January 2010 until January 2011. He currently serves as Chairman of the Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame Council, Vice Chair of the St. Johns County Veterans Council and is Vice President for Veteran Affairs, First Militia Chapter Association of the U.S. Army.

“Sergeant Major Quinn has dedicated his life to serving his community, state and nation during his time in the U.S. Army and Florida Army National Guard,” said Glenn Sutphin, executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs. “He continues today to serve his community and veterans across the state with honor and integrity. Sergeant Major Quinn represents what it means to be a member of the Florida National Guard and a leader in our community.”



Biography

BRIGADIER GENERAL RICHARD G. CAPPS Florida Army National Guard

Brigadier General Richard G. Capps was Assistant Adjutant General, Florida Army National Guard, assigned to Headquarters, State Area Command, in St. Augustine. He was responsible for duties as directed by the Adjutant General of the state of Florida. Brigadier General Capps retired August 1, 1997.

General Capps was born on July 29, 1937 in Jacksonville, Florida. He graduated from Paxon Senior High School, Jacksonville, Florida, in 1955. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Political Science from the University of the State of New York, 1987.

His military education includes the Officer Candidate School, 1958; Ordnance Officer Basic, 1958; Officer Fixed Wing Aviator Course, 1960; Officer Fixed Wing Aviator Instructor Officer Course, 1960; Armor Officer Orientation, 1960; Officer Rotary Wing Qualification Course, 1961; Armor Associate Advanced Course, 1964; U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1976; Air Defense Staff Officer Course, 1981; Reserve Component Officer Course-29, U.S. Army War College, 1990.

General Capps began his military career June 22, 1953, enlisting in the Florida Army National Guard. He graduated from Officer Candidate School, Ft. Benning, Georgia in 1958. The General attended the Ordnance Officer Basic Course, at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Upon graduation, he was assigned as a platoon leader in Company A, 748th Armored Ordnance Battalion, Florida National Guard, Jacksonville, Florida. Reassigned to the 111th Aviation Company, he attended U.S. Army Aviation Flight School, graduating in 1960.

Called to active duty in 1967, he served in the Republic of Vietnam as Aviation Platoon Commander in the 199th Aviation Company. In March 1969, he was released from active duty, promoted to Major and assigned as Company Commander of the 111th Aviation Company until August 1975. He was then reassigned and promoted to Lieutenant Colonel serving in various staff positions in State Area Command.

In September 1978, he assumed command of the 1st Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery. In February 1982, he was reassigned to be the director of material in the 50th Area Support Group. In December 1982, he became the executive officer of the 50th Area Support Group. In March 1986, he was promoted to colonel and reassigned as the logistics officer, State Area Command.



BRIGADIER GENERAL RICHARD G. CAPPS

He was appointed Commander *of* the new 164th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Orlando, FL in May 1987. He was selected to his current post as Assistant Adjutant General, Army, Headquarters, State Area Command, St. Augustine, on 1 March 1989.

General Capps has received the following awards and decorations: The Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, 21 Air Medals - one with the V Device, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Army Commendation Medal, Army Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, and Master Army Aviator Badge. His state awards and decorations include the Florida Cross, Florida Distinguished Service Medal, Florida Service Medal, and the Florida Commendation Medal.

General Capps served as Chairman of the Army Aviation Action Team for the National Guard Association of the United States and also served as President for the First Militia Chapter, AUSA, St. Augustine, Florida. He is a member of the Florida National Guard Officers Association, the Army Aviation Association *of* America and the Fort Benning Infantry Officers Hall of Fame. He is also a member *of* the VFW of St. Augustine and the Telephone Pioneers *of* America.

General Capps was promoted and received federal recognition as a Brigadier General of the Line on 28 February 1989.

General Capps and his wife, the former Sandra M. Stumph, reside in St. Augustine. They have a daughter, Melynda Capps Lee and twin sons, Robert and Dudley Capps.



FLORIDA
**NATIONAL
GUARD**

Robert A. Hardwick
Chief of Police, St. Augustine Beach Police Department



Robert A. Hardwick was selected in November of 2012 as the 11th Chief of Police for the St. Augustine Beach Police Department. On January 7th of 2013 he assumed the duties and responsibilities for the agency after being sworn in by the five City Commissioners. He previously served as the Assistant Chief Investigator with the Office of the State Attorney 7th Judicial Circuit, which encompasses Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns and Volusia Counties. At the State Attorney's Office, he supervised investigations over the four counties to include; homicide, police corruption, governor assignments and special prosecutions. During his approximate 26-year law enforcement career Chief Hardwick also worked at the St. Augustine Police Department, the Flagler County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Department of Corrections.

As a veteran of the U.S. Army and Florida Army National Guard, Chief Hardwick has participated in multiple deployments to the Middle East in support of military operations. His deployments include as far back as Operation Desert Storm in 1990 with the 82nd Airborne Division and as recent as Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and 2004 with the 53rd Infantry Brigade supporting the 5th Special Forces Group. His most recent assignment was in the Florida Army National Guard as a Platoon Trainer (TAC) at the Camp Blanding Regional Training Institute's Officer Candidate School (OCS). In 2018, after 25 years of active and national guard service, Chief Hardwick honorably retired.

Chief Hardwick has a Bachelor of Science Degree from Flagler College and a Master of Arts Degree from Barry University. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, Session 247 and a graduate of the FBI's Florida Executive Development Seminar, Class 16. Chief Hardwick is also a graduate of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Chief Executive Seminar, Session 48.

In August of 2016 Governor Rick Scott appointed Chief Hardwick to the Criminal Justice and Standards Training Commission (CJSTC). He is the current Chair for the Officer Discipline Penalty Guidelines Task Force and Chair for the Florida League of Cities' Law Enforcement Advisory Panel, (LEAP). Chief Hardwick serves on the Region V Training Council, the St. Johns River State College Criminal Justice Academy Advisory Board and the St. Johns County Complete Count Committee (2020 Census). He serves on the Board of Directors for the Flagler Health + Care Connect, the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Police Athletic League, the St. Johns County School's Academy of Law & Homeland Security and the School Advisory Board for St. Joseph Academy Catholic High School. Chief Hardwick continues to volunteer as a local youth coach.

Chief Hardwick has been married to his wife for 29 years, whom works for the St. Johns County School District and they have two adult sons. His oldest son earned a Juris Doctor degree and works for a local St. Johns County business. The youngest son who is a graduate of Flagler College is a helicopter pilot with the Florida Army National Guard and the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office.

CDR John Leslie, USN (Ret), Naval Aviator, 28 Oct, 1966– 31 Oct 1988

I enlisted in the Navy on 22 October 1966 during my senior year in college at the California State College, San Luis Obispo, CA. I graduated from College on 19 June 1967 and reported for duty at Aviation Officer Candidate School (AOCS) in Pensacola, FL on the 4th of July 1967. It was the beginning of my 40 years of service with the Navy; 22 years active duty and 18 years with Northrop Grumman as a test pilot, Manufacturing Manager, and Program Coordinator for Navy aircraft.

After 18 months of Officer, Pre-flight, and flight training I was designated as a Naval Aviator on 17 February 1969, received orders to Kingsville, TX 24 February 1969 for two years as an Advanced Jet Training Instructor Pilot. After two years of this shore duty I was ordered to report to Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore, CA, for training in the A-7E Corsair II Light Attack aircraft and further orders to a fleet squadron for sea duty.

Following training in the A-7E I deployed in the USS Enterprise, departing for the Western Pacific and the Gulf of Tonkin on 12 September 1972. My first combat mission was on 3 October 1972 in the southern reaches of North Vietnam and my 105th and final combat mission was in Laos on 21 February 1973. We served during four “campaigns” titled Linebacker I, Linebacker II, Operation End Sweep, and Operation Homecoming. I flew a total of 105 Combat and Combat Support sorties, mostly in North Vietnam, then South Vietnam, and Laos. Our Airwing lost 5 Aircraft, 3 of which were combat losses and the other 2 were operational losses. The first operational loss was an A-6E Intruder that crashed at sea following a takeoff from NAS Cubi Point – both aircrewmembers were declared dead, bodies not found. The other was an A-7E from our sister squadron having a “Ramp Strike” mishap during a night landing on the ship. The pilot ejected safely but the aircraft was lost at sea. We lost three airwing aircraft to enemy fire; one A-6E Intruder, one RA-5C Vigilante, and one F-4J Phantom. The A-6E was shot down by ground fire on a night low level mission north of Haiphong during Linebacker II; both aircrewmembers successfully ejected and were taken POW. The RA-5C was also shot down during Linebacker II, this time by an air-to-air missile fired by a MIG 21 just north of Hanoi. The pilot successfully ejected and was taken POW. His systems operator was declared KIA. The F-4J we lost was on the last day of combat operations as agreed to within the Paris Peace pact. The aircrew successfully ejected over the DMZ. The pilot was observed by a wingman to land on an island in the river and run to the nearest treeline. The Radar Intercept Officer was shot at and hit in the leg on his parachute descent. The pilot was never found and initially declared MIA, then POW, then KIA. The RIO was taken POW and was repatriated a



Lt. John Leslie
12 Sept. 1972
USS Enterprise Deployment

couple of months later. An Airforce OV-10 Forward Air Control aircraft was shot down by ground fire during the search and rescue efforts for this downed F-4 crew. Both OV-10 pilots were later found bound to a tree and executed.

We left WestPac in mid-May 1973, and I flew off the ship with the 10 other “up” aircraft on 11 June 1973. The ship pulled in to NAS Alameda in the San Francisco Bay the following day for the remaining squadron members to be greeted by family and friends. Our return from the carrier is far separated from the issues that other Vietnam soldiers returning to the states by commercial air. They came home to protestors calling them names at times and more physical acts, whereas we flew to our home station to a waiting crowd of family, friends and shipmates with cake and champagne. Our return was joyous, contrary to those experienced by many other service members.

I remained with VA-97 during the following year from our Vietnam cruise, fully expecting to make a second tour. But I received orders to VA-122, the Fleet Replacement Squadron for A-7Es, as a Weapons Training Officer in June 1974. Shortly after reporting aboard VA-122 I received new orders to report to the US Naval Test Pilot School (USNTPS) in Patuxent River, Maryland to commence training in January 1975.

The course of training at the USNTPS was one year, with most Navy graduates remaining at NAS Patuxent River as test pilots, systems operators, or engineers for their “pay back duty.” I applied to fill a TPS billet in either China Lake or Point Mugu, CA for my payback tour as most of my family resided in California, and I was granted my wish with orders to report to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 5 (VX-5) at NAS China Lake in January 1976. The highlight of this tour was serving on the Aircrew Systems Advisory Panel (ASAP) for the not-yet built F/A-18 for two years and getting to fly the Northrop prototype YF-17 for three sorties out of Edwards AFB.

