

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



Inside this issue:

Lassen Veterans Nursing Home	Pg 2
Jacksonville National Cemetery	Pg 3
From the Chairman	Pg 5
IRS Charity Compliance	Pg 6
Memorial Day Ceremonies	Pg 9,10
From Michael Isam	Pg 13
Battle of Midway Dinner	Pg 17
FL National Guard Foundation	Pg 20

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Newsletter Date: May, 2013

Message from the Chairman



This month we will be honoring all our men and women who have died defending this great nation on **Memorial Day**, May 27. I hope everyone will come out to pay their respects to our fallen heroes of all wars, those who have fought to keep this country free and secure.

Our first Memorial Day service will be at the St. Augustine National Cemetery beginning at 10 am. Following that, we will have an afternoon service at the Jacksonville National Cemetery at 2 PM. Both services have an excellent program lined up to honor our fallen heroes. I encourage you to plan to attend one of these services.

Also, on May 17 at 2 PM at Jacksonville National Cemetery, a memorial service is planned for our recently departed Ben Meggitt. I'm sure all of you are aware; Ben was the quintessential Veteran for St. Johns Coun-

ty for many years. Every Veteran event in this county over the years was all ways honored by his presence. Our own Veterans Council was privileged to have him as its leader in the early years of its forming. Please plan to join us as we gather to pay our respects to Ben and his family.

Don't forget our Battle of Midway Dinner coming up on June 1 at Renaissance Hotel, World Golf Village. We have another great program planned for this year and are expecting over 1000 in attendance. There is more about this event in this month's newsletter and tickets are still available but are selling fast, so plan to get your tickets now.

Also, mark the date of Nov. 3 on your calendar. We are planning another program at Anastasia Baptist Church much like the one we had two years ago for the Documentary on POW's. This program

"Commitment to Honor"

"will tell the story of those brave soldiers who fought in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. It's a story of Veterans helping Veterans, many suffering from PTSD, loss of limbs, and other wounds of war. A video produced by The Douglas Anderson School of the Arts has documented these Veterans stories as told by firsthand experience of those interviewed. The video will be a part of the program and the committee putting the event together promises another performance equal to the POW Documentary that was a huge hit two years ago and filled the church auditorium seating of over 1200 seats.

Bill Dudley

Chairman

Veterans Council of

St. Johns Co .Inc



Special Points of Interest

Drone Medal Cancelled
Fleet Reserve Assoc. St. Augustine
LTC George Gaspard, American Hero
Marineland Military Retreat
POW/MIA Freedom March
Dept of VA News Release
Jacksonville Veterans Center
Irish Water Dogs
FL Veterans Hall of Fame
A Wounded Warrior and his Dog
Korean War Veterans
Disability Claims Wait Time Shortened

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Patriotism is our motto



Three Elk Lodges came together to sponsor a fabulous fishing event at the Elk's Lodge in Green Cove Springs.



Is it a fish or a crab?

We may or may not catch fish, but we enjoyed the day!

Several residents made the outing a family affair



Lassen veterans celebrate special events!

Mr. Germain got a surprise visitor on Easter

Mr. and Mrs. Bowditch were both surprised





The Jacksonville National Cemetery

Greetings from the Support Committee at the Jacksonville National Cemetery!



Chairman Howard McGillin

The support committee has been very busy this spring with several activities. As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, the committee is rapidly preparing for the Memorial Day ceremony to be held at the Jacksonville National Cemetery at 2 PM (that's 1400 for you military types) on the afternoon of Memorial Day – May 27. Many thanks go out to our Program Chair, Sergeant Major (USA, Retired) Ray Quinn who, as usual, has coordinated an outstanding program to celebrate the memory of our departed veterans. Please make plans to join us at the Jacksonville national Cemetery on the afternoon of Memorial Day for this solemn commemoration. If you cannot make it, please take a few moments that weekend to remember that Memorial Day is not about sales, malls, cars and barbecues – rather it is to remember those who have given “the last full measure” in defense of our Nation.

The Committee has several other projects that are well underway. First, the Committee has reached out to, and formed a partnership with, the University of North Florida. Dr. Jillian Smith, and several of her students are now working with the committee on a project to document and film activities at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. In addition their effort will dovetail with efforts to establish a permanent Memorial Center to gather memories and historical information about the veterans who are interred at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. The early phases of the memorial project include gathering information about veterans who are interred at the cemetery. Ultimately, the vision of the Support Committee and our partners throughout Northeast Florida, is to have a physical memorial center at or near the grounds of the cemetery. Family members and members of the general public may view artifacts, documents, historical items and other items of interest related to both the cemetery and the veterans interred there. In the short term, the plan is to make this a virtual experience, with development of a new website for the support committee.

The website is another major effort ongoing with the support committee. The website will include videos produced by Dr. Smith's class, as well as, hopefully scanned images of documents and memorabilia related to the cemetery and to the veterans interred there. As this collection will initially be a virtual one, the Committee is currently only collecting documents and photographs. We hope that someday there will be a physical museum setting available as well.

Other long-term projects of the committee include a partnership, along with several other groups including the Rotary of Northeast Florida and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Montgomery correctional facility. This partnership seeks to take advantage of the proximity of the cemetery and the correctional facility. The correctional facility currently operates a small jail farm. The long-term vision is to possibly team with Veterans Groups to establish a Veterans training farm at the location. One of the products of this form, it is hoped, will be trees that will be initially cultivated at the farm. Once the trees reach a certain size, the long-term goal would be to then plant them along the fence line between the Montgomery correctional facility and the Cemetery. This will provide a better visual site barrier between the correctional facility and the Cemetery. The cooperative effort between the Cemetery and the correctional facility has benefits to both the state, the city, veterans who work at the farm, and inmates at the facility. It is hoped that the opportunity to work with veterans will provide a good role model for the inmates in rehabilitating themselves and preparing for their future lives. The Veterans working at the farm can provide that leadership and simultaneously train to become farmers.

There are many opportunities to volunteer and serve with the Support Committee at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. We have representatives of many veterans groups on the committee. The Committee, however, is also open to any interested person who supports the goals of the committee. Please contact either myself at 904-687-1140 or any member of the committee to volunteer. We're always looking for helpers. We hope to see you at the Memorial Day ceremony



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
COMMISSIONER ADAM H. PUTNAM
THE CAPITOL

I'm deeply saddened by the recent events in Boston, MA and West, TX. During tragedies like these, we feel compelled to help in any way we can and donating to charities is a good way to support the communities affected. There are many legitimate charities that are helping the ones in need; however, during times like these, scammers also take advantage of people who want to give donations.

If you're considering donating to a charity, please keep these tips in mind to assure that your money is going to those who need it most:

When solicited for a donation, always ask for the charity's registration number (CH#), as well as the paid solicitor's registration number, if applicable. Visit our online [Gift Givers Guide](#) to determine what percentage of donations go to administrative, fundraising and program expenses. Information is also available by phone at 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352). All charities soliciting within the state of Florida, excluding religious, educational, political and governmental entities, are required to register and file financial information with the department.

- Never give out your personal, financial or account information over the phone unless you initiated the call and the phone number is from a trusted source.

Be sure to obtain a receipt or printed copy of your donation in order to have a record for tax reporting purposes. Even if an organization is tax exempt, your contribution may not be tax deductible. Ask for the charity's tax-exempt number issued by the Internal Revenue Service and call them or [go online for verification](#).

Do not let yourself be pressured into contributing on the spot. Reputable charities and organizations are just as willing to receive your donation tomorrow as today.

