



VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

CHAIRMAN BILL DUDLEY

VICE CHAIRMAN RAY QUINN

SECRETARY MICHAEL ROTHFELD

TREASURER JOHN MOUNTCASTLE

Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld

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Message from the Chairman



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Fellow Veterans,

November was everything we had predicted it would be. All of the Veterans events were as awesome as we had expected and then some.

Hopefully you were able to make all of our events. The K9's for Warriors program on Nov. 8 was a big success with over 30 different organizations displaying in the Atrium area at Anastasia Baptist Church. The program highlighted the St. Augustine High School Choral singers and the guitar ensemble. They were a huge success and certainly honored our veterans with their outstanding performance. This year's K9's for Warriors documentary was the fifth in a series of documentaries we have done to pay tribute to all our veterans who have served our nation.

This year's Veterans Day event was one to remember. The first ever military parade in St. Augustine was sponsored by the Veterans Council and Ancient City MOAA Chapter. By any metric used to gage the event, it was a huge success. Military marching units, JROTC marching and drillteams, Military and High School marching bands, re-

enactors representing 450 years of St. Augustine's military history from 1565 to present, a Spanish marching unit carrying the Spanish colors, WW II veterans riding in WW II vintage jeeps, WW II and Korean War Veterans riding on the green trolley, USCG helicopter and Aids to Navigation boats....it was all there. The reviewing stand was populated with representatives from the Kingdom of Spain and United Kingdom along with many of our local elected officials and several military General Officers including The Adjutant General, Major General Michael Calhoun. The massing of the colors was supported by our local veteran's organizations and was very inspiring standing on the hillside with the colors flourishing and the Castillo de San Marcos providing the backdrop. (see more on both these programs elsewhere in The Patriot Reader)

Many churches in our community conducted programs honoring our veterans during November. The veterans of St. Johns County wish to thank all churches and organizations who held ceremonies or services recognizing our veterans. To mention two among the many that I attended was the evening service at Trinity Episcopal Church on Nov

10 and the evening service on Nov. 15 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Both ceremonies were extremely well planned and provided the honor and respect deserving of our veterans.

Recently I learned a troubling statistic that I would like to bring to the attention of our veterans in St. Johns County. Records indicate that only about 60% of our veterans are registered to vote. That is very troubling given that this is one of the most precious rights that we as Americans have and one of the reasons we served. I would like to ask every veteran in our County if you are not a registered voter to please contact the voter registration office today and register to vote in the upcoming elections. It has never been more important than in the elections of 2016. Believe me when I tell you **every vote counts.**

Bill Dudley, Chairman
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

Where Patriotism is our Motto



Picnic lunch to Spring Park
in Green Cove Springs



Visiting pets

Veteran's Day Parade

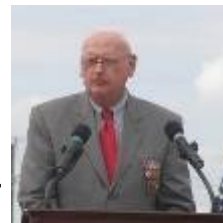


Veteran's Ball
November 11, 2015





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



JNC SC Chairman,
Ray Quinn

The Support Committee invites everyone to attend its **next scheduled meeting, on Monday, December 7, 2015**. The meeting will be at **7:00pm**. The meeting will take place at Community Hospice, **4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257 in Conference Room A**.

+++++2015/2016 Officers of the SCJNC+++++

Chairman: Ray Quinn
Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley
Treasurer: John Mountcastle
Assist Treasurer: Michael Rothfeld
Secretary: Kathy Church
Chaplain: Michael Halyard
Master-At-Arms: Joe McDermott
JAG Officer: Patrick Bennett
Historian: Jody Raymond

VOLUNTEERS are needed! <http://jacksonvilleladies.org>

Membership in **The Jacksonville Ladies/Gentlemen** is strictly *voluntary* and is open to all Ladies and Gentlemen who have a sincere desire to pay final tribute to our Veterans. A Volunteer is there to attend every Service, not to "intrude" but to stand as a "silent witness" and give honor to the Veteran and condolences to their families. It is not a "typical" Volunteer position, it must come from the heart. It is an honor to be a part of these ceremonies that pay tribute to the everyday heroes that make up our armed forces. The Volunteers give back a little to those who have given so much for our great country.

How to Volunteer - <http://jacksonvilleladies.org>

The Jacksonville Ladies/Gentlemen are a very special group of *Volunteers* dedicated to being the "Silent Witness" for the Service of a Veteran and/or their Spouse. Especially important are those with no family present so they are not laid to rest alone. We also hope to provide some comfort to the family.

The only requirements are compassion, dedication and the sincere desire to honor our Veterans for their service to our country.

If you think you might be interested in becoming a Volunteer please contact Chair Gail Williams at 904-291-0604 or Vice Chair Kathy Cayton at 904-272-9489.

You can also fill out the form in the link below and one of us will get back to you as soon as possible.

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

From Congressman DeSantis: After years of delays, I was so glad to attend the dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremonies this morning at the

St. Augustine interim VA clinic! Ensuring that our veterans receive uninterrupted care as the clinic transitions to a permanent location has been one of my top priorities.

It was an honor to speak at today's ceremony; our veterans have given so much to our nation, and we must provide them with the medical care that they deserve.



Veterans Council Hosts Its Annual Honoring Veterans Event

On an overcast Sunday afternoon, November 8th, the Veterans Council of St. Johns County hosted its annual Veterans Salute to all Veterans at beautiful Anastasia Baptist Church. This year the Veterans Council highlighted post 911 Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans.

The Church Atrium had over 30 military/veterans displays for the public to gather information, make contacts, join or contribute to these non-profits.

The main event featured a documentary produced by Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley, Secretary Michael Rothfeld and Dr. Nadia Ramoutar who also Directed the documentary. The documentary was recently seen on WJCT TV, the PBS affiliate in Jacksonville, told the heroic story of warriors suffering from PTSD who spend three weeks at the new K9s For warriors facility in Nocatee. During their stay there they are given a trained rescued K9 to bond with and dog and warrior soon form a lasting relationship that enables the warrior to move on with his life when they return home.





K9S FOR WARRIORS

GIVE A NEW LEASH ON LIFE TO RESCUE DOGS AND MILITARY HEROES

K9s For Warriors is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

K9s For Warriors is dedicated to providing service canines to warriors suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disability, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma as a result of military service post 9/11.

- Founded was in 2011 by Shari Duval.
- 95% of the dogs in the program come from rescue shelters or are owner surrendered.

Why is it needed?

- 20% of post 9/11 war veterans - 500,000 men and women suffer from PTSD.
- 22 veterans a day commit suicide from PTSD.
- The average warrior is on 10-15 medications when he begins the program. 92% will eliminate or reduce prescription medications after they graduate from K9s For Warriors.
- There are over 3 million dogs that are euthanized in rescue shelters every year, many are wonderful dogs that can be trained to be service dogs for deserving veterans

What is PTSD?

