



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

Bill Dudley, Publisher

Michael Rothfeld, Editor

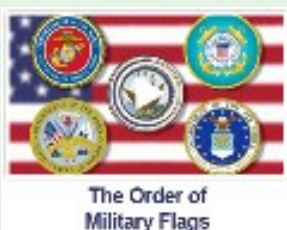
Volume 10, Issue 10

From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

October 2021

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Dear Fellow Veterans, I am excited about the program we have planned for this year on Veterans Day to honor our veterans. The planning committee has been meeting for several weeks to plan out this year's program. Our focus this year is on our Vietnam veterans. Without divulging too much of the program, I do want to let everyone know we have a great program in store for those who attend our event on Nov. 11. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Hal Kushner, Col. USA ret. Dr. Kushner was a POW for nearly 6 years in Vietnam, and like so many of our soldiers and airman, was brutally treated while in captivity. You don't want to miss hearing Dr. Kushner's story of his time spent as a POW and his ability to survive even though he was severally wounded when captured. Dr. Kushner is a resident of Florida and operates a successful

medical practice in Ormond Beach.

Our Veterans Council sponsorship of the homeless Veterans Stand Down was held on Sat. Sept 11 at the Elks Lodge. We had lots of clothing, both military surplus as well as donated items and lots of raffle items to be given away. Unfortunately, the turnout this year by the homeless was much less than in years past. A big shout out to all our volunteers and to the Elks Lodge staff who prepared the food.

We have begun this year's Wreaths Across America program with sales of wreaths available to be purchased. The WAA program at our St. Augustine National Cemetery will be held on Sat. Dec. 18. We will conduct a live program this year as in years past with wreaths being placed on each gravesite by volunteers and those who attend the program on Dec. 18th. A wreath sponsorship form appears in this edition of the Patriot Reader. Please order your wreath now to help



support the Veterans Council pledge to assure every gravesite has a wreath this holiday season. Last Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021, the Veterans Council participated in this year's POW-MIA Memorial Day Program at Cecil Field, Jacksonville. The keynote speaker was M.Gen. James "Hammer" Hartsell, USMC ret. Executive Director, FDVA. The program was well attended. General Hartsell delivered the original POW-MIA Proclamation signed by Governor Ron DeSantis and it was read at the ceremony. Bill Dudley Chairman Veterans Council of St. Johns County

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



Veterans and staff did an Honor walk like we do when we lose a Veteran here in memory of all the lives that were lost on 9/11 and the first responders and their families.



The top picture shows Vicki Dantor of Social Services carrying a poster of the twin towers pre-9/11. The calm before the storm.

The middle picture is the Honor Walk brigade as we circle the houses honoring those lost.

The last picture was our “Moment of silence”, we stood for 1 full minute to Honor those lost.

If asked by anyone what you were doing on 9/11 when the tragedy occurred, everyone remembers vividly exactly where they were and what they were doing that morning. I know I do and I will Never Forget....



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



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

Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee Meetings for 2018

At Community Hospice of NE FL.

4266 Sunbeam Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257

Hadlow Bldg – Conference Room A 6:00 pm

DATES OF 2021 SC at JNC MEETINGS

Not Available

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

Chairman: Steve Spickelmier

Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley, Treasurer: Pat Welch

Secretary: Kathy Church, Judge Advocate: Don Guthrie

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

Chaplain: Pat Archuleta, Public Affairs: Pat Mulvihill

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

All SJC Health Guidelines will be followed.

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



Upcoming Veterans Council Meetings Speakers

September 30: Emily Spencer, The Heartillary Group

David Abramowitz, “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans” Event

October 28: BG Michael Fleming, the Steven A Cohen Military Family Circle

Jason Snodgrass, COO K9s For Warriors, Expansion and new Mega Kennel

November 18: David Kennett, “Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) Program & Outreach for Florida Veterans/Service Members/Military Spouses”.

2021 Meeting Dates: September 30, October 28, **November 18, December 30**



Ladies and Gentlemen,

This email serves to confirm that First Coast Honor Flight will conduct its inaugural Honor Flight on Saturday, October 2nd, 2021.

The community is cordially invited to honor the 25 Florida Veterans participating in this landmark event as they prepare to depart from Jacksonville International Airport's (JIA) main terminal during the early morning hours of Saturday, October 2, and again when they return home the same evening.

All participants are requested to practice social distancing and are reminded of the TSA requirement to wear face masks at all times inside any U.S. airport, including JIA.

To cheer on the Honor Flight Veterans during their morning departure, please arrive at the JIA terminal no later than 6 AM. We request that well-wishers gather in the vicinity of the upstairs information booth, near the terminal's central atrium, shops, and TSA checkpoint entrance. You will have a wonderful view of the Honor Flight group as it approaches from the ticketing level.

To welcome home the Honor Flight Veterans in the evening, please arrive no later than 7:30 PM and gather in the same location as above. Our flight is scheduled to arrive at 8 PM, but a slightly early arrival is always a possibility.

Thank you for your support of Northeast Florida Veterans and First Coast Honor Flight over the past 18 months. We look forward to seeing everyone at JIA on Saturday, October 2nd, whether in the morning or the evening!

With respect,

Selena Hernandez-Haines, President, First Coast Honor Flight, Inc.

888.400.1185, info@firstcoasthonorflight.org , www.firstcoasthonorflight.org

Memorial at Cecil Field for Military members killed in Afghanistan bombing attack

A memorial service for the 13 American military men and women who were killed in the suicide bombing at the Kabul airport in Afghanistan was held at the National POW/MIA Memorial Chapel of the High Speed Pass at Cecil Field on Tuesday, August 31, 2021.



Homer Clawson, an Air Force Vietnam Veteran and member of the Patriot Guards stood with fellow guard members outside the entrance of the National POW/MIA Memorial Chapel of the High Speed Pass with fellow guard members ahead of the memorial service.



Reverend Elwyn Jenkins, a military veteran and the Pastor of the Tru Way Church of the Risen Christ gave the benediction during the memorial service.

Retired USMC Major Teddy Colgate wiped tears from his eyes as he recounts his translator and friend who was killed in 2011 as he addresses the audience during Tuesday's memorial service. Colgate served for 22 years with tours in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan.



Retired USMC Major Teddy Colgate addressed the audience during the memorial service. Colgate served for 22 years with tours in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Reverend Pat Archuleta, the Chaplin at the Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial at Cecil Field held his hand over his heart during the National Anthem during Tuesday's memorial service.



Patriot Guard member Richard Vernon rings the bell during the 7 Bell Honors ceremony, part of Tuesday's memorial service.

Reverend Elwyn Jenkins, a military veteran and the Pastor of the Tru Way Church of the Risen Christ gave the benediction during Tuesday's memorial service.

Bagpiper Will Wheeler, played "Going Home" on his bagpipes as he walked down the aisle of the chapel at the close of the memorial service.

Bugler Jim Steele played Taps at the back of the chapel to close the memorial service.

Bagpiper Will Wheeler, played his bagpipes along the Heroes Walk outside the chapel as the audience left following Tuesday's memorial service.

From the Florida Times Union

VETERANS DAY

**HONOR ALL WHO SERVED
CELEBRATE WITH US**

Thursday, November 11th, 2021

Anastasia Baptist Church

1650 A1A South (on Anastasia Island). Free parking on site.

Organized by the St. Johns County Veterans Council

Static Displays. Video collage. Traveling Vietnam Wall.

Doors open 9:00 am. Program begins 11:00.



**And special recognition for our
Vietnam War period veterans.**

Info at: rothfeldm@gmail.com



Loved ones honor POW-MIAs in emotional ceremony at Cecil Field
News4Jax by Brie Isom

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – It’s been 50 years since the POW-MIA flag was created in the Jacksonville area.

The flag flies to honor those who were prisoners of war or missing in action.

Many gathered Saturday at Cecil Field for a POW-MIA Recognition Day event honoring those who didn’t come home from war.

An emotional sound for many, “Taps” was played to honor those who were killed fighting for our country -- or those who are still missing in action.

The ceremony was held at the POW-MIA memorial at the former Naval Air Station Cecil Field where a new 26-acre museum is being built.

Kevin Kuzel is one of many people who has a family member who was a prisoner of war.

“Both the prisoners and the MIAs, we owe a lot to these people,” Kuzel said.

Kuzel said his father was a POW in World War II. He said he was captured during an operation called Market Garden in Holland.

“The aircraft that was pulling his glider was shot down, and he landed in a field and was immediately surrounded,” Kuzel said.

Kuzel said his father was a prisoner of war for less than a year, and his father returned home safely.

Others, like the Hoff family, were not so lucky. Pilot Michael Hoff has been MIA since 1970 when he was stationed in Laos.

“Every time they bring someone home, it continues to give us



hope that one day we'll have our father buried on American soil," Susan Ogawa said.

Mary Hoff created the POW- MIA flag 50 years ago, and her children are sharing



her story. On Friday, which marked National POW/MIA Recognition Day, a section of Moody Avenue in Clay County was designated as Mary Helen Hoff Memorial Avenue in her honor.

"When our father was shot down, my mom wanted to have accountability for POW-MIAs," her oldest son, Mike Hoff, explained.

"The wives back then were told not to talk about things, and they refused to accept POW-MIA status for their loved ones," her daughter, Susan Ogawa, said.

The Hoff family said after 50 years, they haven't been able to bring their father's body back home from Laos to be buried on American soil, so they won't stop spreading awareness and honoring those who are missing in action.



"Every time they bring someone home it continues to give us hope," Ogawa said.

According to the Department of Defense, there are approximately 82,000 former prisoners of war and unaccounted for U.S. servicemembers. The museum will honor them.

In 1971 Mary Hoff went to the Annin Flag Company asking for their help in creating a symbol to recognize those who were Prisoners of War and Missing in Action during the Vietnam War. (Her still MIA husband is U.S. Navy Commander Michael Hoff - MIA 7 January 1970 - Laos - Not Forgotten.)

Before the POW☆MIA symbol we know today became a flag, it was originally a banner. One of the original banners Annin sent to Mary Hoff for approval of the design now hangs in the home of her daughter Suzanne Hoff Ogawa.

This year, 50 years later, we contacted the Annin Flag Company to ask if it was possible to recreate the original banner. It was. Suzanne being a friend, I asked her to design the 50 years inscription on the banner. She worked with Annin as her Mother did.

According to the Department of Defense, there are approximately 82,000 former prisoners of war and unaccounted for U.S. servicemembers. This bill would designate the existing POW/MIA Memorial and Museum at Cecil Field as the national memorial and museum. It is located on 26 acres at the former NAS Cecil Field Master Jet Base – now known as Cecil Commerce Center. Jacksonville’s Mary Hoff, wife of MIA pilot LCDR Michael G. Hoff and an Orange Park native, was a major driving force behind establishing the memorial. She was also instrumental in developing the POW/MIA flag, the only other flag authorized to fly over the



flag.