Regards,

Adam H. Putnam

Commissioner of Agriculture

adam.putnam@freshfromflorida.com

From the Chairman: Veteran “Wannabes”

In our **Patriot Reader** newsletter this month, Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam has an article stressing the importance of checking out charitable organizations before you contribute to them. That’s very wise advice. Too often our benevolent citizens of St. Johns County will contribute their hard earned dollars to organizations that they know little or nothing about because they appear to be legitimate.



Add to the deception solicitors in military type uniforms and one could easily be fooled into thinking they are contributing to an honest organization soliciting for needy Veterans.

Such was the situation on 6 April 2013 when Sgt. Major Ray Quinn USA (Ret) received a call at home from one of our Veteran Council members that someone was soliciting for Veterans Support Organization at a local Winn-Dixie store. We are all very familiar with this organization. They have operated in our community for many years with impunity. After much discussion with the individual and placing a call to the local Sheriff’s office, we were able to convince the Store Manager that this organization was in violation of a recently passed Florida statute. The Store Manager and Deputy then asked the individual to leave the premises.

This organization, The Veterans Support Organization registered as a charity organization operating out of Stuart, Fl. had income last year of \$5,768,000, expenses of \$5,744,000, and Administration fees of \$794,000. What is not available about this organization is how much was actually given to veterans and Veterans Organizations. One thing we do know for sure, none of it was given to any St. Johns Co. veterans or Veterans Organizations.

The Florida Legislature two years ago passed House Bill 1455 and Florida Statute 817.312 which prohibits a person from falsely soliciting for a charitable organization by misrepresenting themselves as a veteran or member of the armed forces. This is a third degree felony.

The ones who are soliciting are being paid for their time to solicit from our community. Bonafide Veterans organizations are all volunteers and are not paid.

We still have some work to do in Tallahassee to put more teeth in the Florida Statute to make it more enforceable. In the meantime, I encourage everyone to challenge these solicitors whenever you encounter them at our local merchant’s stores. The money being collected is leaving our county and our Veterans receive no benefit.

Bill Dudley



This article is furnished by John Mountcastle as a public service



Does your Exempt Organization have Compliance Issues?

Recent events only emphasize the need to ensure our Veterans' Exempt Organizations become and remain fully compliant with all applicable federal and state requirements.

As President Ronald Reagan said, "Trust, but verify!" While your elected officers may mean well, the complexity of modern-day society makes it more likely than ever that some of the T's may not be crossed or the I's dotted; it's very easy to forget to complete all requirements.

Important Due Dates:	Calendar Year Filers	Other Accounting Year Filers
Florida Annual Report	May 1	May 1
Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act	Varies; find your organization's expiration date at https://csapp.800helpfla.com/cspublicapp/giftgiversquery/giftgiversquery.aspx	
Federal Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax (990 family)	May 15 Note: There is no extension to file 990-N, other requests for extension must be filed by May 15	15 th day of the fifth month after the month in which your accounting year ended
Local Business Tax	September 30	September 30
Food Service License	January 1	January 1
Beverage Alcohol License	September 30	September 30

Dates may change for a variety of circumstances (e.g., date falls on a weekend; administrative action by agency, etc).

Anyone can easily determine if an Exempt Organization's officers have complied with the following requirements for any Exempt Organization (except religious institutions):

Q1. Have they filed the current year's Annual Report with the Florida Secretary of State (required only of Corporations, not Associations)?

A. Go to <http://search.sunbiz.org/Inquiry/CorporationSearch/ByName> , type in your part or all of organization's legal name, and click on search. When the entity search results appear, click in the name to see details. Scroll to the bottom to verify that a current year (2013) report has been filed. Simply filing this Annual Report is NOT proof your organization is fully compliant! Before leaving this page, note the organization's FEI/EIN Number and full legal name.

Some Veterans' organizations are organized as unincorporated Associations. If you do not find your organization's name and city, go to the parent organization's website to see if local units are organized as Associations. Associations often operate under the parent organization's IRS Group Exemption and must report financial and organizational information to the parent each year. Your local unit should be listed as an affiliate of the parent organization, and the parent organization should file an Annual Report with the Florida Secretary of State (search as above).

Q2. Are they currently recognized by the IRS as an Exempt Organization?

A. Go to <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Exempt-Organizations-Select-Check> ; after reading this page, click on the blue "Exempt Organizations Select Check Tool" box.

B. Click in the first circle ("Are eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions"), then enter the FEI/EIN (found in step 1) or the first few words of the name, the city and state, then click on Search (this search engine would rather return more near-hits than exclude some).

If you found your organization's Annual Report (Q1A) but did not find your organization on the IRS website (Q2B), your organization **may not** be currently recognized as exempt. Contact your officers to verify the FEI Number.

C. Return to step Q2A, then click on the third circle ("Have filed Form 990-N (e-Postcard)") then enter the FEI/EIN (found in step 1) or the first few words of the name, the city and state, then click on Search (this search engine would ra-

ther return more near-hits than exclude some).

If you found your organization listed in Q2B but did not find your organization has filed Form 990-N (Q2C), your organization **may be required** to file information returns (short Form 990-EZ or longer Form 990) plus additional schedules. This requirement occurs when organizations have gross receipts that exceed dollar thresholds (currently \$50,000). Exempt Organizations may also voluntarily complete these information returns, as it provides information requested by many donors, and also satisfies some of the requirements for filing under the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act (Q3 below). These forms must be available for public inspection—a best practice is to place copies on the organization’s website each year.

If your organization does not file Form 990-N, 990-EZ or 990 for three consecutive years, the IRS will automatically revoke your organization’s exempt status. Your organization must then go through the application process from the very beginning, at considerable effort, time and cost.

D. If the first two IRS searches were unproductive, return to step Q2A, then click on the second circle (“Were automatically revoked”) then enter the FEI/EIN (found in step 1) or the first few words of the name, the city and state, then click on Search (this search engine would rather return more near-hits than exclude some).

It is possible for an organization to be reported as “automatically revoked” but also as eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions, as these three databases are updated at different times. Once revoked, an organization appears on the automatically revoked list eternally.

Q3. Are they currently registered under Florida’s Solicitation of Contributions Act?

A. Go to <https://csapp.800helpfla.com/cspublicapp/giftgiversquery/giftgiversquery.aspx> ; enter the organization’s name from Q1A or the Registration Number shown on the organization’s website Florida Solicitation of Contributions disclosure statement, then click on Search.

This search engine allows partial name searches (e.g., “Veterans Council” returns five organizations) if the exact name from Q1A returns no results.

Anyone who solicits donations from people in the State of Florida must register with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs and renew annually. This applies to charitable organizations, sponsors, professional solicitors, as well as professional fundraising consultants.

Q4. Has the organization renewed its’ Local Business Tax?

A. This filing is made with the County Tax Collector, Dennis Hollingsworth. To check for Exempt Organizations located in St. Johns County, go to <http://stjohnstaxcollector.governmax.com/collectmax/collect30.asp> ; click on “Business Name” (in the left margin) enter the organization’s name from Q1A. To see the list of business types required to file a Local Business Tax return, on the same screen, click on “Business Type” then click on the drop-down arrow under “Please choose a Business Type”.

While “NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION” (code 950) is listed, registration of most exempt organizations is NOT required (i.e., Veterans’ groups are specifically exempt). However, should start a business enterprise with a profit motive (either as a subsidiary or an integral unit generating Unrelated Business Income Tax liability), there may be a requirement to obtain a local license and pay an annual Local Business Tax. For more information, please contact Christy Dowler at the St. Johns County Tax Collector’s office, (904) 230-2550 ext 4680.

Before obtaining a license, one must also go to the St. Johns County zoning department, to verify that the business use would be one suitably authorized for the location intended.