Subsequent to my tour with VX-5, I received orders back to NAS Lemoore, CA for my department head tour with VA-25, making two extended deployments to Westpac and the Indian Ocean (IO), and then back to shore-duty as the Executive Officer (XO) of the Light Attack Weapons School, Pacific Fleet (LAWSPAC). While assigned to LAWSPAC I screened for command of a fleet squadron and subsequently slated a return to VA-25, soon to be redesignated as VFA-25, one of the first two navy squadrons selected to transition to the F/A-18 Hornet. After training and workups, we made the first extended deployment for the Hornet. We deployed in the USS Constellation to Westpac and the IO, testing, evaluating and documenting new ship operation cycles and combat tactics based on the performance, advantages, and shortcomings of the Hornet at sea. While deployed, I screened for a bonus command and was slated to assume command of VFA-125, the Lemoore-based F/A-18 Fleet Replacement Squadron, in early to mid-1987. But in the interim, I received orders to serve as Special Assistant for Strike Warfare to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific

Fleet reporting directly to ADM James “Ace” Lyons. This was my first, and only, non-flying tour as a Naval Aviator. After 14 months based in Pearl Harbor, HI, I reported to NAS Lemoore and took command of VFA-125, at that time the largest squadron for carrier-based aircraft in the Navy, with approximately 1100 Navy, Marine, and civilian members, 40% of whom were Marines. During this tour I decided to retire from the Navy and did so on 31 October 1988 after 15 months as Commanding Officer.

On the day of my Change of Command ceremony I was contacted by the Chief Test Pilot for Grumman Aerospace Corporation concerning possible employment as an experimental test pilot for the A-6F program. Of course, I said “yes sir, where and when can we get together.” I reported to duty at Grumman’s flight test and production center in Calverton, NY in late November 1988, soon to be conducting various test flights in EA-6B, A-6E, F-14D programs (the A-6F program was canceled the month I reported aboard) along with being the Director of Flight Safety for the Corporation. In March 1994 I was reassigned to become the Chief Pilot at the then Grumman St Augustine Corporation, later to become Northrop Grumman St Augustine. I continued to fly post-modification flights in the EA-6B, A-6E, and E-2C until January 2001. The St Augustine Facility was undergoing an organizational restructure and I applied and was selected as the Integrated Product Team (IPT) Leader for all modification and overhaul programs. After another organizational restructure in 2004, I was promoted to be the Program Coordinator for all manufacturing programs not affiliated to the New Production E-2C Program. I continued in these capacities until my retirement from Northrop Grumman in June 2006.

I was not actively involved with veteran organizations outside of Naval Aviation until 2015 after I had completed a dual autobiography of my father and myself, both as life-time aviators, he as a WW-II Navy Torpedo Bomber pilot and then as a civilian Crop-Duster and me as a Light Attack and Strike Fighter pilot and then as a civilian experimental test pilot. I was introduced to the Veterans Council St. Johns when I was invited to be guest speaker shortly after the publication of my book “In My Father’s Footsteps: A Story of Father and Son Naval Aviators.” From that introduction, I became active in such organizations as the Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans Treatment Court, Mayo Visit-a-Veteran, Community Hospice Volunteer Services, and the POW/ MIA Museum and Memorial, among others.

That’s my story, and I’m sticking to it.





D. BLAIR CRAIG

U.S. Army, Lieutenant Colonel (R)

3rd Platoon Leader May 1969-May 1970

Troop CDR May 1970-Nov 1970

D Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry

101st Airborne Division

I Corps Republic of Vietnam

I completed Ranger training at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida on May 19, 1969, and was in Vietnam 10 days later, on May 29.

There was a vacancy for a lieutenant in the Cavalry Troop assigned to the 101st Airborne Division. I became the 3rd Platoon Leader, D Troop, 2nd Squadron 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne/Airmobile Division.

We were the aviation recon unit for the 101st Division, based in northern I Corps. Our area of operations was from the DMZ in the north, to Danang / Marble Mountain in the south, and from Laos in the west to the South China Sea in the east. The unit was highly specialized and with L Company 75th Rangers, and a few special operation units, the only US units allowed after June 1969 to operate in the A Shau Valley and Ho Chi Minh Trail due to the disengagement of US forces ordered by President Nixon

Delta Troop usually worked in small elements, inserted by combat assault, often rappelling from helicopters 100 feet down thru the triple canopy jungle on "specially directed missions" to go after known enemy units or positions that had been located by aircraft or radio intercepts. We also performed a variety of other mission: bomb damage assessments; rescue of downed airmen; snatching enemy for interrogation; reinforcing and extracting Ranger Teams and Marine 3rd Force Recon Teams in contact.

As my twelve-month tour in-country came to an end, I extended my RVN tour to become Commanding Officer of Delta Troop on 8 May 1970. Delta Troop was now often being employed beyond the range of any supporting artillery and could not be reinforced by US ground units, only by a special unit of the 1st ARVN Division known as the "Hoc Bao", or "Black Panthers".

On May 11, 1970, Team Kansas from L Company of the 75th Rangers was three days into a five day reconnaissance mission when they missed a 0430 hours commo check. A reaction force was inserted to recover their bodies and found that all six had apparently fallen asleep, and shot in the head by the enemy. In response to that tragedy Delta Troop took over all the Ranger reconnaissance, ambush and sniper missions in I Corps for 4 weeks while the Ranger Company went into retraining.

In July 1970, having destroyed a large part of the 66th NVA Regiment the previous month, the 2-17th was targeted against the 9th NVA Regiment believed to have arrived in South Vietnam from its sanctuary in Laos. At approximately 1130 hours on July 8, 150-200 NVA were spotted in the open. Delta Troop was inserted into two

locations directly on top of what turned out to be a 600+-man North Vietnamese Regiment. In the ensuing fire-fight, 139 enemy soldiers were killed and 4 captured, many valuable documents to include the plans for attacking all the US installations and fire bases in I Corps, individual and crew-served weapons, and elimination of the NVA Regiment's Command Group.

On September 29 Delta Troop rappelled down thru the triple canopy jungle twelve kilometers south of Fire Support Base Fist in a recon-in-force. We located several hundred pounds of rice and stores, but the monsoon arrived early and the Hueys could not return to extract us. The 101st Division had declared "No Fly" for all aircraft. We remained on that hillside for five days in continuous driving rain, with only one day's ration per man to eat, being sporadically probed by the enemy.

In late November 1970 my second tour was over and I relinquished command of Delta Troop.

***** ***** *****

Vietnam was a "come as you are" war. After the first year or two, there were few new arriving units, only individual replacements on the "trickle down" system. You came in by yourself, you left by yourself, and you went home to family and friends who couldn't understand where you'd been, what you'd done, or why. And often, they and you didn't talk about it.

Thirty-six Delta Troopers died in combat in the Republic of Vietnam during the 2.5 years from 13 April 1969 through 11 September 1971. Exactly the same number, thirty-six Delta Troopers, have died during the 43 years between 1 April 1972 and 25 September 2015 - at home.



My narrative stands as a tribute to all of the men of Delta Troop. It was their personal valor, teamwork, and looking after each other that enabled them to conduct some of the most diverse and dangerous missions during the Vietnam conflict.

In 1988, having been diagnosed with bilateral necrosis of the hips, I was medically retired in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. I switched focus to homeland security, civil defense, and disaster planning. Moving to Florida in 2006, I was hired by the Florida National Guard as a contractor / consultant in the Joint Force Headquarters J2/3/5/Directorate of Military Support, as Program Manager Future Operations and Contingency Plans. In recognition of my contributions, in 2015 I was awarded the Florida Commendation Medal by the Governor of the State of Florida.

I have become involved in many Veterans related activities in the Saint Augustine area – Vietnam Veterans of America #1084, The Veterans Council of St. John's County, and the Veterans Treatment Court in St. John's County which utilizes Veteran volunteers to be Mentors / "battle buddies" for Veterans who have found themselves in trouble with the law, often due to anger management issues, substance abuse, or PTSD. Since 2017 I have been a Mentor working with each of my Veterans (one to 3 a time for at least a year), meeting with them every week or two, accompanying them to each Court session, and on-call to assist them 24/7. I do this in acknowledgement of their service to our Country, providing them an alternative to a year or more in jail, and to help them re-integrate back as valuable contributors to their family and our community.

Bob Buehn, Capt. US Navy, (Ret)



Bob Buehn serves as Vice-Chairman of the Board. He is a retired Navy Captain and is Director of the University of North Florida Military and Veterans Resource Center. He is an adjunct professor for the US Naval War College and teaches a graduate seminar in National Security Affairs. He was formerly Chief of Military Affairs for the City of Jacksonville in the administration of Mayor John Peyton, and later managed a logistics and transportation contract for the Defense Logistics Agency at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. He was appointed by Gov. Rick Scott in October 2011 as Florida Commissioner to the Interstate Compact regarding education for military children.

He retired from a 30-year career in the US Navy in March, 2008. His career included command of VS-32, at NAS Cecil Field, command of US Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he also served as Deputy Joint Task Force Commander, and command of Fleet Area Control and Surveillance Facility at NAS Jacksonville. Capt Buehn also served as Chief of Staff for the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) Strike Group during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He had previously deployed aboard USS Forrestal (CV-59) in support of Desert Storm, and also served as Executive Officer of USS Constellation (CV-64). As a Naval Aviator he flew more than 5,000 hours in Navy aircraft, primarily the S-3 Viking carrier-based antisubmarine warfare jet. He logged nearly 900 carrier landings.

He is Chairman of the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum board. He is also chair of the Community Hospice Veterans Partnership. He is immediate past chair of the Greater Jacksonville Area USO and past president of the Navy League Jacksonville Council. Capt. Buehn is a graduate of the University of Florida, with a BS in Journalism and the US Naval War College, with a MA in National Security and Strategic Studies. He has two sons who are both naval officers.



Mark Miner

Chief Warrant Officer Three (CW3) Mark Miner is UH-72 Lakota standardization instructor pilot, instrument flight examiner, and functional check pilot in the Florida Army National Guard. He recently became the Battalion Aviation Safety Officer for 2-111th Airfield Operations Battalion out of Camp Blanding, FL. He previously served as a company maintenance officer, aviation maintenance platoon leader, and a company instructor pilot for B Co 2-151 Security & Support at Cecil Airport in Jacksonville, FL.

He has served as an Air Mission Commander and Pilot in Command on two deployments to the U.S. border with Mexico as a member of Joint Task Force Southwest Border (JTF-SWB) and has participated in aviation recovery operations throughout Florida during Hurricanes Mathew, Irma, Michael, and Dorian. He has flown numerous missions in direct support of law enforcement as a member of the Florida Counterdrug Aerial Reconnaissance Team.

Mark joined the Florida Army National Guard in December 2002 as an Infantryman. He attended basic training and Infantry School at Ft. Benning, GA and joined the 2-124th Infantry Battalion as a rifleman. From 2004-2005 he deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a volunteer with Louisiana's 256 Infantry Brigade Combat Team where he served on Task Force Baghdad as an Infantry rifleman, grenadier, radio telephone operator, and fire team leader and earned the Combat Infantry Badge.