- Hyper-vigilance
- Insomnia
- Isolation
- Panic Attacks
- Depression

What is the program?

- A three week in-house recovery program. K9s For Warriors provides a trained service K9, housing, most meals, equipment, veterinary care, 120 hours of training with their new service K9 and a family type atmosphere that provides essential peer-to-peer support during the three week stay.
- We have a small, dedicated staff and over 500 volunteers who give of their time & talents.
- We welcome donors to come visit and take a tour of the Dog House when warriors are not in session (for privacy reasons) and see where your dollars are going.

Our Success

- As of October 22, 2015, 194 Warrior-Canine Teams have graduated with 100% success rate in suicide prevention.

Featured On

- PEOPLE Magazine
- Fox News
- CNN
- NBC's TODAY
- Food Network's CHOPPED
- Fox News Business Edition
- First Coast News Telethon
- Week-long Grand Opening Coverage
- Army Times

K9s for Warriors visits students at FSDB

Second chances

By [JAKE MARTIN](#), jake.martin@staugustine.com

Students at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind on Friday learned that help can come in many shapes and sizes — or breeds.

Charles Crozier, assistant principal of the blind high school, helped coordinate a visit from K9s for Warriors to demonstrate for students in the blind department what their service dogs can do for veterans. Greg Wells, warrior trainer for K9s for Warriors, spent 10 years in law enforcement and eight years in the U.S. Army. During his time in the service, he was in Afghanistan for four years and Iraq for 1.5 years.

“I’ve been in I don’t know how many explosions, but the last one was Feb. 12, 2012,” he said. “I was sent home with PTSD and traumatic brain injury. I came home an angry mess.”

Wells said his medications weren’t making things any better and he finally went through the K9s for Warriors program in April 2014.

The first night, his service dog sensed an oncoming nightmare and jumped into the bed to wake him up.

For Wells, it was literally a wake-up call that K-9s can be trained to have your back.

He said his current dog, Murray, has helped him re-establish a bubble or “three-foot zone” in which he can feel comfortable in public once again.

“Murray is a sweetheart,” Wells said. “Murray thinks he’s a lap dog, but he’s not. Murray will wake me up if I’m having a nightmare. Murray makes it possible for me to go in public with my family or by myself.”

He said having Murray with him is as close as it gets to what it was like having his team in Afghanistan by his side.

“We’re messed up sometimes when we come home and don’t know how to fix it,” he said. “These dogs, by some miracle, just do.”

Second chances

Founded in 2011, K9s for Warriors is a nonprofit providing service K-9s to veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma as a result of military service after 9/11.

Ronald Swanson, a judge on the Florida First District Court of Appeal, is a K9s for Warriors board member and used to teach at FSDB.

“We take dogs that are rescue dogs and we train them and then match them up with returning warriors — or veterans — to assist them in re-acclimating into society,” Swanson said.

Shari Duval founded K9s for Warriors after witnessing her son, Brett Simon, struggle with daily life upon returning from two stints in Iraq as a bomb dog handler.

Simon’s story was common among military service members returning home from combat.

“I didn’t think I had a lot of problems, just like other veterans don’t, but people from the outside could see that there was something going on,” he said.

Simon said he went through more than a year of self-imposed isolation, in which he would stay in his house nearly 16 hours a day.

He is now director of K-9 operations and helping fellow veterans form a bond with his or her own service dog.

“One thing we find with veterans — even the hardest ones — is no matter how hard they are, they’re all givers,” he said. “Having the responsibility of a partner gives them that responsibility back and it gives them a purpose to get out there every day.”

Christine Brooke, lead K-9 trainer, has been with K9s for Warriors for about two years.

“We make these dogs great so they can go out in public,” she said. Brooke said all dogs are evaluated to make sure they can — and want — to do the work, and they are matched to a veteran with a similar personality and the right home environment. “Our end goal is always to make sure the warrior has a great dog that they can rely on — one that can wake them up from their nightmares and help them with their anxiety.”

Dogs must be under two years of age with no history of aggression. Most are Labrador mixes. About 95 percent of dogs used in the K9s for Warriors program are rescue or shelter dogs. The program has graduated 194

teams with a 96 percent recertification rate.

Q&A

Students asked how service dogs get around and if there were any places they could not go with their veterans. Trainers replied the K-9s can go anywhere their handlers can — except for environments that must remain sterile, such as operating rooms — and they are allowed on any mode of public transportation, such as airplanes.

“What if they get the cheap seats?” one student asked.

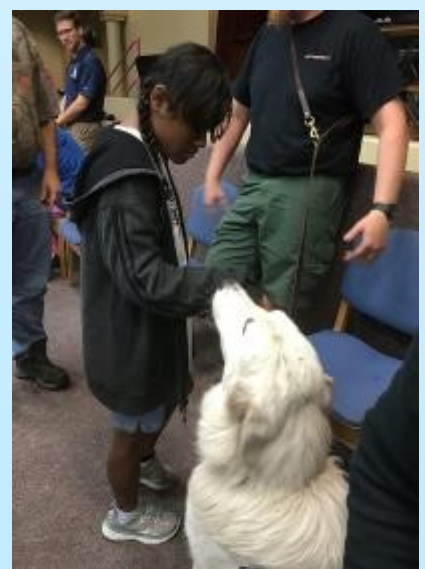
“Most of our warriors are in the cheap seats, yes,” Diamond conceded. “There’s still space in the very front row, behind first class, for the dogs to be.”

“What’s the annual budget for training dogs?” another student asked.

“That’s a spectacular question,” Diamond replied, laughing. e said next year they will have about \$2.9 million with which they will be able to train nearly 200 teams. That training will take place at K9s for Warriors’ new headquarters in Nocatee, which opened in May.

The previous location in Ponte Vedra Beach could only accommodate up to five veterans at a time, but Camp K9 will ultimately help expand the program’s capabilities by housing up to 16 veterans at a time.

“The amount of support you receive from this organization is unreal,” Wells said. “It’s an organization founded by a mom — and we all know what moms are like, right?”



Kuwait/Iraq 2003– 2004 Tour of Duty

**Leo C Chase Chapter VVA President
Bob Dinkins and friend**



Our numbers keep growing on a daily basis. MIAP-FL needs more people to volunteer to work this project. Please contact me if you are interested or if you know anyone who would like to join our TEAM in any area of Florida.



