

# The Patriot Reader: **SPECIAL EDITION**



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## VETERANS COUNCIL OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

**CHAIRMAN BILL DUDLEY**

**VICE CHAIRMAN RAY QUINN**

**SECRETARY MICHAEL ROTHFELD**

**TREASURER JOHN MOUNTCASTLE**

Newsletter Editor Michael Rothfeld

Volume 4, Issue 5

Newsletter Date: May, 2015

### Message from the Chairman



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Fellow Veterans,

By any measure, our Veterans Council meeting Thursday night was a huge success. The attendance of concerned veterans filled the room to capacity, our press coverage by the local TV networks and print media was beyond expectation, and the information conveyed by our speakers clearly stated the problems we as veterans in northeast Florida, south Georgia have been having with the VA for a long time. I would like to personally thank all our veterans who attended and especially for those who signed the petition that was the key focus of our meeting.

It is only through our voice of petition can we clearly send a message to Washington, our elected leaders and those who are charged with the responsibility of providing the health care services of our veterans that their performance is unacceptable and no longer will the veterans remain silent. Our veterans deserve better. They had a contract with America to serve this nation in its time of need. Our veterans have honored their contract. Now it is time for the VA to honor their part of that contract which is to take care of the

needs of those who served by providing essential health care.

Let me be very clear what we are stating as our concern and the element of the VA we are holding accountable. For the health care providers within VA, we thank you for the care you have provided our veterans and continue to provide. The distinction however is with the administration that is failing our veterans on a continuing basis. By their own Inspector General reports, they are failing in nearly every level of service. The IG has given failing grades or needs for improvement to the Gainesville administration as recently as April 29, 2015 in their report entitled "GAO's High Risk List and The Veterans Health Administration." In it, they state that the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is at risk of not performing its mission as the result of several intersecting factors. They go on to state that it is due to the leadership that has failed to carry out their jobs in a satisfactory manner and have failed to support local Veteran Medical Centers in a manner to achieve success. The IG is particularly critical of the leadership of the Veterans Integrated Service Net-

works ( V I S N ) .

With this report and with our recent experience with the leadership of the Gainesville VA Administration, the Veterans Council, have found it necessary to file a Petition of Grievance and Request for Redress. We are asking for the termination of the Administrator and Deputy Administrator, namely Tom Wisniewski and Nick Ross for failure to carry out their duties in a competent and efficient way that is in the best interest of the veterans they are charged with the responsibility to serve. Their attitude of arrogance and apathy is unacceptable and will no longer be tolerated.

With the hundreds of signatures of local veterans on the petition, we intend sending the signed documents to President Obama, Secretary McDonald, and our elected Congressional Representatives from Florida and Georgia's affected districts as well as Congressman Jeff Miller, Chairman, Veterans Affairs.

Bill Dudley, Chairman  
Veterans Council of  
St. Johns County





**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 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.*

*Service is by appointment only.*

*Phone: 904-209-6160      Fax: 904-209-6161*

*Joseph McDermott, CVSO*

*Rick Rees, Assistant VSO*

*Tammy Shirley, Assistant VSO*

*Lashonda Burns, Office Specialist*

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

*March 23, 2015*

***VA Awards Interim Space Contract for  
St. Augustine Community Based Outpatient Clinic***

*GAINESVILLE, FL - As part of the ongoing efforts to secure interim space for the St. Augustine Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in St. Augustine, Florida, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) entered into a contract with Modular Management Group, Inc. to provide a modular clinic. Site work is expected to begin in April. The interim St. Augustine CBOC will be located at the intersection of Southpark Boulevard and Old Moultrie Road, in St. Augustine, FL, 32086, until VA's long-term solution is ready for occupancy.*

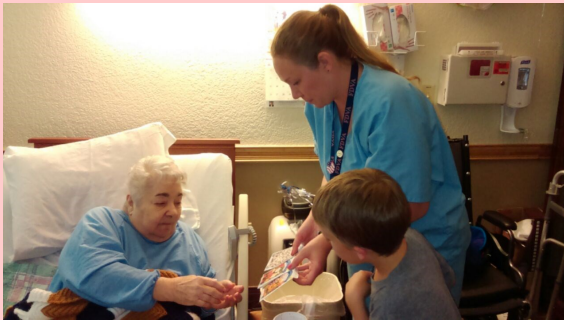
*For more information, please contact Cindy Snook, Acting Public Affairs Officer, North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System at 386-754-6302 or via email at [Cynthia.Snook@va.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Snook@va.gov).*

**Here is a reminder from John Mountcastle: each exempt organization which uses the calendar year as their fiscal year must file some edition of IRS Form 990 no later than May 15, or file Form 8868 for an extension of the filing deadline to August 17.**

***John A. Mountcastle***

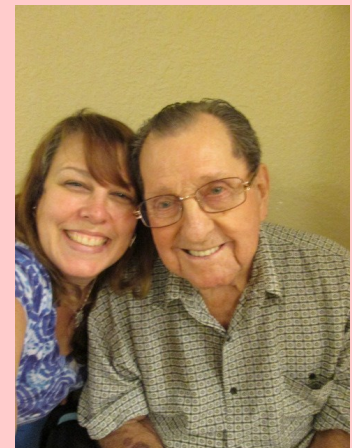
# Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home

*Patriotism is our Motto*



Picking out seeds to use for Earth Day planting

Jake showing his Earth Day planting



The St. Augustine/Palm Coast Council of the Navy League of the US awarded the NCO of the year from Blount Island Command USMC in April. SSG Shawn Nix is this year's recipient. The Presentation was made here at Clyde E. Lassen SVNH.

Another photo from the presentation ceremony

Lorraine and Don goofing around





## 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 **to be announced**. 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.

SAVE THE DATE - MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE - SATURDAY, MAY 23, 2015 at the Jacksonville National Cemetery located at 4083 Lannie Road, Jacksonville, FL.

This year the SCJNC has asked for and received approval to hold this annual service on Saturday.

We will start with the Placing of the Flags at 8:30am with the service to start at 10:00am. It is the intention of the Committee to get more young people of our communities involved in this event and to educate them about Memorial Day and our veterans.

Please spread the word about this service and invite members of your communities to participate or attend this event. We are still in the planning stages of this event and details will be posted when they are finalized.

My Grandfather, Ed Creamer is my hero!! He was shot down over the Bering Sea in 1942, at the age of 21. He spent 1183 days as a POW.

He would tell people who would ask how he was treated by the Japanese, "that there were others who were treated worse." He never said anything bad about what he went through during his time as a prisoner. Many years later, when he was able to meet the man who shot down his PBV-5A plane, he shook his hand and said to him "you were just doing your job."



Papa was a life member of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, he was a guest speaker at POW-MIA ceremonies at our local base. He was one of the first inductees into the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Hall of Honor for his actions prior to and after his capture. He was also inducted into the Association of Aviation Ordnancemen Hall of Fame.

Papa never met a stranger, he liked all people. Papa was a true American, he loved his country. I only hope that I am half the person he was. He loved his family with all his heart and soul, especially my Grandma, Jeanette Creamer.

He died in August 2013 at the age of 91. Gone but never forgotten.

