



# AMVETS Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

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## Commander's Corner.....

As I shared in our last issue November proved to be a very busy and eventful month, not just for our Post but for veterans throughout the Big Bend. We had over 450 veterans attend the American Legion Post #13 and Leon County Breakfast event called the "Operation Thank You

Community Breakfast." This was just before our Veterans Day Parade sponsored by Vet Events Tallahassee, one of the best Veteran Day Parades in the Country. Then we had a Marine Corps Ball on November 12<sup>th</sup> celebrating the 247<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Marine Corps and on November 15<sup>th</sup> there was a luncheon and Induction Ceremony honoring ten of this year's inductees from around the State of Florida. You will find photos of these events throughout this issue.

On a personal note, and with humility I want to share what these events meant to me this year. Leon County honored me with a Proclamation at the Breakfast for my service and commitment to serving veterans in our area. They allowed me a moment and I did share that I thought that Leon County and its surrounding Big Bend was one of the most veteran friendly areas in Florida. The support we receive from the County and the City in both financial and human resources is second to none in the State. I also shared that not just me but each of the veteran service organizations and their membership is in large part the ones that should receive the recognition. We have at least 18 veteran services organizations serving around 17,000 veterans in this area. We have one of the most beautiful National Cemeteries in the Country and one of the best VA Clinics with state-of-the art

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AMVETS National was chartered in 1947 and the Tallahassee AMVETS Post 1776 was chartered in July 2009. AMVETS Post 1776 meets on the first Thursday of the month at American Legion Post 13, 229 Lake Ella Drive Tallahassee, Florida 32303. We invite honorably discharged veterans, including Guard and Reserve, from all branches to join us. We are a small Post doing big things for the veterans in the Tallahassee area. *For more information please visit us at:*

[www.amvets1776.org](http://www.amvets1776.org).

*Continued from front page*

diagnostic capabilities for our veterans in the Country. And I could go on about other major program efforts in our area, e.g., our Tallahassee Veterans Treatment Court, and our Tallahassee Veterans Legal Collaborative. In actuality you will find from time-to-time articles about these programs in our newsletter. We wrote about the Tallahassee Veterans Legal Collaborative last issue.

To continue I am not sure many of us know a lot about Florida Veterans Hall of Fame. It was created by our Legislature in 2011 and conducted its first statewide induction ceremony in 2013. Major John Haynes, one of the original six inducted into this Veteran Hall of Fame helped design the plaques and the Wall of Honor maintained in the State Capital. There are over 130 inductees with an additional ten inductees this year. To quote their certificate, "The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame pays tribute to those men and women who honorably served their country through military service and who continue to achieve and inspire their fellow citizens with exemplary deeds and outstanding accomplishments in post-military life." I am honored to have been one of the ten selected this year. Colonel Bruce Host USAF (Ret.) Founder/President of the FVHOF Society a 2017 inductee opened the luncheon and Major General James "Hammer" Hartsell, USMC (Ret.), Ex. Dir. Of the Florida Department Veteran Affairs made the presentations and honored all ten of the inductees. It was an honor to be able to associate myself with all the veterans attending the event. And even more to have my wife and family share the experience. But, as I have shared with all, my commitment and service to veterans only supplements the contributions in this County and Big Bend area by all the real untold heroes in this town. And I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that I am not the only member of our Post 1776 that has been so honored. We have, in all probability the most per capita members in the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame inductees by any VSO in Florida. And they are: John Folsom; Claude Shipley; Charles LeCroy; Chief John Schmidt (deceased) and David Wilson. I salute them all.

***Here's wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. And as always, thank you all for your continuing service to our Country, our County and our Post.***

***Semper Fi and Aim High.....Gordon***

## **2022 Induction Ceremony at the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame**



***2022 installation of Veterans on the wall of honor.***

**Immediate Right:**

Major General Hartsell, Major John Haynes, Commander Lightfoot and spouse Mrs. Lucia Lightfoot.

