

The Patriot Reader

VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

CHAIRMAN BILL DUDLEY

VICE CHAIRMAN RAY QUINN

SECRETARY GEORGE APRIL

TREASURER MICHAEL ROTHFELD

Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld

Volume 3, Issue 8

Newsletter Date: August, 2014

Message from the Chairman

Fellow Veterans,

There have been several happenings this month that I would like to share with you.

First and of major concern to all our Veterans is the status of our local Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). A temporary location has been selected off Inman Road. The County Commissioners passed a resolution last week making this property available to the VA for a temporary sight. I have included that letter below:_____

Veterans,

I am pleased to report that positive steps were taken this week with the VA to secure a temporary location for our CBOC.

As I'm sure you all know, our CBOC will have to relocate by March 31 of 2015. The property it is currently housed in has been sold to

Lowe's and must be vacated by that date.

There have been many rumors concerning the relocation, whether the CBOC would be closed, or if there would be an interruption to our Veteran's health care.

Through the diligent efforts of many groups working to assure there would be no interruption of health care for our Veterans, progress was made this week when the Board of County Commissioners issued a resolution 2014-89-84 providing a suitable site located at the corner of Inman Road and Arc Drive. This site is located just off SR 16 to the east side of I-95.

This is a stepped process which will require the VA to approve the site location for an interim location for the CBOC, but preliminary indications are it will be acceptable for the purpose of an in-

terim facility.

The Veterans Council has worked tirelessly with the County officials, VA, and the office of Congressman Ron DeSantis to assure our Veterans would continue to have the health care they are entitled to for their service to our country. To assure this problem gets the proper attention at the National level; Congressman DeSantis this week wrote a letter to Acting Secretary Sloan Gibson outlining his concerns and the concerns of our Veterans about our CBOC situation.

I would also like to commend our County Commissioners and County Administration for their diligent effort to assure our Veterans did not suffer any interrup-



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tions to their health care services. I especially would like to recognize the continuous and tireless efforts of Jerry Cameron, Assistant County Administrator. He and his team fought hard to bring this task to fruition. Without their efforts to fight for our cause, I think we would have had an entirely different outcome.

Bill Dudley

We are waiting for a response back from the VA if this property and location is acceptable to them. We want to thank Congressman DeSantis and his office for their support both in Washington and at the local level. We will keep you apprised of the progress.

Second is the progress on our Veterans Court initiative for St. Johns County. Howard McGillin, Charlotte Matthews, and I have been pursuing this opportunity for several months. We have met with the Sheriff's Dept, State's Attorney, and Public Defender and all are very supportive. Howard McGillin has had several discussions with local judges who seem very interested. We will be meeting on Thursday, July 31 to outline a plan for launching this program, which will probably take place in early January. I will put out a special announcement as soon as we have an exact date for the program to have its first trials scheduled.

Third, is an item that I am sad to report on. Diane King who has been the Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home Administrator for the past several years has resigned to accept a position with a company in the Merritt Island area. Diane has done an outstanding job as the Lassen Home Administrator and will be hard to replace. She has also done an incredible job as the Veterans Council recording secretary and she will be missed by all who have worked with her over the past several years. This past Tuesday, the Veterans Council Executive Committee took Diane to lunch and presented her with a plaque as a token of our appreciation. Diane's replacement is Kay Maley. Kay has served as the Lassen Nursing Home Administrator previously on a temporary basis when FDVA was searching for a permanent replacement. We are pleased to have Kay as Diane's replacement.



And lastly, we are only a little over four month's from the date of our next Wreaths Across America program at our St. Augustine National Cemetery. Our WAA committee is working very hard to assure that all 1218 grave sites have a wreath placed on them at the December ceremony. Please reach out to your organizations and help support this year's program by selling as many wreaths as possible to help with this year's campaign.

Bill Dudley

Chairman

Veterans Council of St. Johns County

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Patriotism is our Motto



Above left picture-The Northeast Florida Conservatory of Music Jazz Band performed the evening before Independence Day. Phenomenal performance enjoyed by all!



Above right picture-Our Independence Day Celebration included a tour of our beautiful country and fireworks on the big screen.



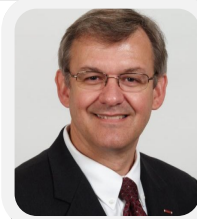
The Youth Group from Hopewell Church came to visit with our residents and to assist with bingo.



Above left picture-Heading out to lunch
Above right picture-Lunch at CiCi's Pizza



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, September 8th** 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.

MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT - (MIAP) – AUGUST 2014

MIAP held it's Call to Honor #3 on Friday, June 27, 2014. At this service interred 13 Veterans & 5 spouses from WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

To date at the Jacksonville National Cemetery MIAP has interred a total of 43 Veterans, 8 spouses and 1 infant son.

USA - 32	WWI – 10	Persian Gulf - 1
USMC – 5	WWII - 26	
USN – 11	Korean - 6	
USAF – 4	Vietnam – 14	

Our Call to Honor #4 will be held on Friday, Nov 07, 2014 @ 1:00pm at the JNC. We have been asked by Admiral Guillory has invited MIAP to participate in the City of Jacksonville's "Week of Valor". Details will be published at a later date.

As of July 23, 2014 nationwide MIAP has visited 1,623 funeral homes, we have located 9,162 unclaimed cremains of which 2,287 are veterans/spouses/dependents and we have interred 2,056 of these.

MIAP – FL needs VOLUNTEERS to reach out to funeral homes, do research, and help with fundraising and other activities. If you know of anyone who is interested please have them contact us @ miapjax@yahoo.com. You can volunteer as much as or a little time as you wish.

Please go to our website @www.miap.us to see what we are doing nationwide. You can also sign up as a supporter.

Thank you to all who continue to support MIAP – FL.

Kathy Church, MIAP – FL State Coordinator



Veterans Council Hosts Forum on Outpatient Clinic By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (June 26, 2014) – The future of the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and the 5,000 patients it serves was the topic of the forum Thursday night. A packed house met at Elks Lodge 829 to listen and learn.