White House and on the same pole



Ameri-



as the
can

VETERANS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES WREATH CAMPAIGN

Chairman Bill Dudley of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County has announced the annual drive for Wreaths Across America has begun.

The council is dedicated to ensuring that every headstone in the St. Augustine National Cemetery is adorned with a live holiday wreath this year. The council has successfully sponsored the drive for several years.

The community is invited to send donations to purchase the wreaths. Individual wreaths are \$15.00. If two wreaths are purchased at \$30.00 the council receives a free wreath (3 for cost of 2). Our local businesses are encouraged to participate. With more than 1,200 gravesites the project is truly considerable.

The community is invited to the St. Augustine National Cemetery on December 18, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. for a ceremony followed by placement of the wreaths. Youth organizations are encouraged to participate to learn and honor our veterans.

Checks made payable to WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA may be sent to: Veterans Council of St. Johns County, P. O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117.

For any additional information please contact the campaign chair, SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn at 904.797.5622.

Wreath Sponsorship Form

*Sponsored wreaths are placed on the grave markers at state, national veterans cemeteries as well as local cemeteries each December. Wreaths may be purchased online at www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org

If you wish to make your sponsorship with a credit card please visit our website for a secure online transaction.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

**CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
 WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA
 SEND TO:
 VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS
 COUNTY:
 P.O. Box 2117
 ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA 32085**

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual= 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Mailed "In Honor" card= If you wish to send a mailed honor card telling someone of your sponsorship-see "In Honor" section below. *Card will not be mailed if the \$2 fee is not included.	\$2.00		
Family= 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business= 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate= 100 Wreaths	\$1500.00		
Merchandise available on WAA Website			
		Grand Total	

****SORRY- WE CAN NOT TAKE GRAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS****

In Honor of:

Please provide email of "In Honor Of" recipient, or mailing address so a card can be sent notifying them of your sponsorship in their honor. (if you have a specific message please write it on the back of this sheet and we will include it.)

Email:

Mailing:

In Memory of:

This name will be listed on our online memory wall, please provide name, rank, branch of service and state resided

Branch of Service: _____

Rank: _____

State: _____

Please note that **all** sponsorships are sent directly to the location and **no** wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

Location ID: FLSNA Fundraising Group ID: FL0080

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Cash \$: _____ Total \$: _____ Date: _____

Total # Checks: _____ Reconciled: _____

MO \$: _____

Entered: _____

GEN:

How to make Veterans Day more meaningful for Vietnam Vets

Veterans Day is just over two months away, and any organization who wants a simple, free way to make Veterans Day more meaningful for Vietnam Veterans can become the Vietnam War Commemoration's "commemorative partners."



The program is for federal, state and local communities, Veterans' organizations and other nongovernmental organizations. They can assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring Vietnam Veterans and their families. More than nine million Americans served from Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975. Six million are still living, but commemorative partners can do more. "These patriots and their families deserve the nation's gratitude," said Phil Waite, chief of strategic engagement for The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration. "Our partners are the backbone of this national commemoration. We would be privileged to have your organization come alongside us in this noble mission."

Becoming a partner

Joining the Vietnam War Commemoration as a commemorative partner is easy. Simply visit www.vietnamwar50th.com and click "Apply" in the blue Commemorative Partner Program box. There's a simple, one-page application that requires two points of contact and one signature. Once approved as a partner, the commemoration provides organizations with a free starter kit of materials for developing and implementing their programs. Questions regarding the commemorative partner Program application process can be submitted to: whs.vnwar50th_cpp@mail.mil.

Creating an event

Once a group becomes a partner, they receive a partner portal login. This allows the partner to create an event that is searchable on <https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/events/>.

Partners can also receive the following free materials:

Lapel pins for Vietnam Veterans, as well as those Veterans and family members who qualify under the Certificate of Honor program, Presidential proclamations, Program brochures, Fact sheets, "I Served" and "We Heart" bumper magnets, 50th anniversary and Family Member tin pins, Vietnam War Patch Posters (all Services)

Search for an event

People can learn about events in their local community by visiting <https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/events/>. Visitors can search for event by name, date, country, zip code and category. The site also allows visitors to search within a 1, 5, 10, 25, 50 or 100 mile radius of a zip code.

To learn more about partnering with this national commemoration program, visit their site at <https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/> or any of the VWC social media sites found at <http://linktr.ee/VNWar50th>.

Homeless Veterans Stand Down

On Saturday September 11 the Veterans Council of St. Johns County hosted its annual Homeless Veterans Stand Down at the Elks Lodge #829.



Thank you Elks for your spacious Hall and Hospitality

Vet who joined military after 9/11 takes part in Wounded Warrior Project: ‘I want to pay it forward’

By John Bachman, Action News Jax

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — After September 11, 2001, America sent men and women to war. When they started coming home hurt, a small charity was born.

Wounded Warrior Project started when a few folks started giving those veterans backpacks filled with basics, like socks and underwear. Nearly 20 years later, the national charity, based in Jacksonville, still gives away those backpacks. However, now they do so much more.

Recently, WWP brought together 15 battle-tested veterans in the pool at Marineland. In his 27 years in the Army, Jimmie Blockett never experienced training like this. Blockett and his new friends are part of Project Odyssey, a five-day camp of sorts, put on by Wounded Warrior Project.

Chase Skylar Demayo is one of them.

“Getting to swim with dolphins, they’re beautiful majestic animals, it’s really cool to get to do it with a bunch of other veterans. There’s 15 of us today get that camaraderie feeling,” Demayo said.

Demayo joined the Air Force in 2006 straight out of high school, because of the September 11th attacks.

“I was in high school English class and I remember them turning on the TV I remember watching the event unfold, trying to process it. The aftermath, couple days later, was my first time seeing real life superheroes -- military, police, fire, first responders,” he said.

These veterans come from all branches of the military and different backgrounds, but they all served after 9-11.

“There were so many things I kept in for the 12 years since I got out. I didn’t know who to talk, to you, about it. I didn’t have the right support group so for those 12 years I was just managing it the best I knew,” Demayo said.

With the help of dolphins at Marineland, and other group activities, Project Odyssey is designed to recreate the camaraderie of the service. It also shows each of these veterans they are not alone, and gives them coping skills to deal with the wounds of war -- seen and unseen.

“It’s a little bit of guilt you know, ‘Why them, not me,’ type feeling,” Demayo said.

At the Wounded Warrior Project, it’s all about the warrior, not the war. In 2003, they started giving backpacks to soldiers hurt after fighting after 9-11. The services have changed but the mission stays the same.

“We want to reduce suicide and they’re doing that by bringing these veterans out of the darkness and bringing them to a place of the light,” Blockett said.

“I think of the Wounded Warrior Project logo. It’s a soldier carrying another soldier on his back and the ultimate goal for me, maybe at the beginning when I signed up, I was the one getting carried and I want to pay it forward and be the soldier that’s carrying someone else and the cycle will continue to grow,” Demayo said.

They fought for our country, now they’re learning to heal for themselves.

Project Odyssey is just one of dozens of ways Wounded Warrior Project helps veterans who have served since September 11



The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library World War II Exhibit

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is proud to announce that its World War II, POW/MIA documentary "Stolen Freedom", and its recording of Dr. Giles McCoy speaking at the premier of the Council's WW II documentary about his survival story after his ship the USS Indianapolis was torpedoed and sunk was accepted by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library for their 2022 World War II Exhibit.

"Serve and Protect"

"From a small senior community near St. Augustine, Florida, over 30 veterans came together to share their stories. Produced by Flagler College TV Workshop Students, produced by Bill Dudley and directed by Michael Rothfeld".



“Stolen Freedom”

"Prisoners of War: Stolen Freedom compares the stories of four American servicemen through their time as prisoners of war in three major 20th century conflicts; World War II, Korea and the Vietnam war. Their stories are supported by archival motion pictures and photographs obtained at the US National Archives as well as through sketches and memorabilia collected by each of the men. Their stories are less about atrocity than they are about the survival of the human spirit and the camaraderie that helped each man survive years of incarceration. Each story is followed by spectacular recounts of their days of release. Produced by Michael Rothfeld & Bill Dudley and the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, directed by Eric Flagg" Pictured below is World War II Veteran Bill Ingram



Dr. Giles McCoy speech, WW 2, USMC, USS Indianapolis, filmed by the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Chairman Bill Dudley, program director Michael Rothfeld.

Giles McCoy was a young Marine when his ship was sunk by a Japanese submarine. Giles spent 4 ½ days afloat in the Pacific Ocean with a deflated life raft, and no food. Less than 1/3 of the Indianapolis crew survived the ordeal.

The Indianapolis Captain was court martialed on the testimony of the enemy sub captain's testimony. The first time an enemy combatant's testimony was ever used at a Military court martial. Captain Charles McVay committed suicide years after the court martial but was exonerated years later in large part due to the effort of Dr. McCoy and his ship mates.



JAX DAILY RECORD
SEP. 9, 2021 by: Mike Mendenhall Staff Writer
Naval Ship Association says USS Orleck could dock Downtown by December

The World War II-era warship is a working museum and is scheduled for dry-dock inspection Nov. 1.

The Jacksonville Historical Naval Ship Association says the USS Orleck warship could be parked Downtown by early December.

In a news release Sept. 9, the nonprofit association said the World War II-era destroyer is scheduled for a Nov. 1 dry-dock inspection in Port Arthur, Texas.

City Council approved an agreement with the association in August to dock the Orleck at Pier 1 in the Northbank Shipyards area of the St. Johns River.

According to the association, the ship will be towed overnight Oct. 31 from its home in Lake Charles, Louisiana, for the safety examination at the Texas port.

“In dry-docking, the Orleck will receive an inspection of the hull to ensure it is capable of the transit to Florida and continue to serve as a museum ship,” said the release.

A conceptual sketch of the Jacksonville Naval Museum at the Shipyards.

The nonprofit expects to know the results of the inspection by Nov. 4 and it will take 10 days to travel from Texas to Florida.

Association Vice President J.D. Weakland said in an email the ship could arrive in Downtown Jacksonville in late November or early December.

The news release says the museum inside the 1945 Gearing Class destroyer will feature the “US Navy Cold War Experience.”

The Orleck served during the Korean, Vietnam and Cold War eras and was modified under the Navy’s Fleet Rehabilitation and Maintenance Program in the 1960s, the release says.



“We look forward to bringing this ‘Bold Ship to the Bold City’ that once was home to many Cold War-era workhorses like the Oliver Hazard Perry Frigates, P-3 Orions, and MH-60 Seahawk,” it says.

Members of the –The Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association at the site planned for the USS Orleck at the Shipyards in Downtown Jacksonville.