*Misti Duvall*

*Jacksonville, FL*

*reprinted from the Veterans Site*



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Jacksonville National Cemetery  
4083 Lannie Road  
Jacksonville, FL 32218

## Media Advisory

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Alphaeus Richburg, Director  
(904) 766-5222

May 1, 2015

### Jacksonville National Cemetery Memorial Day Program

- What:** A Memorial Day Program to honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation.
- Who:** Keynote Speaker & Participants: Brigadier General Michael Fleming, Former Assistant Adjutant General, Florida Army National Guard
- When:** May 23, 2015 at 10:00 – Placement of gravesite flags will begin at 8:30
- Where:** Jacksonville National Cemetery  
Flag Assembly Area
- Contact:** Alphaeus Richburg, Cemetery Director  
Office: (904) 766-5222

**Background:** Memorial Day is a United States federal holiday observed on the last Monday of May (May 25 in 2015). Formerly known as Decoration Day, it commemorates U.S. service members who died while in the military service. First enacted to honor Union and Confederate soldiers following the American Civil War, it was extended after World War I to honor Americans who have died in all wars.

VA operates 131 national cemeteries, one national Veterans burial ground and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites in 40 states and Puerto Rico. More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's national cemeteries. VA also provides funding to establish, expand, improve, and maintain 95 Veterans cemeteries in 45 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam, and Saipan. For Veterans not buried in a VA national cemetery, VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service. In 2014, VA honored more than 356,000 Veterans and their loved ones with memorial benefits in national, state, tribal and private cemeteries.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from local national cemetery offices, from the Internet at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov), or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at any open VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.

## **St. Augustine Record Editorial: Northeast Florida veterans have had enough**

### **April 30, 2015**

Contingents of veterans from St. Johns, Duval and Clay counties will gather tonight to demand the ouster of the leadership of the Gainesville-based North Florida-South Georgia Veterans Health System.

St. Johns County Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley said Wednesday that the meeting is about three weeks in the making. In the interim, he has spoken to veterans' groups across Northeast Florida about the unceasing problems with the regional office and its top staff. He and the groups he's contacted have been circulating a petition, specifically seeking the heads of administrator Thomas Wisnieski and his assistant, Nick Ross.

*The Record* has witnessed both gentlemen in meetings with our local veterans, and wonders only why the demand for their departure took so long.

The local veterans group's troubles are too long and convoluted to summarize here, but suffice to say their health care has been hijacked by stone-walling, arrogance and apathy to their plight. The bumbling by the regional VA has not only put their health care on the back burner, but also is costing taxpayers big bucks in terms of penalties for remaining in its current location after four years of warnings by St. Johns County, as well as solutions proffered for its problems.

For their part, the Jacksonville veterans are fed up as well. The Jacksonville clinic, according to a story in our sister newspaper, *The Florida Times-Union*, this month, has the worst wait times of any major VA facility in the country. Ross told Duval veterans early in April that the culprit in all the extended wait times was canceled appointments. "What Nick Ross failed to mention," The T-U story said, "was that the clinic — not the patients — was responsible for canceling more than half of those appointments."

That number? Of the 117,000 canceled appointments between Jan. 1, 2014, to March 1, 2015, in the regional system, the VA canceled 59,661.

The Clay County vets depend upon both the Jacksonville and St. Augustine clinics because they don't have one of their own.

The VA's inspector general recently released a report blasting nepotism and preferential treatment in the Gainesville office.

Dudley wants all veterans in the area to know they're welcome at the meeting, scheduled for 7 p.m. tonight at the Elk's Lodge No. 829, located at 1420 A1A South.

The petition will be sent to local and state legislators, all the way up to President Obama. But Dudley was candid. "I don't think anybody's going to act on the petition."

The main thing he wants the VA, from Gainesville to Washington, D.C., to know is that a line has been drawn in the sand. "We are going to keep the pressure on, and we will expect to see change."

It is very troubling that any group of citizens in this country has so little faith in the people who are accountable to them. But it's absolutely unbelievable that this group consists of the men and women whose service and sacrifice have made the cushy lives of these bureaucratic dullards possible.

## **The Veterans Council of St. Johns County and The St. Johns County Schools**

Present A ***“Welcome Home”*** Vietnam Panel Discussion

On Wednesday, May 27th, 11th grade high school students from Bartram Trail, Creekside, Nease, Ponte Vedra and St. Augustine High Schools will take part in a discussion with local Vietnam veterans at 10:00 am at the Ponte Vedra High School Auditorium.

Because of the size of the expected student attendance, participation by the public and veterans will be limited to those invited or participating in the program.

The Veterans Council has been working on this program for several years and would like to thank Travis Brown, Program Specialist, Advanced Programs/Social Studies, St. Johns County School District for working with Chairman Bill Dudley and Secretary Michael Rothfeld in developing the panel discussion.

Local Vietnam Veterans taking part in this discussion will be Fred Dupont, Paul Heagy, St. Johns County Commissioner Jay Morris, St. Johns County Veterans Service Officer Joseph McDermott and Tom Waskovich.

Welcoming the students and invited guests will be St. Johns County Schools Supt. Dr. Joseph Joyner and Opening Remarks will be by BG Richard G. Capps, former Assistant Adjutant General of the Florida Army National Guard and a Vietnam veteran.

*The June Patriot Reader will include an article and pictures of this presentation.*





## McGillin installed as St. Johns County circuit court judge

Having waited years to become a judge, Howard McGillin Jr. was thanked by his colleagues for his persistence.

McGillin, an Army veteran and St. Johns County attorney, was honored as a new 7th Judicial Circuit judge Friday at Flagler College during his investiture ceremony.



The event was a mere formality. McGillin has been a family court judge in the county for several months.

But the ceremony was a chance for fellow judges and members of the legal community to celebrate McGillin's accomplishment in rising to the top of his profession.

Judge Terence Perkins, the chief judge in the circuit, said he has learned a lot about McGillin since he was named a finalist for several open judgeships.

"I got to know him through that process," Perkins said. "What impressed me the most was not only his organization, and his skills and broad experience, but the absolute dedication that he brought to the task and the perseverance that he showed in moving along in the process."

Addressing McGillin, Perkins said, "I think that the residents of this community and your colleagues are benefitted by your dedication and perseverance."

McGillin was a finalist in 2012 for the last county opening when Judge Wendy Berger left to join the 5th District Court of Appeal. Judge Howard Maltz was selected instead, and they are now working together at the county courthouse.

The opportunity to become a judge came in November, when McGillin was selected to replace Judge Carlos Mendoza. Mendoza was serving as a circuit judge in Putnam County when he was selected for a federal judgeship.

Judge Clyde Wolfe of St. Johns County was transferred to Putnam while Mendoza's position was filled. That transfer became permanent, so McGillin was assigned to family court in St. Johns County.

Several of McGillin's peers in the legal community took the opportunity to praise his work and express their confidence that he is well-suited for the career of being a judge.

Megan Wall of St. Johns Legal Aid said McGillin has been a generous contributor of his time since she's known him.

Garry Wood of the Putnam County Bar Association described McGillin as a person who is prepared for the challenges that face a family court judge.

"He has all the qualities we would ask for in a judge," Wood said. "It takes a lot of patience and understanding and compassion."

Attorney Michael Freed, who first hired McGillin when McGillin left the military, said the retired colonel impressed him with his humility and class.

McGillin had taught at Judge Advocates General school, among his many accomplishments, and could have demonstrated frustration with the concept of starting over in the civilian courts.

Instead, Freed said, he approached the new challenge with zeal.

"Howard was and is as humble as anyone I've ever met," Freed said. "The colonel seemed as grateful as a fresh law school graduate at the beginning and excited about the prospect of working with me. At least that's how he made me feel."

