From the Directors Desk,

Wow, another New Year. What a pleasure is has been working with such a devoted team of Veterans serving our Veteran Community. I would like to make 2016 a Great Year. Everyone, be sure and make some happy and healthy New Years Resolutions.

Happy New Year!

Kim E Smith (USN, FLARNG)
Director
Alachua County Veteran Services

January Holidays and Recognitions

January 1: New Years Day
January 7: Orthodox Christmas – Christian Holiday
January 11: Human Trafficking Awareness Day
January 18: Martin Luther King Jr Day – Federal Holiday
January 25: Tu Bishvat – Jewish Holiday

Observations and Fun Facts

National Mentoring Month
National Glaucoma Awareness Month
Cervical Health Awareness Month
Birth Defects Prevention Month
December 12, 2015, The Town of Micanopy had a Veterans Memorial Dedication. Mr. Bob Gasche, WWII Veteran and my personal favorite Marine, hosted as Master of Ceremonies. This was a lovely dedication including several program items of the children of Micanopy contributing.

The Milton Lewis Young Marines honored us with their Flag Folding Ceremony. Each fold of the flag has a specific meaning and the crowd learned of each fold as the reader narrated as the Young Marines folded each fold. Our Pledge of Allegiance was lead by Mr. Gasche and Old Glory was honored as we placed our hands over our hearts or gave a military salute as we pledged allegiance to the United States of America. The National Anthem was sang acapella by John Holton and all joined. Father Les Singleton provided the Invocation and meaningful words about appreciating our veterans. The Micanopy Area Charter School made us all smile as the children sang God Bless America and America the Beautiful. Vietnam Veteran and former Alachua County Veteran Service Officer, Mr Jim Lynch moved us with his words including some veteran history of service members who gave their lives for our country. Micanopy Middle School student, Mr. Connor Burks read his welcome about why veterans deserve our support, respect and understanding. I had opportunity to speak at this event to thank the citizens of Micanopy for their support of the Veteran Community by their desire to have this monument and provide information about the services provided by our office. The dedication was concluded by the playing of TAPS by Mr. Dick Lester Commander of the VFW Post 2811.

Overall this dedication was a respectable event attended by many citizens of Micanopy which paid respects to the Veterans who served.

Special Thanks to:
Mr. Bob Gasche, without his dedication and energy this memorial may not have been completed.
The Alachua County Veterans Memorial Committee
Randy Cameron, RJ Cameron Construction General Contractor
Van Goettling Masonry
Bud DesForges
Don Duer, Architect
Dan Holton
Raul Gonzalez
REMEMBER AND HONOR THE FALLEN.

Saturday December 12th at the Forest Meadows Cemetery, Veterans groups and American citizens came together to remember the fallen and remember and honor our veteran brothers and sisters who have been laid to rest there.

The mission to remember, honor and teach is carried out in part by coordinating wreath laying ceremonies on a specified Saturday in December in all 50 states.

Our ceremony was awesome. Multiple Veteran motorcycle groups escorted the Walmart Tractor Trailer full of wreaths to the cemetery, Commander Victoria Van Buren of the American Legion MC’ed the event. Many Veteran Organizations contributed time and energy in laying wreaths at the graves of the veterans interned at the cemetery.

There is a reason we have FREEDOM in America and the moment a person places a wreath at the grave of a veteran at this time of year, the reason we are free becomes evident that there was a cost. That price was and is paid by the service members and veterans who sacrificed for us.
Today it is common knowledge that servicemen and servicewomen who served during Viet Nam may have been exposed to herbicide agents which may have resulted in sickness or death. The most common herbicide was known as Agent Orange. According to VA, there is an eligibility for the presumption of exposure if the veterans military service involved “duty or visitation in the Republic of Viet Nam” between Jan 9th 1962 to May 7, 1975. This includes service within the country and aboard vessels that operated in waterways. At this time, this does not include service aboard large ocean going ships that operated only on the offshore waters of Viet Nam, unless evidence shows that a veteran went ashore. This does not include deep water harbors such as those at Da Nang, Nha Trang, Cam Tanh and Vung Tau. While it can be challenging to prove, our Navy and Coast Guard brothers and sisters may also have been exposed to these herbicides. Ensure you speak to your physician that you may have been exposed so they can refer you to be screened for care.