Q5. Does the organization serve food?

A. Contrary to popular opinion, St. Johns County Health Department does not regulate or inspect restaurants. However, this agency does inspect Bars and Lounges which DO NOT SERVE food.

There are many requirements, including those for Food Service Manager, linked to their web page, <http://>

www.doh.state.fl.us/chdStJohns/environmental-foodhygiene.htm. Many organizations that are not inspected still are required to have a food service manager. Your food service manager must renew his/her license every five (5) years.

The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, 850-487-1395, has the responsibility for inspection of public food service establishments. However, their definition of public food service establishment excludes any eating place maintained and operated by non-profit fraternal or non-profit civic organization. Go to <https://www.myfloridalicense.com/wl11.asp?mode=1&SID=&brd=H&typ=>

Q6. Does the organization serve beverage alcohol?

A. All establishments selling beverage alcohol (beer, wine and/or liquor) are licensed by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation. To search for a current license, go to <https://www.myfloridalicense.com/wl11.asp?mode=1&SID=&brd=&typ=> and enter the appropriate information.

Not only must your exempt organization be properly licensed, that license can be suspended or revoked before the next renewal for non-payment for their purchases of beverage alcohol. Go to https://www.myfloridalicense.com/delinquency_search.asp?SID= to verify that the license is not currently suspended ("NO SALE", on credit watch "CASH ONLY").

Should your organization wish to sell beverage alcohol (beer, wine or liquor) at an unlicensed venue (e.g, a public park, such as the Special Events Field) at a not-for-profit event, your organization must apply for a temporary one, two or three-day permit and collect and remit sales tax on each sale. Florida has a limit of three such permits each calendar year. County Zoning Approval is also required. After the permit is issued, the Department of Revenue will issue a temporary sales tax registration. All trust fund taxes must be remitted within twenty days after the conclusion of the event.

The above process is also required when a licensed premises allows exclusive use of part or all of their premises by the exempt organization. While this arrangement is unusual, as the licensed premises cannot compete with the exempt organization's event by selling or serving alcoholic beverages in the area identified by the non-profit organization, it is not unheard-of.

Next month, first in a series "How to start to organize your exempt organization".

<http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/hr/inspections/FoodServiceDefinition.html>

<http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/abt/forms/documents/onetwoorthreedaypermitapplicationpackage.pdf>

**The Blinded Veterans Association
Florida Chapter's annual meeting will
be held May 2 - 5th at the Plaza Ocean
Club Hotel, 640 North Atlantic Ave-
nue, Daytona Beach, FL 32118. I**

will assume the office of NE District Director, Jane Karp.

For additional information, go to

**[http://www.pkjax.kaminsky.com/blindvets/
FRGNEW20130219_Convention.htm](http://www.pkjax.kaminsky.com/blindvets/FRGNEW20130219_Convention.htm)**



**St. Augustine National
Cemetery**
Marine Street, St. Augustine



Memorial Day Ceremony
10:00 am, Monday May 27, 2013

Massing of the Colors
Hosted by:
Military Officers Association of America,
Ancient City Chapter

In cooperation with:
The Florida National Guard and
The Florida Dept. of Military Affairs



Guest Speaker
BG Robert Branyon,
FL Air National Guard



Jacksonville National Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday May 27, 2013

**Featured Speaker:
Rear Admiral Sinclair Harris, USN
Commander United States Naval Forces
Southern Command and
United States Fourth Fleet**



Hagel cancels creation of new drone, cyber medal following widespread criticism

Published April 15, 2013
FoxNews.com

FILE: Undated: This image, right, released by the Department of Defense shows the obverse view with ribbon of the newly announced Distinguished Warfare Medal. (AP)

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Monday cancelled the production of a new military medal for service members involved in drone attacks and cyber warfare -- following widespread criticism that the award would rank higher than the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Hagel instead wants military leaders to develop a special pin or object that would be attached to already existing medals or ribbons.

The Distinguished Warfare Medal was created by Hagel's predecessor, Leon Panetta, and it immediately triggered complaints from veterans and lawmakers.

Hagel last month ordered the military to stop production of the medal, and top defense and military leaders began a new review.

"While the review confirmed the need to ensure such recognition, it found that misconceptions regarding the precedence of the award were distracting from its original purpose," said Hagel, who was twice awarded the Purple Heart.

The leaders have instead recommended the creation of an alternative honor, similar to the "V" for valor that can be attached to the Bronze Star and other medals to reward an act of heroism.

Hagel asked Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to report back to him in 30 days.

When Panetta announced the medal would be created in mid-February, defense officials said it would be considered a bit higher in ranking than the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, but lower than the Silver Star.

Panetta said the new medal, for only a small number of service men and women, reflected battlefield contributions in a world of changing warfare. He said that remotely piloted aircraft and cyber systems have changed the way that wars are fought and can change the course of a conflict from afar.

But the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other groups sent a letter to President Obama in March, asking him to keep the medal ranked below the Purple Heart, which is awarded for combat injuries. Critics said the ranking was an injustice to those troops who risked their lives in battle.

"The right decision was made," the VFW said Monday. "This decision will clearly keep medals that can only be earned in combat in their high order of precedence,



while providing proper recognition to all who support our war-fighters regardless of their distance from the fight.”

The American Legion's national commander, James E. Koutz, said Hagel's decision keeps the evolving roles of military combat in proper perspective.

"Cyber and drone warfare have become part of the equation for 21st-century combat, and those who fight such battles with distinction certainly deserve to be recognized," Koutz said in a statement. "But the American Legion still believes there's a fundamental difference between those who fight remotely, or via computer, and those fighting against an enemy who is trying to kill them."

As originally conceived, the blue, red and white-ribboned medal was to be awarded to individuals for "extraordinary achievement" related to a military operation that occurred after Sept. 11, 2001. But it does not require the recipient to risk his or her life to get it.

Over the last decade of war, remotely piloted Predator and Reaper drones have become a critical weapon to gather intelligence and conduct air strikes against terrorists or insurgents around the world. They have been used extensively on the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in strikes in Pakistan, Yemen and northern Africa.

Over the same time, cyber attacks have become a growing national security threat, with Panetta and others warning that the next Pearl Harbor could well be a computer-based assault.

The Bronze Star is the fourth-highest combat decoration and rewards meritorious service in battle, while the Silver Star is the third-highest combat award given for bravery. The Purple Heart is ranked just below the Bronze Star.

Several other awards, including the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, are also ranked higher than the Silver Star, but are not awarded for combat.

In addition to veterans' concerns, there is a practical side to the rankings for currently serving troops. There are grades of medals -- commendation, merit, distinguished -- that affect promotions for those still in uniform. Each grade gives troops a certain number of points needed for promotions.



Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/04/15/hagel-cancels-creation-new-drone-cyber-medal/#ixzz2QdJnaVtN>



The tie that binds Veterans together and it is not what you think!

By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (April 12, 2013) – More than the uniform, the weapon, or the geography, hot sauce is the tie that binds.

A military lifer, one who stays until retirement, once said, “As long as the troops are griping, they are happy. It is when they are quiet that trouble bubbles to the surface.”

There are many things a GI gripes about, but number one is [chow](#). There are those in the ranks that will eat anything and always ask for more. There are those who will risk death by starvation before a morsel of GI chow will pass the lips. When push comes to shove regarding chow, an ordinary GI becomes a ‘Black Hat Chef’. If there is a way to ‘spice up’ the infamous field rations, they will find it.

A little history is required before we get into the “meat” of the subject, pun intended.