“We are not now, or ever, closing the CBOC in St. Johns County,” began the presentation of Nick Ross, Assistant Director for Outpatient Clinics for the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System in Gainesville. Ross is a 30-year Navy veteran who described himself as an “absolute advocate for veterans.” “Under no circumstances will VA services be interrupted to veterans in the St. Augustine area,” he continued.

“Do we know where exactly we are going?” said Ross, “No, but we know the general area.” Ross produced a map indicating the general area under consideration showing a north boundary of Anderson Street, a south boundary of the current CBOC location near SR207 on Old Moultrie Road.

Ross also presented a floor plan and blueprints for the new facility.

“We will not know anything until all the Requests For Proposal (RFP) have been submitted, reviewed by the VA in Washington and finally a selection of the company to perform the construction,” said Ross. “The deadline for RFP’s is close of business tomorrow (Friday). The earliest we will know will be sometime in August.”

“We had everything ready to go seven months ago,” said Ross. “Due to a disagreement between two government entities all CBOC plans were placed on hold.”

Ross continued to be questioned by members of the audience for nearly 40 minutes. In the audience was Ron Sanchez, the sitting Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners. He was joined by former commissioners Ray Quinn, Ken Bryan, and John Reardon, all veterans. They were joined by almost all of the 20 plus veteran organizations in St. Johns County and Randy Stapleford, Military and Veterans Affairs aide for Congressman DeSantis, Florida District 6.

When queried about how the VA will manage to stay in its current location, given the \$53,000.00 plus monthly fine, and who will pay the fines, Ross issued a rogue statement of “We are the U.S. Government.” The silence following that statement was deafening.

Bill Dudley, Chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County called an end to Ross’ presentation and introduced Assistant County Administrator Jerry Cameron to present the county’s side of the forum.

Cameron began with the statement “I am not sure about what I heard just moments before. The statement sounded like the VA will use the right of “eminent domain”, if needed, to escape paying the penalties or being forced out of the current location after the deadline.” “Somebody will have to pay the penalties to Lowe’s and the only other name on the list is St. Johns County.” “This is unacceptable.”

Cameron went on to reference some of the interchanges between his office, the office of Mary Ann Blount, Director of Land Management Systems for St. Johns County and various VA departments beginning November 1, 2011.

“We never dreamed the VA would not come with us,” said Cameron. “We included a place for them in our plan in the new location of the offices of the county Health and Human Services department along with offices for the County Veteran Services Office.” Cameron continued, “It only made sense to put everything together where everyone, the general public and veterans, could get the services they need in one area and not have to travel to mul-

multiple locations for services.”

“We offered them the same sized space for the same price they currently pay,” Cameron continued. “With all that has transpired since 2011, some may think this is a personal attack on Mr. Ross,” said Cameron, “but I assure you it is not. I have the utmost respect for him as I know his job is not made easier by the bureaucracy he works within.”

“We, the county, care very much about our 20,500 veterans in St. Johns County and we want them to have the care they need,” said Cameron. “Given the current circumstances, we are not convinced that our veterans will experience uninterrupted care at the CBOC, despite assurances by Mr. Ross.” “Even at this stage, creating and moving into a temporary location will not negate the March 30, 2015 deadline.” Ross agreed with Cameron on this issue. When asked the approximate cost of a temporary home, Ross replied “Probably in the neighborhood of \$1.5 million.” There are rules that must be followed for any structure regardless of the duration.”

Chairman Dudley called for an adjournment at 9:00 p.m. Thanking the two presenters, Dudley said, “Although it was an informative meeting, there appears to be more questions needing answers. He called upon Stapleford, to pass information to Congressman DeSantis and set a date for the meeting of the Veteran’s Group for earlier than planned.

[Disclosure: The author of this story is the current Commander of DAV Chapter 6 who receives his medical treatment from the VA and is assigned to the St. Augustine CBOC.]

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Photo Credits: Michael Isam



Jerry Cameron



Nick Ross



A stack of blueprints



Area under consideration



Audience



Audience



FIVE STAR VETERANS CENTER

ARMY * MARINES * NAVY * COAST GUARD * AIR FORCE

July 12, 2014

Dear Supporter,

The article that appeared in the 9 June 2014 issue of the Florida Times Union made it appear that Five STAR Veterans Center is in negotiations to be acquired by a Texas organization. It intimated that Five STAR was weak, vulnerable.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

We are committed to our veterans who come to us for help to reestablish independent living. We follow the model recommended by the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans of veterans serving veterans.

The article in the Florida Times Union identified several issues that must be clarified:

- Neither Warrior City nor its CEO, Jerry Schaffer are authorized to speak for the Five STAR Veterans Center. Mr. Schaffer has been put on notice that neither he nor Warrior City is to represent themselves as an agent of Five STAR Veterans Center.
- The Five STAR Veterans Center has **no** intention of merging with or being acquired by any organization. To the contrary we are expanding our program, garnering regional and national attention and receiving increasing support. For example, on June 4, 2014 the Home Depot Foundation brought in more than 300 volunteers from across the country and renovated our facility and grounds as part of their national projects.

The Board of Directors of Five STAR Veteran Center is strong and growing stronger and are unified as to the direction of the organization. The Board has the utmost confidence in Colonel Len Loving and his leadership role at the Center.

The staff of Five STAR is lean and mission driven, ensuring the residents have what they need for success.

Five STAR Veterans Center has helped 68 homeless veterans complete the "Passport to Independence" program, secure employment and permanent housing since operations began in March 2012. Currently there are an additional 22 residents enrolled in our program and living at the Center.

