

The Patriot Reader

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

CHAIRMAN BILL DUDLEY

VICE CHAIRMAN DAN BLACKMAN

SECRETARY GEORGE APRIL

TREASURER GEORGE MCCREA

Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld



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Wreaths Across America at Sonny's
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Veterans History Project
FL Dept. of Veterans Affairs
A Message from Secretary Shinseki

Volume 1, Issue 13

Newsletter Date: December, 2012

Message from the Chairman

Fellow Veterans,

November marked another busy month for Veterans events. There were numerous Veterans Day ceremony's around town on Nov. 12 including our annual event downtown at Francis Field which was a huge success. A separate article appears in **The Patriot Reader** covering this event. For the first time this year, a separate Veterans Day ceremony was held on Anastasia Island at Memorial Park at 3 PM on Nov. 12 and was well attended. Michael Isam covered this event and his article appears in our newsletter as well.

Other ceremony's to honor our Veterans were held at the Council on Aging, Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home and Coquina Crossing. All were well attended with each having a unique ceremony to honor our living and deceased Veterans.

On Tuesday, Nov. 6, the members of the Veterans Council appeared before the St. Johns County Commissioners to thank them for their service to our County and their support of our Vet-

erans. To show our appreciation, each Commissioner was presented with a picture collage of special Veterans events in the County over the past year. Outgoing Chairman Ken Bryan and former Commissioner Mark Miner were presented with a letter of appreciation



Chairman Ken Bryan

from the Chairman of the Veterans Council in addition to the picture collage. The St. Johns Veterans Council sincerely appreciates the support we have received from this group of patriotic servants of the people. The Veterans Council was also presented with a County Proclamation from Vice Chairman Jay Morris in honor of all the nearly 18000 Veterans in St. Johns County.

I think the Veterans Council of St. Johns County is one of the most active in the State with many activities to honor our men



and women who have served in the military. . Most all events are always well attended and supported by our community. This reflects well on our citizens who care deeply for the service of our Veterans.

Our next major event is the Wreaths Across America program on **December 15, 2012 12:00 Noon**. Vice Chairman Dan Blackman and his committee have done a yeoman's job of assuring all 1218 markers and headstones will have a wreath this year. A big Bravo Zulu to he and his team. He has also put together an excellent program before the laying of the wreaths so let's be sure we have a great turnout to support this program. Many local elected officials and other dignitaries have been invited with colors to be provided by local JROTC units.

Happy Holidays to all our Veterans.

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



Cheryl Miner receiving
collage for her husband
Mark Miner



On behalf of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County and the **Wreaths Across America** Committee we want to say thanks to the many Veterans, family members, friends, and supporters who came out and had dinner and supported the project.

Without the support of Sonny's and its staff Spirit Night would not have been as successful. On 30 October 2012, Sonny's BBQ donated 10% of the nights proceeds between the hours of 5pm to 8pm. They donated \$203.26 and another 52.00 in cash was collected plus two Wreath Donations that evening. We have reached our target of 1218 Wreaths for 2012, and all future donation are now going toward the 2013 project.

Our next Spirit Night at Sonny's BBQ is scheduled for 16 July 2013. Remember, our Wreaths laying ceremony 15 December 2012 at noon St. Augustine VA National Cemetery.

Dan Blackman



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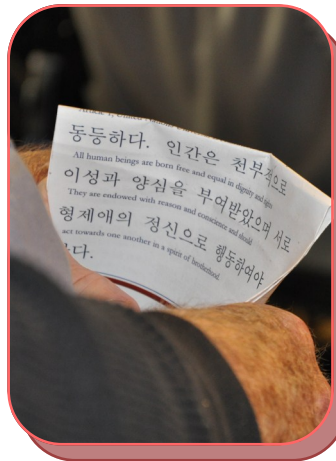
Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Patriotism is our motto



Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home Korean War Veterans Honored by the Pentagon's Dept. of Defense Colonel Clark

Thirty-five Korean War veterans were honored at the November 8 Commemoration ceremony by Colonel David J. Clark, United States Army, Director, Foreign Intelligence, Army DCS G-2, Director DOD 60th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee and Major Billy Canedo. Many gathered to see each veteran honored individually by Colonel Clark, who presented each a personal certificate. Participants saw the pride and honor that shown from the recipients' faces. The administrator accepted a special plaque on behalf of our Veterans, which has been prominently displayed. All our veterans are honored for their service and it was a shining moment to see each Korean War veteran acknowledged for their service by these officials. Our thanks go to the Commemoration Committee in actively pursuing commemoration services throughout our nation on behalf of our citizens and our allies.



CLYDE E. LASSEN STATE VETERANS NURSING HOME

Black and White Ball with the Navy Band Southeast at Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Clyde E. Lassen kicked off their holiday season in November with our first annual event. We held a Black and White Ball one evening in the courtyard complete with refreshments and dancing under white lights. Families, residents and staff danced the night away with the Navy Band Southeast providing the music.



Knights of Columbus contest students compete at Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

The Knights of Columbus held a contest for area students. The winners presented their essays and showed off their posters to the residents of the facility. Great job, kids!

Ward Creek Elementary School honor veterans at Clyde E Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

The students at Wards Creek Elementary School provided our residents with several Veterans' Day posters thanking them for their service. One patriotic poster has a fingerprint from each and every child in the school that comprises the red and white stripes!



The Daughters of the American Revolution honor veterans at Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



The ladies from the Daughters of the American Revolution visited our residents as part of our Veterans' Day Celebration and provided each with a wonderful gift bag. The facility held our annual Veterans' Day Ceremony out front with our own volunteer Robert Phillips as the keynote speaker. Veterans past and present were honored and all enjoyed the ceremony and refreshments.

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home Veterans join community veterans in celebrating Thanksgiving at the American Legion

Recently the American Legion in St. Augustine hosted a group of our residents for a wonderful lunch. All the turkey and Thanksgiving fixins' we could eat!





Greetings from the Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee. I would like to take this time to speak to you about a couple of events that have taken place or will be taking place at our National Cemetery. On the Marine Corps Birthday, we had our first two monuments put in place and dedicated at the cemetery. The first was a Marine Corps monument and the second was the Pearl Harbor monument. It was a good turn out for both. In order to place a monument at the National Cemetery, you must fill out an

application which would be reviewed by the cemetery for approval. The next event coming up is the Wreaths Across America. It will take place on Dec 12, 2012 at 11:45 A.M.. Please come and join us at the National Cemetery and take in this beautiful event.



Chairman Dan Hughes

I would like at this time to speak to you about the finances of the Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee. We operate and depend on the funds that are donated and we are a 501C3 corporation. One of our projects that we are looking for donations for is our Carillon Bell Tower which is 40 feet tall with chimes that ring on the hour. We as a Support Committee along with the Navy Seabees will build the foundation to receive it. Ninety thousand dollars has been raised to purchase the tower and it is up to us to raise the funds to build the foundation. We are asking for your donations in order to complete this project. This project will add to the beauty of our National Cemetery but most of all it will give comfort to our veterans and their families. Please give us your support.