According to the Army Historical Foundation website, <http://armyhistoryjournal.com/?p=37>, “daily rations for the Continental Army consisted of one pound of beef, eighteen ounces of flour, one pint of milk, one quart of spruce beer, 1.4 ounces of rice, and 6.8 ounces of peas. The ration remained largely unaltered until the Civil War. In 1861, potatoes were added to the ration. Desiccated vegetables (dried and compressed potatoes and vegetables) came next. It was often called “desecrated vegetables” or “compressed hay.” To reduce bulk, “essence of coffee” was developed. However, soldiers hated that, too with many saying it looked, and tasted, like axle grease. It was soon replaced with ground coffee.”

“The first of the new(er) rations was the D-ration, a fortified chocolate bar that really was not really a ration, defined as “The allowance of food for the subsistence of one person for one day”, but a stand-in for a missed meal. The new family of rations eventually had nineteen elements at least considered for consumption. Most of these were special purpose rations, but the big three remained. The A-ration (the garrison ration tweaked for training or field delivery “to meet existing field conditions”), the B-ration was the A-ration but without refrigeration and using canned foods to reduce bulk, and last but not least, the famous, or infamous; you choose, C-ration.”

Known officially as Field Ration, Type C, the name has morphed into history as the now universally known “C-Rat”. It was replaced by the “Meal Combat Individual” in 1958. Included in the C-Ration were three individually boxed meals for breakfast, dinner (or lunch), and supper. This supposedly made for a continuity in the everyday life of a GI because the same food was served in the mess halls. The difference being, in the mess hall, you didn’t have to use a can-opener, the infamous P-38, to get at it and it was usually served hot, which, depending on the cook, is a relative term.

According to most published history, C-rations were phased out during the Vietnam War, meaning the cans were dumped on those so far afield and under such duress they forgot about official complaints once they rotated for stand down. “It is amazing what hot showers, clean clothes, and real food can do to wipe-out short-term memory. And don’t forget, sleep, lots of sleep,” said a veteran who asked not to be identified.

Michael Pullium, 11th Armored Cavalry in Vietnam remembers “most of the markings on the “Rats” were from differing periods of the 50s.” “The most used tool in the GI inventory was the P-38 can opener which was included in the accessory pack and most commonly missing from the packs.” Ray Quinn a retired Sgt. Major remembers “Some of the best fights I ever witnessed were over C-Ration fruit cocktail and pound cake.”

The most reality based description of “C-Rats” came from Peter Guinta, who served in Vietnam with the 5th Comm. Bttn., USMC, from November 1967- August 1969.

“They, the C-Rations, were essentially a bunch of drab green cans in cardboard boxes. You got rid of the boxes and packed the cans somewhere on your person. They were bulky and heavy and you really couldn’t store them well in jungle utility pockets.” “The best thing was the peaches. Some guys traded really good stuff for a can or two of peaches. It was an edible currency, a tiny pleasure in a very painful world. I opened and ate a can under fire once.”

Without a doubt, the MOST HATED menu item of all was lima beans with ham.

Guinta continues, “What seemed like a truckload of mushy lima beans squeezed into a can with a few bits of ham stuffed in alongside. The contents were rock hard beans, gelatinous ham, and had no taste. You had to pour on water and mash it, the contents, while cooking over a heat tab. Only then were they edible, and even then you had to grimace when eating.” “Some of us who were really hungry with no chance of food coming soon ate them right out of the can. That felt like eating grout, and it was so hard it would bend a spoon.”

What made it more edible? “Hot sauce was the ‘spice of the hour’,” said Pullium. “Most often in a bottle, it was wrapped and securely positioned in the safest place possible on the body or in the pack.”

According to the wonderful folks at http://www.modernforces.com/fieldgear_rations.htm, C-rations morphed into the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol ration, lovingly called LRRP Rations or "Long rats" or "Lurps". A Lurp was a U.S. Army field ration, developed during the Vietnam War for use by Special Operations troops on long patrols deep in enemy territory. There were 12 menus and 6 accessory packs. John Roane, who served from 68 to 73, told of “opening a slit in the LRRP, adding water, wrapping them up and storing them under the jacket. This was done in the morning and 4 to 6 hours later, the contents were edible.” Well, sort of, “as edible as any freeze dried food can be edible.”

For information on the variety, go to <http://www.troopsupport.dla.mil/subs/rations/programs/mcw/mcwabt.asp>. Just remember it was developed for the military. The twelve menus contain dehydrated entree items and accessory items which include hot sauce, hand cleaner and toilet paper.

Guinta proved to be an incredible source of information. He was a newspaper reporter in Iraq with the 124th Infantry, Florida National Guard, for a month in 2004 and gave a first hand account of Meal, Ready to Eat or “MRE’s.” “In Iraq in 2004, MREs were available to those folks going on a convoy or other assignment where you’d be away a while. A warning should be issued that MREs are “low residue,” meaning they give you energy but little fiber.” Consequences of a low fiber diet can be found via Google.

What about the quality? David Kirolos., U.S Army 11B, during the 90s said “You can quote me on Chicken a la King and Tuna and Noodles. Don't forget the Hot Sauce! They were the best. Ham Slice was also a favorite.

Spaghetti with meat and sauce is one of the best,” said Larry Provost, “but anything with potatoes sucked.”

Bon Appétit!

MARINELAND MILITARY SUPPORT RETREAT

★ ★ RELAXATION, RESTORATION & RECREATION ★ ★

JUNE 7TH, 8TH & 9TH

A FREE RETREAT FOR POST 9-11 DEPLOYED FLORIDA MILITARY
AND THEIR PRIMARY SUPPORT PERSON OR SPOUSE

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904-525-3042 OR JNOVEMBER@GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG

Strengthen and restore connections, enjoy the beauty of the coast, be inspired by outdoor activities, learn about available support resources, and discover deployment adjustment strategies.

- ★ Small, friendly group setting
- ★ Accommodations and great food provided free of charge
- ★ Relaxation by the Beach and Marineland Nature Preserves
- ★ Facilitated by Vets, VA/DoD experts, and Community Nonprofit Support Organizations
- ★ Please note: Childcare is not provided

General Public is invited to Community Forum to be held June 9th at 5PM @ UF Whitney Lab Auditorium



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Howard O. McGillin, Jr.
Colonel, US Army (Retired)
Attorney and Civil Mediator

Fairbanks & McGillin PL Attorneys and Counselors at Law

Practice focusing on Estate Planning (Wills/Trusts), Probate, Elder and Veterans Law and Small Business Law

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THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY COMMEMORATIVE DINNER



ADM William E. Gortney

Ticket Information

Ticket costs are:
Active Duty E-6 and below, \$25;
E-7 to 03, \$35,
04 to 05, \$45,
06 and above,
civilians, and retirees, \$65.

Tickets available from the following-

NAVY LEAGUE MAYPORT

POC Bob Price
Phone (904)246-9982
E-mail - bpricex4@comcast.net

NAVY LEAGUE ST AUGUSTINE

POC Bill Dudley,
Phone (904)806-4712
E-mail - anuday00@aol.com

Make Checks payable to
NAVY LEAGUE MIDWAY DINNER
P.O. Box 331944
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233-1944

Tickets also available thru our WEB SITE
www.midwaydinner.org

Uniform will be 04 and above -
dinner dress white jacket;
03 and below - dinner dress white/dinner
dress white jacket optional
and civilian is black tie or business attire.

Special Hotel Rates for Battle of Midway

Rooms are available from the hotel -
The Renaissance Resort
at World Golf Village

Special Room Rate - \$79.00
(includes 2 breakfast vouchers)
This special rate good until May 9th only
Suites also available for \$109.00

YOU MUST INCLUDE
"2013 Battle of Midway"
to receive this discounted rate

Hotel reservations must be made
By calling
Phone 1-888-789-3090
Monday thru Friday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.