“With Jacksonville’s large Naval community, we feel the Orleck is a fitting tribute and terrific match to call Jacksonville home.”

According to the association, the Orleck was awarded 18 battle stars and is the most decorated post-World War II ship.

After its Navy service, the ship was transferred to the Turkish Navy and renamed the Yüctepe (D 345). It was transferred back to the United States in August 2000 to become a museum ship.

Council approved a 10-year agreement to move the 390-foot warship museum to the pier next to the Berkman Marina and the Shipyards property.

The USS Orleck opened as a naval museum in Lake Charles, Louisiana, in 2010.

The association spent years trying to bring the 437-foot USS Charles F. Adams to Jacksonville. It secured \$2.8 million through donations, private capital, bank loans and state grants to refurbish the ship and move it Downtown.

The U.S. Navy decided not to donate the Adams and instead salvage the ship.

The Orleck deal with the city provides the nonprofit no tax money and requires the association to reevaluate the cost of running the ship every five years.

To protect the city from unforeseen expenses, the nonprofit will have to keep in reserve 110% of the cost of towing the Orleck from the Shipyards to a naval scrapyards in Texas.

The Council ordinance allows the association one year to execute its license agreement with the city and another nine months to open the museum.



Time: 7:30 AM Registration 8:30 AM Shotgun Start

Location: Marsh Creek Country Club

169 Marshside Drive, St. Augustine, FL 32080

Format: 4 Person Captain's Choice

Field: First 36 Teams



Entry Fee: \$85.00 per player (Includes Green Fees, Cart, Lunch & Prizes)

Prizes For: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place

Hole Prizes Include: Longest Drive, Closest to Pin and Longest Putt
Chipping & Putting Contests (During the Tournament)



Golf Shoes Must Be Soft Spikes Only

The Luncheon & Awards Ceremony will be held on-site after the Tournament

TEAM CAPTAIN: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____

PLAYER #2: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____

PLAYER #3: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____

PLAYER #4: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____

MAIL ENTRY FORMS (whether paying by check or credit card) TO:
Mr. Lee S. Diggs, C/O AUSA GOLF TOURNAMENT,
P.O BOX 3883, ST. AUGUSTINE, FL 32085-3883. Phone (904) 827-8528.
Lee.s.diggs.mil@mail.mil

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO FIRST MILITIA CHAPTER - AUSA or

To purchase online visit <https://first-militia-chapter-ausa.square.site>

AUSA is an exempt organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the US Internal Revenue Code.



VETERANS GAMES

Making Veterans Whole Again

October 2, 2021

Register Online

<https://operationbarnabasfl.com/>

Boogerville Hideout, 6043 US-17,

Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Raylan Heck 904 401 2972

**EVERYONE
INVITED**



Led By Dean & Lori Wind Therapy NEFL.

Motorcycle & Jeep Poker Run

Registration Place and Time

Boogerville...0930-1100,

Kick Stands Up @ 1100 A.M.

Stops In Order

1. Boogerville Hideout, GCS
2. VFW, Palatka
3. Lit'l Ceasars, Interlachen
4. The Howling Wolf, Melrose
5. Crossroads, Palatka (last bike 1530, group ride to Boogerville)

Two Person Tactical Teams

Competitive Or For Fun

1st, 2nd, 3rd Place

Gets Custom Axe

Check In @ 8:00 am

Event Starts @ 9:00 am

\$80 Per Team

- Sims Round Active Shooter Engagement Room Clearing Graded By **Ground Operation Development**
- Weapons Station Sig Sauer Graded By **Raul of Sig Sauer**
- Axe Throwing Sponsored By **Southern Game & Tackle**
- Max Team Deadlift

Starting Approximately 1600 will be

- **The Saluting Marine**
- **Presenting Of The Colors Black Creek Marines**
- **Pledge of Allegiance,**
- **Old Glory By Chief Ellis**
- **Operation Barnabas success stories.**

There will be 50/50, raffles, auction, live music, food, games and more.

VIP SEATING: \$50 PER SEAT COVERED SEATING MEAL.

MOTORCYCLE AND JEEP EVENT INCLUDED.

BAR ACCESSIBLE IN VIP AREA.

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO OPERATION BARNABAS

ATTACKING VETERAN SUICIDE AND HOMELESSNESS.

POC: Raylan Heck 904 401 2972

**Due to the sudden rise in the Delta variant,
we have rescheduled this event to 30 Oct**

Proof of vaccine required for entry

Alton Green Memorial American Legion Post 194

73rd Anniversary Dinner

**Come Help Us Celebrate 73 Years of Serving
Veterans in the St. Augustine Community**

Saturday 30 October

**Cocktail Reception & Hors d'oeuvres at Six o'clock
Surf & Turf Dinner at Half Past Six \$25 Per Person**

**Smoked Brisket<>Fried Shrimp<>Garlic Mashed Potatoes
Vegetable Medley<>Dinner Rolls<>Sweet Tea<>Dessert**



**Featuring Special
Guest Speaker
Lt Gen Ronald Bailey
USMC, rt'd**



1029 Pearl Street, St. Augustine

VETERANS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES WREATH CAMPAIGN

Chairman Bill Dudley of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County has announced the annual drive for Wreaths Across America has begun.

The council is dedicated to ensuring that every headstone in the St. Augustine National Cemetery is adorned with a live holiday wreath this year. The council has successfully sponsored the drive for several years.

The community is invited to send donations to purchase the wreaths. Individual wreaths are \$15.00. If two wreaths are purchased at \$30.00 the council receives a free wreath (3 for cost of 2). Our local businesses are encouraged to participate. With more than 1,200 gravesites the project is truly considerable.

The community is invited to the St. Augustine National Cemetery on December 18, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. for a ceremony followed by placement of the wreaths. Youth organizations are encouraged to participate to learn and honor our veterans.

Checks made payable to WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA may be sent to: Veterans Council of St. Johns County, P. O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117.

For any additional information please contact the campaign chair, SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn at 904.797.5622.



Rutherford, Lawson Reintroduce Bill to Establish a National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum in Jacksonville

Legislation would designate the POW/MIA Memorial at Cecil Field as the national memorial

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, Congressman John Rutherford (FL-04) and Congressman Al Lawson (FL-05) reintroduced the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum Act of 2021. This legislation would designate the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum at Cecil Field as the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum to honor all former prisoners of war and those still missing in action.

“Every day, I fly the POW/MIA flag outside of my congressional office,” Rep. Rutherford said. “It serves as a reminder of the 82,000 U.S. servicemembers who are former prisoners of war or still missing in action. These heroes deserve a national memorial designated in their honor, and this bill establishes that memorial right here in Northeast Florida. Thank you to my colleague Rep. Lawson for joining me in leading this important effort.”

“Our servicemembers and veterans have always been the pride of our nation, and we admire them for their sacrifice and dedication,” Rep. Lawson said. “It is important to honor the brave Americans who have been prisoners of war and those who remain missing in action by creating a national museum and memorial in their tribute. It my privilege to introduce this legislation with Rep. Rutherford, as we work to bring this long overdue designation to our community.”

According to the Department of Defense, there are approximately 82,000 former prisoners of war and unaccounted for U.S. servicemembers. This bill would designate the existing POW/MIA Memorial and Museum at Cecil Field as the national memorial and museum. It is located on 26 acres at the former NAS Cecil Field Master Jet Base – now known as Cecil Commerce Center. Jacksonville’s Mary Hoff, wife of MIA pilot LCDR Michael G. Hoff and an Orange Park native, was a major driving force behind establishing the memorial. She was also instrumental in developing the POW/MIA flag, the only other flag authorized to fly over the White House and on the same pole as the American flag.



Contact: Alex Lanfranconi(202) 225-2501 AlexL@mail.house.gov

Rubio Leads Colleagues in Urging National Archives and Records Administration to Reopen Facilities

AUG 26 2021

Miami, FL — U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) led bipartisan members of the Florida Congressional delegation in a letter to the National Archives and Records Administration to express concern over the growing backlog of constituents' requests for military records at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Missouri. The lawmakers urged the Administration to fully reopen their facility so that veterans can access the records they need.

U.S. Representatives John Rutherford (R-FL), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Carlos Gimenez (R-FL), Stephanie Murphy (D-FL), Michael Waltz (R-FL), Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL), Neal Dunn (R-FL), Scott Franklin (R-FL), Bill Posey (R-FL), Kat Cammack (R-FL), Darren Soto (D-FL), Byron Donalds (R-FL), and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) also signed the letter.

“We appreciate the situation the NPRC faces given the volume of records that are paper files and which can only be accessed by on-site staff,” the lawmakers wrote. “That is why it is imperative that NPRC must be open and operational to serve our nations' veterans who need information only the NPRC can provide. The NPRC website cites the rising rates of COVID-19 in the St. Louis area as the reason the center has returned to pre-vaccine pandemic levels of operation. Most of America is open and operating thanks to three safe and effective vaccines. We urge you to get your facility fully reopened so veterans can have access to the records they need.”

The full text of Senator Rubio's letter is below.

Dear Mr. Ferriero:

We write to express our increasing concern over the growing backlog of constituents' requests for military records at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Missouri. Since mid-March 2020, the NPRC has been closed, with few exceptions, for weeks and months at a time due to COVID-19. The August 2, 2021 decision to significantly reduce operations comes amid a backlog of more than 500,000 routine records requests from constituents for copies of discharge documents, official military personnel files and service treatment records.

We appreciate the situation the NPRC faces given the volume of records that are paper files and which can only be accessed by on-site staff. That is why it is imperative that

NPRC must be open and operational to serve our nations' veterans who need information only the NPRC can provide. The NPRC website cites the rising rates of COVID-19 in the St. Louis area as the reason the center has returned to pre-vaccine pandemic levels of operation. Most of America is open and operating thanks to three safe and effective vaccines. We urge you to get your facility fully reopened so veterans can have access to the records they need.

In order to better understand how the NPRC operates and how it plans to eliminate its backlog, please provide the following information:

What is the current rate of vaccination of NPRC employees?

What efforts are you undertaking to allow for NPRC employees to obtain vaccinations?

On March 3, 2021, you told members of Congress that the backlog you were experiencing included 482,000 requests, a number which grows at the rate of 10,000 per week. You noted that it would take "18-24 months of operating at full capacity with the additional planned resources in place to eliminate the entire backlog."

Please provide information about the current backlog, its projected weekly growth, and information detailing your plans to eliminate the backlog.

In order to expedite the delivery of documents to Congressional offices, has the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the NPRC considered either (1) the creation of an online portal to send scanned documents to Congressional offices, or (2) similar to the VA and other agencies, send password-protected documents directly to the staffer submitting an inquiry and providing an email with a separate password? If not, please explain your reasoning.