In 2010 Mark deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn with Florida's 53rd Infantry Brigade to Kuwait where he served on the 2-124th Infantry Battalions S-3 (Operations) staff as an Operations NCO and Battle Bridge Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge. In 2012 as an Infantry Staff Sergeant (E-6), he was selected to attend Warrant Officer Flight Training. He became a Warrant Officer One (WO1) in September 2012 after graduating from Warrant Officer Candidate School at Ft. Rucker, AL.

Mark's military training and education includes the following:

Basic Training / Infantry School at Ft. Benning, GA

Combat Engineer Course at Ft. Dix, NJ

Warrior Leader Course at Eastover, SC

Advanced Leader Course DL

Warrant Officer Candidate School at Ft. Rucker, AL

Aviation Basic Officer Leadership Course at Ft. Rucker, AL

Helicopter Overwater Survival Course (Dunker) at Ft. Rucker, AL

SERE-C Full Spectrum at Ft. Rucker, AL

Initial Entry Rotary Wing FSXXI (Primary, Instruments, Basic Warfighter Skills, UH-60 A/M course) at Ft. Rucker, AL

UH-72 Aircraft Qualification Course at EAATS

NG-J32 Counterdrug Aviation Course (National Guard Bureau)

High Altitude Power Management Course at HAATS

UH-72 Functional Check Pilot validation DES

UH-72 Instructor Pilot Course at WAATS

Aviation Maintenance Officer Course at Ft. Rucker, AL

Helicopter Overwater Survival Training Recertification at Ft. Rucker, AL

Aviation Warrant Officer Advanced Course at Ft. Rucker, AL

Instrument Flight Examiner Preparatory Course at EAATS

Senior Instructor Pilot / Instrument Flight Examiner Course at Ft. Rucker, AL

Aviation Safety Officer Course at Ft. Rucker, AL



LTC Ron Birchall, USA (Ret)

1965 was a very good year. I was a top prospect in the New York Mets Organization and was now returning to the University of Florida to complete my degree in Journalism. The military was the furthest thing from my mind, as I had already failed two induction physicals because of serious injuries and operations.



Fast forward to 1967. I was now with the Houston Astros, completed my degree and was married to my bride of 53 years, Nancy. Several weeks after the wedding, I received another request from my draft board for a final physical – I passed!

I raised my right hand in January 1968. Off to Ft. Dix, NJ for Basic Training and AIT, then to Ft. Benning, GA for Infantry OCS. I was commissioned in March of 1969 and ordered to Ft. Campbell, KY as a Basic Training Company XO. I had made the “Commandant’s List” at Benning and was offered a Regular Army Commission, but opted for a Reserve Commission, as I had no intention of making the Army a career.

In July of 1969, I came down on orders to Vietnam, however, a month later my orders were changed to the 2nd Infantry Division on the DMZ in Korea. I served as an assistant S-3, 3rd Bde, 2nd ID, and as a Company Commander, 1st 38th Infantry Battalion. I also had the privilege of coaching and playing both baseball and football for the 2nd ID. We won the 8th Army Championship in both sports.

13 months later I returned to Ft. Campbell as a Basic Training Company Commander. In March of 1971, Nancy & I returned to civilian life with no thoughts of returning to Active Duty. Wrong again! A Special Forces friend made the mistake of challenging me in 1972 to become a “Green Beret” – back to Active Duty, Jump School and the SFQC. (Special Forces Qualification Course)

I earned my “Beret” some 18 months later, and the rest is history.

The following assignments catalog a 30 year career, serving in both the Army Reserve and on Active Duty.

XO CO E 8th BN 2nd TNG BDE Ft. Campbell, KY

ASST S-3 HHC 3rd BDE 2nd IN DIV Korea

CO RC 1st 38 BN 2nd INF DIV Korea

CO CO A 8th BN 2nd TNG BDE Ft. Campbell, KY

A DET CMDR CO A 3rd SF BN 11th SFGP (Reserve),
Tampa, FL

PSYOP MOB TEAM USAJFKCENMA Ft. Bragg, NC

PSYOP EVALUATOR HHC 3rd BN 5th SFGP Korea

PROJECT OFFICER HQ USAJFKSWC Ft. Bragg, NC (Reserve)

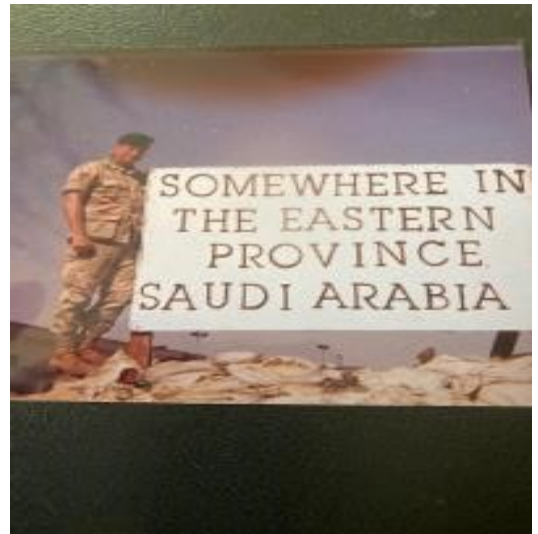
DEPUTY J-3 SOCCENT MacDill AFB, Tampa, FL (Reserve)

DEPUTY J-3/ FWD CO SOCCENT DESERT SHIELD/STORM Saudi Arabia

DEPUTY J-3 SOCCENT RESTORE HOPE MacDill AFB/Iraq

DEPUTY J-3 SOCCENT SOUTHERN WATCH MacDill AFB/Somalia

CHIEF J-5 OPERATIONS 360th CIVIL AFFAIRS BDE Bosnia



Of my four combat tours, Bosnia had the greatest effect on me. What happened in the former Yugoslavia was not supposed to happen in the civilized world. My job was to direct Civil/Military Operations in the Theater, ensuring that civilians were kept out of harms way during combat operations. The Country was destroyed while intense hatred between the warring factions (Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks or Muslims) was pervasive throughout the entire AO. This tour was a graphic example of what should never happen again on Planet Earth.

Vietnam Veteran Rod Phillips Inducted into the FL Veterans Hall of Fame

by: Nichole Osinski Community Editor, Pt. Orange Observer



Rod Phillips is a Vietnam veteran who was awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Air Medal and Presidential Unit Citations, among others.

After being honorably discharged from active duty in the Army in July 1970, Phillips continued to serve through the Army Reserves and with a law enforcement career of 38 years before retiring in 2010. However, retirement has not slowed the veteran down and he has been working to help other veterans throughout Volusia County.

From the time Phillips was out of the service, he saw a need within the community.

"I'm still out there and, even though I retired in 2010, I'm putting in more hours assisting veterans or networking out there in the community," Phillips said. "We are living history and it's important that we educate our youth about our history and what we've done."

It's this work and dedication to other veterans that led Gov. Rick Scott and his cabinet to induct Phillips into the Florida Hall of Fame on Tuesday, Oct. 17. The Florida Veterans Hall of Fame, located at the state's capital, recognizes veterans who have positively contributed to Floridians, whether that is through business, politics, agriculture, science or service to veterans.

Phillips is among 20 veterans nominated for 2017. All of the veterans had an initial screening by a committee made up of members appointed by the governor, speaker of the House of Representatives, president of the Florida Senate and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"I'm pretty humbled and honored just to be nominated for this recognition," Phillips said. "This is the biggest thing that's ever happened to me in my life."

Phillips' road to receiving this honor began in 1967 when he first joined the Army before he was assigned to the 101st Screaming Eagles Airborne Division in Vietnam. The next year, Phillips would be in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive when North Vietnamese and communist Viet Cong forces carried out an attack in the southern part of the country.

During his time as an active military member, Phillips conducted search and destroy missions and was promoted to staff sergeant.

Since returning to the U.S., Phillips has shifted his focus to other veterans. He is currently the president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1048 and is also the VVA mentor coordinator for Volusia County's Judge David B. Beck Veterans Court. Phillips is also the vice president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Florida State Council, which has allowed him to serve as the chairman of the Agent Orange and PTSD committees.

In 2016, Phillips lead five Agent Orange Town Halls throughout Florida, with one in Daytona reaching an attendance of more than 300 people.

Phillips also has a passion for homeless veterans and serves on the Homeless Veterans steering committee where he has organized five stand downs for homeless vets each year. The stand downs provide a way for veterans in need to find the resources and help they need to live better lives.

The five stand downs have been held in Volusia County where veterans had access to a medical mobile van and were provided with services such as haircuts.

"I started seeing some World War II veterans that were homeless in Dade County, Miami, certainly some Korean War veterans and many other types of veterans that were homeless," Phillips said "I just wanted to help them out."

Vietnam veteran educating other veterans about Agent Orange

Anthony D'Aleo, From News4Jax, Kent Justice

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Military members serving in the Vietnam War didn't know it at the time, but there was something more deadly in the air than the bullets and bombs of combat.

Roughly 50 years later, veterans are still dealing with the impact of Agent Orange, a blend of herbicides American military forces sprayed in the jungles of Vietnam and Korea to remove trees and foliage where enemies could hide.

Now, as a local man is fighting cancer again, he continues his fight to let other veterans know how they can get help.

"I am a Vietnam vet that did 31 months in Vietnam," said Tony D'Aleo, president of the Local Chapter 1046 of Vietnam Veterans of America.

D'Aleo grew up in Brooklyn, New York, got drafted into the Army in 1964 and then joined the Marines and went back to Vietnam. He served in some of the bloodiest battle zones of the war, including Hue and Khe Sanh.

"When you're in a firefight, bullets are coming from every direction," said D'Aleo, who was exposed to Agent Orange. "All I wanted to do is stay alive and hope I had enough ammo to make it out of there."

He was wounded in both, and was awarded Purple Hearts. Neither of those wounds compare to the damage caused by Agent Orange.

"My squad in Vietnam, we were in Hue and we were in Khe Sanh -- 98 Days in hell in Khe Sanh," D'Aleo said. "They all came home. They're all dead now. They all died of cancer."

D'Aleo said two of his comrades died in domestic violence. Cancers took the other 13. He is a three-time cancer survivor who is currently battling, too.

"The Agent Orange has infected my inside and it moved from my gallbladder to prostate to spleen to my bladder. I lost all those organs," D'Aleo said. "Other vets will get sores that'll be on their face and everything."

Those "other vets" have become D'Aleo's main focus in life.

"More veterans have died from exposure to Agent Orange since the end of Vietnam War than died in combat during the Vietnam War."

"The DNA travels, so the Agent Orange is being spread all over," D'Aleo said. "The government can say whatever they want to say, but it's five generations going in the United States."

In the last year or so, the Veterans Administration has been adding conditions that qualify people for disability related to their exposure to Agent Orange.