Battle of Midway Commemorative Dinner

Keynote Speaker

Admiral William E. Gortney, USN
Commander
U.S. Fleet Forces Command

Event will be held at
The Renaissance Resort at
World Golf Village.
Cocktails begin at 6 PM
Dinner at 7 PM.
Reserved seating.
Hosted by
The Mayport Council
Navy League
of the United States
June 1, 2013

And you are invited!
Tickets are now on sale

A Short History of the Battle of Midway

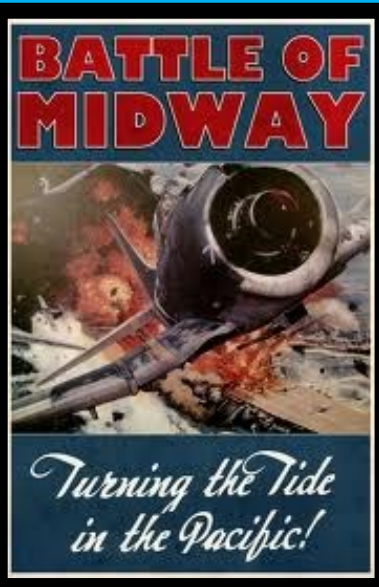
4-7 June 1942

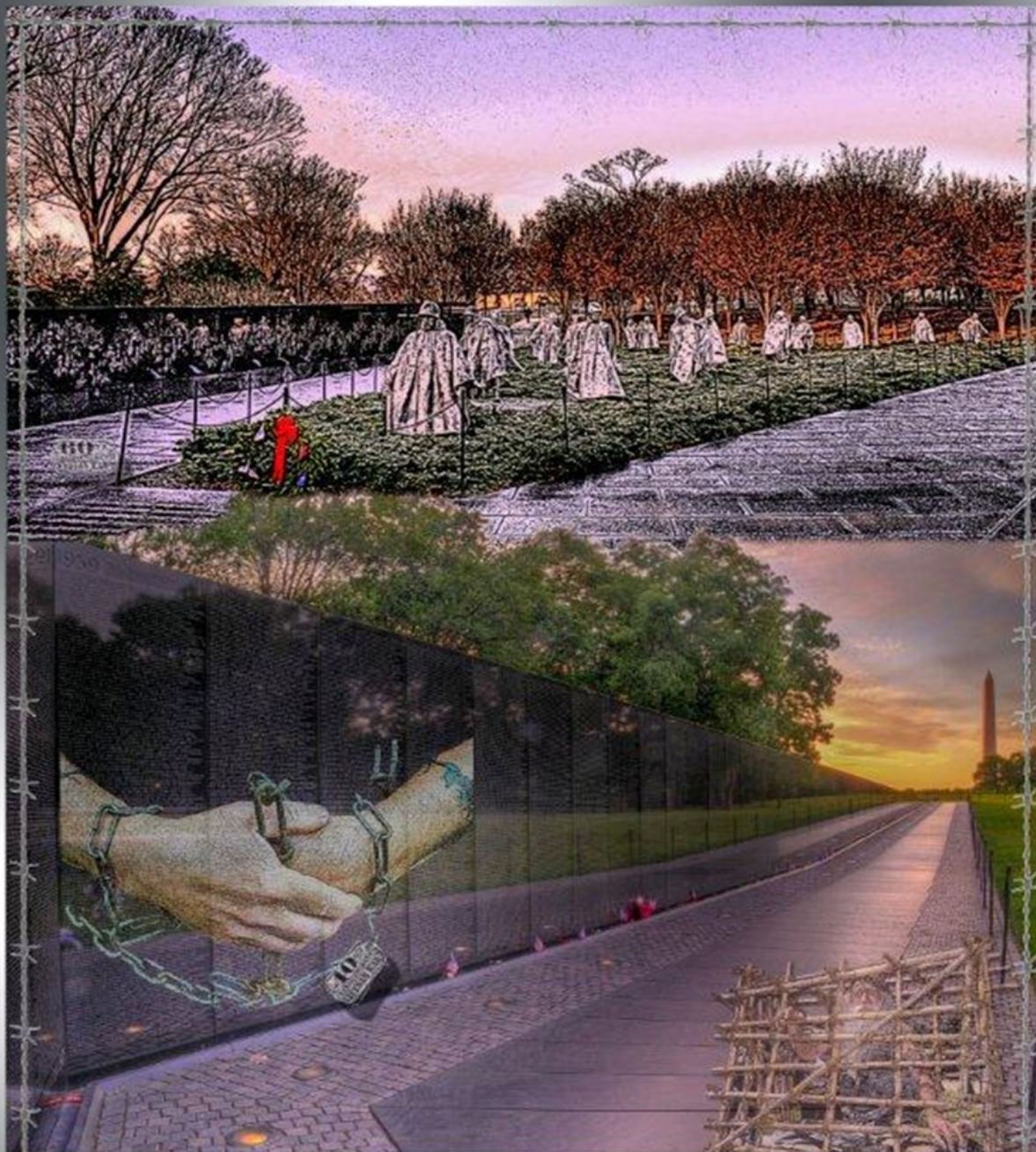
The Battle of Midway, fought over and near the tiny U.S. mid-Pacific base at Midway atoll, represents the strategic high water mark of Japan's Pacific Ocean war. Prior to this action, Japan possessed general naval superiority over the United States and could usually choose where and when to attack. After Midway, the two opposing fleets were essentially equals, and the United States soon took the offensive.

Japanese Combined Fleet commander Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto moved on Midway in an effort to draw out and destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet's aircraft carrier striking forces, which had embarrassed the Japanese Navy in the mid-April Doolittle Raid on Japan's home islands and at the Battle of Coral Sea in early May. He planned to quickly knock down Midway's defenses, follow up with an invasion of the atoll's two small islands and establish a Japanese air base there. He expected the U.S. carriers to come out and fight, but to arrive too late to save Midway and in insufficient strength to avoid defeat by his own well-tested carrier air power.

Yamamoto's intended surprise was thwarted by superior American communications intelligence, which deduced his scheme well before battle was joined. This allowed Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, to establish an ambush by having his carriers ready and waiting for the Japanese. On 4 June 1942, in the second of the Pacific War's great carrier battles, the trap was sprung. The perseverance, sacrifice and skill of U.S. Navy aviators, plus a great deal of good luck on the American side, cost Japan four irreplaceable fleet carriers, while only one of the three U.S. carriers present was lost. The base at Midway, though damaged by Japanese air attack, remained operational and later became a vital component in the American trans-Pacific offensive.

Visit our Web Site at <http://www.midwaydinner.org/>
for photos and more information





NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

September 19-21 Americus/Andersonville, Georgia

Join us as we HONOR and THANK those who

PAID for your FREEDOM with their own

www.theridehome.com



The Ride Home, Inc.
Honoring ALL Former Prisoners of War
Remembering those still Missing in Action

<http://theridehome.com>

**Make Every Shot Count
Sporting Clay Shoot
May 21st 2013**



Time: 8AM Breakfast & Registration - 9AM Shotgun Start

Location: WW Sporting Clays - 1445 Otis Rd. Jacksonville FL 32220

Please observe 15 mph speed limit at WW Sporting Clays

Entry Fee: \$500 per Team of 4 or \$125 per Individual

(Includes Range Fees, Breakfast, Lunch, Shotgun Shells, Eye and Ear Protection, T-shirt & Prizes)

Mulligans \$5 – sold at each station

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

Lunch and Awards Ceremony will be held on-site after the Shoot

Team Captain: _____ Phone #: _____

Shooter #2: _____ Phone #: _____

Shooter #3: _____ Phone #: _____

Shooter #4: _____ Phone #: _____

Mail Entry Forms & Fees To:

Marsha Vaughan, C/O Make Every Shot Count

814 A1A North, Suite 200, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

Florida National Guard Foundation is an exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code.

