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The Patriot Reader

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

CHAIRMAN BILL DUDLEY

VICE CHAIRMAN DAN BLACKMAN

SECRETARY GEORGE APRIL

TREASURER MICHAEL ROTHFELD

Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld

Volume 3, Issue 1

Newsletter Date: January, 2014

Message from the Chairman



Fellow Veterans,

Our Veterans activities have slowed a bit during the Holidays. As you know we will not have a Veterans Council meeting in December as many of our members will be traveling or spending time with family.

The major highlight for December was our Wreaths Across America ceremony held on December 14 at the St. Augustine National Cemetery. We had a great turnout for our ceremony and again this year, all 1218 headstones received a Holiday wreath. Since taking over the Wreaths Across America program a couple years ago, our program has been a sellout thanks to the leadership of Dan Blackman. Dan and his committee have worked tirelessly during the year to make sure we have all the grave markers covered each December. Re-

grettably, this will be Dan's last year as head of our WAA program as he is moving back to Alabama to be near his family. Dan has done a yeoman's job with our WAA program as well as serving for the past 4 years as our Vice Chairman of the Veteran's Council. A big Bravo Zulu to Dan for his hard work and leadership and we wish him well in his next endeavors as he takes up residency in Alabama.

We will be having election of Officer's at our January meeting so I encourage everyone to please plan to attend our meeting on January 29 at the Elks Lodge.

The January edition of our **The Patriot Reader** newsletter will be the beginning of the third year we have been doing this paper. Thanks to all of you who have submitted excellent articles these past two

years... sharing your stories and military experiences has made our newsletter such an interesting piece of journalism. We are especially grateful to our editor, Michael Rothfeld. Michael has worked tirelessly each month to bring us interesting stories and has reached out to our Veteran community both locally and in other parts of the country. And of course, we are truly grateful for our sponsors whose advertisements helps defray the cost of producing the newsletter each month.

Bill Dudley
Chairman
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Patriotism is our motto



Thanksgiving with family at
Clyde E. Lassen



Santa visiting early



The Patriot Dogs Visit



Receiving Christmas goodies
from some little visitors



Karate Carolers

Residents also enjoyed the Christmas party on Christmas Eve. A huge "THANK YOU" to the Vietnam Vets/Legacy Vets Motorcycle Club Chapter 'N' of St. Johns County and to the students/faculty/families of Millcreek Elementary School!! These groups provided a wealth of gifts for all of our residents



Nation's Oldest City Honors Veterans

By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (December 15, 2013) – “What a photo op” said a veteran to another. Before the second veteran answered, tears popped out at the corner of his eyes and his voice cracked when he replied “No, what a heart op” as he turned away and wept.

A crowd of more than 100 gathered for the 7th annual “Wreaths Across America” ceremony at the St. Augustine National Cemetery. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Sgt. Major (retired) Daniel Blackman, this was the second year that all 1218 graves were marked with a wreath.

“Raising funds for this ceremony is a 365 day job,” said Blackman. “The communities, veteran and civilian, really came together to make this a great success. I can’t thank them enough.”

The wreaths make quite a journey to the cemetery. Starting from Worcester Wreath in Maine, they make their way down the Atlantic coastline in an 18-wheeler which is met at the truck stop at I95 and CR206 in St. Johns County.

The shipment is then off-loaded by volunteers into a van provided by Two Men and A Truck and moved to a storage area until the morning of the ceremony. The wreaths are transported to the National Cemetery and unloaded by a cadre of volunteers. The ocean of green, dotted by patches of red, covering the entire walkway inside the cemetery is breathtaking.

Ceremonial wreaths dedicated to each branch of service and those service members still listed as POW/MIA’s were brought forth to its place of honor. Dating back to the first ceremony held here, the tradition of inviting members, and family members, of that service to come forth and help with the placing of the wreath has brought closure to many decades-old open emotional wounds. Tears visibly flowed.

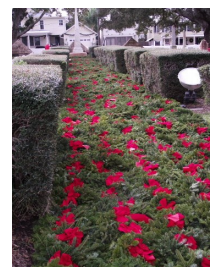
Cathy Heighter Vice Pres., Jacksonville Chapter Gold Star Mothers, was invited to place the first wreath. Heighter was followed by Major General Emmett Titshaw, Adjutant General of Florida, and County Commissioner Cyn-di Stevenson. The general public was then invited to place wreaths. Men, women, and children moved to carry wreaths from the center walkways to honor the graves. Revolutionary soldiers and civilian reenactors were seen walking among the rows wreaths.

The ceremony ended with a detail firing volleys of salute to the fallen and departed, followed by the offering of “Taps” played on a solitary bugle.

The “Wreaths Across America” began in 1992 with 5000 wreaths donated by Morrill Worcester and Worcester Wreath Company. The wreaths were placed on a seldom visited section of Arlington National Cemetery. In 2005, the iconic photograph of snow covering the wreaths and the grounds went viral and the movement exploded.

In 2012, the 21st anniversary witnessed the placing of the one-millionth wreath since 1992. In total, 406,000 wreaths were placed; 105,000 at Arlington National Cemetery and 815 participating locations in all 50 states and at national veterans’ cemeteries on foreign soil.

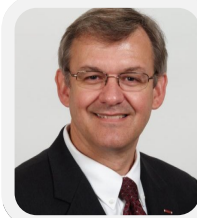
Beginning in 2008, and each year since, Congress has issued a proclamation officially recognizing “Wreaths Across America Day” each December. The official day is the second Saturday.





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

The Support Committee invites everyone to attend its next scheduled meeting on **Monday, February 3rd**, at 7:00pm. The meeting will take place at Community Hospice, 4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257 in Conference Room A



Chairman Howard
McGillin, COL US
Army ret.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



This letter, from RADM V. Guillory, (USN ret) is reprinted to thank all those Vietnam veterans and others who helped make the Vietnam presentation at UNF a success

On behalf of the City of Jacksonville, thank you for your support of the Week of Valor 2013. As you know, our military and veterans communities are vibrant and integral parts of who we are as a city. The Military Affairs, Veterans and Disabled Services Department has made it a priority to continue distinguishing Jacksonville as the most military friendly city in the country, and I appreciate you joining us in that goal.

Please feel free to share my thank you with the Panelist of America's Best and all program participants. (The Vietnam veteran panelists consisted of : *Terry Allan, Tom Crawford, Harry Manford and Blane Wilson. Ray Quinn served as panel moderator, Tony D'Aleo helped organize.*)

I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for your efforts that made the Vietnam Film Documentary a very special event. Words are sometimes most inadequate when it comes to the full scope of emotions one feels when sitting there watching and engaging living history in all its reality. The moment was captured most fittingly when you see the raw, emotional truths being relived and retold to fellow Veterans, their family members and those who did not serve during this era. I was most impressed and moved. Thank you for preserving for now, and for future generations, this awesome saga of service and dedication, as told by the men who were there.

Again, thank you. I hope you had the opportunity to enjoy this year's Week of Valor events, remembering to keep our service members at the forefront of your attention. I commend you for your support to our active and retired military men and women and their families, and I wish you all the best in the future.

Sincerely,

Rear Admiral V. Guillory (US Navy/ret)
Director Military Affairs, Veterans and Disabled Services

December 5th 2013 Erection of the Schulmerich Electronic Carillon / Tower & Liberty Bell System at The Jacksonville National Cemetery

"...As these bells ring ...honored dead rest ... freedom lives..."

A metal, three-bell 40-foot carillon tower equipped to sound approximately 1,000 tunes and other appropriate military sounds, which include theme songs of all military branches, was erected on Thursday the 5th December 2013 at the Jacksonville National Cemetery ("JNC"). Also, to honor the veterans and their families, the bell tower systems will be programmed to toll at specified intervals throughout the day and during funeral processions, including the playing of bugle taps at pre-arranged times.