Please provide additional information about your requests to the U.S. Department of Defense and to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for personnel and resources to help eliminate the backlog. If there are actions Congress can take to assist you in these matters, please list those as well.

Any other information you wish to provide to help us understand how the NPRC and NARA plan to respond to the pending backlog of constituents' requests and current conditions at the facility. We also suggest you widen your informative correspondence and updates on the NPRC's progress to all members.

We appreciate the NPRC and NARA employees, who under your leadership have responded to the emergent requests of our constituents since the onset of the pandemic. We would greatly appreciate a response by September 26, 2021.

ACTIVE DUTY ★ RETIRED ★ NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVE ★ ALL SERVICE BRANCHES

MILITARY SUPPORT RETREATS

RETREATS FOR FLORIDA AND GEORGIA POST 9-11 COMBAT VETERANS
AND THEIR PRIMARY SUPPORT PERSON



Lake Chatuge
(Hiawassee), Georgia



AUG. 5-8



St. Augustine
Florida



SEPT. 9-12



Marineland
Florida



OCT. 7-10



Amelia Island
Florida



NOV. 4-7

From Thursday at 5:30pm – Sunday at 2:00pm



★ RESTORATION ★ RECREATION ★ RELAXATION ★

*Strengthen and restore connections, enjoy the natural beauty of each location,
be inspired by fun outdoor activities, learn about available support resources,
and relax while discovering post-deployment strategies.*

★ Small, friendly group setting ★

★ All accommodations, food, and activities are provided free of charge ★

★ Facilitated by Vets, VA/DoD experts, and Community Nonprofit Support Organizations ★

Please note: Must be 18 to attend and no childcare is provided.

TO LEARN MORE AND TO APPLY VISIT: [GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG/RETREATS](https://www.gratitudeamerica.org/retreats)



CHRISTOPHER DUKE
770-298-7654
DUKE@GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG



“There’s nothing better to do than to help others”: Keystone Heights community remembers fallen soldier with monument

By Ruelle Fludd, WCJB

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS, Fla. (WCJB) -Friends, family joined veterans, students and the community to honor Army Staff Sergeant Dick Lee Jr. at Keystone Heights Junior/Senior high. The life and service of Sgt. Lee is honored by a new fallen heroes monument.



The monument was dedicated to him by Florida Fallen Heroes and placed at the school -- the 16th display the organization has debuted since 2006.

“The school is an educational tool and that’s what we like to use as an educational tool,” said President of Florida Fallen Heroes, Dave Seamans. “That Dick gave his ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms that they so deserve and utilize and that is a free education.”

Lee’s best friend and brother shared stories of him before the Army Sergeant was killed in action 2012 in Afghanistan. Keystone Heights Junior/Senior high students will pass the marker every day.

“I want them to take home with them the fact that one of their alumnus gave the ultimate sacrifice for their education, their freedoms,” added Seamans. “Walk proud when you leave this school.” Keystone Heights high student, Brian Rutkowski said the monument serves as a reminder as to why he also wants to serve in the military.

“There’s nothing better to do than to help others,” mentioned Rutkowski. The student also serves as the JROTC Command Sergeant and second vice president for Sons of the American Legion. Rutkowski’s goal is to serve in the military himself, the monument only inspiring him to follow his dream.

“Since not only are you helping others as in you know, educating them in the form of coming to school and just talking about it, we are fighting for them,” mentioned Rutkowski. “We are putting our lives on the line so they can rest their heads and wake up the next morning.”

Ahead of Gold Star family’s remembrance week starting Monday, Lee’s family gets to honor their loved one with the community by their side.

The three ribbons.

For those who do not know what is the significance of the three ribbons that you see on every poster I do or many images that honor the Vietnam War Veterans, following the suggestion of one of our member, Jim Reece, here is a brief explanation of each and in the comment section, the link to their respective Wikipedia page.

The National Defense Service Medal

A service award of the United States Armed Forces established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953. It is awarded to every member of the US Armed Forces who has served during any one of four specified periods of armed conflict or national emergency from 1950 to the present. Combat or "in theater" service is not a requirement for the award. The four campaigns are : Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, and the Global War on Terrorism.

The Vietnam Service Medal

A military award of the United States Armed Forces established on 8 July 1965 by order of President Lyndon B. Johnson. The medal is awarded to recognize service during the Vietnam War by all members of the U.S. Armed Forces provided they meet the award requirements.

The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

Also known as the Vietnam Campaign Medal (Vietnamese: Chiến Dịch Bội Tinh), is a South Vietnamese military campaign medal which was created in 1949, and awarded to French military personnel during the First Indochina War. During the Vietnam War (Second Indochina War), the South Vietnamese government awarded the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device (1960–) to members of the South Vietnamese military for wartime service and on March 24, 1966, to members of the U.S. military for support of operations in Vietnam.[b] In May 1966, other allied foreign military personnel became eligible for the award.

The medal was awarded for two different periods of service in Vietnam. The first period for the award was from 8 March 1949 to 20 July 1954. The second period was from 1 January 1960 to the end of the Vietnam War (the date was to be given when the war ended and North Vietnam was defeated). On 30 April 1975, Saigon was captured by the North Vietnamese army and South Vietnam surrendered and disbanded. The medal was not awarded after 28 March 1973, when the last U.S. troops left South Vietnam in accordance with the Paris Peace Accords.





WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS

Join the Jacksonville Bar Association, Vets4Vets,
and the Vietnam Veterans Association (VVA) for a *Hero's Welcome*
many Vietnam Veterans never received...

Honoring their courage, valor, and selfless service.

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, November 14, 2021

1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena
300 A. Phillip Randolph Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32202



Guest Speaker - Rocky Bleier, Vietnam Veteran &
Pittsburgh Steeler Superbowl Champion

Performance by The Navy Band

Lunch & Parking Free for Veterans and their families

Sponsorships Levels Available

★ Gold Star - \$5,000 ☆ Silver Star - \$2,500 ★ Bronze Star - \$1,000

Event Sponsorships and donations may be made through the:

Semper Fidelis Society at <https://semperfidelissociety.org/donate/>

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PRESENTS

VETERAN GARDEN PROJECT
OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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**CHARITY GOLF
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SHOTGUN SCRAMBLE

OCTOBER 11TH 2021
9 AM



Sign up today: crystaltimmons@avgp.org



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

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

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

Thanks!

Nick Howland

Executive Director, The Fire Watch

www.thefirewatch.org

904.525.1761





Veterans from all eras are reacting to the events in Afghanistan, such as the U.S withdrawal and the takeover by the Taliban.

You are not alone.

Veterans may question the meaning of their service or whether it was worth the sacrifices they made. They may feel more moral distress about experiences they had during their service. It's normal to feel this way. Talk with your friends and families, reach out to battle buddies, connect with a peer-to-peer network, or sign up for mental health services. Scroll down for a list common reactions and coping advice.

Resources available right now

Veterans Crisis Line - If you are having thoughts of suicide, call 1-800-273-8255, then PRESS 1 or visit <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

For emergency mental health care, you can also go directly to your local VA medical center 24/7 regardless of your discharge status or enrollment in other VA health care.

Vet Centers - Discuss how you feel with other Veterans in these community-based counseling centers. 70% of Vet Center staff are Veterans. Call 1-877-927-8387 or find one near you.

VA Mental Health Services Guide - This guide will help you sign up and access mental health services.

MakeTheConnection.net - information, resources, and Veteran to Veteran

videos for challenging life events and experiences with mental health issues.

RallyPoint - Talk to other Veterans online. Discuss: What are your feelings as the Taliban reclaim Afghanistan after 20 years of US involvement?

Download VA's self-help apps - Tools to help deal with common reactions like, stress, sadness, and anxiety. You can also track your symptoms over time.

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) - Request a Peer Mentor

VA Women Veterans Call Center - Call or text 1-855-829-6636 (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 6:30PM ET)

VA Caregiver Support Line - Call 1-855-260-3274 (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 5PM ET)

Together We Served - Find your battle buddies through unit pages

George W. Bush Institute - Need help or want to talk? Check In or call: 1-630-522-4904 or email: checkin@veteranwellnessalliance.org

Elizabeth Dole Foundation Hidden Heroes - Join the Community

American Red Cross Military Veteran Caregiver Network - Peer Support and Mentoring

Team Red, White & Blue - Hundreds of events weekly. Find a chapter in your area.

Student Veterans of America - Find a campus chapter to connect with.

Team Rubicon - Find a local support squad.

3rd Annual

2021

GOLF

TOURNAMENT

MON
NOV 1st
2021



Eagle Harbor Golf Club
2217 Eagle Harbor Pkwy
Fleming Island, FL 32003

Monday, November 1, 2021

Registration/Warm-up/Pre-Event	11:45am - 12:45pm
Shot Gun Start	1:00 pm
BBQ Dinner/Awards Ceremony/Raffle	5:00 – 6:30 pm

Raffle tickets available throughout the day. Winners will be announced at the conclusion of the awards ceremony.

All proceeds benefit **National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum**

**Deadline to Register:
October 26, 2021**

*Sponsorship Packages and
Player Registration Forms
attached, or register online at:*

www.powmiamemorial.org

Follow the 2021 Golf Tournament
Event from our Facebook page:

 "Cecil Field POW MIA Memorial"

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St. Johns County funds program to help homeless veterans secure housing

First year to bring more than \$123K to help with rent, utilities

Sheldon Gardner, St. Augustine Record

St. Johns County commissioners have launched a new program to help homeless veterans get off the streets by providing financial assistance for rent and utilities.

It's part of a bigger effort in the county to address veteran homelessness and a lack of affordable housing.

The county approved spending up to \$123,652 to start the first year of a program to get homeless veterans into housing. The commission also approved hiring a new full-time employee to manage the program; the salary is not included in the original sum.

New businesses: Wawa among many commercial developments coming to St. Johns County

Housing costs rise: Construction costs pose fresh challenge for workforce housing in St. Johns County

Joy Andrews, deputy county administrator, said the program cost is based on an estimated 38 homeless veterans in the county and information from county social services that it takes more than \$3,000 to get a homeless person into stable housing. The money will go toward rent and utilities.

The intent is not to indefinitely pay for someone's expenses, but to get people into housing and help them live independently, Andrews said.

"That's the hope is that we can stabilize them and then we can house them and then case manage and provide the necessary services," she said.

The first year of the program will give the county a better idea of the need, and it is expected to take place annually. The money is coming from the general fund, so any unused funds will remain in the general fund, she said.

The new employee's salary will likely be around \$45,000, not including benefits, she said.

The county's Veterans Services Office is writing guidelines for the program and working on hiring the case manager. The money is budgeted for the next fiscal year, which begins on Oct. 1.

Andrews said she expects it to take a couple of months for the county to finish the program details and hire the new employee, and then the county will make the funds available.