**Make Every Shot Count
Sporting Clay Shoot
May 21st 2013**

**Make Checks Payable to Florida National Guard Foundation
Donation/Sponsorship Form**

Sponsorships

____ **Course Sponsor \$1,500** - Team of 4, Logo on T-shirt, Station Sign
and Recognition at Awards Lunch

____ **Station Sponsor \$650** - Team of 4 and Station Sign

____ **Team Sponsor \$500** – Team of 4 Shooters

____ **Sign Sponsor \$250** – Sign at Station

____ **Individual Shooter \$125**

Donations

I would like to make the follow donation \$ _____

Donor/Sponsor Information

a. Corporate/Individual Name(s) for Donation Recognition:

b. Mailing Address: _____

c. Phone Number: _____

d. Email: _____

Mail Entry Forms & Fees To:

**Marsha Vaughan, C/O Make Every Shot Count
814 A1A North, Suite 200, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082**

Florida National Guard Foundation is an exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the US Internal
Revenue Code.

POW/MIA Freedom March National Mall, Wash., D.C.



Until they all come home..

Fleet Reserve Association Branch 25, St. Augustine, FL

Branch 25 of the Fleet reserve Association participated in an essay contest for Middle School students in St. Johns County. The theme the students were to write about was entitled "What Voting Means To Me". The following essay won first place by Kyra Liedtke an eighth grade student from Gamble Rogers Middle School.

America has grown into a beautiful country over the many years. I'm proud to be a part of the country that never gave up on the erratic idea of freedom. Voting is just one of the many things we accomplished because 13 colonies decided to intervene with each other and fight for something they wanted. Voting is so much more than just filling in a bubble at a local voting spot. It's something that we earned by watering the liberty tree with the blood of patriots and tyrants, as Thomas Jefferson once said. It means a lot that I am going to be able to vote for someone whom I trust to guide over me and that I will have my voice heard.

When I get old enough to vote I'm going to be very excited because I will finally get to pay a type of respect for the ones that kept our rights safe, including voting. The vote I place will mean that the brave men and women that fight for normal civilians like me won't be fighting in vain. Voting can also make us more united with our own community, and gain a stronger voice in what you believe in amongst your peers. One voice that speaks up can make a lot of difference in your community government and in larger governments.

You may seem just like one person and that your one vote may not matter but that's not true at all. Remember one person had the bravery to have the idea to rebel against the British and it spread like wildfire amongst the colonies and look where we are today. Voting is something I hold dear because it's something that a united nation does as one. Everyone has a voice in something so big. And it's a mark that I make saying I love the land of the free and the home of the brave.



From the left, proud mother Denise Liedtke, Kyra Liedtke and Fleet Reserve Association Secretary Donald Gray presenting the Award Certificate.



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

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

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 23, 2013

VA Launches Hotline to Answer Questions on VA Health Care and Benefits for Women Veterans *1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a new hotline — 1-855-VA-WOMEN — to receive and respond to questions from Veterans, their families and caregivers about the many VA services and resources available to women Veterans. The service began accepting calls on April 23, 2013.

“Some women Veterans may not know about high-quality VA care and services available to them,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The hotline will allow us to field their questions and provide critical information about the latest enhancements in VA services.”

The hotline is staffed by knowledgeable VA employees who can provide information about benefits including health care services for women. Callers can be linked to information on claims, education or health care appointments as well as information about VA cemeteries and memorial benefits. Staff can answer urgent questions and provide referrals to homeless and mental health services as well as provide Vet Center information.

Women make up nearly 15 percent of today’s active duty military and 18 percent of National Guard and Reserve forces. The population of women Veterans using VA benefits including health care is growing rapidly. Since 2000, the number of women using VA health care more than doubled, from nearly 160,000 in

2000 to more than 354,000 in 2012. Based on the upward trend of women in all branches of service, the number of women Veterans—and female VA users—will keep climbing.

VA is committed to making improvements for the growing population of women Veterans, including the way it communicates with them. In 2010, VA established an outbound call center to contact women Veterans and encourage them to enroll in VA health care.

“In VA health care alone, women constitute only 6 percent of VA patients, but those Veterans have a high perception of the quality care they are receiving,” said Irene Trowell-Harris, director of VA’s Center for Women Veterans.

“Many women who served don’t self-identify as Veterans and therefore don’t think they qualify for VA benefits. We need to correct existing misinformation and misperceptions so we can serve more women Veterans with the benefits they’ve earned.”

Women Veterans are entitled to apply for the same benefits as their male counterparts, which include health care and pharmacy benefits as well as education benefits, disability compensation, home loans, employment assistance and more.

The hotline (1-855-VA-WOMEN) joins numerous other VA hotlines that provide critical information and assistance to Veterans, such as those for Veterans in crisis and in danger of becoming homeless. Veterans can also receive information and apply for benefits online at VA’s www.eBenefits.va.gov and manage their health care at MyHealtheVet.va.gov.

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DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



George "Speedy" Gaspard was inducted as a Distinguished Member of The Special Forces Regiment in 2011 and I was fortunate to be invited to attend. Every year, one or two Special Forces veterans are selected for this honor because of their legendary status within the Special Forces community. The accolades that night for Speedy's service are too numerous to mention here, although most in our veterans community know of his service to our Country in three different wars, and in two different Branches of the Service. He was in the first Special Forces Officers Course, one of the first Americans to attend the British SAS Commando course, one of the first to run missions behind enemy lines in Korea and one of the first to insert agents into North Vietnam. Speedy is a member of the Infantry Officer Candidate Hall of Fame in Ft. Benning.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL
GEORGE W. GASPARD, JR.

What should be noted, and maybe a few are unaware, is that Speedy has served our local veterans community for many years as the President of the Military Officers Association and as President of Special Forces Association Chapter 21. We are truly lucky to have someone of Speedy Gaspard's caliber here in St Johns County.

Introduction by Tom Waskovich, Studies and Observation Group, 5th Special Forces in 1969

Lt. Col. George W. Gaspard Jr. was born at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Ala., on August 5, 1926. He served in the United States Marine Corps from 1944 to 1946 and first entered the U.S. Army on June 11, 1951. In May 1952, he reported to Fort Benning, Ga., as a student in the first all officer class at the Ranger course, followed by attendance at a special course at the Air Ground School located at Southern Pines, N.C. He then applied for transfer to the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), which had just organized at Fort Bragg, N.C. He served as a team leader in the 18th SF Operational Detachment, and in November 1952 attended Special Forces Class #1.

In March 1953, then Lt. Gaspard was assigned to FEC/LD 8240AU FECOM during the Korean War, where he commanded four enlisted men and 80 South Korean agents, who were dispatched behind enemy lines to gather intelligence on the North Koreans. In October 1954, Gaspard joined the 77th SF Group (A) as a guerilla warfare instructor with the Psychological Warfare School's Special Forces Department. He was subsequently transferred to the 187th ARCT and honorably discharged in September 1957. From 1960 to 1962, he served as a civilian mobi-

lization designee with the Special Warfare department in the Pentagon. In April 1962, he was recalled to active duty and assigned to the 5th SF Group (A) at Fort Bragg, commanding Det A-13; and in September opened a new Special Forces Camp in Kontum Province at Dak Pek, Vietnam, which remained the longest continuously active SF/ARVN Ranger camp until it was overrun in 1972.