The tower is a three-year project ("*Project*") of: The Nassau County Amvets Post 2007 in Hilliard, chaired in conjunction with the AmVets National Headquarters by Post Commander Jack Howater; The Rotary Club of North Jacksonville ("*RCNJ*"), under the supervision of 2013-2014 President Kevin Wilson; Staffs of the Jacksonville National Cemetery and National Cemetery Administration, under the supervision of JNC Directors Cliff Shields (*Present*) and Gregory Whitney (2011-2013) and Cemetery Foreman Dan Johnson; and, the Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee, supervised by Chairman Howard McGillin and Chairman-Emeritus Dan Hughes; Past Rotary Area Governors, Matthew Garman (*Haskell*) and Doug Register (*General Contractor*), together with RCNJ Rotarian Pat Mulvihill (*Vice Chairman of the Support Committee of the Jacksonville National Cemetery*) were the Project's Construction Leadership Team. The RCNJ was also assisted by the Jacksonville offices of Vulcan Materials; North Florida structural engineer, Dole A. Kelley Jr.; and, by Jacksonville architect, Glenn Dasher of the Dasher-Hurst firm. These professionals have been involved in this Rotary Community Service Project since its initial planning phases. Also, Summit Erectors, Inc. (*structural steel and precast erection company*) donated the entire labor force and equipment necessary for the Project's final erection and installation phase in early December 2013.

The fully assembled and ready-to-be-erected tower arrived from the Schulmerich factory in Kentucky ("*Schulmerich*"). Since 1948, Schulmerich has installed carillons around the world in support of the AmVets' Memorial Carillon Programs- see picture above ("*Program*"). This Program is truly unique - a living tribute and memorial to our nation's deceased veterans and dates back to the end of WW II. After studying the tributes presented by other organizations and groups memorializing the dead of other wars, AMVETS settled on a "living" memorial - a carillon whose tolling bells would act as a constant reminder of the price of liberty. The Program not only affirms that the sacrifices made by those who died were not in vain, but also would serve to remind us of our great legacy and of our debt to those who fought to preserve freedom throughout the world. The first carillon in the Program was installed at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Accepted by an Act of Congress in October 1949, this carillon was dedicated by President Harry S. Truman on December 21, 1949 with his now immortal words, "...As these bells ring ...honored dead rest ... freedom lives..." (*A replacement carillon was dedicated at the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, Missouri on December 21, 1984, exactly thirty-five years after President Truman dedicated the first AMVETS Carillon. This dedication marked the very last event that honored President Truman during the 100th Anniversary of his birth*). In addition to Arlington and Jacksonville, AMVETS' carillons are located at other famous US locations such as, but not limited to, the following: Freedoms Foundation-Valley Forge; and, Honolulu Cemetery of the Pacific.

A formal "Freedom Lives Ceremony and Dedication" of this Carillon Tower is being planned for the 1st Quarter 2014.

Date and Time to be announced.



Thank you Pat Mulvihill for
the article and pictures





“Quilt of Tears” the Agent Orange legacy

By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (November 23, 2013) – In the distance there is a sea of orange. Getting closer it becomes a sea of orange quilts. Even closer, focus shows squares adorned with photos, mementos, names and dates.

Each square of a “Quilt” is a dedication to a Veteran who currently lives with, or who has passed from the ravaging insidious effects of exposure to Agent Orange. When placed edge to edge, the quilts measure just over 200 feet. It is growing every day.

The “Quilt of Tears” was started by Jennie LeFevre and shown the first time on Memorial Day, 1988 in Washington, D.C. LeFevre lost her husband Gerald in 1989 to inoperable Agent Orange cancers. This happened 15 years after his retirement from the Air Force.

After Gerald’s death, Jennie spent the rest of her life working with Veterans, their widows and their families. Jennie passed away in 2004.

Her last wish was for the continuation of her work and to never let the Agent Orange Victims or their ultimate sacrifices be forgotten. The “Quilt Of Tears” and Support Network has helped many Veterans & families through out the years. Jennie passed the torch to Henry and Shelia Snyder. Henry lives with the effects of Agent Orange.

The actions have gone beyond just making a quilt square in honor of a Veteran, An active support network grew out of Jennie’s tireless work with Veterans and their families. “Sharing with a person who is walking the same path helps,” said Snyder. “Veteran to Veteran and family to family, unless you have been, or are there, one really can do little more than offer a modicum of support.”

“It is hard to relate,” he continued, “what one feels as before your eyes a loved one wastes away to nothing while their body is being wracked by a disease caused by a man-made chemical.” Living with a child going through it,” he added as he wiped his eyes, “is worse and sometimes more than one can bear.”

To learn more about “The Quilt” and the support network, contact:

A/O Victims & Widows Support Network, Inc
P.O. Box 90
Davenport, Florida 33836
Phone: 1-863-422-7788 - Fax: 863-421-2333

To learn more about the “Quilt” and the making and submitting of squares please go to their website: <http://www.agentorangequiltotears.com>

What is Agent Orange?

Most people have at least heard of Agent Orange, thanks to the tireless efforts of Vietnam Veterans. Very few of them understand the devastation.

There are just over 58,000 names of those who gave their last full measure of devotion on “The Wall.” This sea of orange: this “Quilt of Tears” represents the over 250,000 people who live with the ravaging effects of exposure to Agent Orange. Interestingly, this number has not changed for several years.

According to the list of symptoms compiled and recognized by VA, those effects could be any one or combination of the following: acute peripheral neuropathy, type II diabetes, prostate cancer, Parkinson’s Disease, and more.

Even worse, if the situation can get any worse than death, is the number of occurrences of Spina Bifida and Infantile Fibrosarcoma in children of Veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

Vietnam Veterans have received the majority of the attention regarding Agent Orange, however research now shows the herbicide was also used at military installations and other facilities on and outside of the U.S. mainland, including including Hawaii and Puerto Rico, as well as localities in Cambodia, Canada, Korea, Guam, Okinawa, the Philippines, and Thailand.

As time has passed, more and more has come to the surface regarding exposure to Agent Orange. Exposure is no longer relegated to “Boots on the Ground” warriors.

If a veteran served in the Republic of Vietnam, regardless of the length of that service, during the period January 9, 1962, to May 7, 1975; or served onboard a ship or boat that operated in Vietnam’s inland waterways or which docked in Vietnam and the veteran went ashore; in Korea between April 1, 1968, and August 31, 1971; or served in a unit recognized by the VA and DoD to have operated in an area in or near the Korean DMZ in which herbicides were applied.

For more information on Agent Orange, go to:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/index.asp>

For a list of naval and Coast Guard vessels currently recognized go to:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/shiplist/list.asp>

For a list of recognized units, go to: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/korea.asp>

For a list of certain occupations at certain air bases in Thailand, go to:
<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/thailand.asp>



Photos by Michael Isam

*From Fred Dupont: **The Bryan Tutton Memorial Post 2391 Honor Guard***

Be it Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, Wreaths Across America, the burial of a veteran, or any occasion, the VFW Honor Guard stands ready to render honors.



Six members of the post created the honor guard in 1998: Al Thorpe, Jim Sisk, Jim Newton, Jim Bodman, Fred Chauvin, and Bob Cuff. They taught themselves the proper way to conduct ceremonies from DOD handbooks and a great deal of practice. They paid for their own uniforms and held fun raises at the post to purchase their rifles. The honor guard has been self supporting since its inception by renting the post to hold dinners and small stipends they receive from various organizations and families to perform ceremonies. These donations are not required but much appreciated.