YOU WERE REALLY ON YOUR OWN': Top secret Special Forces service bonds group of former Green Berets

St. Augustine Record By Colleen Jones

Once all three men were seated around their usual outside table at Zaharias Restaurant, pints of beer in hand, **Tom Waskovich** started things rolling: “So, Speedy is getting out of the hospital Friday.”

Joined at the table by **Bill Barclay** and **Chuck Willoughby**, Waskovich was referring to **George “Speedy” Gaspard**, who — if not for breaking a hip recently — is usually the fourth member at the get-togethers the men enjoy every week or two. At 91 and with seven tours in Vietnam behind him, Gaspard is the eldest — and perhaps most revered — member of the crew, all of who served as Green Berets with the U.S. Army.

But their bond goes beyond the Army, the Green Berets or their ties to St. Augustine. During the Vietnam War, all four were members of a special operations unit known as Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observations Group.

Members of MAC-SOG carried out some of the most top-secret — and dangerous — missions in the field. SOG teams were comprised of several American Green Berets were aided by indigenous mercenary troops to conduct reconnaissance missions, capture of enemy prisoners, rescue of downed pilots and clandestine operations.

When asked to rate the risk level of their activities in North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos during the 1960s and 1970s, Waskovich, 69, doesn't mince words: “I'd say on a scale of 1 to 10, it was like a 21.”

But around the happy hour table all these years later, it's all about jokes, good-natured ribbing, and catching up on how other SOG veterans — some of whom also have make their home in St. Johns County — are doing.

The men don't celebrate Memorial Day or Veterans Day by taking part in traditional ceremonies or parades. Instead, Waskovich, Gaspard, Barclay and Willoughby prefer to get together in their usual laid-back fashion and break bread, twist off bottle caps and “shoot the [breeze]” like always. Their reluctance to march alongside fellow vets has less to do with condescension than the fact that feel like they're a different breed with battle experiences others might not understand.

At one point during the gathering on Thursday evening, Waskovich asks his fellow comrades to raise a glass and take a moment of silence to honor three Green Berets killed in Afghanistan last month, which they do, bowing their heads in reflection.

How the four found each other in the St. Augustine area is its own story.

Several years ago, Waskovich and Barclay were both attending a national organizational meeting of special military forces in Las Vegas. They met in the airport when they realized they both had returning flights to St. Augustine.

Waskovich and Willoughby also linked up as if by chance. In traffic around town, Willoughby happened to notice a MAC-SOG decal on the back of Waskovich's car. He rolled down his window to talk to Willoughby at a red light.

“You said, ‘I heard there were a few more of us around here in town,’” Willoughby, 74, recalls.

Though none of the four served together on missions, Barclay, 70, and Willoughby were in the same unit, just at dif-

ferent times. Gaspard and Waskovich met through a friend of Waskovich's who was doing research for a book about the SOG teams.

Invariably, amidst all the laughter that transpires at their oupost at Zaharias, talk turns to battle stories; about having to wear plain-clothes uniforms with no identifiable American affiliation or U.S. tags. Or like the time Waskovich was part of a covert mission that shut down the Ho Chi Minh Trail for a week. Or when all Barclay could hear was the "ping, ping" of shots being directly fired into his helicopter — "and you were glad you brought your [bulletproof] vest because you could sit on it," he said.

"I was scared sh**less every time I went out, but you had to overcome it," said Waskovich. "I guess you guys were, too,"

"Yep," nodded Willoughby.

"You were really on your own," added Barclay.

Barclay remembers a woman administrator who had to sign off on all SOG assignments as his "guardian angel." Coming off his first tour of duty and considering reenlisting, she asked if he had siblings. When he said no, he was an only child, she suggested he sit out the next SOG mission. Barclay went on to serve more than another 20 years in the military, retiring as a master sargeant.

Only now can any of them talk about this. The unit's activities and identities were government classified until recently, with members signing non-disclosure agreements as conditions to their service.

SOG had a little more than 1,000 men cross border operations during the Vietnam campaign and 13 of them have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Just last month, Gary Rose, who served in the same type of mission Waskovich ran, is the most recent recipient of the national honor. Rose, an SOG medic, ran through a hail of gunfire in Laos in 1970 — in some cases, with men strapped to his back — to treat more than 50 of the wounded. He returned to the U.S. with all 16 American soldiers deployed with him still alive.

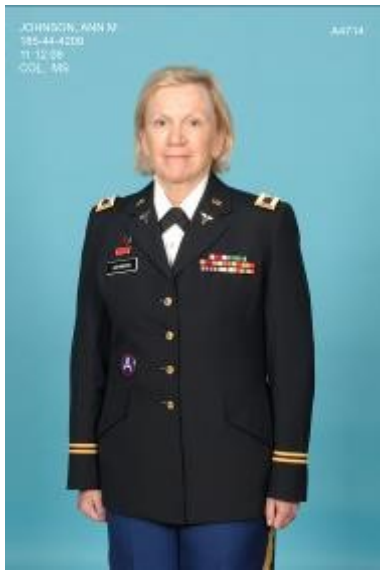
The bravery they displayed as young men, some still teenagers, has continued to be a bond that survives well more than 40 years later.

"We would have died for each other back then," said Waskovich.

Barclay added, "Just as we would now."

Both William Barclay and Tom Waskovich are Veterans Council members, Tom founded the group in 2001 and was its first Chairman.





Ann McCulliss Johnson, COL, ret

Ann McCulliss Johnson LCSW is a native of Philadelphia, PA and has lived all over the world. She is an innovative, behavioral healthcare leader and educator with extensive clinical and professional training experience. Ann McCulliss Johnson is a retired Operation Iraq Freedom veteran with over 30 years of military social work experience and trauma informed practice. She is the recipient of the Order of Military Medicine Merit and Legion of Merit.

Ms. Johnson currently resides in St Augustine, Florida with her husband George, who is also a retired veteran. Since retiring from the military in 2013 she continues to serve the veteran communities of NE Florida as the clinical director for Gratitude America Military Support Retreats. Col Johnson along with Dr Tracy Hejmanowski have launched the non-profit First Responder Project. The First Responder Project is dedicated to working with and supporting our First Responder Community and their families in NE Florida.

John Sutherland, Commander, US Navy, (Ret)



Commander John Sutherland enlisted in the United States Naval Air Reserve in November 1970. His enlisted tours include: AIMD onboard the USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) deployed to the Mediterranean in 1973, 1974 and 1975; AIMD, Naval Station Roosevelt Roads PR 1975-1979; AIMD, USS GUADALCANAL (LPH-7) deployed to the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean in 1980 and 1981; VAW-123 “Screwtops” deployed onboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) to the North Atlantic for Northern Wedding in 1982 and to the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean in 1982-1983. During this tour in the Screwtops he was selected for Chief Petty Officer in July 1982. Transferring to Naval Air Maintenance Training Group HQ in October 1983, he was selected for Senior Chief in 1985 and as a Limited Duty Officer in 1986 and was commissioned 1 November 1987.

Commander Sutherland’s first assignment after commissioning was the VFA-106 “Gladiators”, the Atlantic Fleet FA-18 Fleet Replacement squadron at NAS Cecil Field FL. While in VFA-106, he served as the Aircraft, Line, Material, and Maintenance Control Officer. In 1990 he transferred to VFA-137 as MMCO and made an extended deployment in support of Operations Desert Storm and Provide Comfort onboard USS FORRESTAL (CV-59). After return from this deployment he spearheaded the homeport change of the Kestrels from NAS Cecil Field to NAS Lemoore in October 1992, shortly thereafter transitioning from Lot VIII FA-18As to Lot XV FA-18Cs. In May 1993 the squadron deployed in USS CONSTELLATION (CV-64) with CVW-2 during the ship’s “Round the Horn” sail from Mayport to San Diego.

In October 1993 he transferred to the Staff of CLAW ONE, which was redesignated as Commander Strike Fighter Wing Atlantic. Commander Sutherland served as the FA-18 Aircraft Readiness Officer, traveling to Switzerland as part of the cadre of USN personnel developing the Swiss FA-18 maintenance training program and was the action officer for the introduction of the FA-18A in the adversary role with the VF-45 Blackbirds at NAS Key West.

In 1996, he reported to the Wildcats of VFA-131 as MMCO and completed an around the world deployment in USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN-74) with CVW-7 supporting Operation Southern Watch. Upon return from deployment in August 1998, he initiated the first FA-18 squadron homeport change in December 1998 to NAS Oceana as part of the BRAC closure of

NAS Cecil Field. Completing this tour as AMO, he transferred to VFA-106 in September 1999. As Maintenance Officer of the Gladiators, Commander Sutherland was instrumental in establishing a Joint VF-101/VFA-106 Air to Air FRS maintenance detachment at NAF Key West. . During his tenure, the Gladiators were awarded the 2000 CNO Safety "S" and were the top FA-18 FRS in pilot production for FY 2000 and 2001.

In December 2001, he reported to CVW-3 as CAGMO. His eleventh and final deployment with CVW-3 was onboard USS HARRY S TRUMAN (CVN-75) deployed to the Mediterranean in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During combat operations over Northern Iraq CVW-3 expended more than 700 tons of ordnance, which was the most dropped among the six different Air wings supporting OIF and flew a 100% sortie completion rate. Additionally Airwing Three squadrons garnered all 6 Atlantic Fleet Type Wing Battle Efficiency awards for CY 2003.

In January 2004 he reported to NAVAIRSYSCOM as the E-2C/C-2A Assistant Program Manager for Logistics (APML). As APML he was directly responsible for the entire logistics support organization for the Navy's fleet of 69 E-2C and 35 C-2A aircraft as well as over 35 E-2 FMS aircraft. During this tour he was instrumental in establishing significant cost wise readiness initiatives.

Completing his acquisition tour in Oct 2005, CDR Sutherland reported as the S-3 Wing MO at Commander Sea Control Wing Atlantic. He was the driving force in the installation of the LANTIRN system on the S-3B for GWOT deployment. His leadership of cost reduction measures during the S-3 Sundown returned over \$27 million dollars to Naval Aviation Enterprise. He retired in April 2008 after completing 35 years of active duty.

Commander Sutherland's decorations and awards include: Five Meritorious Service Medals, six Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, the Navy Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, two Navy Expeditionary Medals, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal,

Three National Defense Service Medals, Battle Efficiency Award, five Meritorious Unit Commendations, eight Sea Service Deployment ribbons and various other campaign and service awards.

Commander Sutherland is married to the former Judith Mullin of Boscawen, New Hampshire. They have two grown children, Jennifer and Michael.

Jerome (Jerry) Domask

In honor of Veteran's Day, I want to thank all veterans for their service to our great country and for all the sacrifices they and their families have made to protect and advance freedom at home and abroad. I want to give special thanks to my dad who devoted decades of military service to our country and who more recently has been helping to educate others about the Vietnam war, wars in general, the experiences of veterans and their families, and the need for healing.