McGillin talked a lot about his military background and how it helped prepare him for his life after service. He praised his family for their constant support despite dragging them all over the country — many times while wife Anne was pregnant.

He acknowledged that they actually lived in 18 different houses in a 24-year span.

But the McGillins are settled now, and the new judge has no complaints about the journey.

"I'm truly thankful for the opportunity to serve," he said. "I look forward to the challenges, and I'm deeply humbled to have this opportunity."

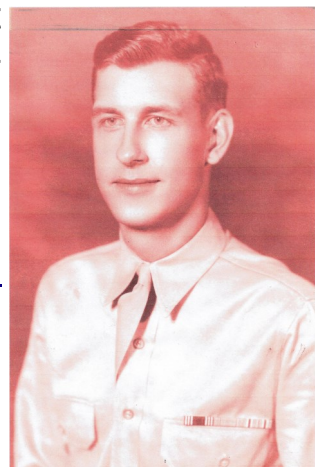


## Staff Sgt. Robert Dexter Dinkins, WW II Veteran

My father was first a member of the CMTC; **Citizens' Military Training Camps** (CMTC) were military training programs of the United States. Held annually each summer during the years 1921 to 1940, the CMTC camps differed from **National Guard** and **Reserves** training in that the **PROGRAM** allowed male citizens to obtain basic military training without an obligation to call-up for active duty. The CMTC were authorized by the National Defense Act of 1920 as a compromise that rejected **universal military training**.

CMTC camps were a month in length and held at about 50 Army posts nationally. At their peak in 1928 and 1929, about 40,000 men received training, but as a whole the camps were a disappointment at their multiplicity of stated goals, but particularly in the **commissioning** of Reserve officers. The **PROGRAM** established that participants could receive a reserve commission as a **second lieutenant** by completing four successive summer courses (titled Basic, White, Red, and Blue), but only 5,000 such commissions were awarded over the 20-year history of the CMTC. Apparently, no records exist that document total participation, but it is estimated that 400,000 men had at least one summer of training.<sup>[3]</sup>

Among known participants were **Harry S. Truman**, **Ronald Reagan**, **Robert Penn Warren**, **Walter S. McIlhenny**, **Chuck Yeager**, and **William Guarnere**.



Then he enlisted April 10, 1941. He was assigned to the 150th Infantry, Camp Shelby, Ms as a part of the 38th Division, U.S. Army.

He was from Anawalt, W. Va.; son of Newton Harmon and Ollie Porterfield Dinkins.

The shoulder patch is the Caribbean Defense Command; for the area of operations.

*Bob Dinkins - President, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1084, St. Johns County, Fl*



# They're barking up the right tree at K9s for Warriors.

This article reprinted from the St. Augustine Record and used with their permission as well as its author, Jake Martin.

A locally produced documentary took a closer look at the Ponte Vedra Beach-based nonprofit, which has received national attention.



A graduating class of veterans with their service dogs. "Unleashing the Underdogs: The K9s for Warriors Story" is a documentary following their journey.

"Unleashing the Underdogs: The K9s for Warriors Story," follows local veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or injury. The veterans share stories of how rescued and trained K-9s helped them adapt to life after war.

**Michael Rothfeld** of Elkton has produced several documentaries featuring local veterans and their stories. He joined forces with **Bill Dudley**, chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, to bring many of those stories to life.

They co-produced the film with Nadia Ramoutar, an instructor at the Art Institute of Jacksonville. Ramoutar directed the film, which runs about 28 minutes.

"This was a difficult film to direct," she said. "It took much longer than I expected it to, but it was very important to me to finish it."

She said there were many situations that came up that veterans weren't just able to push through. A bad day with PTSD can be much worse than other bad days.

The City of Jacksonville featured the film during its "Week of Valor" events last year. The University of North Florida hosted the documentary's premiere and panel discussion. It was also accepted into the St. Augustine Film Festival this past Jan. 23-25.

The show will air at 8:30 p.m. Thursday on WJCT PBS 7.1, Comcast channels 8 and 440.

"My goal as an artist is to give a voice to the voiceless," Ramoutar said. "It's re-

warding to me because I stuck with it and it can bring some hope for people who really felt hopeless.”

Shari Duval, of Ponte Vedra Beach, founded K9s for Warriors after her son returned from two tours in Iraq with PTSD. He had served as a bomb dog handler for the Army.

The program pairs rescued service dogs with veterans suffering from PTSD and other combat-related injuries in an effort to help both the veterans and dogs heal.

About 95 percent of the dogs used in the K9s for Warriors program come from rescue groups, shelters or owner surrender.

“That’s the beauty of the whole situation,” Ramoutar said. “One vet being able to function with PTSD means everyone in their world can function.”

Dudley said while there may be a lack of scientific explanation for why it works, all he’s had to do is ask veterans about the effect it’s had. Where science lacks, reality has filled the gap.

“They may be in Afghanistan on a forward combat mission this week and in two weeks they may be back in the States and being discharged from the Army,” he said. “Just like that, they’re going from a kill mentality to being thrown back into a civilian community, and they can’t cope.”

Veterans have described their experience in the program as “waking up from a nightmare.”

While filming, Ramoutar watched veterans before and after being introduced to their service dogs.

“I saw the change within five minutes,” she said. “I saw them soften and even physically change right before my eyes.”

Work is nearly complete on the new K9s for Warriors facility. The nonprofit will be moving from its current location in Ponte Vedra Beach to a larger space in Nocatee.





**JOE FOSS INSTITUTE**

*At the March Veterans Council meeting one of our speakers was Audrey Mazzotta, the Regional Program Coordinator for the Joe Foss Institute. Please contact her if you know of a*

*school that would like to be part of their Patriotic program & assistance. Audrey lives in St. Augustine, her contact information is:*

*email: [amazzotta@joefossinstitute.org](mailto:amazzotta@joefossinstitute.org) , phone 321-652-8848*

The Joe Foss Institute is helping promote the teaching of Civics and investing in our future leaders in three ways. First through our Veterans Inspiring Patriotism program, second through our “You Are America” Civics Series and teacher trainings, and third through our college scholarship program.

The Joe Foss Institute was inspired and founded by World War II hero and Medal of Honor recipient General Joe Foss and his wife, “Didi.” Joe’s vision was to enlist fellow Veterans nationwide to teach young people about the value of their freedoms. Foss died in 2003, but his legacy lives on through the work of the Institute.



Audrey Mazzotta  
speaking at the Veterans  
Council meeting

### **“You are America” Civics Series Teacher Tested, Student Approved!**

Understanding our responsibilities, the way our government works and our role as engaged citizens of the United States of America is more important than ever. The “You are America” Civics Series is designed to help teach students about the very roots of our democracy — the U.S Flag, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Through educational videos and corresponding lesson plans, we offer engaging resources for K-12 educators with topic-specific learning objectives. The objectives are aligned to the National Center for Civic Education content standards, along with state Social Studies standards.