After several years of practice, they received their DOD certification to hold funerals by an inspection from a US Navy funeral expert. To get certified they demonstrated their expertise in: folding the flag, presenting it to the family, firing salute, and playing taps.

The current average age of the honor guard is in the seventies, with Jim Sisk being the oldest (82) and Fred DuPont being the youngest (66). Over the years, there have been many members that have come and gone, either through death or disability. There have been two chaplains: Harold Grossman and Ron Gagne, with Ron being the current. We represent all branches of the service and have fought in WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the first Gulf War: Jim Sisk, Earl Sludder, Mike Kiely, Paul Heagey, Herb Zieglmeier, George Milroy, Fred Mathis, Fred DuPont, and Judy Davis.

Throughout its history, this dedicated team of veterans has performed honors at the burials of many WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans (the burial of active duty veterans being conducted by the respective service honor guards). They have traveled all across Northeast Florida to render honors for their fellow veterans. Also, they have been at every Memorial Day and Veteran's Day celebration in the St. Augustine area. From Flag retirement ceremonies to Flag Day ceremonies at the Elks, the Honor Guard is there. If you need our services, contact Fred DuPont at 904-540-8704.



Veterans welcome a new resident to St. Johns County

By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (December 3, 2013) – Everyone knows that Marines are tough. Just how tough has yet to be completely proven. St. Johns County is now home to another Marine.

December 21, 2010, two days before the birth of his daughter, Marine Lance Corporal Brandon Long was in Sangin, Afghanistan. He was on his first deployment and on foot patrol with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. While walking through a patch of river rocks he stepped on an IED.

That was when all hell broke loose. Not only did he lose both legs to the IED blast, but he lost nearly 98% of his blood volume.

His squad launched heroic measures to save his life while waiting for a helicopter to arrive for MEDEVAC. Due to the tremendous amount of blood loss, LCpl Long required resuscitation multiple times during the ordeal lasting over an hour by the time he arrived at a local field hospital.

Long was next airlifted to Landstuhl, Germany before arriving at Bethesda Naval Medical Center where he remained for 2 years enduring surgeries and rehabilitation before returning home to Indiana.

Honey Branch Lane, located off CR208, was host to the 3rd groundbreaking ceremony for an ably challenged Veteran. LCpl Brandon Long, his wife, daughter and nephew.

In an event held by Homes For Our Troops, Long and his family were escorted by Rolling Thunder out of Jacksonville, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, and Vietnam Vets/ Legacy Vets Motorcycle Club.

The procession was stopped short allowing Long and his family to be piped in by members of The St. Johns County Pipes and Drums, followed by members of First Watch as they proceeded through a Flag Line provided by the Patriot Guard Riders.

Long and his family were greeted by current residents of Honey Branch Lane, Cpl Tyler Southern and Master Sgt. John Hayes. Hayes and his family received the keys to their new home earlier this year. Southern and his wife were the first neighborhood recipients of a Homes For Our Troops house two years ago. Hayes issued a formal "Welcome to the neighborhood" to Long and his family.

Nease High School JROTC and the Marine Corps League detachment provided Color Guard and Miss Faith Miller sung the National Anthem.

Long told an audience of nearly 100 supporters "One thing this home will provide for our family is allowing my wife to retire from being a full time caregiver and I can become a full time husband again." "My wife will have the benefit from two wives in the neighborhood who know what she is going through." "Having friends able to relate to and understand our situation is going to be amazing," said Nicole Long.

"The stories of these incredible Veterans are inspiring" said Larry Gill, Veteran Liaison for

Homes for Our Troops. Gill went on to share a special moment in his life and the history of the organization.

“Many years ago during my recovery process,” said Gill, “I was talking with a fellow patient at Walter Reid. He had lost both arms and was wearing the prosthetics. Eventually the conversation turned to the inevitable ‘how I got my purple heart’ conversation.” “The young man told me he was inflating a tire when the snap ring came off and severed both his arms.” “I remarked that I knew a young soldier who died under similar circumstances.” “The young Veteran replied, ‘He was working with me when he died.’”

That chance meeting led to a home being built for the Veteran by Homes For Our Troops; with one stipulation. “As grateful as I am for the honor,” said the Veteran, “I won’t feel comfortable until a home is built for all the ably challenged.” A deal was struck that has led to the building of more than 140 homes in over 30 states.

As an added bonus to the event, it was learned a new resident on Honey Branch Lane will be arriving very shortly. Tyler and Ashley Southern are expecting their first child!



Tyler and Ashley ham it up



Brandon's Angel Claire



First Militia Rifle detail

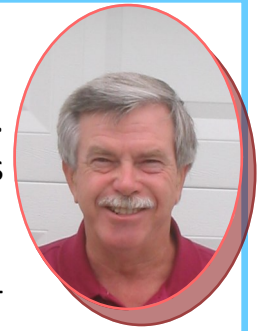


LCpl Brandon and Nicole Long



LCpl Brandon Long

James (Jim) McCollum, *by Harry Manford*



How many submariners do you know? Or have met? Probably not many. Further, how many submariners have you met that were crew members on a nuclear sub? Probably fewer.

Well, meet Chief Petty Officer Jim McCollum, a Coquina Crossing resident. He's your ordinary friend and neighbor next door, but his service to this great Nation is extraordinary. Jim gave our country over 23 years in the US Navy with 12 of those years aboard a nuclear submarine. Although he won't talk (he says he can't) much about his naval duties due to a Top Secret (Intelligence) security clearance covenant, his service is nonetheless storied and interesting.

Jim hails from Franklin, North Carolina, a metropolis of 2,000 people, and after high school graduation at the age of 17, he joined the Navy. By the way, his father had to sign for him at that tender age to join! Jim graduated out of a senior class of 9 fellow classmates. He further comments that when graduating from his Franklin High School, you had two choices for a career: "Either go to Detroit to make cars or join the military." Since his father proudly served on a Navy LST (Landing Ship, Tank) during World War II, Jim's decision to enlist in the US Navy was a natural choice.

Jim's decision for submarine duty was one of a personal, voluntary choice. After one volunteered for this duty, you went through a battery of psychological and physical tests at the Navy's sub school in New London, Connecticut to see if you were fit. One of the first tests was for claustrophobia. He states 10 men, elbow to elbow, were placed in a recompression chamber, sunk 150 feet in water until the chamber walls turned to ice, and if you did not come out yelling and screaming, you were fit for further testing. He passed them all.

Jim loved serving on three nuclear submarines; the USS George Washington Carver, USS Thomas A. Edison, and USS Sam Rayburn. All three of these "boats" were equipped with 16 nuclear missiles either of the long range Polaris or Poseidon types. Although these boats are not the largest, they still are not small; nearly a one and a half football fields long, over three stories deep, and some thirty feet wide all driven by a nuclear power plant. There were only a few of these warships made, and Jim had the privilege to be aboard them.

Jim's duties aboard the subs were to drive or navigate the boat. This wasn't easy as the boat is in total darkness underwater, and submarine navigation underwater requires special skills and technologies not needed by surface ships. Concentration 100% of the

time is the name of the game, and as a result, Jim worked only 6 hour shifts so as not to become 'stale' while behind the wheel. Just think, how would you like to drive a 425' steel behemoth in total darkness, no windshield, and no headlights! There are systems to do this, and Jim mastered them.

Ever hear of the "goat locker?" Back in the time of wooden Naval ships (remember, no refrigeration then), goats and other livestock were kept aboard to supply fresh food and milk. In these early times, this livestock was kept in the Chief Petty Officers' quarters for safekeeping. (Can you just imagine the smell!) Thus, as Navy legend goes, the moniker 'goat locker' still sticks today as the location of all Chiefs aboard a naval vessel. Jim was a Chief Petty Officer, but he told me there were no goats aboard.