PROGRESS TO DATE NATIONWIDE AS OF 10/06/2015

Total Funeral Homes Visited - 1,882

Cremains Found - 12,094

Veterans Cremains Identified - 2,782

Veterans Interred - 2,539



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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**



Veterans Day parade a tribute to military service, history

By [SHELDON GARDNER](mailto:sheldon.gardner@staugustine.com) sheldon.gardner@staugustine.com, Article used with permission of the St. Augustine Record and its author, Sheldon Gardner

People sat in folding chairs and stood along sun-splashed South Castillo Drive near the bayfront, waiting to see the Veterans Day parade in St. Augustine. Children gripped bundles of miniature American flags, handing them out to spectators on the sidewalk. People wore red, white and blue and held signs that read, "All Americans, Pray for Our Troops."

Thousands were expected. About 2,000 people came to watch, according to a police estimate.

Among the veterans preparing for the parade Wednesday were men from the Coquina Crossing community in St. Johns County.

"It's an honor to be able to be here," said U.S. Navy veteran Andy Anderson, who served from '52 to '74. Anderson and other veterans from Coquina Crossing toured the parade route in a restored military vehicle. Joe Shomo, a World War II veteran who served in the U.S. Army, stood nearby.

U.S. Navy veteran Clinton Schoch told his story as he sat in the back of the vehicle. He said he served from '42 to '46 and was a flight instructor. He estimated that he taught close to 1,000 people, many of them "just kids out of high school."

"This is when they were getting ready to make a big push in the Pacific. ... They figured they were going to lose a lot of pilots," adding that not as many were lost as was expected.

The parade honored local veterans and recognized St. Augustine's military history and 450 years of existence, said retired Florida National Guard Sgt. Maj. Ray Quinn, grand marshal of the parade and vice chair of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.

Officials from the Veterans Council and the Military Officers Association of America's Ancient City Chapter helped bring the event to St. Augustine. Typically an event is held at Francis Field on Veterans Day, but the parade was arranged in light of the city's 450th anniversary.

The parade included a Navy band, local Junior ROTC units, a bag pipe band, and a trolley carrying World War II veterans, Vietnam veterans and veterans from the Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home off State Road 16.

Under mostly blue skies, the parade went from Francis Field to the bayfront, traveling past the Castillo de San Marcos and to Cathedral Place, then up Cordova Street and back to the field.

Parade groups paused on the bayfront in front of a reviewing stand, where military

members, veterans and local commissioners and other officials were seated. A speaker provided background about Veterans Day and described the groups who walked by.

The speaker noted that citizen and regular troops have defended the city for centuries, some under Spanish and British flags. A historical formation was part of the parade, representing the military history of St. Augustine and the United States. A smaller crowd lined the sidewalks on either side of Cordova Street as the parade passed by.

Rebecca Downey, of St. Augustine, stood on a sidewalk with her two children. She spoke about her father's military service and said she brought her children to the parade to help teach them that "veterans matter and our flag matters." Across the street, Gail Marion, of Jacksonville, talked as the last of the parade passed by.

She is retired from the U.S. Army. During her decades-long career, she met several presidents, she said. She remembers being one of few women serving early in her military career.

"It wasn't easy. ... " she said. "It was a passion. It was not a job."





ST. AUGUSTINE'S 450th MILITARY COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

As St. Augustine's 450th Commemoration window comes to an end, I would very much like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all who have given so much over the past 4 plus years. The Military Community has set the standard for participation and promotion in communicating the fact that St. Augustine exists as the oldest continuous European community in North America because there has always been a military presence here to protect it, thanks to you.

Your performance in executing the many educational events over the 4 year period was truly outstanding, and will be remembered by a grateful citizenry. My hope & prayer is that there will be a 500th celebration, and the military will again take the lead in portraying the historical truth about our great city.

For posterity, I have chronologically listed all our events, both sponsored and supported, dating back to 2011.

2011

1. Planning Committee identified and initial planning begins - September
2. American Legion Post 37/Hamblen House selected as our "Legacy Project" – November
3. Planning for the production/direction of "To Arms" begins – December

2012

1. "To Arms" presented at Flagler College Auditorium, one of First 450th events - February
2. Dr. Jim Cusick seminar – "The Other War of 1812" – April
3. Memorial Day – May
4. Seminole War Re-enactment/Ceremony – August
5. LTC Greg Moore seminar - "History of the National Cemetery" – October
6. Veterans' Day – November
7. "The Legion Legacy Project" – on going all year

2013

1. Memorial Day – May
2. Cannon Commemoration Re-enactment – June
3. Seminole War Re-enactment/Ceremony – August
4. Legion "Open House" fundraiser – October
5. Veterans' Day – November
6. LTC Greg Moore seminar – "Sacred Ground" – November
7. "The Legion Legacy Project" – on going all year

2014

1. Memorial Day – May
2. Buffalo Soldiers – July
3. Seminole War Re-enactment/ceremony – August
4. Legion “Open House” fundraiser- November
5. Veterans’ Day – November
6. 2015 MOAA State Convention coordination shifts into high gear - November
7. “The Legion Legacy Project” – on going all year

2015

1. Inaugural Military Ball, Forward March, Inc. – January
2. Memorial Day – May
3. MOAA State Convention – May
4. Seminole War Parade Signature event – August
5. Veterans’ Day Parade Signature event – November
6. “The Legion Legacy Project” – on going all year

2016

1. 2nd Annual Military Ball, Forward March, Inc. – January
2. “The Legion Legacy Project” – on going until completion (\$2 million)

These Military productions directly related to the 450th Commemoration celebration, compounded with all the many hours involved in planning and coordination, represent a dedication above and beyond the call of duty. Many thanks to Colonel Ron Radford for being the initiator and architect of an extremely successful 4 year adventure. I am very proud to have been associated with you all during this special time in our history.

Ron Birchall

Co-Chair of St. Augustine’s 450th Military Commemoration Committee

Vietnam War Plaque Dedication

Florida National Guard Public Affairs Office

Story by Sgt. Christopher Milbrodt

Vietnam veterans dedicate Patriot Field with soil from Vietnam during a retreat ceremony in St. Augustine, Fla., Nov. 10, 2015. The ceremony celebrated 50 years since the ground war began in Vietnam.



ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. – Community veterans, military family members and distinguished guests gathered at Patriot Field to honor those warriors who are no longer with us and celebrate those who have served. Currently serving Florida Guardsmen provided full honors with a retreat ceremony focusing on the sacrifices made by those who served in Vietnam.

The Florida National Guard celebrated veterans of the war by dedicating the field with the spreading of soil from Vietnam as well as the internment of soil beneath one of the many dedication plaques lining the field. The ceremony marks 50 years since the ground war in Vietnam began in 1965.

On March 8, 1965, 3,500 Marines entered Vietnam as the first wave of combat troops to augment the more than 25,000 military advisers already in country.