#### **Grades 1-4: The U.S. Flag**

— Objective: Understand the history and symbolism of the U.S. Flag

#### **Grades 5 – 8: The Constitution**

— Objective: Explain the history, purpose, and structure of the U.S. Constitution

#### **Grades 9-12: The Bill of Rights**

— Objective: Discuss the meaning and importance of the Bill of Rights

## Ticket Information

Ticket costs are:  
Active Duty E-6 and below, \$25;  
E-7 to O3, \$40,  
O4 to O5, \$50,  
O6 and above,  
civilians, and retirees, \$65.  
Ticket sales cut off on June 7th

Tickets available from the following:

### NAVY LEAGUE MAYPORT

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

### NAVY LEAGUE ST AUGUSTINE

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

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

Tickets also available thru our WEB SITE  
[www.mayportnlius.org](http://www.mayportnlius.org)

Uniform will be O4 and above -  
dinner dress white jacket;  
O3 and below - dinner dress white/dinner  
dress white jacket optional  
and civilian is black tie or business attire.

## Special Hotel Rates for Battle of Midway

Rooms are available from the hotel -  
The Renaissance World Golf  
Village Resort  
Special Room Rate - \$120  
(includes 2 breakfast vouchers)  
This special rate good until May 30th only  
Suites also available for \$170.00

**YOU MUST INCLUDE**  
"2015 Battle of Midway"  
to receive this discounted rate

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



## Battle of Midway Commemorative Dinner

### *Keynote Speaker*

General John F. Kelly, USMC  
Commander, U.S. Southern Command

Event will be held at  
The Renaissance World Golf  
Village Resort .  
Cocktails begin at 6 PM  
Dinner at 7 PM.  
Reserved seating.  
Hosted by  
The Mayport Council  
Navy League  
of the United States  
June 13, 2015

*And you are invited!*  
*Tickets are now on sale*

The Battle of Midway was a crucial and decisive naval battle in the Pacific Theatre of World War II. Between 4 and 7 June 1942, only six months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, and one month after the Battle of the Coral Sea, the United States Navy under Admirals Chester Nimitz, Frank Jack Fletcher, and Raymond A. Spruance decisively defeated an attacking fleet of the Imperial Japanese Navy under Admirals Isoroku Yamamoto, Chuichi Nagumo, and Nobutake Kondo on Midway Atoll, inflicting devastating and irreparable damage on the Japanese fleet. Military historian John Keegan called it "the most stunning and decisive blow in the history of naval warfare." It was Japan's first naval defeat since the Battle of Shimonoseki Straits in 1863.



## St. John's County Veterans Service Office Relocates to New Offices

Pictured from left to right are Assistant CVSO Rick Rees, Office Specialist Lashonda Burns, Assistant CVSO Tammy Shirley, and County VSO Joseph (Mac) D. McDermott during a tour of the new Health and Human Services building put up by St Johns County. Approximately 3 years ago the county sold the property that was previously the home of the SJC VSO to Lowes and began to build a new building to hold all of the facilities previously occupying the old facility.



The move to the new building began on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and continued for several days after until everything was moved to the new offices. While still very much a work in progress by each of us in our new spaces and individual offices the change has been far less painful than previously envisioned. The new location is only about 5 miles north of the previous building which has us now located closer to the remaining county services departments.

The location has made it easy for our customers to find out new home. We look forward to serving our customers out of this bright new state of the art facility and we have already had several comments from our customers about how nice our new spaces are. Our new offices are located at 200 San Sebastian View, Suite 1400, St Augustine, FL 32084. Our contact numbers are: Phone-(904) 209-6160 and Fax-(904) 209-6167. Our email addresses and phone numbers have not changed. Only the actual mailing address is different.

In commemoration of our recent move our office was recently presented with a plaque from leaders of the St Johns County Veterans Council congratulating us on a successful relocation and thanking us for our ongoing outstanding services to the veterans of St Johns County. See you all at the May 2015 Conference.





**Vietnam War Honors** - a searchable archival directory of over 80,000 records of awards and decorations of honor during the Vietnam War, from 5/1969 - 3/1973 and documenting the period 12/1965 - 11/1972.

Please be aware that this data base does not contain all the records available. Some information might have been corrupted or lost over time and maybe in various stages of data conversion.

For more information, click the following link:

<http://www.vietnamwarhonors.com/>



**AUTHORIZED PROVIDER  
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

*In order to meet the increasing demand for military funeral honors, the National Guard Honor Guard may partner with Veteran Service Organizations to provide each veteran and their family with these richly deserved military funeral honors.*

**THERE IS NO COST FOR  
MILITARY HONORS**

**RESOURCES**

To request headstones or markers:

<http://www.cem.va.gov/hm/hmorder.asp>

VA Burial Flags:

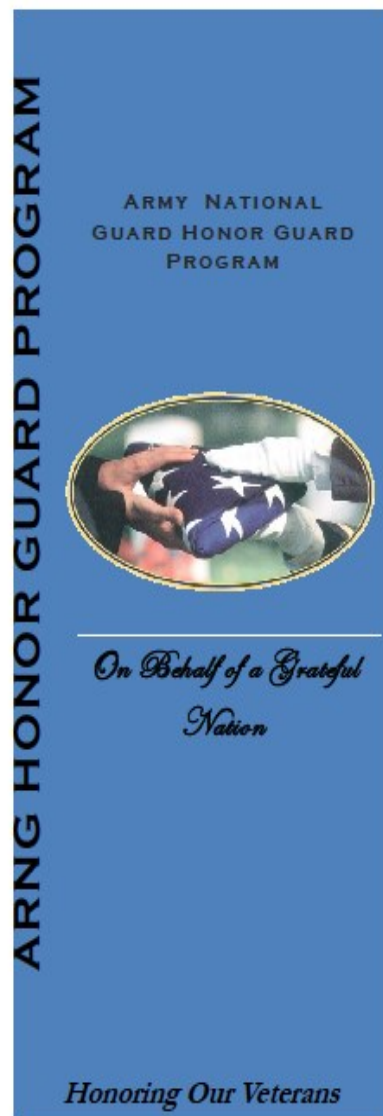
<http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene/bflags.asp>

VA Burial Benefits:

[http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene\\_burial.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene_burial.asp)

Military Records The National Archives:

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service->



## **Upcoming Events**

### **Tallahassee National Cemetery Dedication Ceremony**

The Tallahassee National Cemetery (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) will host a dedication ceremony on Friday, May 22 at 1 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

### **Orlando VA Medical Center Dedication Ceremony**

The Orlando VA Medical Center (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) will dedicate its Lake Nona Campus on Tuesday, May 26 at 10 a.m. Location: 13800 Veterans Way, Orlando, FL 32827. The public is invited to attend.

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## **Comments to our last Patriot Reader issue**

Good Afternoon Michael. I'm reading the Patriot and just got done reading about Colonel Ed Taylor. I never knew he lived around here or anything about him until I read your article. Without someone like you to not just bring Col. Taylor and others like him to our attention, people would have never know about him and his accomplishment that he did for our Country. Glancing through the reader, I noticed a few more stories about other people and events I can't wait to read about. Thank you to you and your staff for providing this excellent service. It's always a pleasure reading about what's going on and local Heroes and events. I look forward to reading May's issue. Once again, Thank you for the great work that you and everyone else is doing. Keep up the great work. A "BZ" to you and your staff.

Respectfully yours, Larry Weiss USA/USN Vet and American Legion Post 37 Historian/Legion Rider.