As Jim became so proficient at his submarine duties, he was invited two separate times by his commanding Admiral to attend Officer Candidate School, or OCS. Upon graduation, each of these new OCS assignments would have taken him from submarines, and due to his love of subs, he turned each offer down. He never looked back at these decisions, but in retrospect, this may have held him back for further promotions. There's no way of telling, but Jim continued to excel at his work.



Jim and Marie McCollum on their wedding day 1974.

The last 11 years of Jim's service was shore duty in England, Italy, Sardinia, and others. Jim was in a special intelligence section, and this duty afforded him special base locations, quarters, and pay. He so enjoyed these assignments, thinks highly of those years, and while in London in 1972, he met a Scottish sweetheart named Marie. In 1974, they married, and they have remained partners for life.

Following 23 years of the Navy, Jim held a number of important positions in private industry in South Carolina and Jacksonville, Florida before finally retiring in Coquina Crossing. He is on the Executive Committee of the Coquina Veterans, and his input on policy and decisions is always sought. He is a definite asset to any organization.

Jim is very proud of his US Navy service, and still has fond memories of submarines. He is a patriot, a warrior, a solid citizen, and the next time you see him, tip your hat to him!



A farewell salute upon retirement

HONOR FLIGHT HONORS JOE SHOMO By BILL NAPPER

From time-to-time there is an event, an organization, that makes you even prouder to be an American. Honor Flight is one of those organizations. Its mission is to transport veterans to Washington, D. C. to visit memorials honoring their service and sacrifices. Earl Morse, a retired Air Force Captain, working for the VA in Springfield, Ohio organized the first flight of six small planes to take World War II veterans to the Capital to experience the recently completed WWII memorial. Morse's generous organization was extremely popular. Honor Flight attracted many veterans and, most importantly, the sponsorship of many affluent individuals and corporations many of whom give on an anonymous basis. To date, Honor Flight has flown about 100,000 veterans, primarily those from WWII, to Washington from all over the nation.



Joe Shomo, 1943,
Wash., DC

Joe Shomo, long-time Coquina resident and a WWII Army veteran, first heard about Honor Flight at a Coquina Veterans meeting. He applied to the Central Florida Honor Flight unit and found he was too late for a 2013 flight. Honor Flight does not fly between the end of November and April as Washington's weather during that period is not suitable for elderly veterans to visit outdoor memorials. Fortunately for Joe an already scheduled veteran dropped out and Joe was assigned to his space.



Joe Shomo, 2008

Honor Flight's trips are one day affairs, a very long day. Joe and five or six other vets stayed at Penny Farms enabling them to leave at 4:30am for a van trip to the Sanford airport. Once there, he and the other Penny Farms vets joined vets from other locations increasing the size of the group to 48. Additionally, each vet was accompanied by an "angel" a helper, particularly useful to about half the group, vets in wheel chairs. Several PR people from Orlando also were on the flight. Only vets fly for free all others pay their way.

A police escort preceded the two buses from the Baltimore/Washington airport to the Air Force monument in Washington. Joe's cousin won the Medal of Honor and his name was on the monument. The buses then drove to the circle containing the Marine Iwo Jima monument. From the bus it looked as if the flag was raising.

It's a long walk to the WWII monument but the angels had a wheel chair for each vet. Joe's visit occurred two days after the government shutdown. Some 50 to 60 bikers told the group that if the vets could not get into the monument, they would see to it that they did. A general saluted the vets as they entered the monument. Senator Bob Dole, who has been very active in Honor Flight, also greeted them. Senator Elizabeth Dole has also been active in the organization.

The vets then visited the relatively nearby Vietnam and Korean War memorials. Their final stop was the Arlington National Cemetery. This visit was carefully timed so that the group could see the impressive changing of the guard ceremony.

There were many heartwarming events including the police motorcycle escorts, crowds of 300 to 400 families that greeted the vets at each airport, thank you letters from elementary school children, and a junior high school band which played at Sanford when the group returned at 11:00pm. Many of these people thanked the vets for their service. Kudos and great thanks goes to all of the Honor Flight organizers and contributors.

A DVD of the event has been made and Joe will narrate it at the Coquina Crossing Homeowners meeting at 7:00pm on Tuesday, January 14, 2014.



The Induction Physical

A right of passage for all American males prior to the “All Volunteer Army” was the Induction Physical Examination to determine fitness for service in the Armed Forces. Mine came in the spring of 1968 as I was about to graduate from dental school and come on active duty with the U.S. Navy. Prior to this time I had been deferred by my Draft Board because I was a full time student.

I duly reported to the Induction Center at 401 N. Broad Street in Philadelphia for the exam. There were about 200 of us that day, so it seemed. The entire process was designed with great precision and efficiency. The multitude filled out required paperwork (SF form 88), then proceeded in line to a series of stations arranged in a circular fashion around a designated passageway for the various procedures and tests.

My first stumbling block occurred at the Color Vision station where we had to recognize numbers hidden as different colored dots. Unfortunately I missed several of these cleverly disguised digits. A few minutes later as the line progressed, I was called aside for a special test, the FALANT. Two of three colored dots, *red, green, and white*, are projected on a screen. The first couple were easy. Then I bogged down pretty consistently. But it was time to soldier on back to the line.

We proceeded to the locker room and stripped down to jockey shorts in preparation for the laying on of hands by the physicians. Back in line outside “the big room” a corpsman stuck his head through the drapes of one of the side booths and appeared to signal to me. Somewhat reluctantly, I confirmed that yes, it was for me. Clandestinely, he ushered me through the drapery into a small chamber. Suspended from the side bulkhead was what looked to be a full sized traffic light. Pointing to it, he said, “What colors are those lights.” Not wishing to be tricked by a ruse, I carefully studied the artifact before answering, “Well the top is red, the middle is yellow, and the bottom is green.” After making a few entries on my forms, he instructed me to return to the line for the final phases of the physical exam.

From Ted

The New Centurions

A vaunted tradition among Naval Aviators is recognizing the number of arrested carrier landings, each hundred of which the aviator achieves "Centurion" status. The actual number of active pilots aboard a deployed modern aircraft carrier is a relatively small percentage of the total crew which may number up to 6500 people. As the first extended deployment of USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER progressed in 1979, a growing number of the Air Wing pilots qualified initially or advanced as Centurions.

Crew morale was extremely high aboard the Navy's then newest commissioned aircraft carrier. Not to be outdone by our fly-boy brethren, the ship's company Wardroom decided to institute an award of its own. A time honored tradition at sea is the screening of the nightly movie in the various messes around the ship. Due to the audience comments throughout the film at these nightly gatherings the best movies frequently turned out to be some of Hollywood's lesser cinema-graphic triumphs. In that era, the most popular films were the spaghetti westerns, especially if they contained such essential elements as kung fu, a modicum of feminine "skin," and a bit of comic relief.

The proposed award would be conferred on a Ward Room member who had endured a minimum of 100 shipboard movies. A night was selected to celebrate the inaugural event, a suitable film scheduled, and a large sheet cake procured. The cake had each new centurion's name emblazoned on the top. A record crowd showed up that night for the festivities.

The Navy sword, though its primary purpose had long been relegated from repelling boarders to the ceremonial function of cutting cakes at various official functions, was brought in for the occasion. Our movie director, Major Dick Houston, USMC was proffered the blade for the honor of making the first cut. The Director chose to make the initial cut lengthwise through the middle of the cake, then a parallel cut a few inches to the right. Shimmying the blade beneath the 2 cuts he lifted out the entire section on the back of the blade. He then grasped the section off the blade and, like a piece of watermelon, took a large bite out of the cake, and in turn passed the wedge along to each new centurion who did likewise. Obviously Navy cakes have a lot of body to them. Thus was a tradition born. I myself left the ship later in the cruise as a triple centurion with over 300 movies to my credit.