I arrived in Vietnam Dec. 1967 as an Army Captain just prior to the TET Offensive in Jan 1968 as an adviser under MACV HQ. Duty was in Cholon, Chinese Section of Saigon. Spent 3 months in Vietnamese language school (Ft. Bliss, TX) prior to assignment. Advisers in this area were not issued weapons of any type, no rifles, no side arms! We were dependent upon Vietnamese for transportation. When the TET Offensive kicked off the Vietnamese Army drives were not seen again, fleeing to help their families. We obtained weapons and secured transportation off the economy and from enemy supplies captured by our Vietnamese counter-parts. We were quartered in an old French hotel without any American security or support. Much of the time we lived off the economy. Several weeks after the start of the Tet Offensive approx. 85 - 90% of the area within a half mile of us was completely destroyed. Our hotel's mess hall on 3rd floor was destroyed by fire, etc., left Vietnam in Dec 68 as a 27 year old Army Major with usual Army service medals; to include Bronze Star Medal, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry w/Palm (Individual Award) and Vietnamese Ordnance Badge. My second child, Jim was born one month after my arrival in Vietnam, at which time I was a father of a newborn and a three old daughter, Lisa. Entered active duty in May 1962. Prior training included Ordnance General Support Officer training, Special Warfare Staff Officer training at Ft. Bragg and 12 weeks of Vietnamese language. Jerry Domask has been selected by the Vietnam Veterans of America, Jacksonville Chapter 1046, to design a Vietnam Memorial for the Jacksonville National Cemetery. Jerry's recent work has focused on his experiences during the Vietnam War. Jerry says reflecting back 45 years has been a difficult and painful process. The creation of 35 Vietnam War multi -media series opened the escape hatch to cry out: breaking down the barriers of anger and betrayal. I had returned to America that vilified veterans of the Vietnam War. The war series has released me to move on with renewed vigor and enthusiasm to create work freed from the pains of war.

Leo C. Chase, Jr. was an inspiration to America and to our community

From the Historic City News

Historic City News received word this morning that bi-partisan legislation has been sent to President Donald Trump's desk for approval that will authorize a new, local veterans clinic being constructed at 207 Stratton Road in St. Johns County, to be named in honor of the late Army Private First-Class Leo C. Chase, Jr.



Chase, formerly of St Augustine, was the first man from St. Johns County to be killed in the Vietnam War on November 15, 1965. The US House of Representatives passed the legislation first introduced by Congressman John Rutherford (FL-04) and Congressman Michael Waltz (FL-06)

“Private First-Class Leo C. Chase, Jr., is an American hero,” Rutherford told local reporters. “Northeast Florida is proud to tell the story of his courage in the face of battle and to honor his sacrifice on behalf of our country and freedom. I look forward to President Trump signing this legislation into law, ensuring every person walking into the St. Augustine VA clinic remembers the life and legacy of Private First Class Leo C. Chase, Jr.”

Chase was only five days from finishing his tour of duty in Vietnam when he and other troopers were airlifted to South Vietnam, where he lost his life. Chase was a rifleman in Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry. The battle in the Ia Drang Valley of South Vietnam, is dramatized in the book and film, “We Were Soldiers”.

Private First-Class Chase flew into landing zone X-Ray at Ia Drang, near the Cambodian border. The helicopter troops were immediately attacked by thousands of soldiers of the 320th, 33rd, and 66th regiments of the North Vietnamese Army in a battle that lasted four days.

Outnumbered nearly ten to one, Chase and the other members of his platoon bravely repulsed many massive ground assaults from the Viet Cong, all the while taking fire from enemy snipers. In the end, Chase and many other members of his platoon lost their lives, but not without accomplishing their objective. The American lines held because of the courage and sheer determination of the Seventh Cavalry.

“It is more than fitting to have this new VA clinic providing top-notch medical care in his honor,” Congressman Waltz added. “He fought and died for our country. Now all who enter will know his name and his story.”

Claude Caviness, Capt., US Navy, (Ret)

A trip of 25,000 miles aboard the USS Midway CV-41 beginning three days before Christmas '54 at NAS Mayport, FL ending eight days after the Fourth of July '55 at NAS Alameda in San Francisco. There our planes were off-loaded by crane, then commencing our ocean-to-ocean flight to Jacksonville. On East Coast arrival, our flight leader (of four planes) flew us from overhead Jacksonville's Cecil Field the additional 39 miles out to Mayport (and back) . . . just so that we could claim to have been all the way around the world . . . and . . . to 'show-off' by flying at (FAA approved) 1,500' along the St. Johns River over downtown . . . in a beautiful sunset . . . on a Friday-the-13th !



David Shelton, US Air Force

50 years ago on September 15, 1970, I raised my right hand, took an oath which started a 20 year service to our Country in the U.S. Air Force.

The first 8 years as a Crew Chief on the McDonnell Douglas F-4E Phantom II and the remaining 12 years as a Flight Engineer on the Lockheed C-141 A/B Starlifter.

I will never forget those I served with as a bond was created to the point I call them Brothers & Sisters, with a camaraderie formed that unfortunately, many who never served will never experience.

During my C-141 service, I was able to visit 65+ foreign countries, which many were 3rd world. There is no doubt in my mind, I can honestly say as screwed up we get at times, the United States is the best country there is and I am truly blessed to live here.

I've always said "if they called me to serve again, I'd be out the door so fast I wouldn't take time to hang up the phone."

God Bless America!





Roy Havekost, U.S. Navy Beach Jumpers, 1943 - 1972

Beach Jumpers were tactical cover and deception units which were organized under Admiral H.K. Hewitt, then Commander of Amphibious Forces and all U.S. Naval Forces in Northwest African waters and the Western Mediterranean. The missions that were undertaken by the various Beach Jumper Units were classified. Unit training, during World War II, took place at a very remote location, Ocracoke Island, N.C. which was only accessible by water. This location added to the security and secrecy of these deception units.

The concept for Beach Jumpers came about as a result of then Lieutenant Douglas Fairbanks Jr., the Hollywood actor turned naval officer during World War II, having been detached from "Blue Water" duty on the high seas and assigned to duty with British Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten and the Combined Operations Commandos in England.

After the war, the original eleven units were reduced to two. Unit 1, was stationed on the west coast at Coronado Island CA. and Unit 2 was stationed on the east coast at Little Creek, VA. These units would continue to serve the Navy as both electronic deception and psychological warfare units during both the Korean and Viet Nam wars. The units were decommissioned in 1972 . . . by name only.

Today, the U.S. Navy Beach Jumpers Association is headquartered here in St. Johns County, and is comprised of former navy personnel who had formerly served in a Beach Jumper Unit. For more information about the history of the Beach Jumpers you can visit their website online at www.beachjumpers.com

Henri “Rik” Erkelens



I grew up in the small town of Sharon Massachusetts where Paul Revere cast cannon balls for the Revolutionary War and Deborah Sampson Gannett is buried along with veterans of all our wars. Early on he was very patriotic minded and built a watch tower over their garage to spot enemy planes in WW II. Became an Eagle Scout and troop leader. Graduated from Sharon HS then the military college, Norwich University in Vermont.

He wanted to play polo there, but discovered the horses had been sold and tanks now occupied the stables. This started his long career in Armored Warfare. After graduating from the Armor School at Ft. Knox his first tour was as a platoon leader in the 14th Armored Cav in Germany along the East West border watching the Russians and almost going into Budapest during the Hungarian revolution. Upon return to the US he went into the family business and did several years in the Mass. National guard commanding a newly formed tank Company. Missing active service he reintegrated to the regular army. He later taught tactics at the Armor School, and commanded company battalion task forces and groups.

Rik was a combat veteran of Vietnam serving in MACVCORDS under William F. Colby through 5 campaigns. He is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College and the Army War College. He served two tours in the pentagon. 1st in Operations on the Army Staff where he changed tank gunnery training to combat gunnery, and later as Deputy to the assistant Secretary to the Army for Research and Development. While there he was responsible to bring the M-1 Abrams Tank into production, Lethal in the Gulf Wars, it is still in use today. Later, assigned as Group Chief in San Francisco ran an unusual operation for a tanker. Two Russian Trawlers were taking on grain in Sacramento in the food for peace program still during the cold war. The governor was alerted that the channel had been mined by a hostile group. Since the Army still had one of two landing ship companies there for which he was responsible to train, he was called upon to run an actual mine sweep operation dragging the entire Sacramento Channel! His last tour was in Connecticut as an Inspector General. During this period he had the unpleasant duty to have the State Adjutant General removed for cause. This must have propelled him to become selected as that state's first civilian Inspector General upon retirement. He then commenced cleaning out the state government. Several commissioners were removed and several organized crime cases were done that was enjoyable!

Rik is married and has six children and eight grandchildren. His family has been in St Augustine since 1951, his mother taught music in the schools and dad taught music at the D&B school. He retired and moved here in 1989. He currently loves swimming and boating. He was past president of the Military Officers Association, and Vice Commodore of the Yacht Club here.

William Tatel, CAPT, ARNG (Ret), father of COL Jane Karp, USAF, Ret.

Born: August 5, 1916, Newburyport, MA

Family: Parents Elick and Ida (Weintraub) Tatel are deceased. Married to Phyllis (Swartz) Tatel since May 8, 1945 (VE Day).

Children: Son, Allan B Tatel, daughter-in-law, Rita Tatel, Daughter Jane Tatel Karp, son-in-law Philip S Karp

Grandchildren: Jeffrey Scott Tatel, Heather Lynn Tatel McMahon, Victoria Joy Tatel

Great grandchildren: Breanna, Kaitlyn, Gage, Charlene, Ari, and Garrett Tatel

Great, great grandchildren: Alliya Tatel, Kylie Rose, Layla Tatel



His Story: Moved to Boston, MA when he was 8 years old. While working he earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Northeastern University in 1938. Then, employed as an accountant and sales agent from 1932 to 1941. During WWII he served for 3 years in the 7th Army Western Task Force, under the command of General George Patton. He participated in the invasion of Africa, Sicily, Rome-Arno, Southern France and Rhineland campaigns in overseas battles. He was awarded American Defense Medal, EAME (European African Mediterranean) Medal and the Purple Heart. Served our country in the US Army from March 1941 to December 1952 when, as a Captain, he was honorably discharged. While in the Army he attended and graduated Officer's Candidate School. On his return to the US, he married his wife Phyllis on May 8, 1945 VE Day. They purchased a home in Milton MA in 1946 where they resided until 1997. Following his service to his country, Bill was employed by the United States Postal Service as a Supervisor of Delivery & Collection from 1946 until his retirement in 1986. He moved to St. Augustine in 1997.

Organizations: Charter Member and Past Commander of Milton, MA, Post 696 Jewish War Veterans

Life Member, Disabled American Veterans

Life Member, Military Officers Association of America

Life Member, Blinded Veterans' Association

Life Member, Temple Shalom of Milton, MA

Life Member, Civil Service Employees, Inc.