Priority housing for veterans

In addition to the new funds, veterans will be a priority for 10% of the new housing units that will be available in two separate affordable housing complexes around State Road 207, Andrews said.

One of those complexes is San Marcos Heights, a 132-unit development that is under construction a couple of miles northeast of Interstate 95.

The rents there are expected to be \$780 a month for a one-bedroom apartment, \$927 a month for a two-bedroom apartment and \$1,070 a month for a three-bedroom apartment, according to a financial model for the project. Leasing should begin in April or May.

Commissioners Jeb Smith and Paul Waldron voted against the new pot of funding for homeless veterans, citing concerns about spending money on a new employee to handle the funds.

The commission also asked that the Veterans Service Office pursue other sources of funding, such as federal grants, to help with the program.

Joe McDermott, veterans service officer for the county government, said the county is handling about 18 to 20 clients a day in its office, so current staff couldn't handle the additional work. But he said he will look for outside support to mitigate the cost.



The case manager will help the office handle other duties when not dealing with homeless veterans, McDermott said.

Commission Chair Jeremiah Blocker said many homeless veterans were of the Vietnam War era, and some have undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder.

"I think this is one of the very rare circumstances where we as a society effectively, you know, abused and used these young men and women, sent them all over to fight a war that the rest of us didn't have to fight, and now they're stuck with this problem. ... So that's why I am supportive of this because I think we as a society have put a lot of these people in this position, and we've benefited from that, from their service. So I do think we have an obligation to help," he said.

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

26 AUGUST 2021

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dudley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Dudley

INVOCATION: Vice Chair Quinn



JULY MINUTES APPROVAL: The minutes of July 2021 were reviewed and no additions or deletions were required. Minutes were unanimously approved.

FINANCE REPORT: The finance report was presented by Treasurer John Mountcastle. The Ameris cash balance is \$59,539.00. It is noted that approximately one half of this balance is in restricted funds. It was noted by the chairman as well as the treasurer that assistance was provided to a veteran to install an air conditioner. This was done through donations and use of council funds. A written copy of the treasurer's report was furnished to all veterans present. The report was unanimously approved.

AWARD CEREMONY: Mr. Al Richburg, Director of Jacksonville National Cemetery and St. Augustine National Cemetery was honored by the Council. Mr. Richburg was presented a plaque in appreciation for his support of our county's veterans. It was noted that his tenure was outstanding he will certainly be missed. Mr. Richburg is retiring to South Carolina and all wished him the best.

THE FIRST RESPONDER PROJECT: The First Responder Project was presented by COL (Ret) Ann McCulliss Johnson and Dr. Tracy Hejmanowski a founder of the project. They explained the need for understanding and care for our first responders who are required to march to the sound of the guns daily. It was also explained that family members of first responders require assistance as well.

She noted that 20 to 30 per cent of first responders are veterans.

It is the mission and goal of the First Responder Project to provide retreats. The retreats are mostly informal and led by peers. The program will provide outreach both in person and virtual.

Assistance has been provided by Sheriff Hardwick and Chief Aviles (both veterans).

She stated that donations are needed to eliminate costs to participants and to provide the much needed retreats.

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE REPORT: CSM (Ret) Joe McDermott provided an office update. He reminded all of the Homeless Veterans Stand Down to be conducted 11 September 2021, 0900 hrs at the Elks Lodge. He reiterated that volunteers are needed to walk the participants through the stations.

He provided an update on the presumptive issues including asthma and more. Unfortunately, conditions at the National Records Center have not changed. Veteran requests for the military records are as much as a year behind. It is estimated that the requests are 500,000 behind.

VETERANS COURT REPORT: John Leslie reported the September session will be conducted via

ZOOM as the pandemic is at a surge level at present. He gave a recap mentioning 87 candidates, 42 graduates. Currently 32 in class now. He stated that 13 had been terminated since the birth of the court.

POW-MIA AND MIAP REPORT: Steve Spickelmier reported that the Missing In America Project (MIAP) will conduct an interment on 23 September 2021. The interment will be the 27th in the history of the Florida program. The will lay to rest 19 veterans and 7 spouses.

Steve also announced plans to recognize our POW-MIA's on 18 September. The event will begin at 0900 hrs at Cecil Field, Jacksonville. There will be a recognition ceremony along with organizations present at booths to offer assistance and opportunities to serve.

CHAIRMAN REPORTS: Chairman Dudley began his reports by presenting the need for a traffic light on State Road 207 and Deerfield Preserve. It is at this location our new Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). He noted the dangers of attempting to leave the clinic considering the amount of traffic in and out of the clinic and the new rehab hospital across 207. He stated we must also consider the state of mind of our veterans having just seen a doctor for any number of critical issues. He has spoken before the county commission and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The FDOT has conducted one study that did not indicate a need. Now that the CBOC is open they agreed to conduct another study. More details will be provided as they arrive.

Chairman explained to the membership that our plan to conduct a grand opening of the CBOC along with participation of the Veterans Administration has been cancelled. Our committee voted to return to the Anastasia Baptist Church that is the current plan. We have reserved the church and have begun planning the program.

The Chairman announced that the United States Coast Guard Band will return to St. Augustine. Having played here in the past they were so very well received. They have confirmed a concert at the Anastasia Baptist Church, April 4, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

He also announced that the Air Force Singing Sergeants will perform at St. Augustine Beach on September 15.

ADDITIONAL: Bob Richmond announced that Blacksmith Forge will have an event for veterans and first responders September 25, 2021 from 9:00 to 4:00. A lunch will be provided for veterans and first responders. He says come out and try your hand at smithing. He estimates one third of the participants are veterans experiencing PTSD. He is the contact for more information.

ADJOURN: Chairman Dudley having no further business called the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

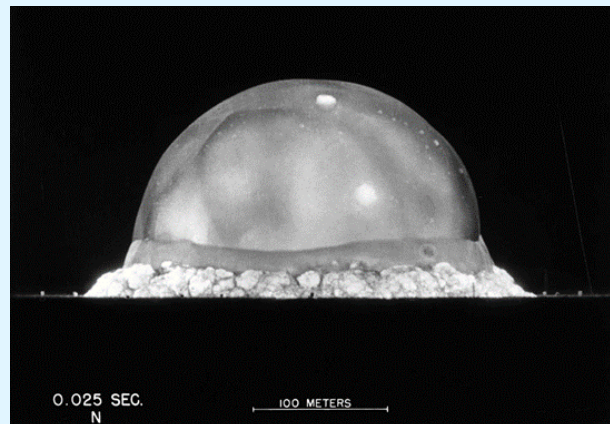
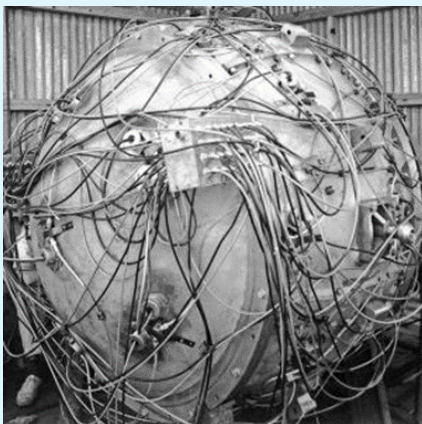
Chairman Bill Dudley

Vice Chair Ray Quinn

The Tragedy of the U.S.S. Indianapolis

In August of 1939, Albert Einstein and other scientists sent a letter to then U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt warning of a Nazi program to develop a nuclear bomb. In response to this threat, Roosevelt authorized the Manhattan Project to proceed under the guidance of General Leslie Groves to oversee the development of America's first nuclear weapon. President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, and Harry Truman assumed the Presidency, within a short time celebrating Victory in Europe (V-E Day) and the end of World War II in Europe. America was still at war within the Pacific theater against the forces of Imperial Japan, who had sworn to fight to the bitter end. Even as the Japanese stronghold on the South Pacific and East Asia was collapsing, children and women reported to factories on the Japanese homeland. There, they fashioned bamboo spears which would serve as a weapon of last defense in the event of an Allied invasion of the Japanese islands. All Japanese men, women, and children were expected to fight to the death.

President Truman was aware of the Manhattan Project and research proceeded under Dr. Robert Oppenheimer in a location forty miles south of Socorro, New Mexico, near Los Alamos. It was the Trinity Test Site for the atomic bomb. In a tower 103 feet above the ground, a large round object sat inside a small shed. It had many names: the gadget, the thing, the beast, the device, or simply "it." Within 0.04 seconds of detonation, the steel tower was already vaporized. Observers of the blast described it as "beautiful and horrifying." Regardless, news of the successful test reached President Truman where he was attending a meeting with Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin in Potsdam, Germany.



Photos Above: Trinity test of the first atomic bomb, New Mexico, July 16th, 1945 at 5:29 am

The battle for Okinawa 400 miles southwest of Japan had seen brutal, hand-to-hand combat over three weeks, leaving 12,000 American soldiers dead. The Japanese lost 107,000 men. The plan to invade the southern island of Japan on November 1st expected American forces to face 350,000 Japanese troops, and General George Marshall, Chief of Staff, had estimated 31,000 American troops would be killed in just the first three days of the assault. For President Truman, the decision was an easy one. This new weapon would bring the Japanese to their knees and achieve a quick and total Japanese surrender. More importantly, it would save thousands of American lives.

At Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in San Francisco, sailors aboard the U.S.S. Indianapolis watched in the morning hours of July 16th as two packages arrived under heavy guard at the dock and were loaded onto their heavy cruiser. Captain Charles McVay had orders to proceed at high speed to Tinian Island airfield, 1,500 miles south of Japan. His orders were to deliver his top-secret cargo, the bomb housing, and the load of weapons-grade uranium that would comprise "Little Boy." This was the fearsome atom bomb that would be dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. The crew of the U.S.S. Indianapolis had no idea what their mission was. They only knew that it was heavily guarded, and they were going somewhere in a big hurry.



Photo Above: U.S.S. Indianapolis (CA-35) Heavy Cruiser off Mare Island, San Francisco, CA, July 1945

76 hours after departure, she was in Pearl Harbor, refueled and restocked, and got underway again without any crew allowed to leave the ship. In less than ten days after leaving San Francisco Bay, the Indianapolis dropped anchor at Tinian Island. Her mystery cargo was off-loaded for delivery to the 509th Composite Group, a squadron of Boeing B-29 Superfortress crews and their planes. The Superfortress crews were trained for a "special mission" over Japan, even though they weren't sure what it was.

Captain McVay now received new orders to join Task Force 95.6, a massive assembly of the U.S. military at Leyte Island in the Philippines to prepare for the invasion of Japan. Though relieved to be rid of their top-secret cargo, the crew of the Indianapolis had no idea of the fate that awaited them while crossing 1,300 miles of the Philippine Sea alone.