From Ted

From SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn:

Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Inductees:

Major General John R. D. Cleland, U.S. Army, Brevard County, Florida

Major John L. Haynes, USMC (Ret). Jefferson County, Florida

Lieutenant General Robert F. Milligan, USMC (Ret), Leon County, Florida

Captain Jeanne E. G. Rubin, U.S. Navy Reserve (Ret), Broward County, Florida

Captain Robert J. Silah, U. S. Navy (Ret), Hillsborough County, Florida

Congressman Sam M. Gibbons, Deceased, Veteran U. S. Army WWII, Hillsborough County, Florida

The inductees were nominated as finalist by the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Council. The nominations were approved by Governor Scott and members of the Florida Governor's Cabinet.

The induction ceremony was conducted at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, 12 November 2013.

Additional: SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn serves on the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Council and participated as narrator during the induction ceremony.

This article is used with permission of its author Alice A. Booher, the American ExPows and its publisher Cheryl Cerbone. It will appear in the January-February, No. 71, Vol. 1/2, American ExPOW Bulletin

Surviving Brutality: Continuing The Oral POW History by Alice A. Booher

Through a number of venues, organizations and individuals, the State of Florida has a number of ongoing efforts to expand the educational opportunity from and to their growing and significant veteran population. The *Bulletin* has reported a number of these including several remarkable DVDs made by Michael Rothfeld of FVPPI and his associates which have placed special focus on members of their POW community. One on-site event in the Fall featured WW II Boatswain Mate Bill Ingram, US Navy (Ret.), speaking as a former Japanese POW in Burma at an event hosted at the Maritime Heritage Center in Jacksonville with the assistance of Robert Mitchell of Rolling Thunder FL Chapter 4 and Museum Executive Paul Ghiotto.

Early in November, Vietnam POW Giles Norrington, Captain, USN (Ret.), shared details on his experiences at Hoa Lo and other prisons. This “Lunch and Learn” experience, which included Rothfeld’s DVD POW documentary, was hosted by the Orange County Regional History Center, located at 65 E. Central Blvd., in Orlando, whose Assistant Director is Kimberlee



Riley (seen in photo on right with Giles). At the event, it was learned that Ms. Riley’s uncle was Major Robert Franklin (“Wild Bill”) Coady, USAF, (seen in photo on left) a rescue pilot flying an A1H “Skyraider” who went down in Laos on January 18, 1969. Listed as MIA, Coady had been recorded by hearsay in the early release debriefs for Department of State on September 25, 1969 and Defense Intelligence Agency on October 3, 1969, given by Capt. Wesley Rumble, (who had coincidentally been Giles’ roommate for a time at Hoa Lo). As has been the case with the others lost in Laos, which was not part of the Paris Peace Accords and thus not part of direct negotiations, Ms. Riley notes that it has been difficult to get additional information, but before her mother dies, she hopes that something more will become available about the fate of her godfather and her mother’s only brother, so there can be some modest element of family closure.

If any reader is able to provide independent information on Coady [602nd SOS, 56th SOW (Nakon Phanon RTAFB), 7th AF, USAF, (DOB: September 11, 1939) out of New Orleans], please contact Cheryl Cerbone who can help you share the information.

Cheryl Cerbone, axpoweditor@comcast.net



The date and time for our next MIAP - FL service has been approved by Clifford Shields of the JNC. This date was requested by Janis Diamond of Hardage Giddens Funeral Home.

Please mark your calendars for Friday, March 28, 2014 @ 1:30pm. The time of 1:30pm works better for the staff of the JNC. At this time we still can not do our services on Saturdays so Fridays are the best day. I hope that by sending this notice

out now it will give everyone enough time to plan. We all know we can never pick a date or time that would be best for all.

I WILL KEEP EVERYONE UPDATED AS THE PLANS COMES TOGETHER AND WILL POST PRE-MEETING DATES AFTER THE FIRST OF THE YEAR.

If you were not involved in our first service but wish to join in for this one please contact me at miapjax@yahoo.com. We want as many people from our community to be a part of this as possible.

Be fore warned I will be asking for some items to be donated (chairs, water, etc) for this service.

On behalf of MIAP - FL I would like to wish everyone a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY HOLIDAYS. PLEASE BE SAFE in all your holiday travels and fun. Remember the REASON for the SEASON.

LOVE & PEACE to all for GOD & COUNTRY,

Kathy Church
101 Bowles Street
Neptune Beach, FL 32266
(904) 219-3035
bartenderpost233@yahoo.com

The Missing in America Project
MIAP - FL State Coordinator
miapjax@yahoo.com
www.miap.us

CFC - Combined Federal Campaign #76243

ALA Unit 233 Membership Chair
ALA 5th District Poppy Chair

American Legion Riders
Chapter 233 - Treasurer
legionriders233@gmail.com

The Jacksonville Semper Fidelis Society would like to share with all some veterans information concerning an initiative to put a memorial in the national cemetery in honor of all who served in Vietnam from 1961 to 1975....A fitting memorial to all those who stepped up to serve and sacrifice when so many wouldn't.



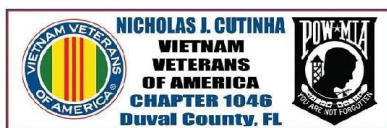
Reminder to the younger veterans, it's the Vietnam Veterans who have made sure the younger veterans are not forgotten when they return and get they recognition, support and care the the Vietnam Vets never got when they came home.

Please consider supporting this memorial that will be proudly displayed near the USMC Memorial on the National Cemetery grounds.

The lord looked down and called on the Veteran, where is thy brother and the Veteran said he is here and I am my brothers keeper. And the lord smiled and said Blessed are the Peace Keepers, they will inherit heaven.

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.

Veterans need to stick together!



December 2013
Jacksonville, Florida

Fellow Veterans,

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1046 is seeking your to help in honoring all those who served during the Vietnam War through a donation for a memorial monument that will be placed at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. The memorial will stand as testimony to the memory, courage, and sacrifice for all that served in the military services of our country during the Vietnam War, 1961- 1975.

Our goal is to raise \$36,000 through private funding for the fabrication and installation of the memorial at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. We have collected close to half of the needed funds as the result of a generous donation from a fellow Vietnam Veteran of a Honda Motorcycle which Chapter 1046 is raffling off. We are now asking for help from fellow veterans in raising the remainder of the funds needed to complete the fund raising goal for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Monument. Details of the memorial and donation options are highlighted in the enclosed brochure. Also enclosed is a graphic rendering of the three sides of the monument.

Please be a partner in sponsoring this memorial at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. It will stand as a permanent monument to the sacrifices and honor of all the men and women who served during the Vietnam War. It is a testament to their valor, dedication and service.

Vietnam Veterans are proud to have served our Nation and would sincerely appreciate your support. Please feel free to contact me if I you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Tony D'Aleo

Anthony (Tony) D'Aleo, President
Vietnam Veterans of America
Nicholas J. Cutinha Chapter 1046
Email president@vva1046.com
Cell 904-910-2386

Enclosures: 1) Vietnam Veterans Memorial Monument Brochure
2) Drawing - Vietnam Veterans Memorial Monument

Monument Design

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a sculpture designed by local Vietnam Veteran, artist and sculptor, Jerome Dornask. The design is different, as was the war. The monument is a tribute to those who served during the Vietnam War. The overall design is characterized by abrupt changes and unpredictable planes, symbolizing the social and political turmoil of the times. The front of the monument pays tribute and honors all those who served from all branches of the United States Military, some of whom never made it home. The back of the memorial is in recognition of the POW/MIAs. The side panel is a listing of major battles and operations during the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Jacksonville National Cemetery

The Jacksonville National Cemetery was dedicated on September 21, 2008. To date, over 5,000 interments have taken place. Over 1,500 burials are now occurring each year. The majority of these are Vietnam Veterans.