In the past year, the year in which we were described as having **failed**, we provided:

- 16,324 meals to residents and 200 to nonresidents who dropped in for referral services around meal times.
- 486 round trips to medical appointments for residents.
- 240 round trips to job interviews and job fairs.
- 267 V.A. benefits assessments to veterans.
- Intake and assessments for 14 veterans referred to the Center by the Duval and Clay County Veterans Treatment Courts.
- 6,720 days of housing to veterans.

Mr. Keith Maynard, Major Peter Jennison and Judge David Carstetter remain on the board. Our new

Board members are: Mr. Dayton Warfle, Bank of America; Mr. Barrett Scruggs, CitiBank; Mr. Michael Atter, Attorney, Wood Atter; Ms. Lucy Ann Wiggins Hoover, Florida Coastal School of Law.

In April of 2013, we had fewer than 30 individual donors. We have increased the total number of individual donors to 379.

Since January 2014, we have leveraged \$583,960 in volunteer hours provided by more than 450 volunteers, in kind gifts, materials and services.

And here is where you can make a difference. Stand with us and show our city that Five STAR Veterans Center is a locally owned, locally supported grassroots organization dedicated to helping homeless veterans return to independent living.

As proof of our continuing success, we have been the grateful recipients of support in Jacksonville by major individual and corporate investors like the J. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver Veterans Emergency and Transition Services Fund at the Community Foundation for North Florida, the Jaguar Foundation, the Jim Jacobs Foundation, Bank of America, Citibank, the Fraternal Order of Police, The Home Depot Foundation, Magic Chef, the Knights of Columbus and a host of veterans organizations. In addition, the people of Jacksonville have donated generously with their time, money, and assets.

Don't just take our word for it. Listen to the voices of our residents at Five STAR.....

"My brother came home from Afghanistan and killed himself. I was on my way to do the same thing. The Lovings and the Center saved my life." Spec. James W. Heeter

"They took me in, put clothes on my back, food in my belly and a bed to lay my head on every night...I have been able to re-start my life, only due to the Five Star Veterans Center." Sgt. Richard Kendall Hobbs

"As a 3 combat tour Marine veteran, I faced issues with drugs, divorce, PTSD and could not hold a job. I am now in school and help at the center. Without Col. Loving, Mrs. Loving and the staff at Five STAR, I would still be lost or maybe even dead." Lance Corporal Patrick Petty

Your investment in Five Star has demonstrated that you are as committed as we are to the future of our veterans and the Greater Jacksonville community and that we are a military and veteran friendly city. We thank you for ensuring that Five STAR continues the mission.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. We believe in transparency and will do everything we can to answer your questions.

Better yet, stop by and visit the center any time. Meet the staff and the residents and see for yourself.

Respectfully,



Keith Maynard, Esq.
Major, Maryland Army National Guard
President, Board of Directors
Five STAR Veterans Center



Len Loving
Colonel of the Marines, Retired
Chief Executive Officer



The following is a list of projects the center needs help completing. Know anyone in your organization or know of a Vet who can assist, please contact Colonel Loving at the 5 Star.

Projects:

1. Plumbers to install the vanities in the 200 wing and 3 other rooms.
2. Carpet workers to lay carpet in the 200 wing.
3. Carpenters to complete the privacy fence in the back.
4. Painters to stain the privacy fence once completed and to touch up locations throughout the Center.
5. Working party to clean up the open lot west of the 300 wing (suggest it be done in the fall).
6. Workers to install the ceiling tiles through the building.
7. Workers to align and relay the landscaping blocks on the east side of the 100 wing adjacent to the long sidewalk facing Acme Street.
8. Electricians to install ceiling fans in the Dining Hall.
9. Electricians to trouble shoot several circuits in the Center.
10. Electricians to electrify the lines to the maintenance and storage building in the rear of the Center.
11. Someone to trouble shoot and fix the kitchen commercial dish washer.

There maybe other projects that may be identified as we move forward.

Colonel Loving suggests that if and when he get volunteers, they meet with him before a commitment to determine the scope of work, availability or acquisition of materials and equipment and the qualifications of the volunteers for that project.

Pass this on and forward to other organizations you are in contact with...Veterans need to support Veterans. Don't forget to let me know as well via email or mobile [904 234 3540](tel:9042343540).

The Vet Center is also working on a newsletter that I will forward to all as soon as they get it out...

Responses should be made to: lenloving@5starveteranscenter.org

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

ST. AUGUSTINE NATIONAL CEMETERY CAMPAIGN

All Veterans & Veterans Organizations



The St. Johns County Veterans Council is proud to announce that the campaign to fill “our” St. Augustine National Cemetery with holiday wreaths is underway. We are dedicated to placing a wreath at each gravesite.

YOUR HELP is needed. We ask that your organization begin immediately to collect donations to purchase wreaths.

Wreaths are \$15.00 each. If you purchase two (2) wreaths we receive and additional wreath free (3 for 2).

Checks can be written in any amount (\$100, \$200 etc.)

Please contact your friends and neighbors as well as your organizations and ask them to participate as well.

HOW:

Make checks payable to: Wreaths Across America

Send to: St. Johns County Veterans Council, P.O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, Florida 32085-2117

Contacts: Co-chair: Ray Quinn, 904.540.1630 Co-Chair Judy Davis, 904.797.2686



From the Sonny's Fundraiser



Afghanistan Veteran Receives New Home By Michael Isam

St. Augustine, Fla, (July 27, 2014) – Homes For Our Troops (HFOT) held their 3rd key ceremony in St. Johns County since 2011. The first was Marine Cpl. Tyler Southern, followed in 2012 with keys presented to GySGT John Hayes and family. On Saturday they turned over keys to a new home for the Brandon Long family.

Despite the early rise in temperature, ballooning humidity, and mostly clear skies, nearly 100 well-wishers came to welcome the newest member of a small veteran community on Honey Branch Lane.

The welcoming committee for LCpl Brandon Long and family was already in place. Lead by Detachment #383 Marine Corps League of St. Augustine Color Guard, the Clay County Sheriff's Office Pipes and Drums, and members of the St. Augustine Spanish Garrison Rifle Detail stood at the ready waiting for the familiar sound of escort sirens announcing the arrival of the guest of honor and his family.