Shortly after, official ground combat operations began against North Vietnamese forces.

“In many ways we are expressing our thanks today, to those who served in the Vietnam War and certainly to the families who supported them; most of all this is a very public way to express our thanks for the courage, bravery and dedication of those who paid the ultimate price,” said retired Brig. Gen. Dan Cherry. “A grateful nation truly does remember and honors on a daily basis all Vietnam veterans for their service.”

More than 58,000 Americans lost their lives in Vietnam; 1,954 of those who paid the ultimate price of freedom were from Florida. Those who returned did so with physical and mental scars of not just the combat of which they lived, but with the memories of those friends and brothers-in-arms who answered the call with their life.

“The dedication today is to honor every Florida National Guardsmen for their service and sacrifice during this controversial war and let them know there are still Soldiers and citizens that remember their contribution to this great nation,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jerry Dedge, the Command Chief Warrant Officer for the Florida National Guard. “Veterans Day to me means honoring the service and sacrifice to every service member that has served and thanking them for the blanket of freedom they have provided to the people of the United States of America.”



Every year, in November, the City of Jacksonville honors veterans with a week of special events. It is called the “Week of Valor”. This year as in the two previous years the COJ has chosen to feature one of the documentaries I produced under the auspices of the St. Johns County Veterans Council. This year’s selection, “ Korea: Forgotten War, Remembered Heroes” was shown at UNF on Friday evening November 13th in the UNF Recital Hall.

Ray Wikstrom, Director of the UNF Military and Veterans Resource Center was the host. Representing the City of Jacksonville was Bill Spann, Director of Military Affairs & Veterans Department of the COJ.

After the Korean War documentary was shown, Dr. Henry Moreland, Commander of the Korean War Veterans Association served as moderator of the panel discussion. The panelists from the documentary were George Gaspard, Jim Vanairsdale and Jack Wentz.



VVA member



Ray Wikstrom, UNF



Bill Spann, COJ



Dr. Henry Moreland,
CWVA Ch 200



George Gaspard



Jim Vanairsdale



Jack Wentz



Eight Inducted into 2015 Class of the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Gov. Rick Scott and the Cabinet today inducted eight individuals into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. The unanimous vote for the Class of 2015 came during the Sept. 29 Cabinet Meeting at the Capitol.

Inductees are:

1. Charles E. Bennett, U.S. Army veteran (deceased)
2. Laurence O. "Larry" Campbell, U.S. Marine Corps veteran (deceased)
3. Chief Master Sgt. Charles E. LeCroy, U.S. Air Force (retired)
4. Lawton M. Chiles, U.S. Army veteran (deceased)
5. Col. Curtis V. "Curt" Ebitz, U.S. Army (retired)
6. Col. Warren "Rocky" McPherson, U.S. Marine Corps (retired)
7. Gerald V. Myers, U.S. Army veteran (deceased)
8. Maj. Gen. Earl G. Peck, U.S. Air Force (retired)

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

An induction ceremony to honor the eight inductees will be scheduled in the future.

For more information, visit <http://www.floridaveteranshalloffame.org/index.asp>



Reprinted from the website of News Channel 8

SARASOTA, FL (WFLA) – A group of forgotten American heroes were finally laid to rest in Sarasota. These military veterans died years ago, but sadly their remains sat unclaimed for years.

So the non-profit group ‘The Missing in America Project’ made sure they got the honors they deserve. The Florida State Coordinator for Missing in America Project, Kathy Church said, “As one funeral director says, it’s the tragedy of cremation.”

Funeral homes across America have cremated remains that are unclaimed. In many of these cases the families never came back, relatives died off, or no money was available for a funeral.

The non-profit group finds those remains and gives them a full military funeral.

Church said, “To have anybody sit on a funeral home shelf unclaimed is terrible, but for a veteran, for somebody who served our nation, and for their family who also served, it’s just not right, we have to take care of our veterans.”



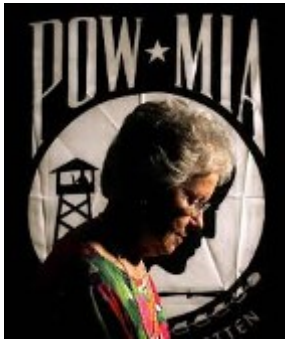
On Thursday, seven military veterans and four military wives were finally honored. They were given a full military funeral.

Most of the veterans served in World War II, and their remains have been sitting on shelves for years. Joan, a Sarasota resident, has been the custodian of the remains of her friend, Rennis Taylor. After the World War II veteran died in 1992, no one ever came to get his remains, so she held onto them.

Joan said, “It saddens me, which is why I’ve held on to Rennis’ ashes all these years. Even though he’s no relationship to me, he deserves respect.

Patriot guard riders hoisted American flags and escorted the remains as they were carried in a hearse to Sarasota National Cemetery.

Once there, the remains were carried to the front of a stage, where the names were read as a bell was struck.



Mary Helen Hoff, POW/MIA flag pioneer: 1931-2015

By [Joe Daraskevich](#), FL Times-Union

Mary Helen Hoff, an Orange Park woman who inspired the creation of a flag honoring military personnel taken as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, died Tuesday. She was 84.

In 1970, Mrs. Hoff had recently given birth to her fifth child when her husband, Navy Cmdr. Michael G. Hoff, was shot down in combat during the Vietnam War.

The youngest of her children, Joe Hoff, was less than a year old at the time and this week he said his mother spent a lot of her energy keeping the family together after her husband was declared missing. He was never found. He said despite the duties that came with maintaining a house full of children, his mother was passionate about finding a way to honor people who had not returned from serving their country.

Mrs. Hoff got the idea for the POW/MIA flag when China joined the United Nations and there was an issue with creating a flag to be displayed because of the country's communist affiliation.

Mrs. Hoff contacted Annin & Co — the flagmaker who had refused to produce flags for the Chinese — and the company hired a graphic designer to complete the POW/MIA project.

"She told them we needed a symbol for those who are serving and are not coming back," Joe Hoff said.

When the design was complete the company contacted Mrs. Hoff to ask if she wanted to own the rights to the flag but she refused.

"Mom told them it wasn't about owning something that everyone should own," Joe Hoff said.

Mrs. Hoff's longtime friend and neighbor in Orange Park, Fran Boyle, said modesty was very common with her friend.

The Hoff family attended St. Catherine Catholic Church in Orange Park for years and when Mrs. Hoff was no longer able to drive because of her battle with Parkinson's disease, Boyle started driving her friend to church. Boyle said Mrs. Hoff was well known in the church but she never bragged about any of her accomplishments.

"A lot of people knew her but I don't think they knew she came up with the idea for the [POW/MIA] flag," Boyle said.