Be Generous Honor Our Vietnam Vets

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1046
P.O. Box 331322
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233-1322

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Monument

To Honor All Who Served

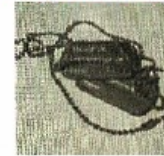


(Artist Rendering)

Join Us

In building a permanent testament to the courage and sacrifice of all the men and women who served during the Vietnam War.

"We Will Never Forget!"



Be Generous Honor Our Vietnam Vets

Honor Our Vietnam Vets

Join Us

In erecting a permanent memorial to all the men and women that served their country during the Vietnam War.

The monument will be erected at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. It's unique design will stand as a testament to their memory and to their courage and sacrifice.

The design and specifications for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Monument has been submitted to the Jacksonville National Cemetery for approval. All specifications are in accordance with the Veterans Administration Cemetery Memorials requirements.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Monument is being funded entirely by private donations.

The goal is to raise \$36,000 to cover the cost of the monument and related costs.

Funds donated that exceed our goal will be used by VVA 1046 to support our Veterans Outreach Programs



"Thank You For Your Service"

Memorial Goal \$36,000

Honor Our Vietnam Vets

Here's How to Help

Donations, Sponsorships and Partners

Donations

Donations of any size are gratefully appreciated. Even the smallest amount will help us erect this memorial to our Vietnam Veterans.

DONATE NOW

Sponsors

Sponsors will be featured on our website, in all program brochures and will also receive a commemorative certificate of the monument.

Partners

We are seeking patriotic men and women as well as businesses, community organizations and veterans organizations to come together to help to promote this project. Please feel free to contact us if you have ideas or means to help us with raising the funds for this monument. Car washes, garage sales, booths and tables at retail outlets are just some of the ways you could partner to help reach the goal. Contact Ray Breault, First vice President, at 1vp@vva1046.com with any ideas or suggestions.



Memorial Goal \$36,000

Honor Our Vietnam Vets

Count Me In! I'd Like to...

☐ Make a donation of
☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

☐ Be a Sponsor
☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ Other \$ _____

Name _____
Company/Organization _____
Mailing Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone # _____
Email _____

Make Checks Payable to:
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1046

Please mail completed form and donation to:
Vietnam Veterans of America
Nicholas J. Cutinha Chapter 1046
Monument Committee
P.O. Box 331322
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233-1322

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1046 is a 501 (c) (3) veterans organization. All donations are tax deductible under IRC 170(c) (3).

Visit our Website at:
www.vva1046.com/monument for more information and photographs. Donations can also be made using debit or credit cards at the website.

Memorial Goal \$36,000



This obituary about a WW II veteran who lived in Jacksonville is used with permission of its author Sandy Strickland. Sandy.strickland@jacksonville.com

Olive Davis: 1912-2013: Oldest living WW II Army nurse liked to help the sick

Olive Davis' compassion for the wounded led her to the front lines in Italy and Africa during World War II.

As an Army nurse, she faced primitive living conditions, air raids and shifts of 12 to 16 hours. But it was the sewer rats the size of small cats that scared her more than the bombs or shells.

Still, Mrs. Davis called her two years of service the best of her long nursing career. And until her death Saturday, the Jacksonville resident was the oldest living World War II Army nurse in the United States. Mrs. Davis was 101 and would have celebrated her 102nd birthday on Jan. 10.

"What I did in World War II was my patriotic duty, " Mrs. Davis said in a 2006 Times-Union interview. "If I were able, I'd do it for the soldiers in Iraq today."

Mrs. Davis worked as a nurse until her late 70s and lived in her own home until October, said her son, Paul Davis, a decorated Vietnam War fighter pilot.

She was born in Aurora, Ontario, outside Toronto, in 1912. When she was 11, her family moved to Detroit. Mrs. Davis trained to be a nurse at Grace Hospital School of Nursing in Detroit. The day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, she and several girlfriends went to the American Red Cross and volunteered to be Army nurses, her son said.

Mrs. Davis spent seven months at a military hospital in Brigham City, Utah, caring for those wounded in the Pacific and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps. As part of a convoy headed to North Africa in 1943, her ship came under heavy fire as it approached Algiers. Mrs. Davis returned to the United States in the fall of 1944. Meanwhile, her ship brought down one of the German planes, but the ship behind it was hit.

In Algiers, the nurses set up a tent hospital and lived in tents next to it.

Their next move was to Italy where Mrs. Davis' unit traveled near the front lines from Naples to Caserta to Benevento. They treated thousands of casualties from the bloody battle of Anzio. The devout Christian said in an interview that she learned the best way to deal with a wound, be it a scraped knee or a gunshot to the head, was with a prayer and a kind touch. It might be a back rub after administering a shot or a foot soak.

"She liked sick people, " Davis said. "She had a nurse's heart."

She needed it during the long shifts and multiple bites from fleas that were attached to the rats. Once, she came down with shingles and spent several days in the hospital herself.

On another occasion, Davis said his mother was walking with friends to their quarters near Naples when a U.S. soldier grabbed her and pulled her against a building to protect her during a twilight air raid. A bomb landed next to them but didn't explode. Later, his mother learned that the German women forced to work in the munitions factories often would rig the bombs so they were useless, and she felt that had happened, Davis said.

The nurses gave the same compassionate care to the wounded Germans, despite fears by some prisoners that the nurses were trying to kill them, his mother told him.

There was one American patient, a young first lieutenant who was awarded three Purple Hearts, who won her heart while she tended to his head wounds and even shaved him. In the spring of 1944, she married Stanley Davis at the only Protestant church in Naples. They were witnesses to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius that year. She took a picture of the historic event, which turned out to be its last recorded eruption.

Mrs. Davis returned to the United States in the fall of 1944. Meanwhile her parents had moved to Jacksonville and in 1950, the Davises and their son followed them. She returned to nursing and worked at St. Luke's Hospital until retiring in the early 1980s.

Mrs. Davis taught Sunday school for decades, most of that time at First Baptist Church, and loved to study the Bible, Davis said. She also visited shut-ins and nursing home residents. In the 1980s, Mrs. Davis went on a medical mission trip to Uganda and in 1987 to the Philippines. She also was one of the grand marshals in a Jacksonville Veterans Day parade.

Her husband died in 2005 at age 85. In addition to her son, she is survived by one grandson and two great grandsons. The funeral was held at the Jacksonville National Cemetery.

Photos courtesy of Paul Davis



Five Star Veterans Center 'very grateful' to receive \$100K grant from Weavers' vets fund Wednesday

A local veterans meeting place and rehabilitation center for homeless veterans was on the brink of closing its doors just months ago.

But the latest in a recent string of successes has certainly brightened the future of Five Star Veterans Center in Jacksonville.

The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida, through the J. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver veterans fund, awarded a \$100,000 grant to the center Wednesday.

"I'm very grateful to be considered for an award such as that," said Col. Len Loving, the center's chief operating officer. "It's going to definitely allow us to maintain and keep the center open."

Five Star Veterans Center, which was devastated by the Allied Veterans of the World corruption case, was nearly forced to close its doors and put residents back out on the street. Allied provided most of the funding for the facility, then called Allied Veterans Center.

Five Star was waiting on a court order to absolve it from any connection to the Allied Internet gaming scandal. Once Attorney General Pam Bondi's office issued the order, the center saw considerable support from the community.