Escorted by Rolling Thunder FL Chapter 4, Patriot Guard Riders, and members of the St. Johns County Sheriff Department motorcycle units, LCpl Long and his family were greeted by supporters bearing U. S. flags lining both side of the street.

LCpl Long was on his first deployment when he lost both of his legs in an IED blast in Sangin, Afghanistan on December 21, 2010, two days before the birth of his daughter, Claire.

Walking through an area comprised of nothing but river rocks, Long was on a foot patrol with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, when he stepped on an IED resulting in multiple traumatic injuries. Over the next hour his squad fought to save his life during a series of multiple resuscitations. By the time he arrived at a local field hospital, Long had lost 98% of his blood volume.

Long was airlifted to Landstuhl, Germany then to Bethesda Naval Medical Center where he remained for 2 years enduring surgeries and rehabilitation before returning home to Indiana. Long and his wife, Nicole, are the proud parents of Claire who Long credits with getting him through his ordeal and on the road to recovery. She became his reason to push harder and be an involved parent.

Gina Colon, Community Outreach Coordinator for Homes For Our Troops, began the ceremonies with a welcome to the audience, and a special "Thank You" to all the volunteers who worked to make this day a reality.

Colon introduced Ms. Emily Gilliland who sang The National Anthem. Gilliland was quickly joined by members of the audience, each with hand over heart, or in the case of veterans giving a hand salute.

"We now have 166 homes in 39 states and more in the works," said Colon. "We love the state of Florida, as do many of our veterans."

Following remarks from Ron Berber, a Marine Corp 1st Lt. from 1961 to 1968, U.S.

Congressman Ron DeSantis; State Senator John Thrasher; Col. Matthew Crabill, Commanding Officer of the Marine Support Facility on Blount Island; LCpl Long's mother Lisa Long; and Larry Gill, HFOT Veteran Liaison.

With all the dignitaries present, the favorite speaker of the day was Long's mother Lisa.

She began by telling her son, "You're going to be embarrassed by these stories son, but paybacks are hell." She then proceeded to tell stories of her daredevil son. "I received a call from a neighbor who told me "You might want to check on Brandon very quickly," the neighbor said. "When I found him," she said, "he had repositioned the family trampoline close to a building, climbed on the roof and jumped onto the trampoline to see how far he could launch himself." "That was tame," she added and proceeded to tell about a neighbors call informing her that Brandon was riding his bicycle around the roof."

When came Long's turn to speak, he focused upon the weight that had been lifted from him and his wife especially. "I can actually cook a meal for my family; I can enter and exit a bathroom without calling to Nicole to help me unstick my wheelchair." "If I need help," he continued, "I have two fantastic neighbors, Tyler and John, who understand this lifestyle and are there for physical and emotional support."

"The people of St. Johns County and St. Augustine have to be the greatest people on earth," said Long. "Everywhere we go, we are welcomed, and the smiles on people's faces are genuine." "I know they really mean it." Long ended with "Thank you, Homes For Our Troops; Thank You St. Augustine."

The assembly adjourned to the flagpole in front of the Long home where the HFOT flag was retired and replaced by 'Old Glory'.

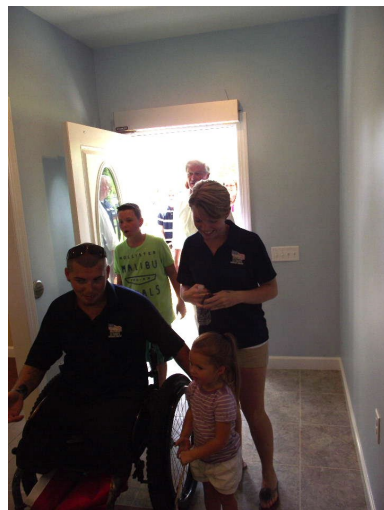
Long accepted a symbolic key from Gill, followed by the actual key which he promptly passed to his wife. On the count of "3", the ribbon was cut and the Longs had an uninterrupted tour of their new home. Upon completion, the audience was invited to tour the home. Food and refreshments, provided by John and Sherri Cunningham of Ann O'Malley's Irish Pub, was served following the cutting of the cake.



Brandon Long cutting the ribbon, l-r DeSantis, Nicole, Claire, Larry Gill, Lisa Long behind Gill, John Thrasher in the rear

The Long Family entering their home for the first time.

l-r Brandon, Claire in front, Nicole, Josh in the back





The Korean Association of North Florida Honors American Korean War Veterans



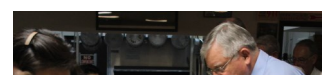
On the 61st Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice the Jacksonville Korean Association gathered to pay their respects and honor those who freed their country from Communism and allowed each of their families to live a life in freedom.

Many from the Korean community spoke about how grateful they were for what the nine Korean veterans in the audience did for them individually and for their families.

Mr. Jung Ung Lee, and Mr. Kyung Ku Cho of the Korean Association spoke as did former President Mr. Jae Lee.

The event was co-hosted by the Korean War Veterans Association of Jacksonville Chapter 200. Dr. Henry Moreland, President of the KWVA addressed the audience and thanked the Korean community for hosting the lunch and for providing the entertainment and Korean food.

The highlight of the afternoon was the Korean dancers from the Korean Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville.



This is a letter to the Editor of the FL Times Union and was published in the beginning of July. LTC Bob Adelhelm, USMC, ret., has additional comments under the editorial.



MORE VETERANS SHOULD BE INCLUDED...

The current criteria to be eligible for adding a name to the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Wall requires that you die on active duty and have a “home of record” of Jacksonville.



This includes not only those who were victims of combat, but also anyone who may have had a heart attack.

Veterans from Jacksonville who survived wounds in combat only to succumb to them later in their life are not recognized for their service and sacrifice.