Member, Penny Whitman Post #300 Jewish War Veterans, Palm Coast, FL

Trustee, Congregation Sons of Israel, St. Augustine, FL

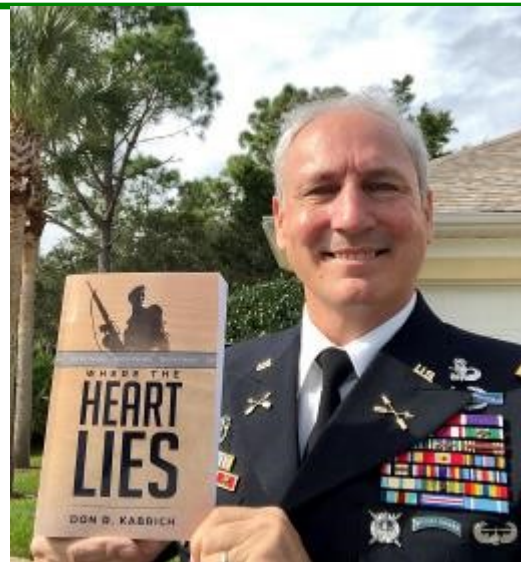
Past Member, Cosmopolitan Lodge, Ancient Free & Accepted Masons, Mass.

Member, Ashlar Lodge # 98 of St. Augustine and the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of FL. Mason since April 2, 1954.

Member, Council on Aging

Donald Kabrich

Don was raised in Northern California and Northwest Washington. Joining the Army at 17, he arrived to Basic Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey just after his 18th birthday. He served as a truck driver assigned to the 503rd Transportation Company in Heidelberg, Germany then finished his three year enlistment at CDEC, Combat Development Experiment Center at Fort Hunter Liggett, California. He left the Army and returned to his home town of San Jose, California where he attended his local community college. Don was a high school dropout but had earned his GED. He was intent on earning a bachelors degree in order to serve in one of the nation's intelligence agencies. Maintaining his military reserves status, he was assigned to the 445th Civil Affairs Company serving as a DPRE, Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Evacuees specialist. He was later assigned to the 351st Civil Affairs Command and was also its full-time GS-08 IMO, Information Systems Manager, responsible for classified document handling and managing the communications of seventeen subordinate units. He later Joined the 12th Special Forces Group and was assigned to the Intelligence section serving as a non-commissioned officer. By then he had graduated the COMSEC Custodian course, Civil Affairs course, Counter Intelligence course and Airborne school. Shortly after, Don successfully passed both SFAS, Special Forces Assessment and Selection, and the Special Forces Qualifications Course earning the MOS of 18C, or Special Forces Engineer Sergeant-also known as the "Demo" Sergeant. He was deployed to JTF-6, Joint Task Force drug interdiction missions and conducted Operational Detachment exercises in Thailand during joint training, COBRA GOLD 1994. His Team Sergeant, Master Sergeant Randy Woolin, was killed in a training accident prior to this deployment.



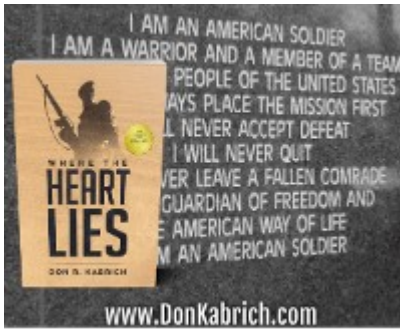
Don then graduated from San Jose State University earning a bachelors degree in Behavioral Science. Having also completed six months of language training at Fort Campbell, Kentucky in 1993-4 with the language specialty of Urdu, Don re-enlisted for active duty with 5th Special Forces Group also located at Fort Campbell, Kentucky and was permanently stationed there starting in October 1995. Assigned to Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, Don immediately deployed to Cap Haitian, Haiti to advise the Pakistani Army until all forces were withdrawn. He then trained for and successfully attended both the United States Army Pre-Scuba course and CDQC, Combat Diver Qualification course, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and Key West, Florida. His Dive Buddy Juan Ridout was later KIA in the Philippines conducting counter-terrorist/insurgency operations. Upon completion of SCUBA training, he was assigned to ODA 575, and for the next four years Don trained and/or deployed to the following AO's: twice to Pakistan, twice to Kenya, Yemen, Oman, multiple tours to Kuwait, Nevada Test Site, Fort Bragg and various other locations. He attended Advanced Demolition school, Air Assault school, Advanced Special Operations course, Advanced SERE school, Jump Master course, Load Planner/Hazmat course, Operations and Intelligence Sergeants course, Advanced NCO school, and the Dive Supervisor course. Don then transferred to Bravo Company's dive team, ODA 585. In November 2000 he was recruited and assigned as a dive instructor to SFUWO, Special Forces Underwater Operations, in Key West, Florida.

Ten months later his team, ODA 585, was one of the first ODAs on the ground in Afghanistan and were chronicled advancing on Osama Bin Laden and his forces in the mountains of Tora Bora. In another re

gion his friend, Sergeant First Class Dan Pettitory, was KIA, being among the first US casualties reported in Afghanistan. A JDAM was mistakenly dropped on their position. In 2003, Don returned to 5th Group and ODA 585 where the team just returned from OIF I and his Team Sergeant and friend, Master Sergeant Kevin Morehead, was KIA the last day of their combat tour. Don then deployed as the advance party for the team to Iraq and OIF II. Soon after arriving he was severely wounded in Mosul, Iraq by an IED where his friend and co-engineer was also severely wounded. Both were evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and Staff Sergeant Paul Mardis died as a result of complications due to his injuries. Because of paralysis issues with his right arm and still experiencing residual effects from a TBI, Don went through a year of surgeries and physical therapy before returning with 585 to Baqubba, Iraq. He went again as the advance party for this deployment in May 2005. Don would complete four combat tours there; OIF II, IV, VII, and XI. His last two tours he served as a Special Forces Warrant Officer, having completed the training and commissioning process before deploying to OIF VII. On his last combat tour he served at Area IV in Baghdad operating as the advisor to the commander of the 2nd Iraqi Special Forces Brigade.

Don retired from the Army after completing 29 years of continuous service, 23 years active duty, with 18 years spent on Operational Detachments to include SFUWO in February 2013. He went on to work for Red Bull International Air Races as a rescue diver. He ran the Boston Marathon in 2009 representing Special Operations Forces and trekking to Everest Basecamp in 2014. In 2016 he began a masters degree program at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary completing it in 2018. He is tracking to complete his doctorate in May 2022. Don currently serves as a Senior Adults Minister at his church, concentrating on veteran related issues and caring for those in his church who are most vulnerable. He is also working on his second book "Rush One-Five" which will follow "Where The Heart Lies" a journey about a soldier describing, among other things, his IED experience and leading a large counter-attack that successfully repelled a complex ambush near the Thar Thar Wadi Bridge in the Al Jazeera (desert) in December 2007. The following is a list of friends and comrades Don lost over his years of service. Sadly, most of them served in the same small building as Don. For every one of these listed here there are birthdays and anniversaries of their sacrifices to remember. It makes for a busy year filling most of the weeks and months in the calendar. To stay busy honoring them all year will take a lifetime to achieve. Don is proud to have served with them and promises that they will not be forgotten.

Afghanistan/Iraq SGT Dustin M. Adkins (5th SFG), SFC William M. Bennett (5th SFG), SSG Jason L. Brown (5th SFG), SSG Gary R. Harper Jr. (5th SFG), SSG Aaron N. Holleyman (5th SFG), SSG Matthew Kimmell (5th SFG), SSG Paul C. Mardis (5th SFG), SSG Ryan D. Maseth (5th SFG), MSG Kevin N. Morehead (5th SFG), SGM Michael B. Stack (5th SFG), MAJ Paul R. Syverson (5th SFG), SSG Ayman A. Taha (5th SFG), CAPT Michael Y. Tarlavsky (5th SFG), CAPT Benjamin Tiffner (5th SFG), SFC Brett E. Walden (5th SFG), SSG Justin R. Whiting (5th SFG), SPC Daniel W. Winegeart (5th SFG), MSG Jefferson D. Davis (5th SFG), SFC Aaron Henderson (5th SFG), SSG Jason A. McDonald (5th SFG), WO1 Sean W. Mullen (5th SFG), SFC Daniel H. Petithory (5th SFG), SSG Brian C. Prosser (5th SFG), Staff Sgt. Scott R. Studenmund (5th SFG). Jordon Staff Sgt. Matthew C. Lewellen (5th SFG), Staff Sgt. Kevin J. McEnroe (5th SFG), and Staff Sgt. James F. Moriarty (5th SFG). Syria WO2 Jonathan R. Farmer (5th SFG), SFUWO PJ Juan Ridout, Sergeant Major Jerry Patton



WHERE THE HEART LIES By Don R. Kabrich Submitted by Nancy Quatrano, WC Publishing

Are we shaped solely by our past or can that just be a starting point? In this debut novel by retired Green Beret Don R. Kabrich, Cory McGuire is a character driven and haunted by his upbringing, one who finds his purpose in life by embracing what was always hiding right in front of him. A part of him as big as his hurt and fears, more powerful than his doubts and disappointments.

It's a story uniquely told as both a narrative and a screenplay; a compelling story of self-discovery. Powerfully shown, readers will get an inside glimpse of both the grueling physical and psychological demands made on the men and women who take on the roles and responsibilities of the elite forces.

Readers are captivated by the story told by a man who has been there, been through it, and spent a lifetime helping others to be all they can be. A review written by another special operations member says, "Don has written a book that captures what we special operators can't explain to those who have not been through the trials of training and deployments.... This is a fantastic book, well written, a must read for soldiers who struggle and anyone that would like to get an insight into our world...."

A 2019 Finalist in the international Book Excellence Awards, *Where the Heart Lies* will both startle and compel readers to keep turning the pages as they travel through real-life events with the people who dedicate themselves to the protection of this nation. Great debut for this multiple Purple Heart honoree.

HEART is available in print and electronic editions wherever books can be ordered.

George 'Speedy' Gaspard And The Original Special Forces

Sep 19, 2020 Craig Bowman, War History Online

Born in the summer of 1926 George Gaspard was to become a pioneering career soldier, breaking new ground in battlefield tactics and earning many decorations for service to his country. He first signed up with the Marine Corps in 1944 and soon found himself in the WWII Pacific Theatre fighting the enemy in Okinawa, as part of the 6th Marine Division.



He later joined the Army in 1951 and volunteered for the 10th Special Forces Group, a new unit born of the need for innovative ways of conducting warfare. Gaspard was part of the first group to graduate from the fledgling Special Forces training program.

George 'Speedy' Gaspard served in WWII, the Korean War, and in Vietnam.