Home Depot sponsored a still-ongoing remodeling of the center, but much of the donations that have kept Five Star on its feet have come from private donations.

"Very gratefully, we've received a considerable amount of donations from John Q. Public, that people are so considerate and kind to send to us," Loving said.

However, the Weaver grant represents a considerable jump in the center's financial outlook.

"The Weavers wanted to help the vets center," said Mark LeMaire of the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida. "They've had a rough season, but they're recognized for doing good work. They wanted to help stabilize them."



The Five Star Veterans Center serves as a meeting place for veterans but focuses on rehabilitating homeless post-9/11 veterans, most of whom have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. The center on Acme Street off Atlantic Boulevard currently houses 27 veterans.

Clifford Davis: (904) 359-4207





American Legion Post 37, information provided by Adjutant Kevin McKeefery

Veteran Mobile Access Points January 2014						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WorkSource Veteran Mobile Access Points (VMAP) an extension of our career centers. Providing use of laptops, 3G/4G and knowledgeable staff to help veteran job seekers target their resumes, locate potential employers and occasional workshops covering a variety of work readiness topics. Contact VMAP at 904-866-9838 for more information			1 	2 Nassau WorkSource 96042 Lofton Sq Ct Yulee, FL 32097 10AM – 2PM	3 Webb Wesconnett Library 6887 103rd St Jax, FL 32210 10AM – 2PM	4
5	6 American Legion Post 202 7441 SR 21 Keystone Hts, FL 10AM – 3PM	7 Baker WorkSource 1184 South 6th St Macclenny, FL 32063 10AM – 2PM	8 USO Mayport 2560 Mayport Road Atlantic Bch, FL 10am – 3pm	9 St Johns WorkSource 525 State Road 16, Suite 109 St. Aug, FL 32084 10AM – 2PM	10 VA Clinic Downtown Outreach 10AM – 1PM	11
12	13 Putnam WorkSource 400 Hwy 19 N. Suite 33 Palatka, FL 32177 10AM – 2PM	14 American Legion Post 137 5443 San Juan Ave Jax, FL 32210 10AM – 2PM	15 Five Star Vet Center 40 Acme Street Jax, FL 32211 10AM – 3PM	16 Nassau WorkSource 96042 Lofton Sq Ct Yulee, FL 32097 10AM – 2PM	17 Webb Wesconnett Library 6887 103rd St Jax, FL 32210 10AM – 2PM	18
19	20 	21 Baker WorkSource 1184 South 6th St Macclenny, FL 32063 10AM – 2PM	22 USO Mayport 2560 Mayport Road Atlantic Bch, FL 10am – 3pm	23 St Johns WorkSource 525 State Road 16, Suite 109 St. Aug, FL 32084 10AM – 2PM	24 VA Clinic Southpoint Outreach 10AM-1PM	25
26	27 Putnam WorkSource 400 Hwy 19 N. Suite 33 Palatka, FL 32177 10AM – 2PM	28 American Legion Post 137 5443 San Juan Ave Jax, FL 32210 10AM – 2PM	29 VFW POST 8255 2296 Aster Avenue Middleburg, FL 32068 10AM – 3PM	30 Regency Square Library 9000 Regency Blvd Jax, FL 1 PM – 4 PM	31	

****Note:** Resume workshop will be held 10:00 am – 11:15 am Dec 3, 2013 at Webb Wesconnett Library.
Interview skills workshop will be held 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Dec 17, 2013 at Webb Wesconnett Library.
Both workshops require advanced seat reservation. Call 904 866-9838 to reserve seat.





**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 273-6000
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 4, 2013

Veterans to Receive 1.5 Percent Cost-of-Living Increase

New Rates for Compensation and Pension Benefits in 2014

WASHINGTON – Veterans, their families and survivors receiving disability compensation and pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs will receive a 1.5 percent cost-of-living increase in their monthly payments beginning Jan. 1, 2014.

“We’re pleased there will be another cost-of-living increase for Veterans, their families and their survivors,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The increase expresses in a tangible way our Nation’s gratitude for the sacrifices made by our service-disabled and wartime Veterans.”

For the first time, payments will not be rounded down to the nearest dollar. Until this year, that was required by law. Veterans and survivors will see additional cents included in their monthly compensation benefit payment.

For Veterans without dependents, the new compensation rates will range from \$130.94 monthly for a disability rated at 10 percent to \$2,858.24 monthly for 100 percent. The full rates are available on the Internet at:
www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp

The COLA increase also applies to disability and death pension recipients, survivors receiving dependency and indemnity compensation, disabled Veterans receiving automobile and clothing allowances, and other benefits.

Under federal law, cost-of-living adjustments for VA’s compensation and pension must match those for Social Security benefits. The last adjustment was in January 2013 when the Social Security benefits rate increased 1.7 percent.

In fiscal year 2013, VA provided over \$59 billion in compensation benefits to nearly 4 million Veterans and survivors, and over \$5 billion in pension benefits to more than 515,000 Veterans and survivors.

COLA 2/2/2

For Veterans and separating Service members who plan to file an electronic disability claim, VA urges them to use the joint DoD/VA online portal, eBenefits. Registered eBenefits users with a premium account can file a claim online, track the status, and access a variety of other benefits, including pension, education, health care, home loan eligibility, and vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.

For more information about VA benefits, visit www.benefits.va.gov, or call 1-800-827-1000.

#

Korean War veteran's remains back home in Southland

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (KABC) -- Friday (December 20)



marked a heartfelt homecoming a long time in the making. The remains of Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Gantt finally returned home to the Southland.

Gantt died while prisoner of war in North Korea in 1951. More than half a century later, his remains touched down at Los Angeles International Airport shortly before 5:30 a.m. aboard United Flight 534.

Gantt was only 26 years old when he was taken prisoner. He was a field medic and was defending his unit's position in North Korea.

The veteran's widow, 94-year-old Clara Gantt, was at the airport to receive her husband's flag-draped casket. She met Gantt in 1946 on a train from Texas to Los Angeles. They married in 1948.



He told her if anything were to happen to him, that she should remarry. But she told him she wouldn't - and she didn't. She says she remains his wife to this day.

"Sixty-some-odd years, and just receiving his remainings coming home was a blessing. And I'm so happy that I was living to accept him," she said.

Gantt was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor as well as a host of other military honors, including the Purple Heart. He also served with distinction in the South Pacific during World War II.

Friday, the decorated war hero took his last trip. His coffin was carried by U.S. Army Honor Guards. Law enforcement and the Patriot Guard escorted Gantt to his final resting place. His remains were set to be buried in Inglewood

Guess who I am? Pictures taken in 1968 in Pleiku South Vietnam. I can't believe I was ever that thin and had all that hair! Who am I?



CLUES: Doesn't comb his hair, initials only please.

Member of VFW, DAV, VVA, CVMA, & other letters of the alphabet...and the Veterans Council.

How much is that doggy in the window?....

How many of you recognized AJ Sartin?

If you would like us to try to identify you from your service picture(s), please email them to me along with a few clues.

From the St. Augustine Record, contributed article and picture



Rep. DeSantis, left, Nicole Thatcher and Supt. Joseph Joyner with the Veterans Council award

First Place Honors for Nease Senior

Nease High School senior Nicole Thatcher has received first place honors in The Ben Meggitt Memorial Scholarship essay contest.

The contest sponsored by the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, challenged students to write about "Commitment to Honor".

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, formed by a proclamation of the Board of St. Johns County Commissioners July 4, 2001, is comprised of representatives from local veterans organizations who are dedicated to supporting local veterans. The council's goal is to increase awareness of the vital role of the men and women of the armed forces, past and present, and to honor their patriotism and their sacrifices.

The award was presented by U.S. Representative Ron DeSantis and superintendent of St. Johns County Schools, Joseph Joyner.