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The news letter is impressive, and, I'm sure, a lot of work. I found the statistics on Vietnam very interesting. Handly Caraway



**Last month's Patriot Reader ran a series of Vietnam statistics,  
below are some of the responses I received:**

Thank you for sending me the Patriot Reader. It is a wonderful trove of information. I did notice one slight discrepancy though and wanted to bring it to your attention. One of my fellow Tennesseans, James T. Davis, is listed under the Vietnam section as the first U.S. Service Member killed in Vietnam. He gained that title by being named so by President Lyndon Johnson. He actually was not the first service member killed in Vietnam and was not the first combat death. It is possible that he was the first one that Lyndon Johnson heard of, hence Johnson's announcement. I have attached the current information on deaths prior to James T. Davis for your review. It's quite possible there were others operating in more classified assignments that were killed also but we may never know their names if they died in the '50's. James T. Davis was an American hero and his not being the first to die is no reflection on his honorable service to Vietnam and the United States of America. Bob Ousley, Maj USA, ret.

One statistic that I did know is that of the 8 females that died in Vietnam, the one who received the Purple Heart was a nurse with the 345th Combat Support Hospital (CSH) in Chu Lai. The 345th CSH was an Army Reserve Hospital in Greensboro, NC that was activated in 1968. She was a ward nurse and was on duty when an incoming rocket took out the entire ward. My good buddy from high school was the Supply Officer at the 345th when it was activated and deployed. I saw him at Fort Sam Houston, TX while he was finishing up the Med. Supply course and I was in the Basic Officer Course. I got to see him again in Chu Lai when the 345th was packing to return to Greensboro and I was transferring from LZ English to Chu Lai. His mother and my mother were very good friends and when one of them would get a letter from one of us, she would call the other. Both of them kept up on us and let the other know what was going on until both of us returned. George Whitmer, Col USA, ret.



## Missing In America Project

Today's service (May 27) at the Jacksonville National Cemetery was beautiful. So many people to thank it is hard to name them all. Steven Spickelmier, it could not have been so honorable without your tireless efforts of getting all the active duty military



and working with all of them

To JNC Acting Director, Don Murphy and his staff we can't say THANK YOU enough. Each one went above and beyond their normal duties to accommodate us for this service, while they were having drainage and landscaping issues and preparing for the placement and dedication for the Vietnam Memorial Marker. They did this at the same time they were holding daily interments.

We are already starting to plan the next service with Hardage-Giddens Funeral home for sometime in June. I will keep everyone posted.

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

### MIAP PROGRESS TO DATE AS OF 3/27/2015

Total Funeral Homes Visited - 1,748 Cremains Found - 10,899

Veterans Cremains Identified - 2,521 Veterans Interred - 2,299

If you would like to know more about MIAP or become one of our team members as a volunteer please go to our website. Sign up as a supporter. It only takes a second. You will receive a welcoming email from our National Assistant Vice President, Charlie Warthling (check your spam email). [www.miap.us](http://www.miap.us)

*Pictures from our March 27, 2015 service for 8 veterans and 2 spouses at the Jacksonville National Cemetery.*



## *Professional Development Day*

### **5 Star Veterans Center**

**Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> – 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM**

#### **Schedule**

**9:00 AM – 10:00 AM (1hr):** Coffee and bagels – introductions and objectives/general expectations for the day

**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (2hr):** Breakout sessions - groups rotate to different sessions

**Session 1 (30mins): *Resume 1on1***

Template to build resume  
Review resumes if available

**Session 2 (30mins): *Online Presence***

LinkedIn  
Twitter, Facebook, Instagram

**Session 3 (30mins): *Dress to Impress***

**Session 4 (30mins): *Job Seeking Tips & Tricks***

Indeed.Com  
Career Builder  
Interviews tips – Q&A

**12:00 PM – 12:30 PM (30mins):** Wrap-Up & Closing Remarks

**BBQ time!**



Woodland Acres Neighborhood  
**FREE GROCERIES  
EVENT**

**Tuesday, May 5, 2015  
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

*Drop by for Fresh &  
Nutritious Foods  
provided by*



The Five STAR Veterans Center,  
here to help our Veterans and our Neighbors



**FIVE STAR  
VETERANS CENTER**  
ARMY • MARINES • NAVY • COAST GUARD • AIR FORCE

**40 Acme Street, Jacksonville, FL 32211**

**Preference will be given to: Veterans,  
Active Duty Military, and our Woodland Acres Neighbors.  
Neighbors **MUST** bring a Door Hanger.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

**Veterans & Active Duty Personnel**  
Must bring ID & Proof of Veteran Status

**Woodland Acres Neighbors**  
Must bring this Door Hanger or Proof of Address

**Enter thru Main Door of Center**

**Bring insulated containers & items to carry food**

Limited Handicap Assistance Available  
if requested in advance

More information at:

**[www.5starveteranscenter.org](http://www.5starveteranscenter.org)**

# Cadaver dog handler remembers K-9 Tess

## Duty calls

By [JAKE MARTIN](#) This article is used with permission of Jake Martin and the St. Augustine record    [jake.martin@staugustine.com](mailto:jake.martin@staugustine.com)

When Vietnam veteran Al Dodds heard his country's call once again — in February 2007 — he didn't hesitate to answer. But he didn't go alone.

He and his K-9 Tess found work with a private company contracting with the U.S. military. Their mission was to search for the remains of American soldiers who were missing in Iraq.

Tess, an East German shepherd, was just 4 1/2 years old, but had already been trained as a cadaver dog.

Before her military mission, the duo had done volunteer work, aiding law enforcement agencies in finding human remains and working locally on several cases with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office.

"I had her since she was a puppy," Dodds said. "We originally trained her just to find missing people, like a kid-lost-in-the-woods kind of thing."

What he learned was law enforcement agencies typically used their own K-9s, but he didn't want Tess' talents to go to waste.

While the military had dogs to detect explosives, it had a growing need for dogs to search for human remains. He and Tess went through the training and certification process and the chance soon followed to serve overseas.

Tess was put down on April 4 at age 12, having contracted a disease from a tick bite. "She had a good, full life and put me all through the world," Dodds said. "We saw 17 states and eight countries together. Some of those were just stops at the airport, but we were there."

## Duty calls

For Dodds, his path to Iraq was quite simple.

"I'm a Vietnam veteran, I'm a patriot. My country needed me, and I wanted to do my part," he said. Dodds had an ear for more than the call of duty, however. He was the band director at St. Augustine High School and was 17 years into his career with the St. Johns County School District when he began his work in Iraq.

Superintendent Joe Joyner and the St. Johns County School Board made an exception for Dodds to take an extended leave of absence. His wife, Sandie, also supported his decision.

But Dodds said what started as a monthlong commitment turned into a couple of years. He and Tess continued searching through March 2009.



CONTRIBUTED

K9 Tess, a trained cadaver dog, helped search for missing American soldiers in Iraq from February 2007 to March 2009. Tess was put down April 4, 2015, at the age of 12.

At one point, he came back and taught at Timberlin Creek Elementary for a few months before embarking on a second tour with Tess.

While in Iraq, Dodds was one of three dog handlers searching for human remains. In between shifts, he and Tess provided entertainment for soldiers in Iraq.

Dodds had served in the U.S. Navy from 1967 to 1971. It was during that time that he first began working with K-9s as a sentry dog handler near DaNang, a major port in South Vietnam.

“Once you’re a dog guy, you’re always a dog guy,” he said.

He came to Iraq armed merely with a friendly dog and stories of keeping watch along the perimeters in Vietnam. Soldiers took an immediate liking to Tess, who would make the rounds among the ranks offering her Frisbee.

### **Top dog**

Dodds said he couldn’t put a number on how many remains they helped find. When the team first arrived in Iraq, there were about five missing U.S. soldiers.

“We did have success,” he said. “We found a couple of the five who were missing and after a couple other soldiers went missing, we found a couple of those, too.”