***AMVETS Post 1776 Tallahassee now has 6 members who have been so honored.***



## Wreaths

By Paul Rogerson

As the years go by and aging process takes its toll, I find myself thinking of the past more. My early adult years were somewhat lost since I had no clue of where I was going, and after high school I was asking what next? I knew that staying at home I would not go far. So, I joined the Army. The best thing I learned was knowing that my comrades came in various sizes and different background but only one color which was green! You could depend on each other no matter what.

Now after 38 years pass since retiring from the army, my mind finds it is hard to realize all that has transpired in my life and reminiscing brings back so many memories. When visiting the Tallahassee National Cemetery (TNC), I see my fellow veterans who have passed on but are laying together as if they are getting ready to pass in review in a parade. We must never forget to honor these veterans!

One of the ways to do this is "Wreath across America" purchase. Laying a wreath to each grave site may seem trivial to some; however, when visiting the TNC during Christmas and look at the interred veterans with the colorful wreaths there is a sense of pride and belonging to the greatest fellowship any man or woman could belong. The wreaths let them, and their families know they are not forgotten, and we honor their sacrifice.

AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 contributed \$600 for TNC wreaths ensuring that these veterans are not forgotten and are remembered and in a small way pay tribute to their patriotism.

Being a veteran means you are part of a strong union, and we must remember our fellow veterans past and present. Wreaths laid on each grave lets the veterans and families know they are not forgotten. We as AMVETS veterans pay tribute by ensuring interred veterans are remembered.

### **DUTY**



### **HONOR**



### **COUNTRY**



# 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary tour to Iwo Jima, Reunion of Honor. By David Wilson

I have been interested in the Pacific War for years as my father flew on a B-29 during missions over Japan. I made four trips to Pacific Battlefields on Guam, Tinian, Saipan, Koror, Peleliu and Iwo Jima. Of course there was also the trips to Pearl Harbor. I had told Jamie Meeks of my trips and he and I had talked of taking a trip together. We both knew General Snowden and General Snowden had been trying to get Jamie to go. He sealed the deal when he told Jamie that the 70th Reunion would be his last trip to Iwo. Jamie and I traveled together and had lots of fun and laughter as well as visiting some of the bloodiest battle sites of WW2

*This photo is from the Banquet held on Guam prior to leaving for Iwo Jima the next morning. Jamie is with one of the few living (at that time) Navajo Code Talkers. His Navajo granddaughter came with him to interpret for him. It's no wonder the Japanese could not figure out the Navajo language as she and he conversed*



*(Left) This is Hershel "Woody" Williams who at the time was the last living MOH Winner from Iwo Jima.*



*This is Jamie and I with General Larry Snowden, Retired, USMC. He fought on Iwo Jima as well as Saipan and Tinian. He is the man responsible for the Reunion of Honor trips taken back to Iwo Jima by American and Japanese veterans of Iwo. Many Japanese Navy and Air Force personnel were evacuated to Japan prior to the landings by Americans.*



*There are very few vehicles for the ride up Suribachi, one must walk. A distance of about 5 miles.*



*At the monument on top of Suribachi. This is the approximate location of the Flag Raising.*



# Did you know this Local History on Iwo Jima?



## **CGJ African-American DUKW truck battalions at Iwo Jima** *(Assisting Marines during D-Day at the invasion of Iwo Jima drew the praise of their officers as well as the grateful Marines)*

The 43rd Amphibious truck battalion was constituted on 30 June 1944 and activated as an African American battalion on 5 July 1944 at Camp Gordon Johnston, Florida. The 43rd had three Amphibious Truck Companies, the 471st, 473rd and 476th. After training and shipping out to the Pacific Theatre, the 471st was attached to the 5th Marine Division, the 476th to the 4th Marine Division and the 473rd was attached to the Corps Artillery and Anti Aircraft Artillery for the scheduled 19 February 1945 Amphibious landings.