Mike Hoff is the oldest of the five children and he said his mother was very involved with selling POW/MIA bracelets throughout Orange Park for years in honor of missing military personnel.

But every few years his mother would be asked to do an interview with the media and she got tired of all the attention, Mike Hoff said.

Mrs. Hoff decided to pass her responsibilities with the POW/MIA organization on to someone else, but she started spending most of her time organizing a soup kitchen at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in downtown Jacksonville.

"She always had to have a cause or something she was working toward," Mike Hoff said.

Mike Hoff said she took pride in the fact the POW/MIA flag became one of the most recognizable flags in the world and people seem to rally around it.

"The flag is still out there and she was obviously very proud of that," Mike Hoff said.



Times-Union file
FILE - Mary Helen Hoff, shown in 1981 with three of her five children, inspired the creation of the POW/MIA flag after her husband, Lt. Cmdr. Michael G. Hoff, went missing in action when his plane crashed over Laos in 1970.



Times-Union file-FILE - Mary Helen Hoff, left, whose husband, Lt. Cmdr. Michael G. Hoff has been missing in action since his plane crashed over Laos on Jan. 7, 1970, presents the first of a newly designed banner and emblem which will serve as a reminder of our captured and missing American servicemen to Jacksonville Mayor Hans Tanzler, center, and city council president Lynwood Roberts.

Kathy Beaudoin Church, MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT

MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT – FLORIDA

CALL TO HONOR #8 - SOUTH FLORIDA NATIONAL CEMETERY

LAKE WORTH, FLORIDA



MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Missing in America Project (MIAP) is to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of American veterans through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations, and to provide honor, respect and dignity to those who have served this country by securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes.

“IT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO”

On Saturday, December 5, 2015, at 11:00am, MIAP – Florida, in cooperation with the Dorsey E. Earl Smith Memory Gardens, Funeral Home & Cemetery, the Howard-Quattlebaum Funeral, Cremation & Event Center, the Quattlebaum Funeral, Cremation & Event Center at Hillcrest Memorial Park, the National Cremation and Burial Society, and the Taylor & Modeen Funeral Home, will be interring 15 veterans and 8 spouses of veterans at the South Florida National Cemetery located at 6501 Florida State Road 7, Lake Worth, FL 33449. The longest that any of these being interred have been unclaimed dates back to 1976.

THE FOLLOWING WILL BE INTERRED:

US ARMY: 4 veterans, 6 spouses

US MARINE CORPS: 1 veteran

US NAVY: 5 veterans, 2 spouses

US AIR FORCE: 4 veterans

US COAST GUARD: 1 veteran

WAR PERIODS:

WWI: 1 spouse

WWII: 10 veterans, 7 spouses

KOREA: 5 veterans

VIETNAM: 3 veterans

*** 3 veterans served in 2 war periods**

Protect the Future of Our Warriors:



Wear the Badge - Become a Guard Dog

K9s For Warriors is a grassroots, national non-profit that assists our veterans living with the invisible wounds of war. Sadly, we are losing twenty-two veterans every day to suicide, which far exceeds those we have lost in combat during 13 years of war – 112,000 vs. 52,000. We are losing more

veterans at home than on the battlefield! Through our service canine program, we want to put a STOP to this epidemic. We've made great strides in this effort – we are proud to report that we have a 100% success rate! Our program works! Although many of our warriors have come to us at their lowest point, and some have even attempted suicide in the past, not a single warrior has attempted suicide since graduating with their service dog!

We will only be able to accomplish the audacious goal of putting an end to veteran suicide through the help of our supporters. If as a community, we band together and give just a little bit, we can make a huge impact. Committing just \$22 per month and becoming a K9s For Warriors *Guard Dog* is how you can do your part. And as a token of our gratitude for doing so, you'll receive an exclusive K9s For Warriors garden flag.

By becoming a *Guard Dog*, you'll be impacting the lives of our nation's heroes. Heroes like LaWanna:

LaWanna spent over 25 years in the United States Air Force. As a Senior Master Sergeant, she specialized in knowledge operations management and intelligence. LaWanna deployed to both Kuwait and Iraq. For seven-and-a-half months, she served as the 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squad-



ron First Sergeant outside the wire. She was responsible for managing 275 Security Forces Airmen. LaWanna is the mother of two children and resides in Arlington, Texas. She applied to K9s For Warriors to overcome fear, anxiety, and doubt, especially in regard to being out in public. LaWanna applied to the program after researching K9s For Warriors. She was impressed by the high level of professionalism and knowledge exhibited by the staff. After returning home to Texas with her service dog, Corey, LaWanna made the following statement:

“After being hidden away in my bedroom for four years, I can finally go out in public. I am no longer in constant fear that something bad is going to happen. My dog, Cory, allows me to be more independent and gives me peace of mind. Because of Cory, the thoughts of suicide that once plagued my days and nights are slowly starting to fade away.”

LaWanna is thankful for Corey and feels that she has been given a true gift. Just recently, LaWanna was interviewed by a local magazine near Dallas. She has gained back her confidence and is very passionate about spreading awareness on PTSD, service dogs, and the K9s For Warriors Program.

Please consider becoming a *Guard Dog* and protecting the future of our warriors! **To make your monthly pledge \$22 per month, please visit K9sForWarriors.org** Together, we can make a HUGE difference.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shari Duval', written in a cursive style.

Shari Duval
President

The next V4V is **JANUARY 16th**...Pass the word and let's have a good turnout from all the counties.



Check out the V4V FaceBook page for updates ...Like the page so we can keep you informed and share the page with others, we need to get more Veterans involved...

www.facebook.com/Vets4VetsNJax

V4V is not political, we are all about taking care of Veterans.. We are a movement that believes "Where there is no vision the people perish". If veterans see "vision" they will attend and we will flourish and make a difference.

Inform, Connect, Grow and Organize/Unite.

Veteran issues are better addressed by another Veteran



JANUARY 16TH VETERANS MEMORIAL ARENA

Pass the Word

Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan want their own memorial

Veterans from the post 9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan want a monument, but is it too soon for a memorial if fighting continues?

By Eva Botkin-Kowacki, Staff writer , Christian Science Monitor

And yet, such a memorial is barred by legislation because 10 years have not passed since the end of the conflict, and the arguably the post 9/11 wars in these countries haven't ended yet.

Veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan say that a conclusion to the fighting could be too far in the future and that the veterans need this tangible recognition as soon as possible.

"A lot of these veterans were hurt physically. There are high rates of PTSD, just like among Vietnam veterans, and if we wait until the war on terror is over, they will never see it happen," Jan Scruggs, a Vietnam veteran told the Associated Press. Mr. Scruggs led efforts to fund and construct the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington three decades ago.