They often found more than they were looking for, including several mass graves.

“She’s an American hero as far as I’m concerned,” said Barbara Snow, executive director of the U.S. War Dogs Association.

Snow said an Iraqi military leader placed a bounty of roughly \$170,000 on Tess and other U.S. war dogs.

Snow said she was happy to ultimately place her organization’s War Dog Medal on Tess.

“The stories are so good, and it’s important people know about the services these dogs provide,” she said.

When “off duty,” the search dog was simply the family pet, known for backyard play and living room lounging.

“She loved everybody, and everybody loved her,” Dodds said. “She was a smart dog, and she had all the things people say about their dogs. She was a classic example.”

Dodds ended up retiring from the school district when they returned from Iraq but soon decided he wasn’t ready. He is now a music teacher in Satellite Beach.

He and Tess had continued working with several organizations. The duo aided in a 10-day search for missing people after a 2011 tornado ripped through Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Tess’ son, K-9 Aryck, is taking over her work.



## Survivor of WWII torpedo attack that killed hundreds to visit monument for first time



Steve Negrey

A World War II veteran who survived a torpedo attack that sunk his troop ship will finally visit a memorial in Titusville, Florida that recognizes the tragic event.

On Christmas Eve 1944, Private First Class Steve Negrey was aboard the SS Leopoldsville in the English Channel with about 2,000 other soldiers who were to be reinforcements for the Battle of the Bulge.

Many would never made it. Just off the coast of France, a German U-Boat struck the Leopoldsville in the English Channel, killing 783 members of the 66th infantry division.

Negrey was rescued, continued into combat and was later wounded, receiving the Purple Heart.

In 1991, a circular memorial park was dedicated on the Titusville riverfront as a tribute to the members of the U.S. armed forces with monuments for 10 major conflicts from the Revolutionary War to the first Gulf War.

In 2005, a monument dedicated to the American soldiers who lost their lives on the Leopoldsville was added to Veteran's Park, which is at the east end of Broad Street adjacent to Space View Park. The monument also names six Floridians who died in the attack.



The 94-year-old Negrey had heard about the Leopoldsville monument and spent years searching for its location. This weekend, with the help of book author Mark Cubbedge, the WWII vet will finally see the monument.

On Saturday, April 25, there was a ceremony at Veteran's Park to honor Negrey and pay tribute to those who lost their lives. The public was invited to attend.

For more information, go to the Faces of Freedom page on Facebook

## **Monument is a treasure to area Vietnam veterans**

By [Clifford Davis](#), article used with permission of its author, Clifford Davis as well as the FL Times Union

The polished surface of the black granite monument unveiled at Jacksonville National Cemetery on Saturday reflected the matured, sometimes grizzled faces of hundreds of Vietnam veterans as they passed solemnly.

The reflections of the aged warriors struck a sharp contrast to those of the chiseled soldiers of over 40 years ago permanently emblazoned on the centerpiece of the marker, a metallic medalion with the inscription: Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans.

“The monument is a treasure and it’s in a good location,” said Tony D’Aleo, president of Jacksonville’s Vietnam Veterans of America chapter 1046 who were behind the project. “We hope that when people come and see their relatives who are resting here, they’ll come and see the monument that is here for them.”

The dedication of the monument was the culmination of a three-year saga for the Jacksonville chapter and other organizations that assisted in raising the \$40,000 needed for the project. Fittingly, they did it themselves.

The highest-ranking man at the dedication, Maj. Gen. Arnold Fields, recited the Medal of Honor citation of Jacksonville’s Robert Ingram, a Navy corpsman.

Ingram’s unit was ambushed in Vietnam in 1966. Even after being shot in the hand, knee and right eye, Ingram continued treating Marines until he was shot in the torso.

Unbelievably, he survived.

However, Fields said the reason he chose to read the citation was not only because of Ingram’s bravery, but because of how he finally received the honor in 1998.

“Those Marines knew he’d earned a Purple Heart, but when they found that he’d never been recognized for his bravery that day, they fought until he did,” Fields said.

The granite monument that now stands along the memorial walk is but a small reminder of the bravery of all those who fought and died over 40 years ago in Southeast Asia.

“Hopefully this is a reminder to the nation to be sure of what we’re doing before we do it,” said Jerry Domask, the monument’s creator and a Vietnam veteran. “It’s heartfelt and I hope the veterans will find respect, find peace and a place of honor.”

Clifford Davis: (904) 359-4103



“DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY,  
NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE  
GENERATION OF VETERANS  
ABANDON ANOTHER”



## **Jerry Domask, Vietnam Veteran, Artist, Friend**

To say that Jerry Domask is a unique individual would be an understatement. He is so much more. When you see his Vietnam related paintings you can readily see how he was influenced by his war experience.



I first met Jerry through a UNF event where he was exhibiting his Vietnam collection of paintings. We have since developed a friendship because of our common interest in recording Vietnam war experiences, we just do it in different ways.

Jerry is working with UNF, a very military friendly campus with over 1200 veterans in “developing an opportunity for the veteran community (on & off campus) and other UNF students creating veteran art projects (film, video, visual and performing arts) to display their work in one of UNF’s art galleries” What an idea! If anyone can see this project through to fruition it will be Jerry.

Jerry’s artistic creations are recognized nationally as well as locally; including several multimedia works at the National Veterans Art Museum in Chicago and the University of North Florida’s permanent art collection, plus numerous local art exhibits and shows.

The following thoughts and ideas were used by Jerry for the inspiration behind the Vietnam memorials design. The Vietnam Monument has to be different from other memorials. The Vietnam War was different. It was different in the fact that there was no American war prior to, or after Vietnam, where the returning warrior was scorned and shunned by their homeland. The Vietnam veterans received no “Welcome Home”.

The memorial is an effort to right that wrong, to deliver the message to our veterans who proudly served, that their sacrifices were deeply and forever appreciated. The monument welcomes home all veterans who served during the War between 1961 and 1975, regardless of where stationed worldwide.



The womb shaped front of the memorial symbolizes a final resting place of respect, honor, and gratitude for our veterans. The remaining surfaces reflect abrupt changes, truncated edges and unpredictable planes.

They echo the mood and environment of the nation at the time—one of political and social unrest. Clashing cultures and core values collided, sometimes overwhelming the returning veterans with a relentless bombardment of rejection and feeling of worthlessness. Finally the memorial was designed to be viewed 360 degrees.

## **Vets 4 Vets**



**Mark your calendars for June 20th Veterans Memorial Arena the second 2015 Gathering of Veterans 1100 to 1300. We had a great turnout the last gathering and hope to do as good or even better this time. Some of you had other commitments and didn't make it, hope you can make this one. Important that Veterans and the organizations they represent coordinate on issues affecting Veterans and their families in this community. The current VA issue and the impact on local Veterans is only one of many issues affecting Veterans that needs attention. Fixes to these issues start with Veterans uniting....SEE YOU ON THE 20th OF JUNE.**

**More to follow as we approach the gathering date...Stay motivated and united.**

**Pass the word to other Veterans and organizations...**

**JUNE 20th 1100 to 1300 VETERANS MEMORIAL**

**United we stand, Divided we fall**

**The City of Jacksonville and Department of Veterans Affairs - Florida Veterans Foundation is putting on a three day Stand Down for it's Homeless Veterans. The event will be held at the Jacksonville Fair Grounds on Aug 13 - 15, 2015. We are expecting over 600 homeless veterans to be present. We need St. Johns County veterans support. Our goal is to end veteran homelessness in 2015. Please consider giving us your support through voluntary services or monetary contribution. Either one would be very appreciated.**

**For more information please contact Daniel Hughes at:**

**[jamiedhughes@msn.com](mailto:jamiedhughes@msn.com) or 386-446-3830.**





## Operation Ancestor Search (OAS) March 2015

### ATTENTION!!

"Are you interested in discovering more about your family history?"  
"Let us The Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) assist you in finding your family roots through Operation Ancestry Search (OAS)"

To all those military and x-military service personnel in St. Johns and Putnam Counties, Florida, who have been wounded, incapacitated and are under medical care. Who are interested in their family history and that would like to find who their great- great grandparents were; you know that there are sixteen of them? How about all those veterans in the family that served from the present to the American Revolution and possibly beyond? If so the following program is for you at no cost.