It gives me great pride to serve on the Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee. With your support we can continue in making our Jacksonville National Cemetery one of the finest in the country.

Yours through veterans,
Dan Hughes
Chairman; J.N.C.S.C.



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One of our Adopted Units By Glen Tilley

The Florida Army National Guard 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment is one of our Post's 2391 Adopted Units. We supported the unit throughout their yearlong deployment to Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. We wanted to give them a special Welcome Home BBQ to show our gratitude for their service.

Realizing the complexity of getting all of the troops together at one time, we coordinated with the Battalion Commander, LTC Pat Mignon and arranged a working BBQ for them during their first drill weekend at their home base, Cecil Field, FL. We hosted a luncheon for all of the troops consisting of BBQ pork and chicken, macaroni and cheese, green beans and banana pudding and iced tea.

We had a VFW information table with VFW information brochures. We had a prayer prior to lunch by Arden Battle, District Six Jr. Vice and Glen Tilley spoke to the troops during lunch, welcoming them home and expressing the gratitude and ongoing support of the VFW. Since this was a working lunch, we were not able to schedule any other special events. A reporter from our local newspaper, The Florida Times Union was present and interviewed the Commander and some of the troops.

The planning stage started while they were still deployed. We were able to communicate and coordinate our desires for the event through email contact with the Commander and MSG Lucas. When the planning stage started, I was Post Commander. My wife Debbie was, and is the Ladies Auxiliary President of the Post 2391 Ladies Auxiliary and District Jr. Vice. Together with the Battalion Commander, we made plans for the event and coordinated it with Posts in Florida District Six.



There were 32 VFW and Auxiliary members who volunteered to assist.

www.VeteransIsland.com

Welcome to Florida's Veterans Island! - Doesn't that Name sound WONDERFUL !!

The name “Veterans Island” will be a Salute to all Active, Retired, and Former Military Personnel in the State of Florida and the United States of America and those who died, defending our Country.

The island that is being named, is a 37 mile stretch of Barrier Island, stretching from Naval Station Mayport, south to Porpoise Point. (The Navy at Mayport covers 3,409 acres and is the third largest Naval Facility in the continental United States)

Included on the Barrier Island is Mayport Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Jacksonville Beach, Ponte Vedra Beach (PGA Tour Headquarters), North Beach, Vilano Beach, and Porpoise Point.

This Barrier Island doesn't have a name yet.

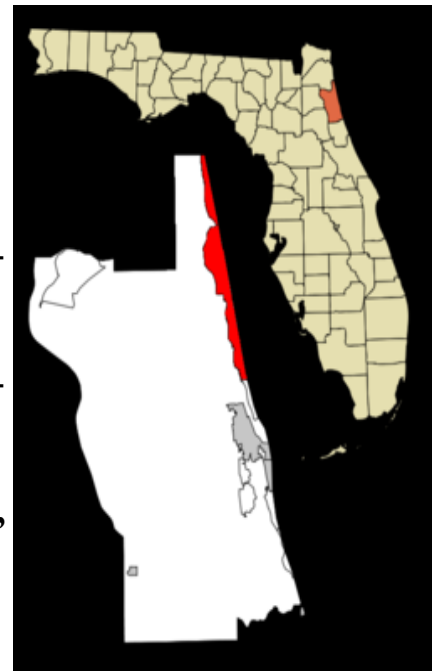
Please push for the name "Veterans Island"

This will be the last chance to do this - ...EVER In America!!

Let's make sure it gets a Proud Name and a name that reflects on the MILLIONS of America's Veterans.

Note: We already have several area streets & a school, and other places named San Pablo.

Let's do something FOR AMERICA !



Proposed Veterans Island in RED

Please eMail the St. Johns County Commissioners:

Cyndi Stevenson - District 1 bccd1@sjcfl.us

Ron Sanchez - District 2 bccd2@sjcfl.us

Bill McClure - District 3 bccd3@sjcfl.us

Jay Morris - District 4 bccd4@sjcfl.us

Rachael Bennett - District 5 bccd5@sjcfl.us

Please write to Florida Governor Rick Scott

Governor Rick Scott 400 S Monroe St, Tallahassee, FL 32399, (850) 488-7146

Please write to the State of Florida Senators & Representative

Senator Bill Nelson

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WASHINGTON DC 20510

(202) 224-5274

Senator Marco Rubio

317 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON DC 20510

(202) 224-3041

Representative John Mica - 7th District

2187 Rayburn HOB

Washington DC 20515-0907

(202) 225-4035

Number of Veterans in the Nation 23 Million *

Number of Veterans in Florida: 1,683,899 *

Number of Veterans in St. Johns County 17,845 *

~ Totals from the Veterans Administration in 2010 ~

A total of 1,346,000 Veterans gave their lives for this Country - 1775 to Present

Thanking You In Advance,

A. J. Sartin

403 17th Street , St. Augustine, FL 32084

(904) 824-3833



Florida National Guard Public Affairs Specialist, SFC Blair Heusdens, announced to Historic City News that Kangaroo Express made a donation of \$180,000 to benefit the Florida National Guard Foundation in St Augustine today.

Maj. Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw, the Adjutant General of Florida, accepted a check on behalf of the Foundation at the Florida National Guard headquarters. "This contribution will go a long way in helping the Foundation to provide sup-



port to soldiers and airmen and their families in their time of need," said Retired Brig. Gen. Richard Capps, President of the Florida National Guard Foundation.

This summer, Kangaroo Express raised a total of \$3.17 million during the company's "Salute Our Troops" fundraising campaign for military support organizations, including the United Services Organization, the Wounded Warrior Project as well as the Florida National Guard Foundation.

"This significant donation builds on our ongoing commitment and gratitude for the sacrifices required to protect our nation and preserve our freedom," said John Fisher, senior vice president of marketing, merchandising and restaurant operations for Kangaroo Express. "We look forward to continuing to work with the FLNG Foundation to support our National Guard servicemen and women and their families right here in Florida."

The Florida National Guard Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides support to the men and women of the Florida National Guard in times of emergencies and deployments. Due to its low administrative costs, 95 percent of the donations to the Foundation go directly to assisting the men and women of the Florida National Guard.

From the Jacksonville Semper Fidelis Society

Thank you to those who took the time to attend the dedication and the annual Evergreen service....Here is a link to some pictures taken at the dedication.

<https://pi-casaweb.google.com/104249596351510248364/20121110JacksonvilleSemperFidelisSocietyMemorialDedicationService?authuser=0&feat=directlink>

Four family members of Marines and Sailors killed in Iraq and Afghanistan attended the Evergreen service. The looks on their faces and tears in their eyes were evidence enough to prove they appreciated the fact we still remember their loved one.

What we do makes a difference...it isn't easy adhering to the values like Honor, Courage and Commitment in today's society. We remain the few and the proud. We will never forget our fallen comrades and we are intent on taking care of Marines and FMF Corpsmen despite all obstacles ...The Marines are the glimmer of hope for this nation and today's society in more ways than one.