"I look at the Vietnam veterans and they really jelled around their memorial after it went up," said Andrew Brennan, a former Army captain in Afghanistan told AP. "It was a very conflicted conflict in the hearts and minds of Americans, and the same can be said about the global war on terror, but the memorial gave everyone a focal point."

Brennan has organized the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation Inc., with fellow post-9/11 veterans. He said, "I want that for my era of veterans, to kind of have our own place to heal."

But the Commemorative Works Act of 1997 stands in their way. Under the act, war memorials cannot be approved until 10 years have passed from when the war ended.

"Whatever memorial they build, it has to be cognizant of the fact that this isn't an end game. The war on terror is going to be an issue in the next several presidential elections, I'm afraid," Retired Rear Adm. George Worthington, a Navy SEAL who served in Vietnam told AP.

"One of the things that's very difficult is, because these aren't technically declared wars, they're operations of the global war on terror, it's difficult to fit the statutes," Lauren Augustine, a member of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America's legislative team told the Washington Times. "We've been [in the wars for over a decade](#), but it's particularly difficult to have that closing date."

Past wars have had clear enemies and there could be clear negotiations. But the war on terror is a new breed, Terry Anderson, a military history professor at Texas A&M University told the Washington Times.

"This shift happened because we've never fought an enemy like Osama bin Laden types, we've never fought an enemy like that before," Mr. Anderson said.

"As long as there are radical Islamists who will kill themselves to kill others, we never will have a peace treaty with the [global war on terrorism]," he said. "It is the never-ending war."

Even if Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are allowed to have a monument before the fighting ends, there might not be a place for them on the National Mall. But the advocates will press on and are seeking a congressional sponsor.

“When we’re thinking about the legacy and the service of those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, it’s so important to start thinking about that today to ensure their services are honored on the National Mall alongside many of the other wars and that our country never forgets,” Ms. Augustine said.

These efforts come just as the Senate passes a bill to spend billions of dollars on veterans’ programs and other military projects.

The bill, passed Tuesday, allocates \$80 billion to programs such as the Veterans Administration’s medical services. The measure will move into House-Senate negotiations now.

This report contains material from the Associated Press.



Jan C. Scruggs, visits the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, Monday, Nov. 9, 2015. Scruggs, who led efforts to build the memorial on the National Mall, is calling for a national memorial for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, even though violence in those service members. The Commemorative Works Acts stipulates that a decade must pass before work can begin on a memorial, but supporters of the idea say the war on terror may never end.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

Taken from Facebook:

Our veteran of the day is WW II Navy Veteran, Mr. George Mendonsa, 92-years old, better known as "The Kissing Sailor."

The Alfred Eisenstaedt photo below, taken on Aug 14, 1945, in Times Square, NY is one of the most iconic WW II images and the most popular photo Life magazine ever published.

Though the identities of the sailor and nurse have been disputed for years, Mendonsa, commented, "I haven't found a person yet that I haven't convinced."

He points to the following as evidence:

- a scar on his brow (received in a bar room fight)
- small tattoo near his right wrist (still visible)
- lump on his left forearm
- large hands

and the most solid piece of verified evidence is the women behind his left should is Rita Petry – Mendonsa's date on 14 August 1945 and his future wife (they have been married 60+ years)

Take a few minutes to watch the American Veterans Center video and listen to Mendonsa recall the events leading up to this famous kiss.

Thank you for your service, sir. We wish you many more years of good health.

<https://vimeo.com/135295185>

Compiled by MSgt Rob Wilkins, USAF, Ret.



Second Watch: The Second Watch is an organization formed by the family members, friends and supporters of the men of the *USS Indianapolis*. They are dedicated to the promotion of citizenship and patriotism and remembering what America is about.

The Second Watch, along with generous donations from many, has purchased flags and they are being flown with the help of the Indiana War Memorial Staff, over the USS Indianapolis Memorial in the memory of a Lost At Sea sailor for a day.

The flag flying over the Memorial today, Thursday October 29th, is in memory of Lost At Sea USS Indianapolis sailor Michael J McKenna S1

At the time of the sinking, Michael was 22 yrs old.

He was the son of Mrs Julia McKenna, and had 4 brothers and 2 sisters.

Michael was born and raised at the same address all his life in Chicago, Illinois, and was well known for his sportsmanship. He played tackle on his high school football team. He wanted to join the Navy hoping to "get a chance at the enemy".

He entered the Navy in January 1943 and went to boot training in Idaho. He then went to San Diego. His first assignment overseas was on the Indianapolis.

He was an amateur boxer and on July 1 before the sinking, he was the winner of the Golden Gloves championship. And a week previous to that, he was boxing at a million-dollar bond rally, the finals for the Golden Championship with Jack Dempsey as the referee.

His mother was notified on August 12 that her son was missing in the loss of the Indianapolis on July 30.

His family has many letters that he sent home to his mother which they treasure. There are some letters to him from his mother and sisters in their collection that were return undeliverable after the ship had sunk.

His nephew will be traveling to Indianapolis today and will be at the Memorial tomorrow morning to receive his flag from General Goodwin as it is lowered.

Gone but not forgotten.



American Legion Post 194 sponsored "Family Night" for our "Kids Safe Zone Program. " Family Night honors those children in the program that achieved honor roll status. We also thank the Viet Nam Veterans Association for their support of the program.



From Michael Isam: My lovely Bride and I had the distinct pleasure to take advantage of the great repast provided by the **Alton Green Memorial American Legion Post 194** annual Thanksgiving celebration. This was our umpteenth year to have great food, share great times with other veterans (both young and old), and to assist in delivering meals to homebound veterans.

If you decided to skip this event and not participate, you missed a great opportunity to express your thanks to fellow veterans who have paid a great price in the past and are still paying in the present.

I have been witness to watching the face of a homebound veteran light up at the sight of a fellow veteran coming in the door bearing a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal. More than once I have watched their eyes glisten as tears welled up just before washing down their cheeks. Some have cried just knowing they have not been relegated to some "those who also served" list and otherwise forgotten.

If one has never held a veteran as they "let it all out", until they had let it all out, you have no clue about what I am saying. "To those who have served, no explanation is necessary. To those who have not served, no words can explain."

Thank you Post 194 for the opportunity to give as well as receive!

Military Records/DD 214 Update 04

A fire in 1973 destroyed 80 percent of Army personnel records for soldiers discharged between 1 Nov 1912 to 1 Jan 1960 and 75 percent of the Air Force records of Airmen discharged between 25 Sep 1947 to 1 Jan 1964 (with surnames beginning with Hubbard and running through the end of the alphabet). Veterans whose records have been lost can download and fill out a specific form at the National Archives or VA website:

www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/na-13055-info-2-reconstruct-medical-data.pdf

that authorizes the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) to search for other types of documents that would assist the veteran with their VA healthcare access or compensation claim, or for valuable research their family member's service history. For more information, visit the Department of Veterans Affairs website <http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/NPRC1973Fire.asp>.