Yet, if you were on active duty and were killed in a liberty incident and your home of record is Jacksonville you are eligible.

When challenged, the argument is the city can't include everyone because it would adversely affect the limited area around the current site.

If the intent is to preserve the aesthetic value of the Wall over honoring all who sacrificed from Jacksonville than the title of the Wall should more appropriately be changed to the Memorial Wall vice Veterans since Veterans are excluded.

A more logical solution would be to try and honor all who served and sacrificed in some way with the understanding that adding Veterans may add thousands of names to the wall if you included Agent Orange, PTSD and other combat related wounds.

A possible solution could be to do what they are doing with the Vietnam Veterans War in Washington.

They have had to deal with the same problem and they decided to add a plaque near the Vietnam Wall that honors all who served in the Vietnam War and later died as a result of their service.

They realized it would be impossible to identify by name all of the postwar casualties for whom the in memory commemorative plaque would serve as a point of honor, but they realized the symbolic recognition will call attention to the unseen sacrifices to all who visit the memorial.

Maybe it is time Jacksonville considers the same.

I am moved by the spirit of Sgt Randall Hansen, a Marine who had two tours of combat in Iraq and fought in the battle for Fallujah.

He returned to eventually succumb to the demons involved with PTSD.

Under the current criteria for inclusion on the Wall, this Marine---- despite being from Jacksonville and a Fletcher HS Graduate --- cannot receive the same honor of being on the Wall in his city as someone who died in a liberty incident on active duty and went to HS in Kentucky

#####

Bob Adelhelm served as a US Marine from 1973 to 1995. He retired as a Lt Col. He was an Infantry Reconnaissance Officer MOS's 0302/0402/9953/9960...A GRUNT!

Sadly, I met Sgt Hansen at his funeral...Never got to know him in life, but as Marines we share a warrior spirit. I attended his memorial ceremony and was touched by this spirit and felt compelled to make sure my brother Marine's community remembers his service and sacrifice.

As Veterans our first responsibility is to remember and as a Marine I went through a rite of passage that instilled in me values like being Always Faithful...Semper Fidelis is more than a motto to Marines it is a way of life and a commitment we have to each other on and off the battlefield. As an officer, I take my responsibilities of looking after Marines seriously, it doesn't just stop when you take off the uniform for some of us; we are a band of brothers for life.

Sgt Hansen's parents are also Marines. This was family business!

It is important to get the city of Jax to recognize young men like Sgt Hansen at the Wall...Right now, they are excluded as are all Veterans are under the current criteria.

In the absence of the city taken action, the Semper Fidelis Society of Jacksonville is adding Sgt Hansen's name along with 9 other young Marines and FMF Corpsmen killed in Iraq and Afghanistan to memorial markers at our Marine and FMF Corpsmen Memorial at Evergreen Memorial Park on November 10th...Sgt Hanson and these other warriors names will be known to all in Jacksonville for eternity.

www.jaxsemperfidelis.org



You're Invited **8th ANNUAL HOMELESS** **STAND DOWN**

Where: ELKS LODGE on A1A

When: SATURDAY – AUGUST 16, 2014

0900 - 1300

NO ALCOHOL/DRUGS OR UNRULY BEHAVIOR TOLERATED

We'll provide drinks and a HOT meal.

We look forward to seeing you!

LOTS OF GIVEAWAYS *MILITARY SURPLUS
DENTAL SCREENINGS * HAIRCUTS
VETERANS ASSISTANCE
HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Florida Army National Guard Commander retires

Historic City News, friends, family and military peers of Major General James “Don” Tyre, honored the Florida Army National Guard’s highest ranking officer, a leader with more than ten-thousand soldiers under his command, as his 45-year military career came to an end.



Tyre said today that when he joined the Florida National Guard in 1969, his goal was only to complete an initial enlistment and leave; but, he is confident he made the right

choice to stay for 45 years in uniform. Tyre served concurrently as the commander of the Florida Army National Guard and as Assistant Adjutant General of Florida for Army.

“You’ve allowed me the greatest opportunity that a soldier could ever dream of,” Tyre said to the well-wishers and attendees at the ceremony. “It was the opportunity to command the best Army National Guard in our nation.”

Adjutant General of Florida, Major General Emmett Titshaw, presented Tyre with the Florida Cross and the US Army Distinguished Service Medal during the ceremony at the historic St Francis Barracks today, and lauded him for his years of service to the Army National Guard.

“Don’s work since September 11, 2001 was instrumental in the mobilization, deployment and re-integration of our soldiers who went off to war,” Titshaw said. “He was a task force commander and a joint task force commander for over fifteen named storms in Florida, as well as relief operations, Operation Deep Water Horizon, and several wildfire operations.

Titshaw closed his remarks about Tyre by adding, “He is an approachable leader, a mentor to many, and a battle-buddy to me.”

Major General Tyre, who is a Live Oak native, is also a fifth-generation soldier. He can trace his family’s military lineage back to his great-great-grandfather, who served with the first Florida militia during the Seminole Wars from 1836-1838.

Tyre enlisted in the Florida Army National Guard in 1969, serving ten years as a non-commissioned officer before attending the Florida Army National Guard Military Academy. He was commissioned as an engineer officer in 1980, and in his first officer assignment served as an equipment supply officer at the 50th Area Support Group in Jacksonville.

Tyre’s lengthy and prestigious career led him through numerous positions and commands with the Florida National Guard. These assignments included: Director of the Joint Staff, Florida National Guard; Deputy Chief of Staff Operations, Florida Army National Guard; Commander, 164th Air Defense Artillery Brigade; Commander, 2nd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment; Commander, 269th Engineer Company; Deputy G3, 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command; and Inspector General, Florida Joint Force Headquarters, Florida National Guard

As the Assistant Adjutant General, Tyre was responsible for the operational readiness of more than 10,000 soldiers of the Florida Army National Guard. Since 2010 he was also responsible for the manning, training, administration, and logistics for both State and Federal missions.