From then on Gaspard built upon a reputation for fearlessness, running cross-border secret operations throughout the Korean war, which was really just the proving ground for techniques he deployed to great effect during his tours of duty in Vietnam. In Korea Gaspard ran a team of four enlisted American soldiers and up to eighty anti-communist South Korean agents, supported by Chinese intelligence operatives, gathering information on North Korean troop movements and other enemy activities.

US forces in the icy conditions of Korea witness a large detonation.

Gaspard was awarded the Silver and Bronze stars for combat actions in 1953 and late in 1954 he arrived at the 77th Special Forces group as a guerrilla warfare instructor for the Psychological Warfare School's Special Forces Department before he was discharged three years later.

After a stint at the Pentagon in the Special Warfare Department Gaspard he was recalled to active duty. In 1962 he was sent to Fort Bragg attached to the 5th Special Forces group. From here he was dispatched to Vietnam, to a Special Forces camp at Dak Pek in Kontum Province, the first of his seven tours in the country.

In 1965 he was instrumental in successful negotiations to allow the mountain dwelling Montagnard people safe passage to join the South Vietnamese Army. The Montagnard name came from the time of French colonial rule in the region.

In 1966 Gaspard was promoted to the rank of Major and in 1967 returned to Vietnam to direct the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observations Group



(MACVSOG) in the Strata program until 1968.

Strata was developed to streamline and clean up intelligence gathering activities that had previously been dogged by poor quality information and the activities of double agents. Gaspard's new focus was on short-term gathering of intelligence from close cross-border sources. He had an all-Vietnamese team, a Road-Watch and Target-Acquisition group, who would be deployed and recovered for re-use time and again.

Gaspard went in to extract two wounded agents in an emergency when they had been surrounded by the enemy, saving lives and earning an Air Force Distinguished Flying Cross for Heroism and a Purple Heart.

Gaspard served with distinction in the Vietnam War (Not Gaspard in the image).

But it did not all go Gaspard's way. A colleague he knew as Francois was unmasked as a spy some twenty-five years after the war ended, receiving top military honours from Hanoi's government. 'There's no question that he hurt SOG operations,' Gaspard said later in an interview, but it did not diminish his pride in the overall success rate of the Strata teams.

Having served in three major US wars George 'Speedy' Gaspard retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1973. His list of decorations is impressive and numbers more than fifty including medals from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia.

In his retirement Gaspard continued to serve his country as part of the South Carolina State Guard where he attained the rank of Brigadier General and was appointed Chief of Staff. He was a member of multiple military groups including the American Legion and Sons of Confederacy.

At Fort Benning, Georgia, Gaspard was inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame in 1991, in recognition of his service in three wars and his continual development of the understanding of innovative and disruptive forms of war in inhospitable and difficult terrain. In 2010 he was further honoured as a Distinguished Member of the Special Forces Regiment.

Gaspard died on January 30th, 2018 and laid to rest in Jacksonville, Florida.

George "Speedy" Gaspard was featured in the Veterans Council's Korean War documentary. Here is the PBS link...Korea : Forgotten War, Remembered Heroes

<http://www.floridastoriesofservice.org/korea-forgotten-war-remembered-heroes/>

Margaret Wright

I am a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1046 here in Jacksonville since our chapter began in 2010. I am a former Navy Nurse serving from Sep. 1967- June 1971 and had 2 duty stations. First, I was stationed at NNMC Bethesda, Md (now called Walter Reed) when it was a 1000 bed hospital caring for combat Marines and Navy personnel. I worked on 5 enlisted surgical wards. Depending on the shift, I worked on 1, 2, or all 5 wards as the RN on duty. We saw wounded that were often 2 weeks post injuries and were admitted for more care and reconstructive surgeries. Dec. 1969 I arrived in Guam, MI for an 18 month duty. I worked on a female dependent ward for 6 months and then the Operating Room and Recovery Room for a year. We saw fresh casualties, 2-3 days post injuries, often with above the knee traumatic amputations plus a variety of surgical needs



A Short Biography of Gerald “Scott” Knight

I was born in Jacksonville, Florida and spent most of my life there until I enlisted in the Air Force in July 1967. After Basic Training, at Lackland, I went to Keesler for almost a year of AC&W radar repairman training. We studied the FPS-20/66, FPS-6/90, FPS-26, UPA-35 and a lot of auxiliaries.



After training was completed, in late May of 1968, I was assigned to Det 1, 729th Tactical Control Squadron, a mobile radar squadron at McCoy AFB Florida. The first thing I noticed was the radars were the MPS-11/FPS-8 and the TPS-40, nothing I was trained on.

A few weeks after my arrival, radar operations and radar maintenance burned to the ground. Fortunately no one blamed me.

In August of 1968 the squadron was moved to Homestead AFB that had just been re-designated a Tactical Air Command base.

In 1969 I received orders for Det 2, 620th TCS, Pleiku AB, Vietnam. I returned to Keesler before leaving for Vietnam for some equipment specific training, arriving there the morning of August 18th or the morning after Hurricane Camille's landfall.

I arrived at Pleiku during a rocket attack. I picked out a GI and followed him running to shelter.

In December of 1969 I was reassigned to the 620th TCS Monkey Mountain Vietnam and immediately sent back to Pleiku TDY. I later found out they were manipulating the manning chart to show the Vietnamese were taking over at Pleiku. About March of 1970 I returned to Monkey Mountain where finally there was an FPS-66 and FPS90 to work on.

On returning from Vietnam in 1970, I was assigned to the 1839th Engineering and Installation Group at Keesler, where uneventfully I finished my enlistment in 1971.

After the Air Force I worked for Leeds & Northrup, later bought out by Honeywell, for a short period of time, as a Field Service Engineer. I then worked for the Jacksonville Electric Authority for 31 ½ years as an Instrument and Controls Technician, until I retired in 2004. I briefly did contract work on Honeywell software.

Most recently qualified for VA disability, from exposure to Agent Orange. I have been retraining as a Database Administrator at the VA's expense. Unfortunately the job market collapsed at the same time I finished training. I briefly worked for the Census Bureau updating maps and for AT&T answering DSL problem calls.

I currently reside in Orange Park, Florida with my lovely wife of 38 years. I have 2 sons, Brian and Devin, and 5 grandchildren.



Giles McCoy: Surviving adrift in the Philippine Sea

From the VA Vabtag Point

Marine Corps Private Giles McCoy survived for nearly four days after the sinking of the USS Indianapolis in the shark-infested Philippine Sea.

Launched in 1931, the USS Indianapolis was a Portland-class heavy cruiser of the United States Navy. Following the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and subsequent U.S. intervention in World War II, the USS Indianapolis began serv-

ing in the Pacific theater. Throughout the war, the USS Indianapolis and its crews participated in many of the island-hopping campaigns of the Pacific theater. It was responsible for transporting parts of the atomic bombs to Tinian Island in preparation of the atomic bombings of Japan.

One of the crewmembers aboard the USS Indianapolis was Marine Corps Private First-Class Giles G. McCoy. Having been shot during the Battle of Peleliu while serving as a sniper with the 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Giles had been assigned to the USS Indianapolis as a light assignment in recognition of his courage during the battle. While aboard, Giles was primarily responsible for keeping the deck clear of spent cartridges from the five-inch guns.

After successfully delivering the atomic bomb components to Tinian Island in July 1945, the USS Indianapolis made a short stop at Guam. There, it dropped off sailors who had completed their tours, then made its way towards Leyte, where its crew was to undergo training. On July 30, 1945, at 12:15 a.m., while en-route to Leyte, the USS Indianapolis was engaged by Japanese submarine I-58 and struck by two torpedoes.

At the time of the attack, Giles was stationed three levels below deck, guarding two court-marshaled crewmen. The first torpedo struck near the Marine compartment, killing all men inside. Soon after, the second torpedo hit, igniting the eight-inch magazine compartment, throwing Giles to the side of the ship and burying him under a pile of bunks.

After climbing his way out in complete darkness, Giles managed to find a lantern, and with the assistance of the court-marshaled men, began assisting wounded men out of the rubble to the top deck. As the ship began rapidly taking on water, Giles and his fellow crewmen were ordered to stop rescuing the wounded so the compartment could be sealed. Despite their protests, the men were forced to leave the wounded behind and the compartment was sealed.

Upon reaching the top deck, Giles managed to grab a life vest. As he walked towards the bow of the ship, he could see it was already under water. With the ship already half submerged, Giles slipped into the sea and began to swim away.



Giles was then sucked underwater by the negative current caused by the now rapidly sinking ship. As he was dragged farther and farther under, the pressure began to build until he felt as if his head would blow. Suddenly, a pocket of air pulled him back to the surface, saving him from death. Looking back, Giles saw nothing but a patch of foam where the ship had sunk. As he struggled to get his life jacket on, Giles felt the concussions hit his legs as the ship's fuel and ammo exploded under water.

After floating for some time, Giles came across another group of men who had managed to climb aboard a large piece of broken life raft. Once he was pulled aboard, Giles began vomiting the leaked fuel he had swallowed while swimming.

Assuming the Navy was aware the ship had been sunk, the men felt confident they would be rescued the next day. Unknown to them, the Navy was not yet aware the USS Indianapolis had sunk.

In addition to being exhausted and injured, the men had sunk in the shark infested waters of the Philippine Sea. With no bottom to their life raft, the men were forced to float with their bodies partially submerged in the water. There, they attracted the attention of hungry sharks, which began to strike at the men. Despite their efforts to fight back, several survivors aboard Giles' raft were killed in shark attacks before help could arrive.

Rescue

On August 2, three and a half days after the USS Indianapolis had sunk, Navy pilot Wilbur "Chuck" Gwinn was patrolling the sea for Japanese submarines in his PV-1 Ventura bomber when he spotted what he believed to be an enemy submarine. As he flew down to engage the target, Chuck realized he had not spotted an enemy sub. It was Giles and his fellow survivors. Due to a series of tragic mistakes, it was not until Chuck spotted the men three and a half days later that the Navy became aware of the sinking and launched a rescue operation.

Of the 1,195 crewmen aboard the USS Indianapolis, only an estimated 900 managed to jump ship. Of the 900 men who managed to jump ship, only 316 survived to be rescued.

While at sea, Giles promised to God that if he was saved, he would dedicate his life to helping others. After recovering in Guam and returning to the United States, Giles kept his promise. He earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri at Columbia and a doctorate in medicine from Logan College of Chiropractic. In addition, Giles recorded his experiences throughout World War II in the book, *Forever a Soldier*.

Giles died in 2009. He was 83. We honor your service, Giles.

Giles McCoy lived in Palm Coast, FL until his death.

Here is a link to Giles' story in his own words when he spoke at Flagler College:

<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/1/AA00052854>



D-Day: Former paratrooper carries memories, scars of war

By Matt Soergel, FL Times Union

Army Pfc. Mario Patruno was 23, tough and fit. He'd fought in the ring as a youth boxer, and in the streets of Holyoke, Mass., with a brawling gang called the Bond Street Rovers.



On the dark morning of June 6, 1944, he'd need all the toughness he possessed if he wanted to see June 7.