Operation Ancestor Search (OAS) is here to help, sponsored by the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in conjunction with the world's largest online family history resource, Ancestry.Com.

The program was developed and specifically intended for those service personnel, active or not, men and women, who have been wounded or otherwise incapacitated while in the U.S. Military service, are under medical care, including their families and care givers as well as those veterans in VA Nursing Homes.

Operation Ancestor Search (OAS) is a free National Society of the for NSSAR.

It's open to all service members as well as those discharged members who have been injured in the line of duty, are under medical care, their family members and military care givers as well as those patients in VA Nursing Homes.

There's no charge to OAS members for resources or training provided.

Members will be provided the knowledge and tools that allow them to conduct their own genealogical research. Most notably free access to the data base of Ancestry.Com. the program's National sponsor.

SAR volunteers provide genealogical training classes, work sessions and individual assistance to OAS members.

To find out more about the OAS program, call at any time: 904-825-1594



# **Do you or someone you know suffer with *Psoriasis?***

We need your help, we are conducting a clinical trial with an investigational topical medication for those with moderate to severe **Plaque Psoriasis.**

If you are at least 18 years of age,  
please call

**Solutions Through  
Advanced Research  
(904) 619-8157**



14546 Old St. Augustine Rd. Suite 107, Jacksonville, FL 32258  
[www.jaxadvresearch.com](http://www.jaxadvresearch.com)

#1001820718 (1/6 PG HORIZON(5in x 7in)) 10/06/2014 00:59 EST

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Steve Murray

[murrayr@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:murrayr@fdva.state.fl.us)

(850) 487-1533 office

(850) 491-1092 cell



## **Nominations Open for 2015 Class of the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council is currently accepting nominations for the third annual class of inductees into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. The nomination period is open until May 30, 2015. Anyone is permitted to nominate a military veteran.

The Florida Legislature established the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame to honor and recognize military veterans for their post-military service to the state.

Those nominating a veteran will need to complete a nomination packet that can be downloaded from [www.floridaveteranshalloffame.org](http://www.floridaveteranshalloffame.org). Nominations are based on established selection criteria including recognizing 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.

Up to 20 military veterans can be inducted into the hall each year.

"We are privileged to recognize and honor veterans for their leadership and civic contributions to the Sunshine State," said retired Army National Guard Sgt. Major Ray A. Quinn, who serves as council chairman. "With so many deserving veterans, we hope to receive many nominees for consideration for this year's class."

Names honoring selected inductees are commemorated on a plaque in the Capitol Rotunda in Tallahassee. Since 2013, eleven Florida veterans have been inducted into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council, a seven-member advisory panel, is responsible for accepting nominations to be considered for induction into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. In selecting its nominees for submission, the council gives preference to veterans who were either born in Florida or adopted Florida as their home state. Each year, the council transmits its recommended list of nominees to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, which submits the nominations to the Governor and Cabinet, who will select the nominees to be inducted.

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

# Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

Gov. Rick Scott and the Cabinet inducted five individuals into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. The unanimous vote for the Class of 2014 came during the March 24 Cabinet Meeting at the Capitol.



Inductees are:

1. Rear Adm. LeRoy Collins Jr., U.S. Navy Reserve (deceased)
2. Maj. Gen. James L. Dozier, U.S. Army (retired)
3. Col. Frank Farmer, U.S. Army, Florida Army National Guard, U.S. Air Force Reserve (retired)
4. Chief Master Sgt. Eugene Cecil Johnson, U.S. Air Force (retired)
5. Lt. Gen. Lawrence F. Snowden, U.S. Marine Corps (retired)

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**From Dan Luce:** I moved from Mandarin/St. Johns Lodge #2866, south to Citrus County (Gulf Coast. 15 miles west of Ocala & Wildwood, W off of I-75). I am now a member of, and Veterans Committee Chairman of, Inverness Lodge #2522.

Citrus County has the largest Veteran Population, per capita, in the USA (43000 out of 139,000 pop.) They also have 41, Veterans, 501(c)3, Organizations. As you can imagine, the Veterans down here are pretty active. This being the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, they decided to take affairs into their own hands. They organized the Welcome Home Celebration, that they never received 50 years ago.

So, this 'Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans' event, is from April 30th thru May 3rd. The Traveling Vietnam Wall arrives on April 30th, and will be escorted 25 miles through the County, to Inverness. From that afternoon, after set up, there will be a 24 hour honor guard at the Wall, until it is taken down on Monday morning, May 3rd.

Apart from 24 hour viewing, there is also a parade, for Vietnam Era Veterans only, in Inverness, marching to the Wall, where the festivities begin. I have attached 4 fliers, that pretty well speak for themselves.

If any one from your area wishes to attend, and or march, they are more than welcome to come on down.. The 2 Citrus Co. Elks Lodges have a float in the parade, and all Elk Vietnam Veterans can ride/march with us, or form up under their old unit Flags. We will also be passing out cold bottled water, FOC, to any Vietnam Veteran visiting the Wall. Please have a read of the fliers and decide if you want to spread the word, in the NE District. Feel free to pass my phone number to any one who may want further information.

Thanks, Dan Luce, PH: 832-276-4556







## Quarterly Gathering of Veterans

Veterans Memorial Arena

June 20th 1100 -1300



Join us and get an update on Veterans happenings in the NE Florida community and share your organizations events with your fellow Veterans.

**Buffet Lunch will be available.**

Parking in Lot Z signage will be direct you to the meeting room  
(same room on first floors as the last meeting)

With all that is happening to Veterans it is time we unite to make sure things start happening FOR Veterans. To quote a Napoleon Maxim: Move dispersed and fight concentrated. It is time Veterans heed this advice and unite to save ourselves from being used and abused. No more broken promises, no more kabuki show and tells, it is time for those who say thank you your service to put something more behind that thank you. It is time we make them stick to their promises or it is time we promote one of our own to lead us into the future.

Vets 4 Vets  
June 20th,2015  
VETERANS MEMORIAL ARENA



## Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs has released the 2015 edition of the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide. The 28-page guide, sponsored by the Florida Veterans Foundation, provides information about earned federal and state benefits and how to obtain them. Bulk copies of the guide are being distributed to county veteran service offices, VA medical centers and outpatient clinics, and state colleges and universities. An interactive online version will also be available on the FDVA website at [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org).