His career culminated in October 2010, when he became Florida’s Assistant Adjutant General for Army, serving at the Florida National Guard Headquarters in St. Augustine.

“I stand here today as one of the luckiest people in the world,” Tyre said.

USO



My first encounter with the USO while serving in the military was at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. We had been on station in various parts of what was then known as The Caribbean Sea Frontier. The ship anchored in the bay for an extended stay. Aboard was a full contingent of combat loaded Fleet Marines. It was 1964.

Every day was like a regular work day, it was daily work routine, not like the long days when we were underway. After our regular work day we could go ashore and there was still plenty of long, sunny Caribbean days to enjoy. Like many others, when ashore, I headed for the “Beach Shack.”

This was a favorite recreation spot, on a beautiful, sandy beach, with clear, clean water to enjoy. However, the beach was probably not the favorite attraction. The Beach Shack sold beer to the troops for ten cents a can/bottle, with an excellent selection. However, if you wanted the Dutch imported beer, it was fifteen cents a bottle. Just imagine what you could do for two dollars in the afternoon! This is not a USO place; I suppose it was a Special Services canteen. There were also the clubs you could go to where mixed drinks were available for twenty cents each. Cigarettes were available at ten cents a pack.

All military dependents had been evacuated from the base. As far as I knew Guantanamo was 100% male at that time. Castro had cut off the water supply to the base, so Secretary of Defense McNamara had this huge desalination plant built to supply the base. It was elevated on a mound or small hill and at night it was lit up like a football stadium. The plant was spotlighted like a teaser, implying “here I am, we don’t need you Fidel, and you can’t do anything about it!”

Cuban workers were allowed on base for regular work days. They entered through a distant gate and were processed in across a long board walk which was like a dock or something of a very defined walkway where they must stay while accessing the base. Marines were always on duty manning guard with their weapons, even tanks and howitzers with camouflage nets pulled over them. The guns, of course, pointed to the distant mountainous area of Cuba. In the distance you could make out what was left of a town or what was once a resort area. The unmistakable architecture of what once had been a Howard Johnson’s hotel was visible albeit no longer in the colors of the chain. It was somewhat of a sad reminder of pre revolution Cuba days that was now in decadence.

The weekend was approaching and with it the arrival of a USO show. It featured none other than Jimmy Durante. He was old in 1964, and if you now remember him it definitely shows your age! The really good thing for us young GIs was that he was known for the beautiful women he surrounded himself with. This helped us tolerate the corny “Inka Dinka Doo” old stuff that “The Schnoz” featured himself. He was really from our parent’s time, probably was a



good vaudeville act. Perhaps you remember his catch line “Good Night Mrs. Calabash, where ever you are!” The very beautiful girls he had for this show were to be no exception this time either. We were all ready for anything female following months of deployment, it had been awhile, blonds, brunettes, show girls, vocalist, bring them on!

The weekend came, and if you had no duty Saturday, you could get your \$2.00 worth of sun and suds at the beach shack. The sun set over the Cuban mountain ridge and we got into the Uniform of the Day (whites) which was required for the USO show. We downed our last suds before taking the hike over to where the stage was set up for the show. The hike took us on a slightly elevated gravel roadway past the Marine gun emplacements which were separated from the road only by a drainage ditch. Marines were on duty, under their camouflage nets, on watch across a no man’s land that stretched to the Cuban territory.

It was dark, but loud music and stage lights focused our attention. A few “warm up” groups kicked off the show, the Schnozzola appeared. He did bring some really good looking girls that were not modest and really did seem to try to please the troops within the limits of what could be done on stage. It was enough to send us cheering and wild, especially after a long day at the Beach Shack. After the show girl review we started to get bored and ready to head for one of the clubs for beverages.

Some of us started the hike back. We were out of the bright lights of the stage area and it was very dark. Hiking along the gravel road we could see a few lights in the distance on the Cuban side. We were tired as we approached the open area where the Cuban workers were allowed to cross. The grunts were manning their duty stations and occasionally glanced back to us on the elevated roadway. The tanks, howitzers, and other mechanized weaponry was backed in with their fronts slightly elevated under the camouflage nets in the darkness.

Suddenly there was a huge explosion. The flash lit up the open area like daylight briefly. Everyone on the gravel road, mostly Sailors, dove into the ditch. It was muddy, but if Cubans were coming charging across the minefield we need to take cover pronto! We waited face down, but there were no other explosions. The Marines did not open fire.

We began to realize that something had set off one of the mines. I thought it was a Claymore because it appeared to be directional (toward Cuba), and it was extremely powerful. However, Claymores are usually set off by the operator electronically, not ignited by proximity or contact. Later speculation was that some animal had set off a land mine. It was not unusual for stray or wild dogs to wander from Cuba.

I guess we will never know what set off the mine, but it was sure a finale for the USO show that we will never forget. We never did get over to the club because we were all filthy,

muddy wet mess in our white uniforms. When we finally got back to the Quarterdeck (where you board the ship from the gangway) which is where the Officer of the Day stood watch while in port, it was easy to explain our mess because word had spread quickly of the incident.

My next encounter with the USO was months later. We had put into the Port of New York and the ship had docked right where the cruise ships tie up. What a wonderful liberty spot for the Sailors and Marines. It was in easy walking distance of Times Square or you could easily get to where ever you wished in Manhattan. The USO came to our ship everyday. They would make available tickets to the very best Broadway Shows. Apparently if the show was not a sell out for that evening they would make tickets available to active duty troops.

I was able to take advantage of it twice. I really enjoyed both “A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum,” and “Flora The Red Menace.” I did not realize it at the time but Flora was played by an upcoming star Liza Minnelli in a musical that would bring the 19 year old out from the shadow of her famous Mom, Judy Garland. The production in the Alvin Theatre only ran for 87 performances, but it allowed Liza to proudly win a Tony Award for her singing role as leading actress.