The 471st and 476th hauled ammunition and division artillery right behind the initial assault waves and then returned for more ammunition under a hail of enemy fire. The 473rd did not bring in the Corps Artillery until early morning the next day. The companies lost several DUKW's to enemy fire and continued to return to the ships to pick up and deliver critical supplies. The HHD, 43rd Amphibious Truck Battalion arrived at the invasion and assumed control, from the Marines, over the three truck companies.

For their performance during the invasion, the three companies were awarded the Navy Unit Commendation Medal. As a testament to their bravery, the 476th had 5 soldiers receive the Silver Star and 17 earned Bronze Star medals. The 473rd had three soldiers earn the Silver Star. There is no list as to how many valor medals were awarded to the 471st.

The current 332nd TC BN, Tampa, Florida traces its lineage and honors back to the 43rd. The 332nd has attended Camp Gordon Johnston Days in past years bringing its LCU 2000 for display on Marine Street.

*Information for this article was derived from the Original Camp Newspapers "The Amphibian" March 31st and April 21st 1945 issues as well as the TC-Regt-Association Magazine in the Hall of Fame section 2011. Special thanks also to Colonel Charles Aucoin, USAR (Ret).*



## *Chaplin's Corner.....*

Everlasting God, thank you that your ear is always attentive to our prayers. Hear our prayer for our military veterans and those in the military currently deployed during this holiday season. We especially ask prayers for those families that are separated this time of year. May they know that their service is appreciated by us. Give us clear minds and peaceful hearts as you bless all of us for our service. May we know your presence with us at this time. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us always.

*Bless us forever, Amen.*

# Tallahassee AMVETS Post 1776 Tallahassee, Florida. Calendar of Events, December 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 <i>Post Meeting 1830-2000 Hrs</i>	2	3
4	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 
25 <i>Christmas Day</i> 	26	27	28	29	30	

**A full day of activities A “HOMETOWN HERO” Henry and lovely wife Mona are pictured prior to the Parade and Commander Lightfoot is feted for his accomplishments by LC Commisioner Nick Maddox.**



## Newsworthy Happenings in our area;

### Membership Notes.....

*From the VVA Veteran, September/October, 2022 issue.*



*Big Bend Chapter 96 President Joe West dressed as Ben Franklin reads the Declaration of Independence on the front steps of the historic Florida Capitol in Tallahassee on July 4th.*

Tallahassee, Florida Big Bend Chapter 96 hosted its eighth annual Independence Day commemoration at the Florida Historic Capitol Museum in Tallahassee on July 4th. The event included Chapter President Joe West, wearing his best Benjamin Franklin suit, reciting the Declaration of Independence on the front steps of the Historic Capitol, which was built in 1845 and has been restored to its 1902 appearance.



During the event, Leon County presented a Veterans Day proclamation to Gordon Lightfoot, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served in the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines during the Vietnam War. It recognized his continued service with several local and national veteran groups.

## Marine Corps Ball



Major John Haynes was the keynote Speaker.



Cutting the cake for Patricia.

## Happy Birthday Marines!

November 10, 1775, was the birth of the United States Marine Corps. This year was the 247<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Our Marine Corps League Arthur R. Meyer Jr., Detachment #472 Birthday Ball was held on November 12, 2022, at the Capital City Country Club. Major John Haynes was our Keynote speaker and as usual Major Haynes gave an inspirational talk about what it means to be a Marine in service even after your military time in service is done. Special to our Ball is cutting of the cake. The oldest Marine cuts the cake and hands the first slice to the youngest Marine. This year Major Haynes provided Patricia her slice of the cake. A good time was had by all.

# The 2022 Veterans Day Parade...



Charles LeCroy

Photo courtesy of Tallahassee Democrat



Henry Lowery



Photo courtesy of Tallahassee Democrat



Photo courtesy of Tallahassee Democrat

November 11, 2022, a day full of activity for the city of Tallahassee, Florida. Veterans were honored throughout the weekend. The Parade featured every VSO in the area as well as different organizations, schools and individuals who wished to show their appreciation by participating in the events. AMVETS Members **Charles LeCroy** and **Henry Lowery** were feted as *Grand Marshal* and *"Hometown Hero"*.