Florida Veterans Programs & Projects, Inc. and the Veterans Council of St. Johns County are working on a new documentary to premiere in November 2014. In order to complete this important documentary about how wounded warriors are able to succeed in today's society with the aid of K9s, we are asking for your help. Please look at the short trailer of what we have done so far and please consider contributing: <http://vimeo.com/71966728>

All contributions are tax deductible. Please make checks out to Florida Veterans Programs & Projects, Inc. and mail to 4905 Los Altos Circle, Elkton, FL 32033. Thank you.



Short Summary

This documentary tells the story of the K9 For Warriors Program which month after month is radically changing the lives of Post-9/11 veterans who are suffering with PTSD and pairing them with rescued dogs trained to be service dogs. Veterans have described the success of the story as "waking up from a nightmare".

- **This short documentary is intended to promote the efforts of K9 for Warriors and recruit more donors and veterans**
- **It is important to educate the public about PTSD and how rescued dogs are being used to heal and comfort veterans who thought life for them was over**

This documentary will allow us to take the inspiring and positive message of K9 for Warriors global letting the world know that healing is not just possible, it's happening.

We want to share this uplifting and positive message in a sea of bad news and difficulty that will create a greater audience for the program and it's possibilities.

What We Need & What You Get

We need your help. There are production expenses involved in making any film. Please support us to make this film a reality!

- **Post 9/11 Veterans are suffering in unacceptably high rates and need relief beyond the medication and services that are being offered to them at no avail**

This project is being sponsored by FVPPI and the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.

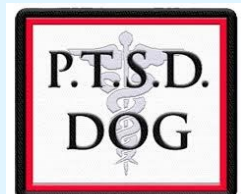
Other Ways You Can Help

- **Please help us spread the word about this film and fundraising.**
- **Forward the trailer on your social media.**

Email people or even call folks to help us make this happen



THANK YOU for being part of this important film about Veterans, rescued dogs and miraculous healing.





BOZARD



LINCOLN

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



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

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In fiscal year 2013, VA provided over \$59 billion in compensation benefits to nearly 4 million Veterans and survivors, and over \$5 billion in pension benefits to more than 515,000 Veterans and survivors.

For Veterans and separating Servicemembers who plan to file an electronic disability claim, VA urges them to use the joint DoD/VA online portal, eBenefits. Registered eBenefits users with a premium account can file a claim online, track the status, and access a variety of other benefits, including pension, education, health care, home loan eligibility, and vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.

For more information about VA benefits, visit www.benefits.va.gov, or call 1-800-827-1000.

The Veterans Council wants to thank AJ Sartin for being the VC website administrator. John Mountcastle has set-up a guide for all veterans/not for profit groups on what you need to know to stay in compliance with IRS regulations.



The IRS info page has been added to the WebSite under the IRS & Charities button.

**www.VeteransCouncilOfStJohns.org or
www.StJohnsVetsCouncil.org**

If you click on them, the .pdf file opens. If the file does not open you can get Adobe Reader here, just click on <http://get.adobe.com/reader/> and you can download the file.

**If you still cannot open this link contact Michael at:
mrothfeld@anyveteran.org**

The Military Museum of North Florida is a non profit organization dedicated the honoring those men and women that have served their country in the armed forces via artifacts, displays and military memorabilia. Admission is free but donations are welcome.



The museum is located on Rt 16 in Green Cove Springs FL 1 1/2 miles East of US 17 and 1 1/2 miles West of the Shands Bridge.

**The Museums' hours are: 10:00 to 3:00
Thursday through Saturday and 12:00 to 4:00 on Sundays.**

**Call (904) 584-8719 for more information Herb Steigelman,
Curator**

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- ★ Please note: Childcare is not provided



GratitudeAmerica

General Public is invited to Community Forum to be held Feb. 16th at 5PM @ UF Whitney Lab Auditorium

Meeting:
First Tuesday of each month
Time: 1900
St. Augustine Elks Lodge #829
1420 A1A South
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2nd Prize AR 15 Rifle \$1,000 Value



This fundraiser is by The Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1046, Jacksonville, FL

The Drawing will be held on January 1, 2014 4:00 p.m. at the Five Star Veterans Center, Jacksonville, FL. You are encouraged to attend but **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE PRESENT TO WIN.**

Winners will be responsible for all taxes, fees and picking up or transporting their prize. The gift card can be mailed. The rifle winner must be of legal age.

3rd Prize



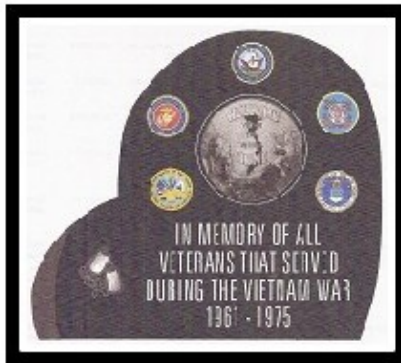
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You may purchase from members of VVA 1046 or online www.VVA1046.com/trike. More information can be obtained by calling 904-419-8821 or by going to the website below.

www.VVA1046.com/trike

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Proceeds to help pay for a Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Monument to be placed at the Jacksonville National Cemetery.



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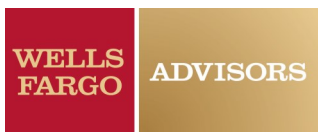


Above is an Artist's Rendition



"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another"

The raffle tickets will be mailed to your home address, they only cost \$20.00. If you can pass the word or this email to other Veterans we would deeply appreciate your help.



Christopher Thompson, CFP®, CRPC®

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Attorney and Civil Mediator

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*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



Ruth & Mario Patruno at the Wreaths Across America
Ceremony at St. Augustine National Cemetery

Veterans History Project

www.loc.gov/vets/

Find out how to participate in
the Veterans History Project

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

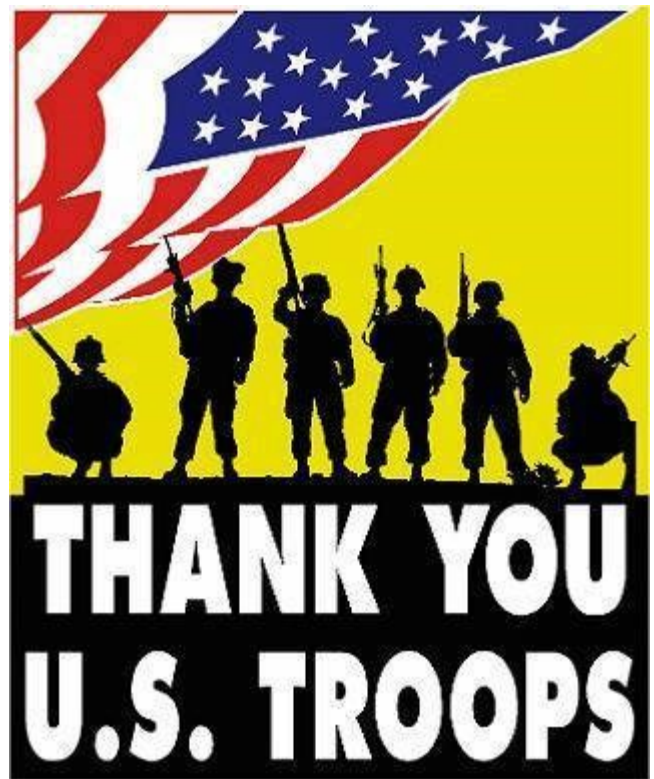
Tammy Shirley, Assistant VSO

The locally produced *Vietnam documentary, Service, Sacrifice
and Courage* has received **276,087** 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.



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.

This is your Newsletter, please contribute.

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.