Semper Fidelis is more than just a greeting and motto, for some, it is a way of life that makes a difference.

**Reprinted with permission of The Florida Times- Union,
written by William Browning**

Seventy years ago, Patricio Ganio and Donato Abalos were in the Philippines helping defend Bataan Peninsula from a Japanese invasion.

Now they are Jacksonville residents and Thursday morning they both stepped aboard the USS Bataan at Mayport Naval Station. The amphibious assault ship, which was commissioned in 1997 and named in honor of those who helped defend the Bataan Peninsula, is at Mayport to host the Navy-Marine Corps Classic basketball game between the University of Florida and Georgetown University.



Donato Abalos (seated left) and Patricio Ganio are greeted by sailors aboard the USS Bataan. The men survived the Bataan Death March.

Capt. Erik Ross, the Bataan's commanding officer, welcomed Ganio and Abalos aboard, calling them "heroes."

"This ship wouldn't have been commissioned were it not for your heroism," he said during a short ceremony. "You sir, both of you, are true heroes."

Following several weeks of battle against the Japanese, roughly 80,000 Allied forces, including American and Filipino servicemen, surrendered in early April 1942 after defending the western edge of Manila Bay. The surviving forces were taken captive and forced to march more than 60 miles to prison camps in what would come to be called the Bataan Death March. Thousands died along the way, either from malnourishment or at the hands of the Japanese.

Ganio and Abalos, now 92 and 87, survived. Ganio was eventually released and fought with guerrilla forces. Later he was with the U.S. Army's 25th Division as a first lieutenant. Abalos, meanwhile, escaped from Camp O'Donnell and became a second lieutenant. Thursday they were escorted aboard the Bataan by the Filipino American Veterans Association Honor Guard. Abalos wore a tie depicting the American flag and Ganio wore a white barong tagalog shirt, national attire from the Philippines. They are both up in age and hard of hearing.

'It means a lot' Ganio's son-in-law, Joel Garrido, said Ganio saw young men tossed to their deaths on bayonets and others who collapsed along the march run over by tanks. To be honored aboard the ship bearing a name that specifically honors those who fought at the Bataan Peninsula means a lot to his family.

"For this older generation, this only happens once in a blue moon," Garrido said.

Eugenia Reed, the president of the Filipino American Veterans Association, and Betty Howard, with the Mayport Council of the U.S. Navy League, both agreed. They worked with Navy and Jacksonville officials to make the event happen during the Week of Valor.

"Our veterans from World War II, the way they are passing away at such a high rate, it means a lot to get them here to honor their sacrifice," Howard said.

Ross said the men stationed aboard the Bataan have the "humbling challenge of living up to" the example set by men like Ganio and Abalos.

Ross then named the two veterans honoree captains of the Bataan.

"I am humbled and I am honored to be in your presence," he said.

william.browning@jacksonville.com, (904) 359-4619

THE RIDE HOME 2012 by Carol Rothfeld

Each year, Chapters of Rolling Thunder and their guests meet to commemorate the service to America by those referred to as POW/MIA. These letters designate those military who were Prisoners Of War or who are still Missing In Action. The Mission of Rolling Thunder is to publicize the POW/MIA issue and to educate the public that many POWs were left behind after all previous wars, to help correct the past by bringing home as many as possible and to protect future Veterans from being left behind should they become POW/MIA.

This year we were invited to attend the ceremonies taking place in Americus, Georgia. Our invitation came from the Chairman and members of Chapter 4 from the Jacksonville, Florida area. In 2011 Michael produced the documentary "Stolen Freedom" recounting the experiences of four Prisoners of War from Northeast Florida who served in either World War II, Korea or Viet Nam. The documentary came to the attention of many Veterans groups including Rolling Thunder. It was the intention of Chapter 4 to honor Michael at the banquet where presentations were to be made honoring those who had contributed so much to our country. Southwestern Georgia University in Americus partnered with Rolling Thunder and donated the use of their wonderful campus. We gratefully accepted the invitation and it turned out to be one of the most stirring events



that either of us had ever attended. We stayed in a remarkable hotel that was built in the late 1890s. It had been completely renovated but kept in the Victorian style. On the first morning there was a wreath-laying ceremony at the National Cemetery in Andersonville, which was an infamous Civil War Prisoner of War camp housing Union prisoners. This was followed by a ride to the University for a candle lighting ceremony honoring the families of the Missing In

Action followed by a lovely luncheon. The following day found everyone at a local WalMart parking lot lining up in long aisles of motorcycles, trucks and cars waiting to travel as a cavalcade to the University for the banquet and further ceremonies. We estimated that there were five hundred vehicles taking part, with the American Flag prominent on many of them.

We made two circles of the town while the local police let us go through the traffic lights. The streets were lined with people of all ages and ethnicities; some waving flags, most with their hands over their hearts and many giving a military salute. This was America at

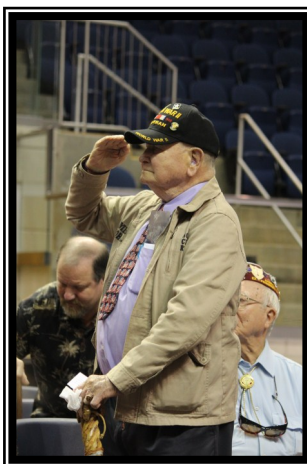


its best. We went on to the planned event where Michael was presented to the attendees. There were some former POWs who spoke about their experiences. We were introduced to the oldest former POW there. He is Philip Coon, a 94 year old Native American from Oklahoma who had served in WW II and took part in the infamous Bataan Death March. He was accompanied by his wife and son. One of the most touching parts of that evening was Mrs. Coon singing Amazing Grace in their Native American language. We were told about Sgt. Bowie R. Bergdahl, who is now a Prisoner of War captured in Afghanistan June 30, 2009. We are all waiting for him to come home. Following the dinner we drove back to the hotel, using our GPS, of course and were able to see some very beautiful homes from a by-gone era. The next afternoon, back at the college there was a ceremony involving the former POWs, their families and the families of the MIAs. They were given a commemorative medal and a certificate thanking them for their sacrifice. There was a very nice indoor picnic lunch. That evening we joined some of the Chapter 4 members for dinner at an Amish restaurant.

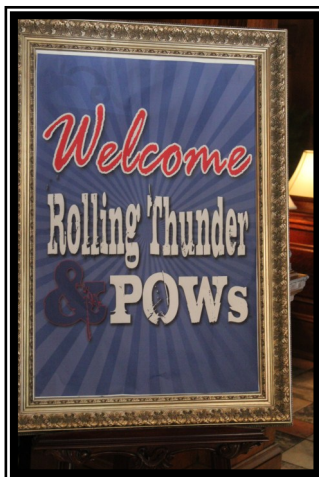
We were both so impressed by the planning and implementing of The Ride Home. The dedication of Rolling Thunder to our service people is amazing. The next time that you see a group of “older” folks riding their motorcycles through town they just may be on their way to a fund raiser honoring America’s heroes.