Exposure to these chemical has had detrimental effects on our Brother and Sister Viet Nam Veterans and Veteran Service Officers are working diligently to link the veterans service to current medical conditions. The list of Presumptive health problems and diseases can be easily found including forms of cancer. We have lost many veterans to this so it is crucial that Viet Nam Veterans know to be diligent about their healthcare and to communicate with their Veteran Service Officer so we may assist you with your claim for Compensation Benefits.
WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it plans to propose expanded disability compensation eligibility for Veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

From 1953 to 1987, water sources at the base were contaminated with industrial solvents that are correlated with certain health conditions. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald decided to propose presumptions of service connection for certain conditions associated with these chemical solvents following discussions between environmental health experts at the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

"The water at Camp Lejeune was a hidden hazard, and it is only years later that we know how dangerous it was," said Secretary McDonald. "We thank ATSDR for the thorough review that provided much of the evidence we needed to fully compensate Veterans who develop one of the conditions known to be related to exposure to the compounds in the drinking water."

ATSDR determined that the drinking water at Camp Lejeune was contaminated with perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, vinyl chloride, benzene and other petroleum contaminants from leaking storage tanks from 1953 to 1987. ATSDR also determined that prolonged exposure to these chemicals increases the risk of certain health conditions.

Based upon VA’s review of current medical science and ATSDR’s findings, Secretary McDonald intends to propose creation of a presumption of service connection for the following conditions:

- Kidney Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Leukemia
- Multiple Myeloma
- Scleroderma
- Parkinson’s Disease
- Aplastic Anemia / Myelodysplastic Syndromes

The Secretary’s proposal would also expand benefits eligibility to Reserve and National Guard personnel who served at Camp Lejeune for any length of time from August 1, 1953, through December 31, 1987. These personnel would be presumed to have been exposed to the contaminated water during their Reserve or National Guard service and, in appropriate circumstances, to have been disabled by such exposure during service, thus allowing them to qualify for VA benefits under the statutory definition of “Veteran.”

This would make them eligible for VA disability compensation and medical care for any of the presumptive conditions, and their surviving dependents would be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and burial benefits.

VA is working on regulations that would establish these presumptions, making it easier for affected Veterans to receive VA disability compensation for these conditions. While VA cannot grant any benefit claims based on the proposed presumption of service connection for these conditions until it issues its final regulations, it encourages Veterans who have a record of service at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, and develop a condition that they believe is related to exposure to the drinking water at the base, to file a disability compensation claim with VA.

VA will continue to grant claims for disabilities claimed to be associated with exposure to the contaminants that can be granted under current regulations and review of the evidence in each case. If a claim for service connection for one of the proposed presumptive conditions would be denied under current regulations, the denial will be stayed until VA issues its final regulations. VA will announce when the regulations are final and presumptive benefits can begin to be awarded. For more information on applying for these benefits, visit:


Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, are already eligible to receive VA healthcare for up to 15 health conditions. More information, including a full list of covered conditions, can be found online at:


Veterans can establish eligibility for healthcare benefits by submitting VA Form 10-10EZ online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, downloading it at www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/1010EZ-fillable.pdf and returning it to any VA Medical Center or Clinic, or by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM (Eastern Time).

VA is reimbursing certain veterans’ family members for eligible out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered conditions. More information can be found at: https://www.cffamilymembers.fsc.va.gov

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VETERANS AWARD BANQUET
February 27, 2016
Paramount Hotel
Gainesville, Florida
Music By
TBA
TICKETS $30 PER PERSON

Buy Your Tickets Early, Limited Seating

Dress Uniform | Formal Attire
1700 Happy Hour | 1800 Dinner | 1930 Awards

Open Bar Available at the Command Post Bar
All drink donations go to create a “Dick Davis” Veterans Bridge Scholarship at SFC for a UF student veteran.