The Cold War continued (sometimes hot) as did many other deployments, however, I only recall one other encounter with the USO while I was on active duty. Our ship was “on the hook,” Navspeak for anchored. I do not remember which harbor it was, either Chesapeake or Brest, France. I had duty so I missed the USO show that was on deck, but I could hear some of it over the ship’s 1MC. The show headlined the group that made “Locomotion” a big hit at the time. It was Little Eva, I think.

That concluded my exposure to USO activity while on active duty. As a Veteran, years later, I have supported the USO for what they do for our men and women in uniform as well as dinners and activities for their families while the troops are deployed. I think that the greeting and service they do at the major airports for our returning and traveling service people is especially good. I encourage each of you to support USO so that they can continue their work.

Harvey Warnock, Past Commander, Greater Beaches VFW 3270

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01/03/2013

“I would encourage everyone to contact your local/state USO if you desire your donation to help those troops and families that live in your area or state. If you desire to support USO Headquarters in Arlington VA, please call them!”

USO National Headquarters (703) 908-6402

Greater Jacksonville area USO (904) 778-2821

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The Ride Home, Inc.

3818 Litchfield Loop
Lake Wales, FL 33859



Theridehome.com

Phone: 863-324-7268

email: info@theridehome.com

The RIDE HOME, a National POW/MIA Recognition Day event, takes place in conjunction with the Presidential Proclamation for National POW/MIA Recognition Day. This is traditionally held on the third Friday of every September. The Ride Home weekend pays tribute to former Prisoners of War and to the family representatives of our Missing in Action.

We are offering you the opportunity to be an important part of this weekend, to sponsor a former Prisoner of War and/or MIA family member. Invited honorees include former Prisoners of War and Family representatives of those still Missing in Action from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War I & II and including Iraq and Afghanistan. A sponsorship of \$350 will pay for one POW and guest or one representative and guest of a MIA family's lodging, meals and on-location transportation. To bring this opportunity to its emotional peak, we encourage you to attend. By joining us in Americus/Andersonville Georgia, you will have the honor of meeting these true American Hero's, hearing their amazing stories of survival first hand, laugh out loud and even break bread with them.

Please, complete the form below and mail it with your check payable to The Ride Home, Inc. or go to our website—www.theridehome.com and click on the Pay Pal button to use your credit or debit card. Sponsors giving \$350 or more will receive a commemorative Ride Home t-shirt, patch, sponsor bar and pin.

Thank you for your support and we hope to see you in Americus/Andersonville in September.

Until they all come home.....

Detach and send to: "The Ride Home"

Enclosed is my check for; _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ \$350 _____ Other

Include t-shirt size here for donations of \$350 or more _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Make Check to: The Ride Home, Inc., 3818 Litchfield Loop, Lake Wales, FL 33859

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It takes many people and organizations pulling together to make **The Ride Home** a success and we need your HELP! We ask you reach out to all your business friends and acquaintances asking for an advertising trinket that they may use for promotional purposes for their business. Explain that you want to give their promo product to true American heroes at The Ride Home Recognition tribute. They have the opportunity to put their name/product into the hands of some of the bravest military men and women that have ever served.

What are we looking for – quantity 225

Patriotic pins, travel size first-aid kits, manicure sets, hand sanitizer, pocket calendars, USB drives, paper pads, key chains, bottle openers, do-rags, pocket sewing kits, nuts, mini-flashlights, small flags, cookies, crackers, nuts, mints and individually wrapped hard candies - please no chocolate or gum.

Cash donations welcomed to purchase items not donated. No amount too small.
Feel free to contact me with any questions. I appreciate your time and thank you in advance for your continued support Thanks Kat :)

Go to www.theridehome.com to see prior year's testimonials and photos

Kat Mc, Board Member
The Ride Home Inc.
352-816-7864

Until they all come home....

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A Public Service Announcement

-

Class Action Against USAA Relating To Failure To Pay Sales Tax On Covered Claims

A class action has been filed against USAA automobile insurance companies alleging that USAA has improperly withheld sales tax from military men and women who have made auto insurance claims for their totaled vehicles. The lawsuit alleges that USAA improperly withheld up to 6% of the insured vehicle cost, which on a \$10,000 vehicle can be as high as \$600 per person. Documents filed with the federal court show that USAA withheld sales tax from as much as 75% of policy holders who made claims for totaled vehicles in a one year period. The same documents show that the withheld sales tax at issue in the lawsuit may total over \$17 million. The lawsuit is in federal court and styled *Chantal Bastian v. United Services Automobile Association, USAA Casualty Insurance Company, Garrison Property and Casualty Insurance Company, and USAA General Indemnity Company*, No. 3:13-cv-01454, Middle District of Florida, Jacksonville Division. The federal court denied without prejudice USAA's motion to dismiss the lawsuit and the lawsuit is proceeding. **For information, you can contact attorney Tracy Markham at 904-794-7005 or tmarkhamlaw@gmail.com.**

For several years, D.A.V. FI Chapter 6 has furnished the passenger vans for the delivery of Veterans between the St. Augustine Clinic and the Gainesville, V.A. Hospital, and back, Monday – Friday. The Van departs the Clinic every weekday at 0600. Phone (904) 209-3710 to schedule a ride.

Drivers furnished by the COA are:

**Monday – Lonnie Woodard;
Tuesday – Jack LaLonde
Wednesday – Floyd Bubba;
Thursday – Bob Garlander
Friday – Robert “Butch” Harrison**



Dr. Anne Freund, friend of veterans

Anne Freund, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist who has been practicing since 1989. She graduated from Duke University with a Bachelor's in Psychology and from the University of Florida with a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. Dr. Freund completed her internship at the VA in Bay Pines, FL. She has been with the Department of Veterans Affairs since 2005. Prior to that she worked with law enforcement and



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anne Freund, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist with the Department of Veterans Affairs in Central Florida, specializing in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Dr. Freund has almost 25 years of experience working with combat veterans, paramedics, firefighters and police officers on the critical impact of stress, and has served as a VA therapist since 2005. This book is not affiliated with or endorsed by the VA or DOD.

first responders as part of a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team. Dr. Freund began conducting PTSD support groups in 2005, shortly after arriving at the VA. She has had specialized training in PTSD at the National Center for PTSD in Menlo Park, CA and at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. Dr. Freund is a member of the American Psychological Association, American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, International Society for Traumatic Stress, the European Society for Stress Studies, and the Association of V.A. Psychologist Leaders. Dr. Freund was the keynote speaker at the annual POW/MIA Heroes Dinner sponsored by Rolling Thunder in 2011.