NAUS Note: If your service time does NOT fall into the above timeframes and you request copies of your service record only to be told they were destroyed in “the fire,” do not quit. Submit the request again. Most likely they will magically find your record. Unfortunately, it has happened too many times. .

[Source: NAUS Weekly Update | August 21, 2015 ++]



First Coast TV was delighted and honored to help spread the word on the event "**Honoring Our Veterans**", that took place on Sunday, Nov. 8th at Anastasia Baptist Church. We need to let our community know that that very small percentage of our men and women, who we value because of their service in uniform, must still be valued after they are no longer in uniform. So First Coast.TV was pleased to be asked to help spread the word. We also covered the story of the new and improved VA clinic in St Augustine. For more **news in video format** on our community in St Johns County please go to www.firstcoast.tv to see more stories on what's news at home.



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From Chairman Bill Dudley: The USCGC Valiant is one of the adopted ships that the St. Augustine-Palm Coast Navy League Council supports. Noted in the article is also a helicopter deployed for USCG HITRON, also an adopted unit of the SA-PC council. Not mentioned in the news release was a burial at sea ceremony conducted while she was underway. At the request of Chairman Bill Dudley, Commander Adam Chamie and his crew conducted the ceremony for one of our deceased veterans who had requested a burial at sea with military honors.

11th Coast Guard District

U.S. Coast Guard

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



News Release

Date: November 19, 2015, contact: Petty Officer Anthony Soto , (904) 564-7585

USCGC Valiant Returns from Counter-drug Deployment

After 63-day patrol, Coast Guard Cutter VALIANT returns to Mayport after seizing \$116 Million in Contraband.

JACKSONVILLE— The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Valiant returned home to Naval Station Mayport on Thursday, November 19, after the cutter and its crew seized more than \$116 million worth of illegal narcotics during a nine-week counter-drug deployment.

The Coast Guard Cutter Valiant was deployed to the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South, operating off the coast of Central and South America. Valiant's crew stopped and seized five vessels suspected of drug smuggling, detaining 16 suspected narco-traffickers and recovering over 7,800 pounds of illegal narcotics.

Valiant's crew included a detachment from Jacksonville's Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON). HITRON is America's first airborne law enforcement unit trained and authorized to employ airborne use of force and intercept go-fast vessels suspected of transporting illicit narcotics toward U.S. borders.

"I'm extremely proud of what our crew accomplished during this patrol," said Commander Adam Chamie, Valiant's Commanding Officer. "Our 80 men and women patrolled over 14,000 miles, through the Panama Canal and back. The quantity of drugs they seized was impressive."

To achieve such success in interdicting illegal narcotics, the crew of Valiant works closely with local partner nations as well as Department of Defense assets and other U.S. agencies to detect and identify suspicious vessels. Upon locating such vessels, the crew launches law enforcement teams in interceptor boats to stop and investigate the suspected smugglers. Valiant also uses embarked aviation assets as a force multiplier to extend its reach.

"Our families, friends, and citizens of Jacksonville have much to be proud of. Our crew has been looking forward to today's homecoming to share their pride and accomplishments with their loved ones," said the ship's senior enlisted leader, Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Corey Driscoll.

Joint Interagency Task Force South, under U.S. Southern Command, oversees the detection of illicit traffickers and assists U.S. and multi-national law enforcement agencies with interdiction of these activities. These law enforcement operations are led and conducted by U.S. Coast Guard personnel or partner nation law enforcement agencies and occur under the tactical control of the 11th Coast Guard District in Alameda. The 11th District encompasses the South-western U.S. and coastal waters, as well as offshore waters from California to South America.

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant is a 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter with a 75-member crew. Valiant and 26 other Medium Endurance Cutters are slated for replacement by a new class of cutters. The Offshore Patrol Cutters will operate more than 50 miles from land, carrying out the Coast Guard's maritime security and safety missions in support of national interests. The OPC will be an economical, multi-mission ship, providing pursuit boat and helicopter capabilities, and interoperability with other military and federal partners, superior to the cutters they will replace. Equipped with modern sensors, the OPC will provide the enhanced surveillance necessary to detect threats far from U.S. shores and meet the demands of the Coast Guard's homeland security, search and rescue, law enforcement, and other vital missions.

Valiant is the largest Coast Guard Cutter in north Florida and is homeported at Naval Station Mayport.

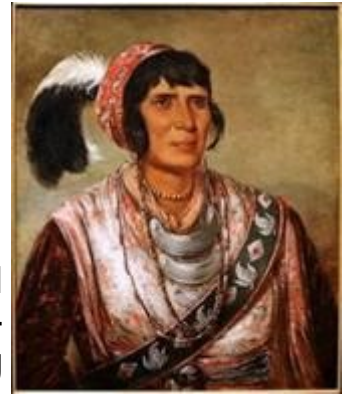
For more information about CGC Valiant, visit <http://www.uscg.mil/lantarea/cgcValiant>

Photos: (1) Valiant crew with seized contraband, (2) A Boarding Officer's view of Valiant from a smuggling vessel, (3) Crew members stand on the forecandle as Valiant enters the Pedro Miguel Locks in the Panama Canal



*This article is reprinted from the St. Augustine Report, published by former St. Augustine Mayor,
George Gardner*

Osceola's final days



October 21, 1837, the Seminole War Chief Osceola entered St. Augustine's Fort Marion - and the history books as a legendary "Patriot and Warrior," owing in no small measure to his being captured by American forces under a flag of truce.

That inscription, "Patriot and Warrior," would be set on his gravestone three months later by respectful military authorities at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, where he quietly expired in full regalia.

He was captured under orders of the U.S. Florida commander, Maj. Gen. Thomas S. Jesup, as his band gathered at Fort Peyton on the St. Johns southwest of St. Augustine to parley with the Americans.

Both sides were exhausted from two years of battle - some 40,000 US troops against 5,000 Indians determined to hold their lands. Jesup vented his frustration with orders to take Osceola - white flag or not. His actions infuriated a nation which now saw Osceola as a hero/martyr and Jesup as a discredit to its military.

The captured band was paraded to Fort Marion, the territorial name for the Castillo de San Marcos at St. Augustine, where it seemed the whole town had been alerted and turned out to watch.

In the damp interior of the fort, an already ill 38-year-old Osceola's condition worsened. A month after his capture he showed no interest in the escape plans of a younger, fiery associate, Coacoochee. Perhaps as a result of this warrior's miraculous escape with 18 other braves and two women November 29, 1837, Osceola and his wives and other Seminoles were transferred to Fort Moultrie at Charleston, South Carolina.