WHERE TO PURCHASE TICKETS?
American Legion  Vicki VanBuren  (352) 562-9963
Korean War Veterans Don Sherry  (352) 375-8355
Marine Corps League Sandy Golden  (352) 494-4547
MOAA  Jim and Candy Gleason  (352) 333-8974
VFW  Dick Lester  (352) 376-7660
DAV  Pete Sabo  (352) 332-4608

Special Room Rates at $79.00
The Paramount Hotel

ALACHUA COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE
ARE YOU
COMBAT WOUNDED?
PURPLE HEART?
THEN YOU'VE EARNED A
FREE CLOTHING KIT!
WOUNDEDWEAR.ORG WILL SEND
YOU THE FOLLOWING ITEMS, FREE!
Softshell nylon jacket
Embroided Purple Heart Polo
Soft cotton tee and sport shorts
Black "WoundedWear" baseball cap
and more............

Just give us your sizes, let us verify your Purple Heart, and we'll do the rest.
(Your kit should reach us in 4-5 weeks)
We'll get it to you as soon as it arrives.
SSG John A. Reiners Chapter #0823
Military Order of the Purple Heart
P.O. Box 357808
Gainesville, Fl. 32635-7808
Stephen Dodd (386)336-2663  tnlrat68@gmail.com
Norm Sassner (352)339-4645  nsassner@yahoo.com
Veteran Organization Information

American Hometown Veteran Assist, Inc.
Dedicated to helping local US Military Veterans & their families

P.O. Box 274, Fort White, FL 32038  A 501-c-3 Tax-Exempt Public Charity  (FL Non-Profit Corp. N07000007121)
www.hometownvetaassist.org  www.facebook.com/hometownvetaassist

Freedom isn’t free; our VETERANS have paid dearly for it!

October 31, 2015

To All Interested Parties:

AHVAI is a 501-c-3 tax-exempt Public Charity, founded in February, 2007, dedicated to assisting all generations of our local* Military Veterans and their families in times of real need. All uncompensated volunteers who recognize we are but the conduit through which the generosity of others flows, we work to keep necessary expenses as low as possible while striving to fulfill our mission.

We are unique in our approach, in that we serve all generations of veterans of all of our Military Branches, and consider all manner of assistance, as we recognize people's circumstances vary greatly. In this ninth month of our ninth year, we fielded eighteen requests, for an overall total of 712, of which we have approved 492, with four pending.

Many of our cases are submitted by Case Managers with the various V/A facilities, but we also receive them from churches, Veteran Service Offices, and other charitable organizations. We actively pursue collaboration when we can, to stretch our funds, and strive to achieve the greatest help from every dollar. Our intent is to provide a hand up, rather than a handout; we're less about improving veterans' lives than we are about helping veterans to improve their lives!

Our funding has come from events such as Banquet/Auctions, Sporting Clays Tournaments, Car Shows, Yard Sales, and other events for which we can foster interest; Grants, when we can qualify; and simple donations from the general public. We accept donations in person, by mail, or through PayPal on our website, and are happy to provide receipts upon request. Commitments for recurring donations—in any amount—are welcome, as are one-time donations; everything helps!

Through the tireless efforts of some loyal supporters and new friends, BIKERS ON PARADE was re-instituted on Sunday, November 9, 2014, providing a great funding boost for the current year; we are humbled by—and sincerely grateful for—such tremendous support from the Committee, Partners, Sponsors, and from the Community! THANK YOU ALL!

Sincerely,
Chuck Wilder

Our Mission Statement:

Our mission is to assist local* veterans of our Armed Forces and their family members in need, with war-wounded veterans being given highest priority.

Such assistance may take various forms, dependent upon circumstances, including—but not limited to—monetary, providing needed equipment, assistance with vehicle or other equipment repairs, help with locating needed resources, or other reasonable humanitarian assistance.

All assistance requests will be reviewed by the corporate officers for approval, based on available funds and conformance to our guiding principles: evident need, urgency, stress relief/family integrity, quality-of-life improvement, bolstering/restoration of self-respect & confidence.

*Local, for our purposes, is defined as within approximately a 100-mile radius of Fort White, Florida.