Here is a link to a free download of Dr. Freund's latest book, "Taming the Fire Within"

<http://www.wwe.com/shows/tributetothetroops>

or

<http://www.wwe.com/military/taming-the-fire-within>

(The above links will work if you scroll down the page and see the book on the lower right with a red bow on it. Then click on that and it will download.)

Please join

**U.S. Congressman Ander Crenshaw
Five STAR Veterans Center**

&

VETS4VETS

Veterans from the DAV, VFW's, American Legion, Korean War Veterans Association,
Marine Corp League, Viet Nam Veterans of America, and the Jacksonville Semper Fidelis Society,

as they host

U.S. Congressman

Jeff Miller

**Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
and**

U.S. Congresswoman Corrine Brown

Member, House Committee on Veteran's Affairs

to discuss

Veterans' Issues

Healthcare, Employment, Education & Housing Benefits

at the

Five STAR Veterans Center

40 Acme Street

Jacksonville, FL 32211

Tuesday, August 19, 2014

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Business Casual

Refreshments will be served

Space is limited; please RSVP to: suzie.lovings@5starveteranscenter.org or call: (904) 723-5950

VETNET

Prudential's Military, Veterans, and Veteran Supporters Group

On Thursday, July 24th, 2014, Dr. Nadia Ramoutar, director of the Veterans Council's latest documentary, K9's for Warriors, and producer Michael Rothfeld, were invited to speak about the documentary at a meeting of Prudential's VETNET group.

Dr. Ramoutar spoke about PTSD and how shelter dogs are trained to assist wounded warriors adjust back to a normal life back home with their families. Michael Rothfeld spoke about educating today's youth about the sacrifices veterans make for them and how their heroic stories of service should not be forgotten.

The Prudential VETNET organization was launched in 2010. The organization seeks to articulate the military veteran's viewpoint by providing a vehicle for communication and sharing common issues, and by establishing a support network to promote professional development of employees to their fullest potential.

*The **MISSION** of the organization is to focus on the professional development needs of Prudential associates, support and nurture interpersonal relationships among Prudential associates in order to promote personal growth, represent Prudential within the military veteran's community, and raise military veterans' issues as they relate to the Enterprise. Among the objectives are to:*

- Foster relationships within the military veterans community and institutions of learning by providing a vehicle for communication and sharing of common issues to enhance Prudential's brand recognition and acceptance in the community.*
- Promote partnership with other like-minded organizations that may assist in the advancement of the VETNET mission.*



Tony D'Aleo VVA Ch 1046
President speaks with a Prudential VetNet supporter



Our hostess Kathy Sumrow,
getting ready to introduce us
to the group



Documentary Producer Michael Rothfeld speaks about
the K9/PTSD documentary



Documentary Director Dr. Nadia Ramoutar talking
about the bond between
humans and dogs

RE-ENACTMENT PARADE AND CEREMONY
COMMEMORATING THE END OF THE 2ND SEMINOLE WAR,
Saturday, 23 August, 2014

St. Francis Barracks, 82 Marine Street , St. Augustine
St. Augustine National Cemetery

On Saturday, 23 August, 50 re-enactors in period uniform will re-trace the final route of the stirring parade through St. Augustine . It marked the termination of hostilities after seven years of fighting during the 2nd Seminole War. The re-enactment will begin at 9:30 AM, with displays in front of St. Francis Barracks. The parade will form at 10:00, with cannon* fire at 10:30 ,announcing the march from the Barracks to the "gardens," now the St. Augustine National Cemetery . The ceremony will feature remarks by distinguished military and civilian representatives with traditional military honors.

A reception in The Florida National Guard Officers Club recognizing the re-enactors will follow, the public is invited.

**This is the third year the Cannon will be fired as part of the ceremony. The cannon is an exact replica of the "6 pounder" that accompanied Major Dade's column when it was ambushed near Ocala in December, 1835. The original has never been found. The replica is home based at the Dade Battlefield Historic State Park in Bushnell, and "manned" by re-enactors of the "Peace River Artillery" Association.*

Seminole War Commemoration



“Honoring Those Who Perished” St. Augustine National Cemetery

82 Marine Street

Saturday - August 23, 2014

9:00 AM - Reenactors & Living History Display

10:30 AM - Parade To The National Cemetery

11:15 AM - Commemoration Ceremony

The West Point Society Of North Florida

The Seminole War Foundation - Dade Battlefield Society

Veterans Council of St. Johns County - The 450th Military Commemoration Committee

Poster design by Ted Pappas

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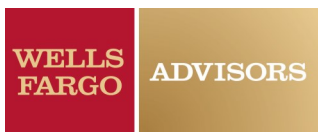


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*Veterans Council of St. Johns County,
"Helping All Veterans"*

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



LTC Jim Vanairsdale, USMC, ret., receives gift from the President of the Jacksonville Koran Community in recognition of his service during the Korean War

Agent Orange Zone

[http://
agentorangezone.blogspot.com/](http://agentorangezone.blogspot.com/)

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

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

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

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

**The St. Johns County Veterans Council meets the last
Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the Elks Lodge,
1420 A1A So., St. Augustine.**

Visit our Website: www.veteranscouncilofstjohns.org

**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 **287,645** views to date on YouTube.

You can view part of it at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8Cs6Th7VNC>



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.