On Sunday, July 29th, having left Guam and heading west, she was spotted by Japanese submarine, I-58, under the command of Lt. Cdr. Mochitsura Hashimoto. He immediately dove his sub to periscope depth. He fired a spread of six type-95 torpedoes at two-second intervals at the ship that was making way without following the usual zig-zag pattern ships used to avoid torpedo attack. Hashimoto saw two torpedoes hit.

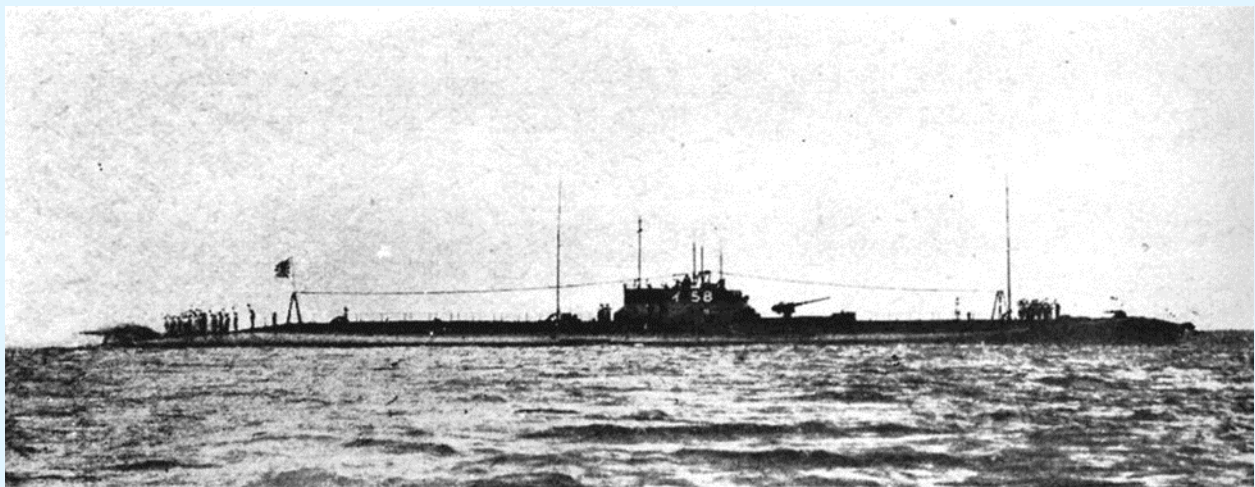


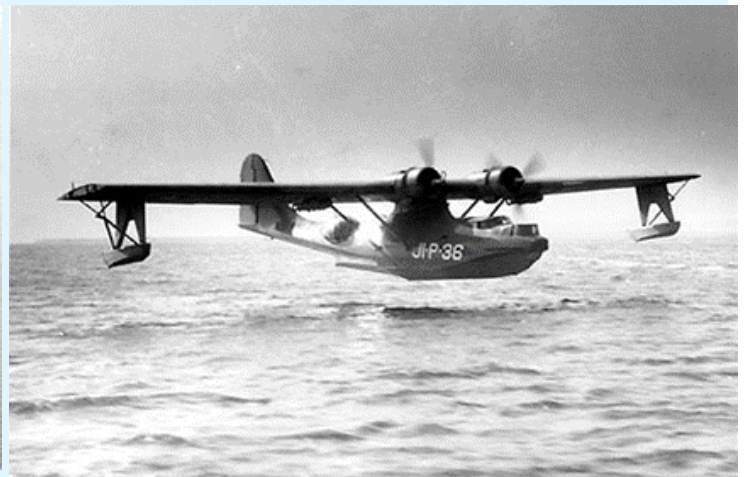
Photo Above: Imperial Japanese Navy Submarine I-58 (IJN I-58)

Back aboard the Indianapolis, the two explosions rocked the vessel. One sailor reported looking forward, and it appeared that the bow was gone. The ship listed heavily to starboard and sank in twelve minutes. The crew had a compliment of 1,197 souls on board. An estimated 300 went down with the ship, with the other 897 men going into the sea. Many were severely burned and injured. Others were covered in oil and feared the fire would consume them. Very few had time to gather life jackets and launch lifeboats. The radio operator had made a hasty call for help, but due to the top-secret nature of their previous mission, no one was looking for them, and no one knew where they were. More importantly, the few who heard their call for help ignored it, thinking it was a Japanese trick. Another officer who listened to the call was drunk and did not respond.

The crewmen huddled together in groups to help each other stay afloat as their first night in the water began at approximately 11:30 pm. But they soon learned that they were not alone. The Japanese submarine had departed heading north, not bothering to check for survivors. It was now that the sharks came, and they came in large numbers. As the men in the water were attacked, they would splash and kick and punch at the sharks, and sometimes the sharks would swim away, but more often, they would drag the men under. When daylight came, the sun bore down upon their heads for hours without relief, and the water, as one survivor described it, was like wearing a mirror under your chin, your head being slowly roasted. And still, the sharks came. The men would pray for the night to come to relieve them of the burning sun but then pray for the day so they could see the sharks. The crew of the Indianapolis remained in the water for four and a half days, struggling to stay afloat, struggling to stay alive.

There was no food or water. The sun and the sharks continued to do their work. Some drank salt water and became violently ill and incoherent. Some lost hope and gave up, drifting away from the group until the sharks took them. The men of the U.S.S. Indianapolis lived in a nightmare that would not end, and they quickly lost strength and hope.

On the morning of August 2nd, a Lockheed PV-1 Ventura flown by Lieutenant Wilbur "Chuck" Gwinn spotted the men in the water while on a routine patrol. They flew low over the remaining men and dropped a life raft and a radio transmitter to them while they radioed their position. All available surface and air units responded immediately. First on the scene was a PBV-5A Catalina piloted by Lt. Cdr. Robert A. Marks. He disobeyed orders not to land and put his giant seaplane down in 12-foot swells, damaging the aircraft in the process. He and his crew immediately began pulling men out of the water and into the plane and lashing them to the wings when there was no more room inside the plane. They saved 52 souls.



Photos Above: PV-1 Lockheed Ventura (left) and a Consolidated Aircraft P.B.Y. Catalina (right)

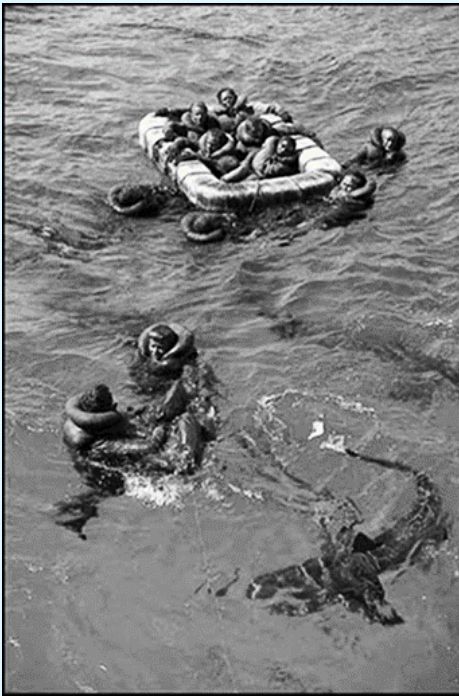


Photo Left: Photo of survivors in the water. Three sharks can be seen swimming among the men.

After the recovery mission was over, only 312 of the approximately 897 men who went into the water came out. It has been estimated the majority died of exposure, hypothermia, hyponatremia, and many killed themselves from delirium and dehydration. Still, the Indianapolis incident has been recorded as the worst shark attack in human history and the worst sea disaster in U.S. Naval history.

A few days later, on August 6th, at 9:30 am, the crew of the B-29 Enola Gay flown by Colonel Paul Tibbets dropped "Little Boy" over Hiroshima, Japan. The bomb performed exactly as planned, detonating at the optimum altitude of 1,850 feet, sending a shockwave that flattened every structure in the city with a force of seven tons per square meter and reached temperatures of 60 million degrees centigrade, 10,000 times hotter than the surface of the sun. Total Japanese surrender followed soon after. Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day) is officially marked on September 2nd, 1945, when the Japanese Imperial forces signed surrender documents aboard the U.S.S. Missouri.



Photos Above: Survivors of the U.S.S. Indianapolis being treated on Guam and aboard rescue vessels

It is vitally important to remember these events and tell them to the next generations, as difficult as that may be so that they can hopefully avoid repeating the same man-made horrors in the future.



Photo Above: Actor Robert Shaw (left) telling Quint's story in the movie "Jaws." Copyright, Universal Pictures, 1975

For most of us who grew up after the war, we first heard about the U.S.S. Indianapolis, not from history books, but from actor Robert Shaw in Steven Spielberg's 1975 blockbuster movie "Jaws," based on the 1974 book of the same name by Peter Benchley.

In the film, a shark hunter named "Quint" tells the story of the Indianapolis to co-stars Richard Dreyfuss and Roy Scheider in the cabin of the "Orca," Quint's boat while out hunting the great white shark. According to Spielberg, the scene became the film's defining moment and had audiences transfixed as Shaw "brilliantly relates the story." You can easily find it online and listen.

The scene with Quint remains Spielberg's "favorite scene in the film." It serves to educate those who are not much interested in history, hopefully driving them on to find out what really happened in the southern Pacific so long ago, along with other stories of the valiant deeds of our nation's men and women in uniform, in service to their country. These stories must be preserved. We should never forget.