Flying over Normandy under heavy fire, his plane was going low and too fast when he jumped from 400 feet, landing far from his intended landing spot. His parachute riddled with holes, he tumbled to a rough landing, all alone.

It was 1:20 a.m. on D-Day. Patruno - nicknamed Gus - was a member of Company F of the Army's 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, recently a focus of HBO's "Band of Brothers."

His job: to help hold a causeway at Utah Beach. In the confusion, he never made it to the causeway, but for the next month he would endure a series of skirmishes and firefights across France - bloody, nasty moments that still cause him to cry out at night.

Now 90, he lives with his wife Ruth in a senior community southwest of St. Augustine. The exact order of the days after D-Day are a little fuzzy for him today, but his memories of specific events are vivid.

Focused on survival

He was born April 8, 1921, in Massachusetts to Italian immigrants. After World War II started, a recruiter sold him on the paratroopers.

"He said, 'We got this new outfit: You don't walk, you ride in planes, it pays 100 bucks a month.' I said, 'Sign me up.'"

In 1943, the 506th arrived in England to prepare for the invasion of Europe. Before it came, there was some time for sightseeing. Patruno was cheeky: He once tried to take an ancient brick from Roman ruins in Wales, but the authorities stopped him.

"I told them I was Italian, I was related to Julius Caesar," he said. They didn't buy it.

Rumors and stories flew in the weeks before D-Day. He knew it was going to be big. Patruno remembers what a beautiful sight it was late at night, flying low over hundreds of ships making their way across the English Channel.

After landing alone, Patruno met a guy from the 501st. His gun stock was broken, but Patruno repaired it with medical tape. Within half an hour, they stumbled on a lieutenant from the 82nd Airborne and about 15 men. They joined up with them as they marched toward Utah Beach, but Patruno split off as the group from

the 82nd went their own way. He was itching to join his own men.

The area was thick with Germans, and all his senses were focused on survival.

“Every bush was a German, every sound. You were on pins and needles,” he said. “If you touched me, you were dead.”

Outside a village, he stopped a Frenchman on a bike and asked him for directions. The local was reluctant to answer, and the reason became clear as three truckloads of Germans came over a hill. Patruno dived into hedgerows as the Frenchman tried to stop the Germans, frantically pointing to the Yank’s hiding place. The trucks kept going, though, bound for someplace more important.



A little later, Patruno saw the Frenchmen, still riding his bicycle. He aimed at him and shot him, he says, right off the bike. He doesn’t know if he was dead, but he knows the bike ended up in a ditch.

Early the next morning, or the one after that, he spotted five beautiful horses in a field next to a barn. He sneaked into the barn, which was guarded by two Germans. He stealthily took down a bridle, went back outside and chose the most beautiful horse. It was huge. It was white.

He couldn’t mount the horse - not with a bag of grenades and his heavy pack - so he coaxed it over to a water trough, stood on top, and heaved himself up.

Just before dawn, he and the horse sauntered by a couple of German soldiers who waved hello to him. He waved back. In the dark, they couldn’t quite see what uniform he had on. Besides, what would a Yank be doing riding by on a big white horse?

And he was riding his white horse when he caught up with the men of Company F. It was quite the entrance.

“They said: ‘Patruno, what are you doing? Hey Gus, there’s a war going on.’”

Tommy’s final words

Almost seven decades later, Patruno tears up repeatedly as he speaks of his buddy Tommy Wolford, a corporal who’d been with him since their training days in the States. Patruno was at his side in Normandy as Wolford raised his grenade launcher against an approaching tank.

“I’ll get that tank,” he told Patruno.

Those were his last words.

As the tank fired, Patruno jumped into a shallow foxhole, then shot and wounded a German who approached his hiding spot. The man fell on top of Patruno, coating him in blood. As Patruno struggled to get out from under him, two unarmed German medics came to collect their comrade.

Patruno had no problems with that - at least not until the medics, whom he held at rifle-point, loaded him on to a stretcher and carted him out of the busy firefight.

Patruno later went back to find Wolford. His friend was lying there, his arms underneath him, his face peaceful, with a smile on his face. Not a mark on him. It may have been the blast concussion that killed him.

The war lives in him

These days, Patruno speaks frankly of the terrible things he saw and the terrible things he had to do.

“We had it drilled into our minds to kill those Nazis,” he said. “We had a saying: Come face to face with the enemy, kill him, eat his rations and take his watch for a souvenir.”

He once took the ring off the rotting finger of a giant German soldier, dead on the side of the road. Another time he took a hunk of black bread from another dead German’s knapsack: The bullet that killed him had gone through his chest, out his back and finally stopped in the bread. Patruno said he ate the loaf, then spat the bullet out.

Orders were to take no prisoners, he said, so soldiers on both sides routinely killed them instead.

“My friends, they gave their prisoners cigarettes first. I never gave my prisoners a cigarette. I didn’t smoke, and it was bad for their health.”

Once, though, as hardened as he was, he just couldn’t pull the trigger. The German was an older man, perhaps 45, half-balding. He held his hands at his side and bowed his head as he prayed loudly, waiting for the bullet.

“He looked like my father!” Patruno exclaimed. “Like my father. So I turned around and walked away.”

In September 1944, Patruno would be among the waves of paratroopers dropping into the Netherlands in Operation Market Garden, a bloody operation that ended his war. A ricocheting bullet hit him in the face, breaking some teeth and lodging in his tonsils.

The scar is with him still, and so is the war; he sometimes cries out in his sleep, his wife says - not actual words, just moans and groans.

“Anything you see in the movies, he said, it was worse,” Ruth Patruno said.

After the war he worked in a wire factory back home in Holyoke, became a brick mason, had six children and moved to St. Augustine in 1986 to raise horses.

In 2004, at 83, he parachuted again during a reunion with his surviving comrades in Toccoa, Ga., where they had trained. And in 2006, Patruno went back to Normandy one last time. He found the grave of Tommy Wolford and knelt down next to the marker honoring his old friend, who had looked so peaceful after he died.

Mario lived in Elkton, FL until his death, a true American Hero

Terry Allan, 1st SGT, USA (Ret)

Three tours in Vietnam

I came across this short video on YouTube. It is local Vietnam veteran Terry Allan telling the difference between a Fairy Tale and a War Story. Terry worked on our Vietnam documentary as a historian, script writer and interviewer.

Terry Allan, esteemed Vietnam War Veteran and War Historian, speaks before 800 people of St. Augustine, FL attendees at the world premier of Vietnam: Service, Sacrifice & Courage held November 7, 2010 at Flagler College. The documentary produced by Michael Rothfeld and Bill Dudley includes some of America's bravest men who served in Vietnam telling their personal stories. The event was also a chance for Congressmen, dignitaries and others to finally express "Welcome Home" to Vietnam Veterans. Terry made an emotional presentation discussing the Differences Between Fairy Tales and War Stories. He vividly articulated how 15,000,000 men who reportedly served in combat during the Vietnam era tell War stories today about their brave deeds. Mr. Allan pointed out that only 2.3 million men actually served in Vietnam, but who's counting when you're dealing with some Fairy Tales.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Xd6xbvAkvY>





Bob Dinkins



Bob Mitchell



Bob Adelhelm



Giles McCoy



Steve Sollish



Ed Taylor



Giles Norrington



Richard Bassett



Terry Allan



Bill Ingram



Howard McGillin



Michael Isam



Jack Wentz with
Marilyn Monroe



Leo C. Chase



John Leslie



Mario Patruno



Jim Vanairsdale



Joe McDermott (on left)



Fred Dupont



Ton Waskovich



George McCrea



Paul Heagy



Harry Manford

The St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum Honors Our Veterans

The St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum announced the opening of a new exhibit, “Guardians of the First Coast: Building Readiness for World War II” in August. This exhibit honors the brave men and women who defended our coast as World War II began. Our community responded by volunteering in the military to starting American Red Cross drives.

While preparing the exhibit, the Museum uncovered stories of individuals who answered a call for service. One such person was Marian Barnett (Stenger) who ran away from home to join the SPARs, the Coast Guard auxiliary. She trained here in St. Augustine at the former Hotel Ponce de Leon that became the Coast Guard Training Center. A young girl from the Cincinnati, Barnett liked the SPAR uniform and decided to do her part by serving in the auxiliary. Her assignment was to serve in a clerical position as secretary to Colonel Leopold in Personnel where she took dictation and managed the office. The use of women’s auxiliaries for state-side posts freed men to serve abroad. Between 1942 and 1946, over 10,000 women volunteered as part of the SPARs. With the closure of the USCG Training Center in 1945, Barnett transferred to San Francisco but following her marriage, she returned to St. Augustine and lived here until her death in February 2019.



Photo Left: Marian Barnett (far left) with other SPARs in a publicity photo. Source: St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum Collections

The call to service was also heard by many of the young men from St. Augustine. One such soldier was Private John Carmen Buckhalt who joined the United States Marines. Private Buckhalt served with the Marines in Guadalcanal and was killed during the first week of action there. While exchanging fire with the enemy, he was shot and killed. The escalating fighting prevented the removal of Private Buckhalt’s body and he was buried where he fell by the members of his unit. As several men attached to his unit wrote to his sister, detailing his final resting place, the “grave was marked by [a] white cross made out of coral and placed flat across [the] center of it. There was also an identification tag tied to a bayonet.”

Burkhalt's name is included in the Tablets of the Missing in Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines as well as here in the St. Augustine National Cemetery where his headstone is a fitting memorial to a native son.



Photo Above Left: Private John Burkhalt's headstone in the St. Augustine National Cemetery;

Photo Above Right: Private Burkhalt's photo after joining the United States Marines (Source of photos: www.ancestry.com)

Many of the men and women who served in World War II had never been outside their hometowns, but they heard the call to serve in the military in places far and wide. I hope that you will consider visiting the exhibit at the Museum, but more importantly, I hope that you will help us preserve the stories and artifacts for the future generations. Please reach out to me if you or someone you know has artifacts or stories to share with the Museum. You can reach out to me by email at jsmith@staugustinelighthouse.org or by phone at 904.829.0745 ext. 240.

The St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum's mission is "to discover, preserve, present and keep alive the stories of the Nation's Oldest Port® as symbolized by our working St. Augustine Lighthouse." We are open from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM every day and closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. For more information about the Museum, please check out our website at: www.staugustinelighthouse.org.



**ST. AUGUSTINE
LIGHTHOUSE
& MARITIME MUSEUM**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

You may have noticed the Veterans Council's new logo, it was created by Roy Havekost and his web design company PageAuthors. The VC strongly recommends that you contact Roy, 727-487-6252, if you or your vet group wants to create a website or Facebook page.

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

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

Send to: rothfeldm@gmail.com



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

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

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

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

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

***The Veterans Council will meet at the St.
Johns County Administration Building
500 San Sebastian View
Auditorium, 1st floor***

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

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

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

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

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