William Day, Vice President; Robert Mitchell,
President, Rolling Thunder FL Chapter 4



Bowe Bergdahl, US Army soldier in captivity
since July 2009



Meeting:
First Tuesday of each month
Time: 1900
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St. Augustine, FL 32080



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VETERANS CHARITIES

Americans gave millions of dollars in the past year to veterans charities designed to help troops wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, but several of the groups spent relatively little money on the wounded, according to a leading watchdog organization and federal tax filings.

The American Institute of Philanthropy, a leading charity watchdog, issued a report card this month for 29 veterans and military charities. Letter grades were based largely on the charities' fundraising costs and the percentage of money raised that was spent on charitable activities.

Air Force Aid Society (A+) **deficit of \$7M or more than 100% of revenue**
American Ex-Prisoners of War Service Foundation (F)
American Veterans Coalition (F)
American Veterans Relief Foundation (F)
AMVETS National Service Foundation (F) **program expenses 81%, admin 12% fundraising 6% but has a loss of \$700K**
Armed Services YMCA of the USA (A-)
Army Emergency Relief (A+)
Blinded Veterans Association (D)
Disabled American Veterans (D)
Disabled Veterans Association (F)
Fisher House Foundation (A+)
Freedom Alliance (F)
Help Hospitalized Veterans/Coalition to Salute America's Heroes (F)
Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund (A+)
Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation (F)
National Military Family Association (A)
National Veterans Services Fund (F)
National Vietnam Veterans Committee (D)
Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (A+)
NCOA National Defense Foundation (F)
Paralyzed Veterans of America (F)
Soldiers' Angels (D)
United Spinal Association's Wounded Warrior Project (D)
USO (United Service Organization) (C+)
Veterans of Foreign Wars and Foundation (C-)
Veterans of the Vietnam War & the Veterans Coalition (D)
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (D)
Viet Now National Headquarters (F)
World War II Veterans Committee (D)

This information was submitted by George Milroy, the RED comments by John Mountcastle

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

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

Send to: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org



St Francis Barracks, St Augustine

**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 at the Elks Lodge,
1420 A1A So., St. Augustine.**

**Visit our Website: www.veteranscouncilofstjohns.org
(please note the NEW web address)**

**Veterans Service Office
1955 US 1 South, Suite 550
St. Augustine, FL 32086**

(physical location)

The VSO Office is located in the St. Johns County Health and Human Services complex, behind the VA Clinic.

*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, CVSO
Rick Rees, Assistant VSO
Heather Andrews, Assistant VSO
Tammy Shirley, Office Specialist*

Important Online Veterans Links:

Vietnam War Websites:

**[http://www.yale.edu/glc/Stratford/
vietnam.htm](http://www.yale.edu/glc/Stratford/vietnam.htm)**

Korean War Project:

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

The Gulf War:

<http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/>

The locally produced *Vietnam documentary, Service, Sacrifice and Courage* has received **80,661** views to date on YouTube.

You can view part of it at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8Cs6Th7Vnc>



Florida Veterans Programs & Projects, Inc. in association with Rolling Thunder Florida are making available free copies of its "Prisoners of War: Stolen Freedom" documentary to all Veterans Groups. Just contact Michael at: 904-829-0381 or mrothfeld@AnyVeteran.org and I will mail them or meet you to give you as many free copies as you need. Our goal is to have as many people see the documentary as possible.

"Armistice - The End of World War I, 1918," EyeWitness to History, www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (2004).

Armistice - The End of World War I, 1918

The final Allied push towards the German border began on October 17, 1918. As the British, French and American armies advanced, the alliance between the Central Powers began to collapse. Turkey signed an armistice at the end of October, Austria-Hungary followed on November 3.

Germany began to crumble from within. Faced with the prospect of returning to sea, the sailors of America troops at the front celebrate the end of the fighting, Nov 11, 1918 the High Seas Fleet stationed at Kiel mutinied on October 29. Within a few days, the entire city was in their control and the revolution spread throughout the country. On November 9 the Kaiser abdicated; slipping across the border into the Netherlands and exile. A German Republic was declared and peace feelers extended to the Allies. At 5 AM on the morning of November 11 an armistice was signed in a railroad car parked in a French forest near the front lines.

The terms of the agreement called for the cessation of fighting along the entire Western Front to begin at precisely 11 AM that morning. After over four years of bloody conflict, the Great War was at an end. "...at the front there was no celebration."

Colonel Thomas Gowenlock served as an intelligence officer in the American 1st Division. He was on the front line that November morning and wrote of his experience a few years later:

"On the morning of November 11 I sat in my dugout in Le Gros Faux, which was again our division headquarters, talking to our Chief of Staff, Colonel John Greely, and Lieutenant Colonel Paul Peabody, our G-1. A signal corps officer entered and handed us the following message:

Official Radio from Paris - 6:01 A.M., Nov. 11, 1918. Marshal Foch to the Commander-in-Chief.

1. Hostilities will be stopped on the entire front beginning at 11 o'clock, November 11th (French hour).
2. The Allied troops will not go beyond the line reached at that hour on that date until further orders.

[signed]
MARSHAL FOCH
5:45 A.M.

'Well - fini la guerre!' said Colonel Greely.

'It sure looks like it,' I agreed.

'Do you know what I want to do now?' he said. 'I'd like to get on one of those little horse-drawn canal boats in southern France and lie in the sun the rest of my life.'

My watch said nine o'clock. With only two hours to go, I drove over to the bank of the Meuse River to see the finish. The shelling was heavy and, as I walked down the road, it grew steadily worse. It seemed to me that every battery in the world was trying to burn up its guns. At last eleven o'clock came - but the firing continued. The men on both sides had decided to give each other all they had-their farewell to arms. It was a very natural impulse after their years of war, but unfortunately many fell after eleven o'clock that day.

All over the world on November 11, 1918, people were celebrating, dancing in the streets, drinking champagne, hailing the

Celebration in Paris Nov 11, 1918

Armistice that meant the end of the war. But at the front there was no celebration. Many soldiers believed the Armistice only a temporary measure and that the war would soon go on. As night came, the quietness, unearthly in its penetration, began to eat into their souls. The men sat around log fires, the first they had ever had at the front. They were trying to reassure themselves that there were no enemy batteries spying on them from the next hill and no German bombing planes approaching to blast them out of existence. They talked in low tones. They were nervous.

After the long months of intense strain, of keying themselves up to the daily mortal danger, of thinking always in terms of war and the enemy, the abrupt release from it all was physical and psychological agony. Some suffered a total nervous collapse. Some, of a steadier temperament, began to hope they would someday return to home and the embrace of loved ones. Some could think only of the crude little crosses that marked the graves of their comrades. Some fell into an exhausted sleep. All were bewildered by the sudden meaninglessness of their existence as soldiers - and through their teeming memories paraded that swiftly moving cavalcade of Cantigny, Soissons, St. Mihiel, the Meuse-Argonne and Sedan.