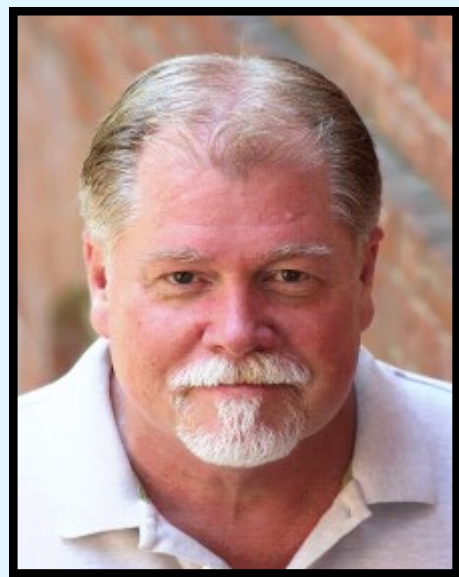
Photo Left: U.S.S. Indianapolis CA-35 Memorial, Indianapolis, IN, Indiana War Memorials Foundation

**unless otherwise noted, all photos are in the public domain.*

**Shockwave, Countdown to Hiroshima by Stephen Walker, copyright HarperCollins 2005, provided invaluable information for this article.*

About the Author: Rick Cain

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



A Family/Survivor Reference Guide for When A Veteran Dies



I Prior to Death- Discussion to Have and Action Items Prior to Death

1. Designate a "battle buddy," a go-to friend or family member who will provide support:
 - a. Assist with calls and gathering information
 - b. Reach out to local Veteran Service Group Chapter Personal Affairs
 - c. Reach out to Veteran Service Organization Chapter Chaplain (insert contact information here)
2. Locate servicemember's DD Form-214 - Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty. No DD-214? Request a DD-214 in any of these ways:
 - a) Contact your state or county Veterans agency
 - i. For North Carolina county veterans offices you can locate closest office at link: https://files.nc.gov/ncdmva/documents/files/DMVA_Resource_Guide-2020.pdf
 - ii. For veterans in other states please refer to other state directory for veteran service offices closest to you: <https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm> or refer Appendix A
 - b) Mail or fax a Request Pertaining to Military Records (Standard Form SF 180) to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC); download SF 180 <https://www.milvets.nc.gov/request-dd-form-214-certificate-release-or-discharge/open> (mailing addresses are included on the form) Be sure only one SF 180 is sent in or it can cause delays. Contact NPRC if veteran has already passed after sending in SF 180 to request it be expedited.
 - c) Get an eBenefits account with the VA: [Home - VA/DoD eBenefits](#)
3. Connect with Veterans Service Officer (VSO) [Benefits & Claims | Department of Military & Veterans Affairs \(nc.gov\)](#) or call (844-624-8387); Complete Form VA 21-22 (Appointment of VSO as Claimant's Representative): [21-22 \(va.gov\)](#), and Form VA 21-0845 (Third Party Disclosure): [21-0845 \(va.gov\)](#); VSO guides veterans and or surviving spouse through the benefit process, and provides entitled benefit information during final days, for example:

- a. Home skilled nursing (VA eligibility check)
 - b. VA state nursing home (Discuss)
 - c. Durable Medical Equipment (Wheelchair, ramps, etc. check)
 - d. Have VSO check for any possible service-connected conditions or pension eligibility
4. Obtain Military Bio if available
- Make/Review Funeral arrangements/disposition of remains:
- a. Local Mortuary
 - b. Arlington National Cemetery (877) 907-8585 www.arlingtoncemetery.mil
 - c. VA -contact closest local County Veteran Service Officer
 - d. Order flag [VBA form 27-2008](#) for burial from VA if meets criteria
 - e. [Military Funeral Honors](#) Directory- Military One Source
5. Know what the veteran's service-connected disability rating is and for what (if applicable):
- a. Contact local VA VSO for support
 - b. VSO will provide information on VA support for interment
 - i. Payment for interment varies on level of disability and if death is service-connected, or varies by location at time of death.
 - ii. Ceremony support (this is provided usually by funeral home directors)
6. Additional data needed: Complete forms from MOAA or other Veteran service organizations -in preparation of a death:
- a. Computer/phone passwords
 - b. Banking/ online passwords for bank accounts
 - c. Properties
 - d. CPA
 - e. Financial Advisor
 - f. Insurance (Property, Life, Extended Home Health Care)
 - g. Online passwords (utilities, any direct deposits, deposit box key locations)
 - h. Check for VGLI or SGLI (life insurances contact number (800) 669 8477)
 - i. Check for Survivors Benefit Plan "SBP" (call DFAS (800) 321-1080)
 - j.

II After Death Occurs

- 1. Connect with "battle buddy" or go-to friend
- 2. Speak with attending physician or medical support:
 - a. Discuss cause of death
 - b. Share VA disability rating with MD. Important note: To get certain survivor VA benefits (such as Dependents and Indemnity Compensation, DIC), a VA service-connected disability must be recorded on the death certificate as either part of the primary cause of death or additional/secondary/other causes)

III Day One

1. Contact VA to report death of veteran (800) 623 1000
2. Have pertinent information ready: DD 214, date of death, place of death, Social Security Number
3. Notify agencies of veteran's death - all that apply
 - a. VA- work with Veterans Service Officer
 - i. Connect with county VSO or Veteran Service Organization (must have VSO)
 - ii. Is death service connected?
 - iii. Does the disability rating need to be adjusted?
 - iv. Start paperwork for DIC or survivor's pension if applicable (note: the federal VA will need a copy of the death certificate before they grant anything, this is why it is key to talk to coroner or attending physician before they sign off on death certificate.)
 - v. VSO will apply for other benefits/certificates
 1. DD-214
 2. Pay in arrears
 3. Possible appeals
 4. Survivor Pensions
 5. Aid and attendance
 6. Fiduciary if appropriate
 - b. [DFAS](#) (Defense Finance and Accounting Office) (800) 469-6559 (contact if veteran retired or received medical retirement from service)
 - i. Notify
 - ii. Request Survival benefit Plan claim
 - c. [DEERS](#) (800) 538-9552
https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/self_service/rapids/unauthenticated?execution=e1s1
 - d. Prudential (VGLI/SGLI) (800) 669 8477- Prudential (if VGLI/SGLI in effect)
 - i. Notify (find out if the veteran was paying to receive VGLI/SGLI)
 - ii. Request paperwork to file
 - e. Privately issued insurance
 - f. [Social Security](#) <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/survivors/> (800) 772-1213
 - i. Notify
 - ii. Request appointment to file for death benefits
 - g. Arlington National Cemetery (ANC)
 - i. (877) 907-8585 www.arlingtoncemetery.mil
 - ii. Arlington requirements- must meet criteria
 - iii. Review on ANC web or speak with ANC support staff
 - iv. To schedule must have
 1. DD214

2. Copy of Death Certificate
3. Copy of cremation certificate
- v. Funeral Home – Communicate that death is of a veteran
4. Reach out to [TAPS](#) - Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors if needed (grief counseling)
www.taps.org (800) 959 8277, or closest [Vet-center](#) 1-877- 927-8387)

IV Day Two+

1. Continue with list above
2. Contact lawyer where the will or living trust is filed to inform of death
3. Contact USAA (or other auto insurance) check if there is a gratuity payment
4. Speak with attending physician regarding Cause of death. (Note: this might eliminate the surviving spouse from being eligible for DIC if the cause of death/other causes of death part of the death certificate does not include a service-connected disability)
5. Receive/Review Death Certificate from Mortuary
6. Communicate with attending physician
 - a. Cause of death
 - b. VA disability language should be included if applicable
 - c. Request death certificate be sent electronically
 - d. Talk with signer of death certificate if amendments are needed
7. File paperwork with the above agencies as directed to receive benefits
8. [COVID-19 Death Burial Benefit](#) (FEMA) If Veteran passed away from COVID-19
9. [Benefits to support Survivors](#) – Brochure Military One Source
10. [VA Survivor Tool Kit](#) <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/VASurvivorsKit.pdf>
11. Obituary
 - a. Use military bio to help
 - b. Mortuary provides service as needed
12. Interment
 - a. Announcements
 - b. Location
 - c. Reception

Citation: Military One Source

<https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Trifolds/SurvivorMilestoneTrifold.pdf>

This guide compiled by Western North Carolina Chapter, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)-Personal Affairs. Dr. Vivianne Cisneros Wersel, Lead Author and Editor, in coordination with Jeremy Hughes, North Carolina Department of Military Veteran Affairs Regional Officer. Additional contributing team members: Katherine Knight, CAPT, USN Retired, Donna Culp, Capt, USAF, Frn, John D. Culp, LTC USA Retired



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
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(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

21-100

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 2, 2021

VA to start processing disability claims for certain conditions related to particulate matter

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs will begin processing disability claims Aug. 2 for asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis on a presumptive basis based on presumed particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas — if these conditions manifested within 10 years of a qualifying period of military service.

VA conducted the first iteration of a newly formed internal VA process to review scientific evidence to support rulemaking, resulting in the recommendation to consider creation of new presumptions of service connection for respiratory conditions based on VA's evaluation of a National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine report and other evidence.

The process concluded that particulate matter pollution is associated with chronic asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis for Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations beginning Aug. 2, 1990 to the present, or Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria or Djibouti beginning Sept. 19, 2001 to the present. VA's review also concluded that there was sufficient evidence to presume that these Veterans have been exposed to particulate matter.

"I announced my intent to initiate rulemaking on May 27 to consider adding respiratory conditions to the list of chronic disabilities," said Denis McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Through this process I determined that the evidence provided was sufficient to establish presumptions of service connection for these three respiratory conditions. This is the right decision, and VA will continue to use a holistic approach in determining toxic exposure presumptives moving forward."

The Southwest Asia theater of operations refers to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the airspace above these locations.

VA will conduct outreach to impacted Veterans and survivors to inform them about their eligibility and will provide information on how to apply. Veterans and survivors who believe they may be eligible for the newly established presumptive conditions are encouraged to apply. They should file a [VA Form 21-526EZ](#) if applying for the first time or a [VA Form 20-0995](#) if they are reapplying for these conditions. For more information on the new presumptive conditions, visit our website at [Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposures - Public Health \(va.gov\)](#).

To apply for benefits, Veterans and survivors may visit [VA.gov](#) or call toll-free at 800-827-1000. Within the next week, you can view the interim final rule at [www.regulations.gov](#).

###

From Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley

Subject: VA Transportation Assistance

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

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

From Michael Isam

DAV van service to Gainesville returning on a limited basis.

Begins on Monday, 23 March 2021

The van will run on Monday and Wednesday ONLY

3 passenger limit

Masks are required to and from VAMC



The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

If you are looking for a simple way to help Florida Veterans, consider upgrading to a military themed specialty plate when you renew your tag. Revenue from military themed specialty license plates sales supports capital improvements to our State Veterans' Homes. For more information, click here: <https://bit.ly/3gxSZ8c>



REQUIREMENTS

MILITARY

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

MEDICAL

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

FINANCIAL

INCOME AND EXPENSES IN RELATION
TO MEDICAL EXPENSES

From Lynn M Geiser

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

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

MEDICAL SCREENING

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

MONETARY SCREENING

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

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



Legal Aid for Veterans

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

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

1.866.486.6161

Call Today!

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



We Can Help With

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

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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Disaster Resources Available to Veterans

“Veterans and their families should be focused on their health and safety during the natural disasters,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

“VA is taking action to give those with pending debts greater flexibility during these challenging times.”

Health Care Assistance

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

Debt Relief

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

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

Other Resources

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Florida veterans and military families have a new resource to receive the care they need thanks to a partnership dedicated to serving this most deserving population.

Centerstone and the Cohen Veterans Network have joined forces to offer compassionate, targeted behavioral health care for Post 9/11 veterans, National Guard, Reservists, their families and active duty family members at the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone, Jacksonville. <https://centerstone.org/cohen-military-family-clinic/jacksonville/>. The clinic’s skilled clinicians and staff have been trained to work specifically with veterans and their families, and some are veterans themselves. Services offered include individual therapy for children, adolescents and adults, couples therapy, family therapy, groups and workshops.