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free (800-435-7352) within the state, or by going to their website: www.freshfromflorida.com. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state. reg. # CH23315

CORPORATE OFFICERS
Pres. Chuck Wilder  Sec’y, Judy Keener  Treas. Sue Wilder
Project Outreach Admin Faye Wilder
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Meeting Information</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 &amp; 8 Voiture 1388</td>
<td>1st Monday  American Legion Post 16</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>Major Stroupe</td>
<td>352-486-3872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Legion Post 16</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday at 4701 NW 6th St Gainesville, FL</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
<td>Vickie Van Buren</td>
<td>352-372-8802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IWO TRIO</td>
<td>1st Tuesday at Jason's Deli</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
<td>Bob Gasche</td>
<td>376-0402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of the American Legion Chapter 16</td>
<td>2nd Monday American Legion Post 16</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Paul Salg</td>
<td>352-278-8360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. James A. Van Fleet Chapter 267 Korean War Veterans</td>
<td>1st Wednesday at American Legion post 16</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Frank Murphy</td>
<td>352-538-6999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans for Peace</td>
<td>1st Wednesday  Call for directions</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Scott Camil</td>
<td>375-2563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Support Group of Alachua County</td>
<td>1st Thursday 1st United Methodist Church in Alachua</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
<td>Jim Yakubsin</td>
<td>222-8837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution</td>
<td>3rd Tuesday at Browns Country Buffet, Alachua FL</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>David Cromer</td>
<td>352-375-1257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOAA Military Officers Association of America</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday at Queen of Peace Church,10900 SW 24th Avenue</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
<td>James Gleason</td>
<td>352-333-8974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alachua County Veterans Advisory Board</td>
<td>2nd Monday Location usually Veterans Memorial Park Freedom Center; Location posted on <a href="http://advisoryboards.alachuacounty.us/boards/info.aspx">http://advisoryboards.alachuacounty.us/boards/info.aspx</a></td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>Kim Smith</td>
<td>264-6740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFW Post 2811</td>
<td>2nd Thursday General meeting and auxiliary will meet at the Post at 1100 NE Waldo Road</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Commander Dick Lester</td>
<td>386-462-1192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VietNam Veterans of America Chapter 1092</td>
<td>4th Monday at the American Legion Post 16; Social at 600</td>
<td>6:30PM</td>
<td>Forest Hope</td>
<td>352-514-0270 / <a href="mailto:vvachapter1092@yahoo.com">vvachapter1092@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Legion Post 230 and Auxiliary</td>
<td>3rd Monday Post home in Hawthorne at (20370 SE Hawthorne Road)</td>
<td>12 Noon</td>
<td>Harry Carter / Cherie Korn</td>
<td>352-481-4483 / 352-481-5071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Legion Riders Chapter 16</td>
<td>3rd Monday  Legion Post 16</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Kevin Porterfield</td>
<td>352-494-2281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling Thunder Chapter 3</td>
<td>Location and dates vary, call for details</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Daniel Buckland Presid</td>
<td>352-281-2026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Day WWII Veterans</td>
<td>2nd Thursday at Conestogas Restaurant Alachua, FL</td>
<td>11AM</td>
<td>Bryan Walker</td>
<td>352-372-9685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Lewis Young Marines</td>
<td>4th Saturday  VFW Post 2811</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Cary Hill</td>
<td>352-495-2710 / 352-514-3915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military order of the Purple Heart</td>
<td>1st Saturday at American Legion  Post 16</td>
<td>1:00PM</td>
<td>Steve Dodd</td>
<td>386-336-2663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps League Gator Detachment</td>
<td>4th Tuesday of the month at 1st United Methodist Church in Alachua</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>Commandant Jim Yakubsin</td>
<td>352-222-8837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Legion Post 149</td>
<td>1st Tuesday</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
<td>Major Stroupe</td>
<td>352-486-3872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET CENTER</td>
<td>105 NW 75th St Suite 2 Gainesville, FL 32607</td>
<td>Call</td>
<td>Ingrid Rincon Office Manager</td>
<td>352-331-1408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gainesville Fisher House</td>
<td>1601 SW Archer Rd, Gainesville, FL 32608</td>
<td>Call</td>
<td>Commander Pete Sabo</td>
<td>352-548-6492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAV Chapter 90</td>
<td>4th Wednesday DAV HQ - 2015 SW 75th Street</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>Commander Pete Sabo</td>
<td>352-316-3247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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