What was to come next? They did not know - and hardly cared. Their minds were numbed by the shock of peace. The past consumed their whole consciousness. The present did not exist-and the future was inconceivable."

References:

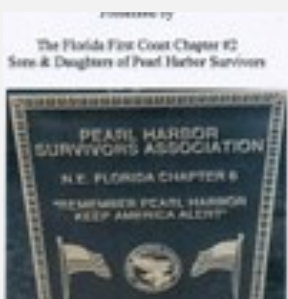
Colonel Gowenlock's account appears in Gowenlock, Thomas R., *Soldiers of Darkness* (1936), reprinted in Angle, Paul, M., *The American Reader* (1958); Simkins, Peter, *World War I, the Western Front* (1991).



Pictures of the Memorial Dedication for the USMC & Navy FMF Corpsmen Memorial dedicated at the Jacksonville National Cemetery

on Saturday 11/10/2012.

<http://spotted.staugustine.com/galleries/index.php?id=338588>



Pictures of the Memorial Dedication for the Pearl Harbor Memorial dedicated at the Jacksonville National Cemetery

on Saturday 11/10/2012.

<http://spotted.staugustine.com/galleries/index.php?id=338593>

*Photos Courtesy of Rick Rees, St Johns County
Assistant Veterans Services Officer*



"Marines Lead the Way!"

... "First to fight" is a slogan associated with the United States Marine Corps, but there is another first the Marines are proud of and that is its "Toys for Tots" program. Others are attempting to imitate, but are not able to duplicate this program. For over a half a century – the US Marine Corps – is the unchallenged leader in looking after America's needy children at Christmas.



In 1947, Major Bill Hendricks, USMC – with the support of members of his Los Angeles Marine Corps Reserve unit – collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children. Major Hendricks' program was so successful that in 1948, the Marine Corps adopted it and expanded it nationwide as the "US Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program." In the intervening years, Marines have conducted successful Toys for Tots campaigns each year, collecting and distributing over 418,000,000 toys.

Today, Toys for Tots is the Marine Corps' premier community action program. Marine Corps Reserve Units, located throughout the nation, conduct toy collection and distribution campaigns near their Reserve Centers each year. To expand the nationwide coverage of Toys for Tots, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation authorizes Marine Corps League Detachments to conduct Toys for Tots campaigns in their communities. *The Oldest City Detachment #383, Marine Corps League, St. Augustine, FL* is once again the spearhead of this program within the St. Augustine and St. Johns County community. However, your local Marines cannot spell success without "u".

Caring and generous Americans drop off new unwrapped toys at collection receptacles located in local businesses. Detachment #383 Marine Coordinators pick up, sort, and store these toys for distribution to our needy children. December 22nd will be the distribution date held at the Elks Lodge 829, 1420 A1A South, St. Augustine. So have you looked at your calendar? Yes, the December 22nd date is fast approaching. This is why we need you to support the Toys for Tots Program as soon as possible. For further details and drop off location, please do not hesitate to contact The Oldest City Detachment #383 by visiting its web site: <http://www.mclfi383.org>

Semper Fidelis!



Veterans Day in Nation's Oldest City By Michael Isam



St. Augustine, Fla, (November 16, 2012) – Boasting the oldest citizen militia in the country, residents go “all out” to honor veterans.

The attendees witnessed abundance of pomp and circumstance with the “Massing of the Colors,” enough gunpowder smoke to make one think of a London fog from the old Sherlock Holmes movies, enough Junior ROTC cadets to successfully storm and capture a beachhead, and more.

Such was the Veterans Day observance at Francis Field.

Guest speaker Rear Admiral Sinclair N. Harris, USN, showed he understands the chain of command. When he asked his wife the question “What should I speak about?” and her answer was “About 5 to 10 minutes.” He followed the advice.

It was difficult at times as he addressed the many accomplishments of the various branches of service during times of war and peace. “Many remember the heroics of our men and women in uniform during periods of war,” he said, “But our missions have no end point. We are duty bound to protect and serve our country 24 hours per day.” “the exploits of service personnel during Hurricane Sandy is a prime example of our ability to perform under the most extreme circumstances.”

Following Admiral Harris was the most solemn time of all remembrances, the salute to Veterans who passed. With the cancellation of the Memorial Day observance, names of the fallen were carried over to Veterans Day. In all, 261 names were read embracing, Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine. Veterans of WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, the Gulf Wars, Iraq, and Afghanistan were remembered. They will be missed. Due to the large number of Veterans honored, the traditional ringing of the ships bell occurred after the last name of each branch of service. Nease High School Naval JROTC Cadet Brittney Ziminski was accorded the honor as Salute Officer.



“Mario Patruno, WWII Veteran of the “Screaming Eagles” and well known for stealing a Nazi officers horse enabling him to return to his unit.”

Special thanks to Nease High School and Bartram High School JROTC Drill Teams for an excellent performance of close quarter drills. The Nease team came with weapons and showed excellent skill and coordination.

To those who think that Florida is all sand, I offer this tidbit. It took two retired Sgt. Majors, a retired Lt. Col., three tent stakes and a sledge hammer to set up the display honoring fallen comrades.

Thanks to the “Pirate Festival” there was a tent and dozens of chairs.

One word of advice for next year, a loud and clear “Fire in the hole!” before firing cannons would be nice. At the first firing, 55 veterans hit the dirt.

Veterans Day in St. Augustine Beach By Michael Isam

St. Augustine Beach, Fla, (November 16, 2012) – It was no mean feat to begin the First Annual Veterans Day Observance at Lakeside Park in St. Augustine Beach, and doing it properly requires pipes and drums. And so it was!

Thanks to the abundant energy of John Reardon, a Marine Veteran and former St. Johns County Commissioner, and the Ancient City Pipe and Drum led by Walter O’Kon, it happened.



"Drum Major Walter O'Kon leads the Ancient City Pipe and Drum to begin the First Annual Veterans Day observance in St. Augustine Beach"

Lakeside Park is home to Veterans Memorial honoring Veterans of all the branches of service. The designation plaque bears the words, “To those who have fought for it, Freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.” The Memorial was the idea of Captain Robert L. Beskind, USN, Retired. Beskind died before he could see his dream become a reality. The torch was picked up by Reardon whose tireless efforts saw Beskind’s dream become a reality on November 11, 2009.

The observance was short and well attended. Many nonprofit agencies supporting Veterans as well as local businesses were the main sponsors of the event.

A guest speaker was Colonel Lisa Craig of the Florida National Guard. Colonel Craig spoke of a life in the Florida National Guard who was deployed to war zones multiple times. As she spoke, a wave of realization came across the faces of the audience that members of both sexes are in harm’s way. Fighting is no longer a venue reserved for men only.

“It may be a desert, but it is NOT sand,” she said. “It is a fine powder dust that gets in EVERY-THING.” “There were no ‘white glove’ inspections,” she added.

Speaking as a leader, she reiterated about expectations regarding loved ones returning from war. “Don’t expect your loved ones to be the bright-eyed innocent who left so many months ago. That person only exists in photographs.”