“Military families are some of the most resilient people you will ever encounter, but a life of service often gives way to invisible wounds and unique challenges that are difficult to navigate,” Elizabeth Sherr, clinic director said. “We understand those challenges and stand ready to support our veterans and their loved ones with effective, personalized care right now.”

The clinic’s ability to meet the needs of veterans and their families quickly is vital in today’s mental health environment where gaining access to care can often be daunting - with long wait times and all too common barriers to overcome. The Cohen Clinic at Centerstone is committed to reducing these barriers. Not only are military families currently able to receive same day appointments, the clinic also offers all therapy services via telehealth - breaking down time and distance concerns that can sometimes be problematic.

“We want to make getting help as easy as possible for our veterans and family members,” Brigadier General (ret.) Michael Fleming, the clinic’s outreach director said. “Sometimes just reaching out for help is difficult enough, and we want to ensure we meet this step with compassion and ease.”

For the time being, in an effort to ensure the safety of clients and team members amidst the COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines, that includes conducting all services via CVN Telehealth or telephone. Studies have shown telehealth has the same efficacy as in-person counseling and the clinic’s therapists are well trained in the delivery of this care. Additionally, front desk staff still have complete access to answer the appointment line during business hours, as before, and veterans, military families and outside organizations can continue to call directly for an appointment.

Veterans, National Guard, Reservists, their families and active duty family members may contact the clinic at (904) 431-3500 to schedule appointments. Clinic hours are:

Monday	8:00am – 5:00pm
Tuesday	8:00am – 5:00pm
Wednesday	8:00am – 7:00pm
Thursday	8:00am – 5:00pm
Friday	8:00am - 12:00pm

For more information on clinic services log on to <https://centerstone.org/cohen-military-family-clinic/jacksonville/> or call the appointment line at (904) 431-3500.



You sacrificed for our country.

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FREEDOM IS YOURS.

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

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

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



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

Assisted Living Facility #12928

Vietnam Veterans of America

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



Chapter/President/email/Location

1046	Tony D'Aleo	adaleo5579@gmail.com; Duval
1048	Rod Phillips	cobra101st@gmail.com; Daytona
1059	David Treffinger	dtreffinger433@msn.com; Clay
1084	Salvatore Sorrentino	suncler1951@aol.com
1088	Roy (Corky) Rudd	corkstopper50@yahoo.com; Nassau
1092	Forest Hope	foresthope@usa.net; Gainesville
1134	Marvin Lagle	mdlagle@gmail.com; Baker



PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET VETERANS' UNIQUE NEEDS

Advance Care Planning

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

Palliative Care

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

Hospice Care

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

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

Complementary Therapies

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

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

We Need Volunteers

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

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

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

★ Along with traditional reimbursement for hospice services, we offer payment options to veterans with TRICARE. As with all Community Hospice & Palliative Care patients, we provide care and support to all who need it, regardless of their ability to pay. VET 007 5/20



SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES

Strength
built on
Sacrifice

Your Florida SOS Team

St. Augustine Area

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

Tallahassee Area

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

Orlando Area

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

Tampa Bay Area

LaShawnda S. Strother
Support Coordinator
2801 Grand Avenue
Pinellas Park, FL 33782
(727)-563-3647
lashawnda.s.strother.ctr@mail.mil

Miami Area

Support Coordinator
9301 NW 33rd Street
Doral, FL 33172-1202
(305) 437-2178

Scholarships & Application Deadlines

There are two primary VA Programs offering educational assistance. While federal benefits do not technically have a due date, it is important to apply as early as possible.

The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Fry Scholarship) is currently available for children of those who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. Beginning January 1, 2015, Fry Scholarship will also be available for surviving spouses of those who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001.

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program offers education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or of Veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition.

Application Deadlines for surviving children

Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation

No set amount, available for children of those who died in the line of duty or of a service-connected disability. No application due date.

Freedom Alliance

Scholarships of up to \$5,000 for children of those who died in the line of duty. No application due date.

Fisher House Foundation/ Heroes Legacy Scholarship

Amount varies, for children of those who died while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Applications available from early December to March 14.

Special Ops Warrior Foundation

Amount varies, for surviving children of Special Operations Service Members who died in the line of duty. Applications due at least sixty days prior to the start of the semester.

Deadline for multiple relationships

Army Emergency Relief Fund

Amount varies, for surviving spouses and children of soldiers who die while on active duty or in retiree status. Applications available from January 2 to May 1, 2015.

Application Deadlines: For surviving spouses

Aspire

\$3,000 scholarships per semester for spouses of those who died on active duty. Applications due by October 31 for spring semester and June 30 for fall semester each year.

National Military Family Association

\$500 to \$2,500 scholarships for surviving spouses of those who died while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Applications available from December 1 to January 31.

Pat Tillman Foundation

Amount varies, scholarships for surviving spouses of those who died on active duty, in veteran status, or in retiree status. Applications available from February 1 to March 6.

Application Deadlines: For surviving siblings

Matthew Freeman Project

\$1,000 scholarships for siblings of those who have died in the line of duty. No application due date

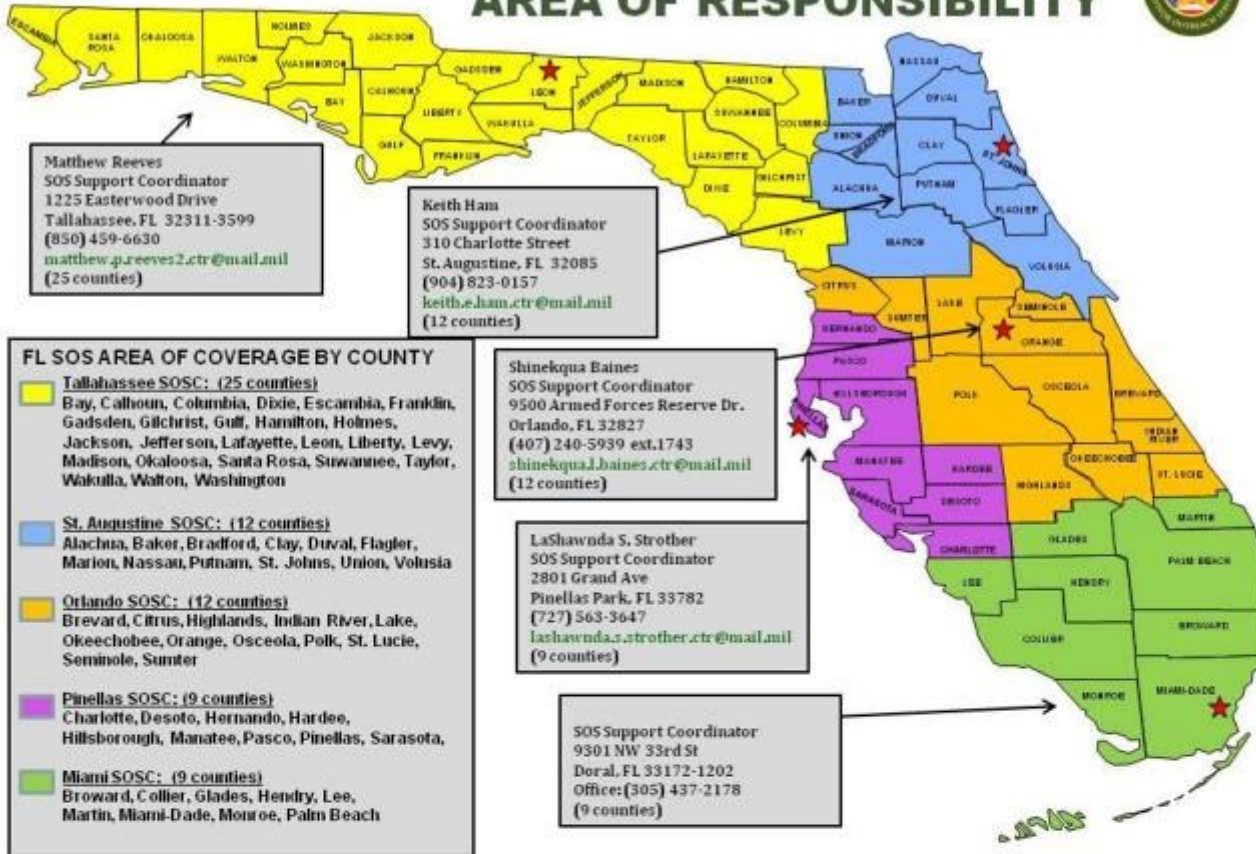
Deadline for multiple relationships

Folds of Honor

\$5,000 scholarships for surviving spouses and children of service members who die in the line of duty or from a service-connected disability. Applications available from January 15 to March 15.

Disclaimer: The information presented in this newsletter is for informational awareness only and does not represent endorsement, sponsorship, recommendation, or promotion of any commercial events, commercial names or brands by the editors of this Newsletter, the Department of Defense, US Army, US Navy, US Air Force, US Coast Guard, National Guard, Reserve, or the federal government. Usage of commercial or trademark names is for identification purposes only.

FLORIDA SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY



Survivor Outreach Services provides long-term support and advocacy for families of the fallen. Our support coordinators and financial counselors are dedicated to helping survivors from all eras understand and apply for benefits as well as stay connected to the Army family for as long as they desire.

Although Survivor Outreach Services is the focus of this newsletter, please know that all branches of the Armed Forces are equally committed to taking care of surviving military families. Please contact us, and we will connect you with additional resources that may be available for your branch of service. To find the Survivor Outreach Services location nearest you, check out the map on this page, or visit www.sos.army.mil.



Mission Statement:

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



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

What the Council has done:

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

SA-0003147064-01

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

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

STAND BY THEM
Confidential help for Veterans and their families

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

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

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

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

Confidential chat at MilitaryCrisisLine.net or text 838255

Veterans Councils of Northeast Florida



BAKER COUNTY

President: Larry Porterfield

Meetings:

Second Thursday of each month

Location:

MacClenny Primitive Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall on North Boulevard

Time : 1800 (6pm)

CLAY COUNTY

President: Harry Silvers

Meetings:

First Wednesday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1400 (2pm)

DUVAL COUNTY

President Steve Spickelmier

Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month

Location:

American Legion Post 37
Main Building
San Juan Avenue

Tome: 1900 (7 pm)

NASSAU COUNTY

President: Mike Doran

Meetings:

First Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

St. Johns County

President: Bill Dudley

Meetings:

Last Thursday of each month

Location:

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

Time: 1900 (7pm)

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



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:

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

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

Please join our group on Facebook at:

<http://veteranscouncilsjc.org>

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

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

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

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

He can be contacted at webmaster@veteranscouncilsjc.org

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

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

Send to: rothfeldm@gmail.com



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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