Capt. Gaspard returned to Fort Bragg in 1963 as adjutant and HHC commander of the newly formed 6th SF Group (A). In July 1965, he reported to AID Washington, DC, and subsequently to AID Saigon, assigned as a provincial adviser in Quang Duc Province. He was instrumental in negotiations to peacefully transfer FULRO personnel to the Army of South Vietnam. He was promoted to major in 1966, and after completing this tour, reported to 1 SF Group (A), Okinawa. In October 1967, he returned to Vietnam and directed the MACVSOG Strata program. With the SOG Commander, Col. Jack Singlaub, Maj. Gaspard briefed Gen. Westmoreland and Gen. Abrams on future STRATA operations, resulting in 24 helo insertions and 22 1-2 extractions into North Vietnam, with one STRATA team becoming surrounded and requiring emergency extraction. Maj. Gaspard, riding a hydraulic penetrator, twice descended to remove a wounded agent and was awarded the Air Force Distinguished Flying Cross for Heroism and the Purple Heart Medal. He returned to SOG in 1969; was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1971; and reported to 1st SF Group, Okinawa as the group executive officer, and later assuming command of the 1st Battalion.

Lt. Col. Gaspard retired in August 1973 and lives in Jacksonville.

His awards and decorations include: the Silver Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with V-device and five Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal with V-device and three Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Combat Infantryman's Badge with one Battle Star, Master Parachutist Badge, Pacific Theater Service Ribbon with one Campaign Star, Korea Service Ribbon with two Campaign Stars, Vietnam Service Campaign Ribbon with 15 Campaign Stars, 18 other service and foreign awards including the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Gold, Silver and Bronze stars, U.S. Navy Parachute Wings, Korea Master Parachutist Wings, Vietnamese Master Parachutist Wings, Thailand Master Parachutist Wings and Cambodia Parachute Wings.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL
GEORGE W. GASPARD, JR.

Inducted December 2010



Jacksonville Vet Center

The Vet Center Program was established by Congress in 1979 and made part of the US Dept. of Veterans Affairs after a significant number of Vietnam Era veterans were experiencing problems readjusting to civilian life. As a result of the Persian Gulf War in April 1991, Congress extended eligibility to veterans who served during other periods of armed conflicts, including World War II and Korean War veterans.

The Jacksonville Vet Center was first established in Florida/South Georgia in 1980. We provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services for veterans and families who have earned this no-cost benefit through their service in combat zones. Our goal is to help them make a successful post-war readjustment to civilian life. We also provide bereavement counseling to parents, spouses, and children of service members who lost their lives on active duty, including Guardsmen and Reservists. Our professional staff is comprised of counselors and support personnel, many of whom are fellow veterans who have also served in combat zones.

Post Traumatic Stress is a normal set of reactions or memories of a trauma or terrifying event that one has seen or experienced such as combat, a serious accident, sexual or physical assault/abuse, domestic violence or natural disasters. These events can happen to anyone. If these feelings do not go away on their own, worsen or are not dealt with, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can develop. PTSD can affect the way people readjust to life following the trauma or event. Delayed stress reactions may surface after many years and include some or all of the following problems:

Anger, irritability, and rage	Feeling nervous	Depression
Difficulty trusting others	Feeling guilt	Hyper alertness
Feeling grief or sadness	Nightmares	Substance Abuse

The Vet Center is now in St. Augustine, two Wednesdays a month, in the same building as the VA Clinic.

If you or someone you know or love are experiencing any of these symptoms, we'd like to help. Please call our office at (904) 232-3621 for more information or to set up an appointment to speak with one of our counselors.

IRISH WATER DOGS

THE PROGRAM: THE IRISHWATERDOGS PROGRAM STARTED IN 2010 TO HELP INJURED VETERANS THROUGH KAYAKING, KAYAK FISHING AND THE OUTDOORS. KNOWING HOW THERAPEUTIC BEING ON THE WATER IS TO ALL OF US WHO ENJOY KAYAKING AND FISHING WE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE A TREMENDOUS HELP TO OUR INJURED VETERANS WHO ARE SUFFERING BOTH PHYSICALLY AND WITH DEBILITATING EFFECTS OF PTSD.



ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH WE TAKE A GROUP OF INJURED VETERANS OUT. WE ARE OFFICIAL PARTNERS OF THE VA, WOUNDED WARRIORS PROJECT AND NUMEROUS OTHER VETERANS CLINICS AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS., BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND NON GOVERNMENTAL.

WHEN THEY ARRIVE, WE BUY THEM A FISHING LICENSE ONLINE AT CHECK-IN, WE PROVIDE THEM WITH BREAKFAST, A PACK WITH WATER, SNACKS, FISHING TACKLE, SUN SCREEN AND RAIN WEAR. WE THEN SET THEM UP WITH OUR KAYAKS, FISHING RODS AND PARTNER THEM UP WITH ONE OF THE TEAMWD TO TAKE CARE OF THEM ON THE WATER AND MAKE SURE THEY WANT FOR NOTHING. WE TAKE THEM OUT FOR 5 HOURS THEN BRING THEM BACK TO THE LAUNCH WHERE WE PROVIDE A COOKOUT FOR THEM.

THANKING OUR VETERANS



About **Purple Hearts Reunited INC.** is a Non Profit 501(C)(3) Incorporation, which Locates Lost or Stolen Medals and Returns them to Veterans or their Families

Mission Locate Lost or Stolen Medals and Return them to the Veterans who earned them or to their families in order to Honor their Sacrifice to our Country.

Company Overview Captain Zachariah Fike donates a considerable amount of his own time to track down Lost or Stolen Medals and Returns them to the Veteran who earned them or to their families.

Description Purple Hearts Reunited INC is now accepting donations by PayPal. All donations will go towards covering travel cost to these Veteran's hometown's, covering the cost to get his/her medals professionally framed, dedicating monuments in small towns that currently don't have one established, purchasing brick "Pavers" with the Veterans name to be donated to Military Museums associated with that Veteran...s Unit, Plaques to be displayed in the Veterans High School, VFW, or American Legion, symbolizing their service, and a plaque recognizing the Veteran at the Purple Heart Hall of Honor. The possibilities are endless, but it can be assured that all proceeds will go into honoring their sacrifice.

Contact information: PurpleHeartsReunited@hotmail.com

Burlington, VT 05402-0003

Meeting:
First Tuesday of each month
Time: 1900
St. Augustine Elks Lodge #829
1420 A1A South
St. Augustine, FL 32080



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www.mclfl.org



COL Mike Prendergast, ret
Executive Director FDVA



Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame recognizes and honors those military veterans who, through their works and lives during or after military service, have made a significant contribution to the state of Florida through civic, business, public service or other pursuits. It is not a traditional military hall of fame, as it focuses on post-military contributions to the State of Florida.

The inaugural class will be inducted in 2013.

Nominating guidelines and submission forms are located on the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame website at <http://www.floridaveteranshalloffame.org/index.asp>.

Spotlight: Vietnam Veterans

Florida is home to more than 449,000 Vietnam-era veterans, so it is very likely that one in four veterans you meet in the Sunshine State is a Vietnam veteran.

To thank and honor veterans of that war on behalf of a grateful nation, the State of Florida has erected a Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Tallahassee next to the Capitol building. In addition, Florida honors its Vietnam veterans annually during Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

The Florida Legislature has also enacted laws in which Vietnam veterans who, as a result of being inducted into any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and unable to complete their high school education, can be awarded a State of Florida High School Diploma. For more information, call (850) 245-9029.