Bill Dudley spoke about the Veterans Council of St. Johns County and important role it plays in assisting to better the lives of veterans of all branches of service.

Daniel McCarthy spoke about the “Wounded Warrior Project” which had its beginnings just north of St. Augustine Beach in Jacksonville.

A high point in the observance was the singing of the “Star Spangled Banner” by Madison McCutcheon. McCutcheon is a Junior at St. Augustine High School.

The Color Guard was provided by VFW Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391.

The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps provided parking and audience assistance.

Oldest City Detachment #383 Marine Corps League “New Officer Installation”

The Oldest City Detachment #383, Marine Corps League, St. Augustine held it's “Officer Installation” this past November 10th, which was conducted at its 237th Marine Corps Birthday Ball. High goals have been established to lead The Oldest City Detachment #383 into the New Year to further enhance the Detachment's involvement within the St. Augustine, St. Johns County Communities as major contributors towards programs benefiting our veterans. The Oldest City Detachment #383 has its doors open to all Marines and Corpsmen (veterans and active) to join its ranks. Meetings are held every first Tuesday of the month at the Elks Lodge #829, 1420 A1A South, St. Augustine. Visit us @ <http://www.mclfl.org>



Coquina Veterans Veterans Day, 2012 By Harry Manford

The Coquina Veterans in typical grandeur, style, and respect presented its seventh Veterans Day Observance on November 12th, 2012. This grand event was held at the Coquina Crossing Ballroom with appropriate military decoration and pomp. The Ballroom looked fabulous.



Over 170 veterans and Coquina Crossing community citizens were present for the event.

First, everyone was treated to delightful, all-time favorite military tunes by the Coquina Crossing Crusaders (Coquina Crossing's official band). The final medley of "God Bless America" brought everyone to their feet with all clapping and cheering. Then, the Coquina Veterans Color Guard decked out in their finest presented the Colors. This Color Guard is always sharp in its appearance and execution, and each time they do this, the detail receives a round of applause for proudly presenting the US Flag and organization colors in appropriate fashion.

Harry Manford then made comments about the ever changing US military force. He cited, currently within our **all volunteer** Armed Forces, including active and reserve personnel, the composition is approximately 15% female. These ladies do not just have office jobs, or stand behind a supply counter passing out web gear, or do logistical planning for the smooth and efficient movement of material and personnel. They have extremely important positions such as aviation pilots, command positions of naval ships and air stations, and are manning nuclear submarines.

Manford further spoke about the misconception of "What is a veteran?" To many, the definition of a veteran is one who has been in "combat." Is that correct? Is that inclusive? The straight answer to these is "No". Didn't we all raise our right hand and make a pledge and promise to protect this Nation during peacetime or not? Wouldn't all of those who raised their right hand go into combat, without question, should they receive that call? So, a veteran is anyone who wore an Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or Merchant Marine uniform whether in time of conflict or not. They all served; therefore, **they all are veterans!**

Twice a year, once at Memorial Day and then again on Veterans Day, the Coquina Veterans awards a 'Certificate of Appreciation' to that Coquina Veteran that has shown dedication, participation, and contribution to the Coquina Veterans. Today's most appreciated Coquina Veteran is US Air Force (retired) Chief Master Sergeant George Milroy. George has served the Coquina Veterans admirably for the past eight years, and this award is well deserved. George had prior commitments elsewhere and was not present to receive his award; however, his wife, daughter, and grand daughter were there to receive it in his stead. Congrats George!

Following, US Navy (retired) Command Master Chief Robert "Mitch" Mitchell with his Rolling Thunder group made their "Remember: POW/MIA" presentation. Many in attendance were spellbound and in awe as they had never seen (maybe not thought much about it) this before. Mitch had a POW/MIA table set up and described in detail each piece on the table and the meaning behind each item. Mitch then made a roll call for the missing, and this is the portion of the program that is the most memorable. It's obvious the audience was impressed as afterwards, dozens expressed their thanks and gratitude for bringing this to their attention, and how appreciative they are for bringing this concept to the forefront. Mitch and Rolling Thunder did a superb job.



The day's program ended with some gift giving and everyone was served a delicious meal prepared by one of the community's master cooks. Everyone had a Veterans Day they will long remember.



Veteran Women Can Become Entrepreneurs *Get inspired!*

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE) is a premier training program in entrepreneurship and small business management. V-WISE helps women veterans find their passion and learn the business savvy skills necessary to turn an idea or start-up into a growing venture. V-WISE is offered by the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University (SU) in cooperation with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and is operated by SU's Institute for Veterans and Military Families.

ELIGIBILITY

Applications will be accepted from all women veterans (from any branch of the military and across any era of service), active duty and female spouses/partners of military personnel interested in learning about entrepreneurship and starting, running or growing a business.

COSTS & LOGISTICS

Through the support of the SBA, there are no conference or hotel accommodation fees associated with the program. Participants are responsible for securing travel to and from the program (including hotel parking), as well as a one-time \$75 registration fee. All other expenses are covered, including hotel, meals and related course materials.

THREE-PHASE EXPERIENCE

PHASE 1 ONLINE: An online, 15-day self-study focused on the basic skills of entrepreneurship and the language of business.

PHASE 2 CONFERENCE: A three-day entrepreneurship experience where delegates are exposed to successful entrepreneurs, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies and leaders in government. Upon completion of this phase you will receive 2.7 continuing education units (documentation required).

PHASE 3 SUPPORT: Delivery of a comprehensive listing of community-level resources covering the Small Business Administration (SBA), Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), Women's Business Development Centers (WBDC), Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC), and Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) offices.

TOPICS ADDRESSED

business concepts • profit models • guerrilla marketing
financing • human resources • legal challenges

APPLY

We operate on a rolling admissions basis; therefore early application is highly encouraged.

Apply online at: whitman.syr.edu/VWISEApplication2

QUESTIONS

(315) 443-4629 • vwise@syr.edu

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

JACKSONVILLE: January 10–12, 2013
CHICAGO: May 3–5, 2013
SEATTLE: August 16–18, 2013
DENVER: November 14–16, 2013



THE INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES
The Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University is the first national center in higher education focused on the social, economic, education and policy issues impacting veterans and their families post-service. To learn more, visit vets.syr.edu.



Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

On Friday November 16, Bill Dudley and I visited the UNF Military & Veterans Resource Center. We met with Ray Wikstrom, Director and Rich Carey, Transition Coach, both men had impressive military backgrounds. Bill and I were given a tour of their facility and spoke with a few veterans. We will look into doing a joint veterans project in the new year.