You may order bulk copies by e-mailing a name, street address, telephone number and the number requested to [murrayr@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:murrayr@fdva.state.fl.us)

Individual copies may be requested by sending an e-mail to [Sferrazza-RiosL@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:Sferrazza-RiosL@fdva.state.fl.us)

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# # #

Individual copies may be requested by sending an e-mail to [Sferrazza-RiosL@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:Sferrazza-RiosL@fdva.state.fl.us)

## **The Veterans Council of St. Johns County Website**

<http://www.veteranscouncilofstjohns.org>

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is very fortunate to have AJ Sartin, Commander of VFW Post 12142 in Vilano Beach as our webmaster. Thank you AJ for the outstanding design of the website and for always keeping it updated.



If you haven't visited the website recently I encourage you to do so now. Here is a partial list of what you will find on the site.

Event Flyers: we list here Veterans Organization flyers for fund raisers, golf tournaments, etc.

Wreaths Across America: an update of progress toward goal of having one wreath on every burial site at St. Augustine National

Jacksonville National Cemetery: an update on MIAP, and events, ceremonies, and dedications

How to get Veterans License Tags

Update on meetings, events at new VFW Post 12142, Vilano Beach

All editions of the Patriot Reader going back 4 years are available here

The Veterans Council produced documentaries, as seen on PBS, are available for viewing here, they all feature the stories of local veterans: World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and Stolen Freedom, the story of 4 local ex American Prisoners of War. Soon to be available online, "Unleashing the Underdogs: The K9s for Warriors Story", filmed in Ponte Vedra Beach.





On December 1 the Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142 became official and all of our officers were sworn in!

**“Honoring the Dead by Helping the Living”**

***For more information,  
contact A. J. Sartin (904) 669-1946***



Offered by the Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142, [VilanoBeachVFW@att.net](mailto:VilanoBeachVFW@att.net)  
**Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142 collects Walkers, Wheel Chairs, and Power  
Wheel Chairs for distribution to other Veterans in need.**  
**VETERANS HELPING VETERANS**

The P320 Travel-Ease Regal has an 18"W x 16"D swivel seat, flip up armrests, headrest and flip-up footboard. The Travel-Ease comes with batteries and runs up to 4.5 mph.

The small footprint is perfect for getting around indoors, but don't be fooled, it's outdoor performance is second to none. The P320 has an excellent torque-range for consistent pulling no matter what the terrain does.



The Merits P320 Travel-Ease Regal is stylish and compact. Its low center of gravity, tight turning radius of 23" and excellent maneuverability makes it extra stable and gives you a high level of freedom.

The P320's 9" Foam-Filled Drive wheels and 8" front casters can take you just about anywhere. Work great indoors and outdoors. The P320 has a maximum speed of 4.5 mph and a range of about 15 miles.

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### Go-Go Elite Traveller 3-Wheel

by Pride , Model No. SC40E

**Lightweight, agile, the Elite Traveller.**

18AH battery option for extended drive range

Comes with blue, and red shroud covers

Front frame-mounted seat post offers maximum stability

#### **Key Specs**

Top Speed: 4.25 mph

Drive Range: 10.00 miles (this may vary, depending on charge and life of battery)

Heaviest Piece: 28 lbs., Rider Weight capacity: 300 lbs., Weight: 96 lbs.



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**Wheelchair Walker Folding Combination, without basket  
(pictured on left)**





**Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142 Commander, A.J. Sartin and Vilano Beach Post Ladies Auxiliary President, Gloria Sartin, delivered an electric wheelchair to the residence of Veteran Ed Watson at Coquina Crossing.**

**Also pictured is Jeff Haluch, Matt Haluch, Marvin Mott, and Wally Greis, who were building a ramp into the house. Ed will be arriving home soon from the hospital.**



**Commander Sartin's Diabetic Service Dog, Gidget was also on duty.**

**The Vilano Beach VFW Post 12142, of St. Johns County, has a EZ-Access Modular Ramp System available for a Veteran that needs one that requires a turn, and two ramps to get from the porch to the sidewalk. This ramp cannot be parted out...must be used as manufactured.**



**For more information,**

**contact A. J. Sartin (904) 669-1946**

**For several years, D.A.V. Fl 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**







## PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2015

No. 15-4

Contact: Mokie Porter  
301-996-0901

### **Senators Moran and Blumenthal, Representatives Benishek and Honda Introduce New Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015**

(Washington, DC) – “It’s bad enough that veterans have had to bear the cross of exposure to toxic agents during our military service,” said Vietnam Veterans of America National President John Rowan. “It is worse to see our children and grandchildren afflicted with health conditions we suspect have derived from our exposure, and to think we are the cause of their hurt and pain. Today, however, we see real light at the end of a long, grim tunnel with the introduction of the ‘Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015.’ This legislation, when enacted, will establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a national center for research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of the descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service,” Rowan said

“VVA is gratified that this is a bipartisan effort in both houses of Congress,” Rowan emphasized. “We applaud Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Dick Blumenthal (D-CT), and Representatives Dan Benishek (R-MI) and Mike Honda (D-CA) – and their energetic and committed staffs – for introducing S. 901 and H.R. 1769. We will pull out all the stops to work with them in seeking additional co-sponsors for this very necessary legislation. And we will work with our fellow veterans service organizations, military organizations and associations, and others to move these bills through the legislative process and into black-letter law.”

“This bill isn’t only about the herbicide Agent Orange and other chemicals used in South Vietnam,” Rowan pointed out, “It’s about exposures to chemical agents for all who have served in our Armed Forces, including those exposed to the toxic fumes released by the U.S. Demolition Operations at the Khamisiyah Pit and those exposed to the toxic fires from burn pits across Afghanistan and Iraq during Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn.”

Rowan noted that a key part of this legislation is the establishment of an advisory board that will oversee and assess the work of the center, to determine health conditions in a veteran’s offspring that likely result from the veteran’s exposure, and to study and evaluate cases of exposure.

*Vietnam Veterans of America (www.vva.org) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."*



# Memorial Day *Celebration!*

**Join us at the River House**

**Friday, May 22, 2015**

**9:30-10:30 AM**

Weather permitting the event will be held  
outside on the terrace.

Immediately following the celebration a brunch  
will be provided for all Veterans who  
have pre-registered.

**Register by calling the River House at**

**904-209-3655**

**Reservations requested by May 19**

**This event sponsored by**



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## Wine & War Stories

### IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERANS OF AMERICA (IAVA) VET-TOGETHER

New Owners of The Wine Bar and a recently separated Vet back from Afghanistan team up for a great social networking and community building event at The Wine Bar.

Located on 1st Street, Jacksonville Beach!

This is open to Veterans, Active Duty, and Military Supporters.

We are hosting once a month so come on out meet new friends, bark at old ones and don't be afraid to stick around a little while longer! It is A Wine Bar.

Check out our Facebook Page and Web Site—Events for the next one!

Tweet, Text and Share IAVA VetTogethers for Vets in Jax



For More Information, Please Call or Email

Phone: 912-271-5748  
Email: alex@stonefran.com  
www.facebook.com/WineWarStories  
www.facebook.com/IAVA.org/

RSVP :  
www.stonefran.com  
/events/wine-and-war-stories



STONEWORK FRANCHISING is proud to host another IAVA VetTogether in Florida. The IAVA (Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America) have dedicated quite a bit to helping vets get back on their feet, find employment, seek education and function within our communities upon separation. This is a chance to speak the lingo and get along with people who understand you.

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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](mailto: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](http://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.  
Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161  
Joseph McDermott, CVSO  
Rick Rees, Assistant VSO  
Tammy Shirley, Assistant VSO  
Lashonda Burns, Office Specialist*