Army doctors speculated he was suffering from quinsy - a form of strep throat - with intermittent bouts of malaria, but their efforts to treat him were interfered with by a medicine man. He was regularly visited by officers at the fort, and sat for a portrait by the artist George Catlin, famed for his extensive paintings of American Indians.

On January 31, 1838, sensing the inevitable, Osceola directed his followers to dress him in his best finery, and he laid back and quietly expired. His remains are buried outside the Fort Moultrie gate.

His fame was spread nationwide, particularly by reports of his capture under flag of truce and ultimate death within months. The image he left was one of the noble savage, defending his homeland, and he joined the legendary ranks of Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse and Geronimo.

*Image: George Catlin's painting of Osceola at Fort Moultrie
Excerpts from Osceola in St. Augustine Bedtime Stories.*



"These American heroes are owed a debt we can never fully repay, but we are passionate about making a significant difference in their lives."

-Lewis Jordan, Founder, & CEO



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We are a 501 c 3 nonprofit that organizes and holds 4-day retreats at NO COST for veterans and their primary support persons/spouses. Our retreats provide a supportive environment in which veterans can connect with their peers, gain critical coping skills and interact with licensed counselors to begin healing where needed. Our retreats provide various activities including, for example, nature-based recreation, tai chi, breath awareness, kayaking, and dolphin interactions. In many cases our retreats act as a gateway for deeper levels of care. Evidence from a Kansas State University study, using validated metrics over the last two years, demonstrated that our retreat model created positive trends in reducing PTSD related reintegration challenges, and improved relationships between veterans and their spouses.



As shocking as it may seem...

It has been reported that America's service members are committing suicide at a rate of 22 every day and are getting divorced at a rate of 80 every day. We are now building an alliance and are asking you to join forces with us to help reverse these trends. Every \$1000 donated provides at least one service member with the opportunity to attend a retreat with his/her primary support person, become empowered, and make changes to improve their lives. If you would like to make a financial contribution to support GratitudeAmerica's efforts, please visit GratitudeAmerica.org or send a donation, large or small, to GratitudeAmerica at PO Box 16956 Fernandina Beach, FL 32035.

"Having war injuries can be very isolating, lonely, and hard for many to understand. Being surrounded by others who can completely understand your issues, fully relate, and offer support works better than years of therapy. In a few short days, a group of strangers was able to bond and become family. Knowing we have connected with 15 service members and 15 caregivers allows us to be hopeful and optimistic we do not have to go through this alone."

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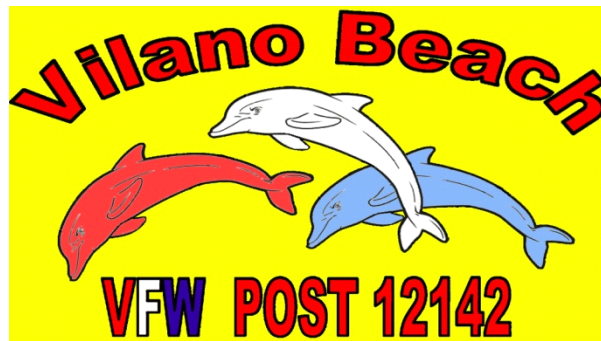
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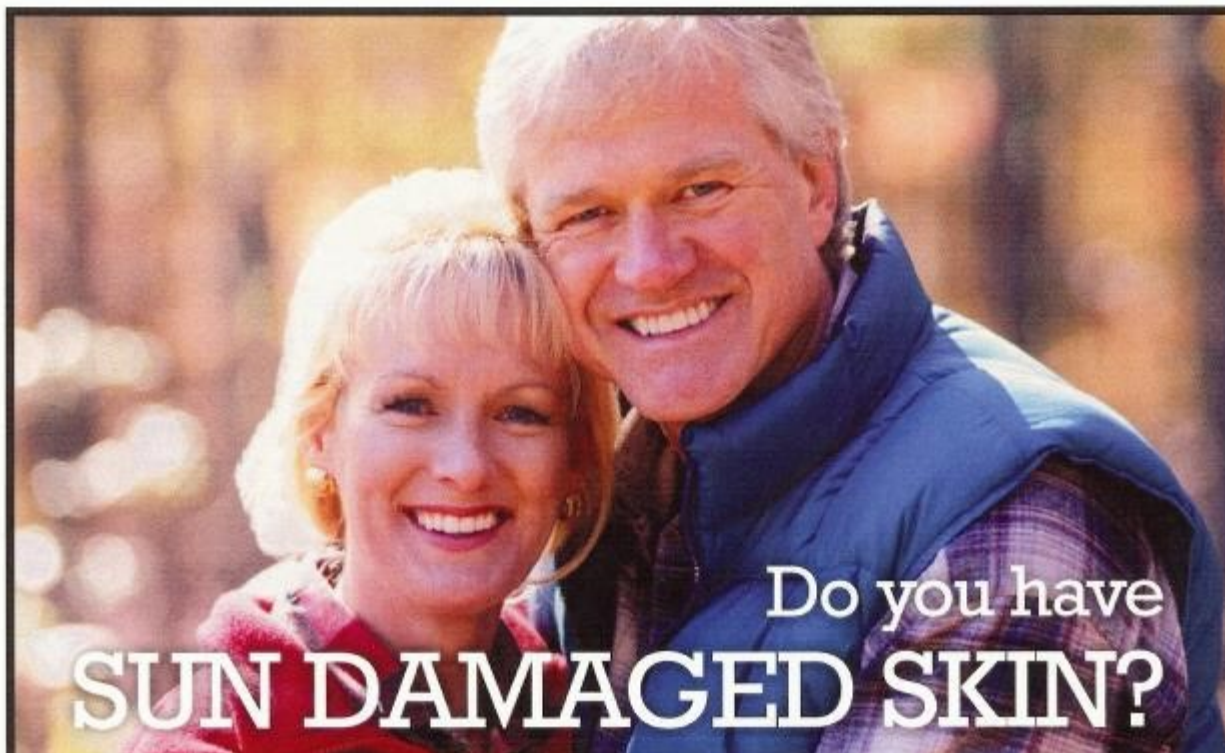
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*Veterans Council of St. Johns County,
"Helping All Veterans"*

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



The new Veterans Service Office is now open and ready to serve you.



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.

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

(physical location)

*The VSO Office is located in the new St. Johns County
Health and Human Services Building.*

*The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily,
Monday through Friday excluding holidays.
Closed for lunch daily from 11:30 am 12:30 pm*

*Service is by appointment.
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