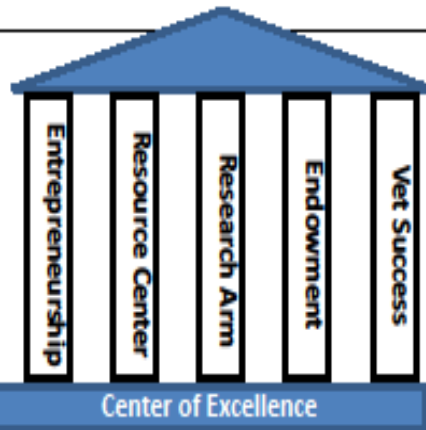
Fact Sheet – MVRC

University of North Florida Military & Veterans Resource Center

Mission Statement: the MVRC provides a broad range of student services and resources focused on the special needs of today's military veteran, service members, and their families to enhance their smooth "transition" from the military environment to campus life leading to academic success, graduation and employment opportunities.



Vision: The MVRC's vision is to become a Veteran's Center of Excellence through a pillar approach. These pillars include: Entrepreneurship, Resource Center, Research, Endowment, and VetSuccess. The MVRC will touch not only the UNF military and veteran community and their families, but also the northeast Florida military and veteran community and will serve as a model of excellence.



Major Functions:

Center Facility - Transition Coach, (7) Station Computer Lab, Copy Machine, Fax Machine, Group Study Room, Lounge with Refrigerator, Microwave, and TV; Counseling Room, VA Certifying Official Tuesday Visits, Open until 6:30 p.m.

Campus Services – Priority Registration for Veterans, Academic Advising, Tutoring, Workshops, Veteran Orientation, UNF Veteran's Handbook, Military Ambassador Program

Campus Resources- Disability Resource Center, Counseling Center, Financial Aid, VA Educational Benefits, Student Veterans of America, Student Government, Career Services, Veteran Scholarships, and Veterans Club of UNF Alumni Association

Veteran Specific Offerings – (22) Veteran-Specific Scholarships, (8) Veteran-Specific Internships, (5) VA Work-Study Positions, and (2) Student Assistant Paid Work Study Positions

Workshops – Eight noon hour workshops each semester to include non-academic areas of interest

Special Events – Veteran's Day Tribute each fall semester. Each Spring semester "College Ready Boot Camp" for newly released veterans or transfer students to assess their skill levels and Military Veterans Job Fair.

Contact:

Ray Wikstrom, MVRC Director
904.620.2655 ray.wikstrom@unf.edu

Kathleen Leone, Director of Development
904.620.1369 k.leone.48680@unf.edu





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:		Cemetery ID Number FLNSA
Address:		
City:		
State:	Zip :	Sponsoring Group ID Number FLVCSJC01
Phone: ()		
Email:		

Cemetery Designation: **St. Augustine National Cemetery**

Sponsoring Group Contact: Daniel Blackman sgm500@gmail.com or 904-669-6423

Sponsorship	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual= 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Family= 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business= 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate= 100 Wreaths or more	\$15.00 each wreath		
		Grand Total	

****WE REGRET WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT GRAVE-SPECIFIC REQUESTS****

Please make checks payable to: **Wreaths Across America™**

**Mail check and form to: c/o Daniel Blackman (WAA), St. Johns County Veterans Service Office
P.O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117**

Questions? Call (904) 669-6423 or (904) 540-1630

Thank you for your Sponsorship and joining us in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach!

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

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA is an IRC§501(c)(3) exempt non-profit Maine corporation, FEIN 20-8362270, registered (# CH34722) with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Contributions are deductible from taxable federal income as charitable donations under IRC§170 and/or IRC§6115. Wreaths Across America™ does not use professional solicitors. 100% of funds received benefit the mission: to purchase wreaths to lay at the gravestones of Veterans. More information may be obtained from our website [http:// www.wreathsaacrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathsaacrossamerica.org). A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. The toll-free number of the Department is 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352)—calling from within the State of Florida or (850) 488-2221—calling from outside Florida.



On Friday November 9th, the Council on Aging, Veterans Council of St. Johns County and Florida Veterans Programs & Projects, Inc. hosted a talk



and luncheon for veterans. Dr. Henry Moreland, Commander of the Korean War Veterans Association, Jacksonville Chapter 200 and LTC James Vanairsdale, USMC ret., both spoke about the relevance, sacrifice and history of the Korean Conflict. Bill Dudley served as Master of Ceremonies and SGM Ray Quinn, USA ret., gave the eulogy. The presentation was well received and lunch followed, hosted by FVPPI.



KWVA Chapter 200 Members



Host Mary Lou Belmont, COA



SJC Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley



SGM Ray Quinn offers Invocation



Dr. Henry Moreland, Commander KWVA



LTC Jim Vanairsdale, USMC ret.



FL Elks National Veterans Service Commission



Bill Dudley, Master Chief Duffy, USN ret.,
& Nease HS JROTC Color Guard



Dan Luce setting up Elks Flags

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS DAY 2012



Three days ago, the citizens of this great land decided who would have the privilege of leading our Nation for the next four years. It is a time-honored process reflecting both the wisdom and the power of the American people. Today, America honors the men and women whose profound acts of citizenship — service in the armed forces of the United States of America — have safeguarded our country for 237 years and guaranteed our rights as Americans to choose our leaders.

Twenty-two million living Americans today have distinguished themselves by their service in uniform. Their devotion and sacrifice have been the bedrock of our sovereignty as a Nation, our values as a people, our security as a democracy, and our offer of hope to those in other lands, who dream our dreams of “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

For the past 11 years, the men and women of our armed forces have stood watch in Iraq, Afghanistan, Europe, Korea, and more than 150 other countries around the globe. More than 1.5 million Veterans have served in the combat theaters of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa. Since 9/11, nearly 3 million Veterans have departed the military, having fulfilled their duty to the Nation, and become eligible for the benefits and services we offer here at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

We are often reminded that, today, less than 1 percent of Americans wear the uniforms of our Nation. The sum of their service to the country, however, is beyond measure. Our rights and privileges as American citizens have been their gifts to each of us. We must not take those gifts for granted. On behalf of the American people, each of us here at VA has the responsibility of caring for these giants among us. Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence — I CARE — are our watchwords.

VA is renewing our country's historic covenant with its Veterans. By leveraging 21st century technology and empowered by a dedicated workforce, over one-third of whom are Veterans themselves, VA is boldly transforming itself in healthcare and benefits delivery, and in memorial affairs, to better serve all Veterans.

Our goals remain unchanged: increase access to VA benefits and services; eliminate the backlog in compensation claims in 2015; and end Veterans' homelessness, as well, in 2015. In this Department, every day is Veterans Day. We celebrate their contributions, take pride in their achievements, and as their national advocates, care, nurture, and protect them as well as they protected all of us.

I extend my thanks and admiration to our Nation's Veterans on this, their special day of recognition, and I express my deep appreciation to my colleagues at VA for their dedication, their loyalty, and their partnership in this noble mission.