A Vietnam Veterans license plate is also in the works.

We strongly encourage our eligible Vietnam veterans to enroll in health care through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs if they have not already done so. The VA recognizes that service in Vietnam may have exposed veterans to certain cancer causing chemicals and other health problems as presumptive diseases related to exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides. We want those veterans to be identified, treated and compensated for any effects they may be having as a result of exposure. Call (727) 319-7400 for more information.

[Click here: Department of Defense 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration](#)



R. Steven Murray
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (Ret)
Communications Director
FL Department of Veterans' Affairs
The Capitol, Suite 2105
400 South Monroe
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001
Office (850) 487-1533, Ext. 7714

*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



**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)

Important Online Veterans Link:

**Official US Navy website for
US Navy Ships**

[www.navy.mil/navydata/
our_ships.asp](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/our_ships.asp)

**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*

The locally produced *Vietnam documentary, Service, Sacrifice
and Courage* has received **129,546** 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.

A DAY WITH **Luis Carlos Montalván** *and Tuesday*

FRIDAY, MAY 17
@ 11 A.M. AND 6:30 P.M.

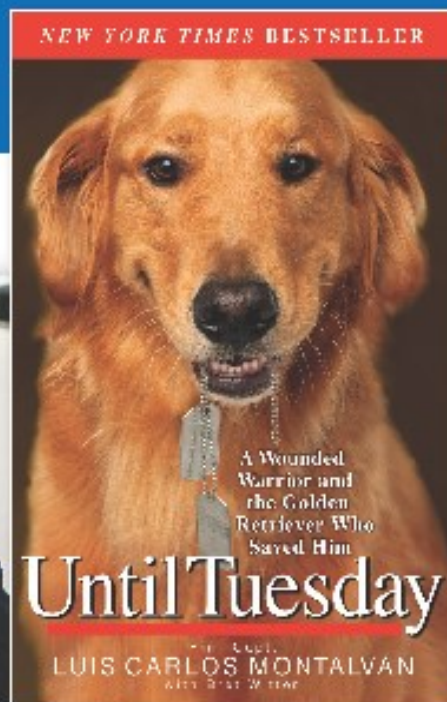
Join Wounded Warrior and
New York Times bestselling
author Luis Carlos Montalván
as he shares his inspirational
memoir *Until Tuesday:
A Wounded Warrior and
the Golden Retriever
Who Saved Him*.

Capt. Montalván will
be accompanied by
his faithful service dog,
Tuesday, and discuss
issues relating to
service members,
veterans and their
families, and
Americans with
disabilities.

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Friends of the Jacksonville
Public Library, Inc.



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Conference Center Level

Multipurpose Room

Please use Main Street entrance only.

KOREAN WAR VETERANS

DIGITAL MEMORIAL

Looking for Applicants!

KOREAN WAR VETERANS YOUTH LEGACY WORKSHOP

Please share this information with your families and friends!

In honor of the 60th Anniversary of the Armistice and the US-Korea Alliance, the Korean War Veterans Digital Memorial Foundation (<http://www.kwvdm.org/>) will host the first KWV Youth Legacy Project Workshop in Washington, D.C. A select group of high school and college students who are KWVs descendants will be invited to carry on the valuable legacy and lessons of the Korean War, KWVs, and the US-Korea alliance. Expenses up to \$1,000 will be covered by the foundation for transportation, hotel, meals, and program fees.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- ⇒ Attendance at the 60th Armistice event in the KWV Memorial Park
- ⇒ Visits to the Republic of Korea Embassy, Library of Congress, and Memorials
- ⇒ Launching of the National KWV Descendant Organization
- ⇒ \$1,000 Scholarship Award for excellence in participation

APPLICATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Please submit application (form downloads from:
<http://bit.ly/16uf4q1>) and questions to:
President Dr. Jongwoo Han at jonghan@syr.edu, (315) 480-9427

Please Apply By: June 20, 2013
(early birds with more benefits)

Application details on the back.



VA moves to process oldest disability claims first

By KEVIN FREKING The Associated Press , BY KEVIN FREKING, ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON -- Veterans waiting more than a year for a decision on their disability claims are moving to the front of the line, under a new program announced Friday.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is responding to criticism about the soaring number of claims that have been pending for longer than 125 days. The VA said that of the nearly 900,000 claims pending in the system, some 250,000 are from veterans who have been waiting at least a year for a decision.

Veterans receive disability compensation for injuries and illness incurred or aggravated during their active military service. The amount of the compensation is based on a rating assigned by the VA.

Allison Hickey, the VA undersecretary who oversees the Veterans Benefits Administration, says provisional decisions will be made on the oldest cases based on the evidence currently in the veteran's file. In some cases, medical exams will be required, and those will be expedited.

Veterans whose claims are granted would get compensation immediately. Veterans whose claims are denied will have a year to submit more information before the VA makes a final decision.

The VA projected that it will take up to six months to complete the 250,000 claims being targeted.

Lawmakers cautiously approved of the plan to focus on the oldest claims first, but Rep. Mike Michaud, D-Maine, emphasized that it doesn't resolve the systemic problems that the VA faces because it relies on paper files. The VA is rolling out a new computer system designed to improve efficiency, but not all regional offices will have that system until the end of the year.

"We will be monitoring it closely to make sure it's good policy rather than just good PR," said Rep. Jeff Miller, the Republican chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

The number of disability claims pending has steadily grown over the past four years. The average time to resolve a disability claim has gone from 161 in fiscal year 2009 to 286 currently. Hickey warned that number will spike in the coming months as the VA focuses on the oldest cases first.

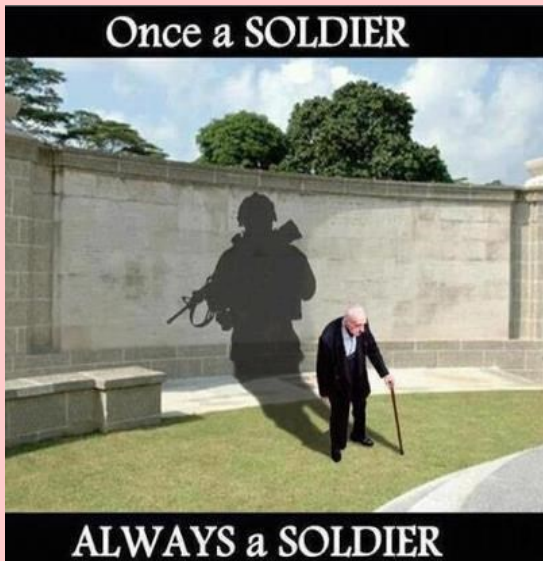
Hickey said a decision in late 2010 making it easier for Vietnam Veterans to qualify for compensation related to Agent Orange exposure brought about 260,000 new claims into the system. Those cases took precedent. Meanwhile, other types of claims poured in as result of 10 years of war and the downsizing of the military, and the backlog soared.

"Now, it is an appropriate time for us to go and really tackle those folks who have more than patiently waited," Hickey said.

Most veterans submitting claims are already receiving some disability compensation. They're citing new or aggravated conditions in an effort to get additional money.

The VA has traditionally given top priority in resolving disability claims to certain categories of veterans, such as the homeless, those who are terminally ill and those separating from the military for medical reasons. The veterans in those particular categories will retain their top-priority status. However, many others filing claims can expect that it will take longer for the VA to resolve their cases.

"It's great to see the VA finally taking more immediate and aggressive action to address this important issue for our veterans," said Paul Rieckhoff, the chief executive officer for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.



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.