Eric K. Shinseki

We Honor Veterans

"It's About Living in a Country that is Free"

November 8, 2012

Special viewing of "Korea: Forgotten War, Remembered Heroes"

10:30 am

The Meeting Room, Ponce de Leon Mall

Veteran's History Project

Collaboration with St. Johns County Public Library

Opportunity for Veterans to record their military experience

and have it archived at the Library of Congress

Veteran's can record their experience with trained volunteers at the Library
or in their home

Family Outing for Families of Fallen Soldiers

January 12, 2013

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

In collaboration with Survivor Outreach Services

All branches of military

19 Northern/Central Florida Counties

Grounds of Haven Hospice

4200 NW 90th Blvd., Gainesville, FL



St. Augustine Offices

200 Southpark Blvd., Ste 207

St. Augustine, FL 32084

904-810-2377

Geographics



A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



Americans have always had much for which to give thanks. We live in a good and great country, where our blessings are manifold. For those who settled Virginia's Berkeley Plantation, it was a safe arrival from England in 1619. For the Pilgrims at Plymouth, it was a bountiful harvest in 1621. For the Continental Congress in 1777, and for President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, it was the Almighty's presence during times of great peril.

This year, despite a difficult economy, we can give thanks that we continue to enjoy the blessings of liberty, prosperity, and security. These are the gifts of successive generations of our fellow citizens, who answered the calls of duty and safeguarded our freedoms during times of peace and war.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is dedicated to serving these men and women, who have served us all so magnificently. As we join with friends and loved ones this Thanksgiving Day, let us all take a moment to remember and give thanks for our 22 million Veterans, who have kept this country and much of the world safe, free, and prosperous. Let us also give thanks for our 319,000 dedicated VA colleagues, who help us keep Lincoln's promise to "care for [those] who have borne the battle and for [their families]." Say a special prayer of thanks for the nearly three million Americans in uniform today, many of them in harm's way and more than 800 of whom are our VA colleagues. They stand watch around the world so that we can enjoy the blessings of being American.

Warmest Thanksgiving greetings to all our Veterans and their families, to our survivors, and to the professionals at the Department of Veterans Affairs, who serve them. May God continue to bless and protect those who serve and have served our Nation in uniform. May God continue to bless this wonderful country of ours.

Eric K. Shinseki

The St Johns County Public Library System and Haven Hospice are working together to gather and collect the stories of our nation's greatest resource: our local heroes.



There are two ways you can take part in this project. If you are a veteran who would like to be interviewed or you would like to volunteer to conduct interviews you can contact:

Amy Ackerman: aackerman@sjcfl.us, 904-827-6960, Bartram Trail Library

Mikki Sampo: msampo@sjcfl.us, 904-827-6940, Main Library

Kathy Furney: jkfurney@havenhospice.org, 904-810-2377, Haven Hospice



The United States Congress created the Veterans History Project in 2000. The Mission of the VHP is to collect, preserve and make accessible the personal accounts of American wartime veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war.



Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Launches New Outreach Campaign to Connect Veterans with Earned Benefits



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida veterans may be missing out on millions of dollars in benefits to which they are entitled, so the [Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs](#) has launched a statewide multimedia campaign to connect them with federal and state benefits and services they have earned.

Florida's 1.6 million veterans range from the nation's largest population of World War II vets to those returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. Just as the state's veteran population spans the generations, so does the outreach campaign — utilizing everything from traditional newspaper ads and displays to a new website and smart phone app.

"Some of Florida's veterans fought for our freedom in the days before television while others never knew a time without personal computers, yet they all share the admiration of a grateful nation," said Mike Prendergast, executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. "If they aren't receiving the benefits and services they rightfully earned, we must use every approach available to reach them and set things right."

Florida's veteran population is the third largest in the nation, and its Department of Veterans' Affairs plays a critical role in advocating for veterans and connecting them to federal and state benefits and services they have earned. Currently, Florida veterans draw down more than \$13.7 billion a year in federal compensation, education and pension benefits, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical services and military retired pay, but agency leaders say veterans are leaving millions more on the table.

For example, of Florida's 1.6 million veterans, only 260,000 are receiving service-related compensation or pension from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

In addition, many of Florida's 449,000 Vietnam veterans may be unaware they could be entitled to a monthly payment for a [service-connected disability](#) if they suffer from one of several [diseases](#) associated with exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange — diseases ranging from Ischemic Heart Disease and Hodgkin's Disease to Type 2 diabetes to prostate cancer. Currently, only one third of Vietnam veterans nationally are enrolled in VA health care or have applied for benefits they earned as a result of military service.

"We strongly encourage our eligible Vietnam veterans to enroll in health care and apply for service-related disability payments," said Prendergast. "We want our veterans to be identified, treated and compensated for any effects they may be having as a result of exposure."

To help bring a fresh new awareness to the situation, the 23-year-old state agency unveiled a new logo, website, smart phone app, collateral materials, [public service announcements](#) and outreach strategies, and reframed its mission, vision and motto.

The department embraced a renewed commitment to reach Vietnam veterans, Florida's largest veteran demographic; women veterans, who number more than 140,000; and younger, returning veterans, since more than 230,000 veterans of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom call Florida home.

The new, easier-to-navigate website will act as a portal to help veterans find the information that they need to access benefits and services more efficiently and effectively. All of the English and Spanish public service announcements and radio spots will raise awareness about the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and its services, while also directing veterans to the website. In addition, the mobile application, offered in the Android and Apple markets, will not only integrate with the website and offer veterans reminders and updates about services through push notifications, but also lead veterans to [Employ Florida Vets](#), the state's veteran employment website, to help them find jobs.



Florida Department of
Veterans' Affairs



FLORIDA VETERANS FOUNDATION, INC.

The Capitol, Suite 2105D
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

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Chairman

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Col. Mike Prendergast
ex-officio

November 16, 2012

Dear Florida Veterans

It is requested that veterans from the State of Florida provide this office with a minimum of five (5) of the major problems effecting veterans.

Please use the website form to list the problems as you know them, and if you can, then give a recommended solution to the problem. We have listed several sample problem areas which have already been collected by our office. Please look these samples over and feel free to use any or all of them in giving your answers.

Please provide this information no later than November 29, 2012, to the Florida Veterans Foundation, Attention Major John Haynes, USMC (Ret) Chairman, email haynesj@fdva.state.fl.us.

If you have any questions, please contact this office.



The Vietnam War Veteran and Korean Conflict Veteran license plates shipped out to the counties last week. The Combat Action Badge should be available during January 2013.

The remaining military license plates listed below will not be available until sometime next year. I am currently waiting on the electronic designs from 3M. From there we will then go to the metal sample plates for review. Hopefully, they will be available in the April - May 2013 timeframe.

Air Force Cross

Combat Infantry Badge

Distinguished Service Cross

Navy Cross

Silver Star

Let me know if you have any questions.

Kathy Hill

*Business Consultant - North District
Motor Vehicle Field Operations*



Once a SOLDIER



ALWAYS a SOLDIER

Please don't forget to send your articles or Veteran organization information for the Veterans Council of St. Johns County Newsletter to Editor Michael Rothfeld at: mrothfeld@anyveteran.org

We want to tell everyone about where you served, who you served with, any interesting or exciting battles you were in, etc. We also want to know what you are doing now, what veterans groups you belong to, how to join, when they meet and what they do.

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.