

Commemorative Issue



AMVETS Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

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Commander's Message...



If you were at our Dedication Ceremony on July 8, 2021 you were there witnessing the result of almost 6 years of work by folks at our National AMVETS office; the National Cemetery Administration/VA; officers and members of our AMVETS Post 1776 and a lot of help from almost 120 donors that contributed over \$75,000.00 toward our effort to place a Patriot Tower and Carillon at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. What is most interesting is that TNC was itself dedicated by VA within that same period of time. In fact, in the

original design of the Cemetery, in the architectural drawings and blueprint of the Cemetery, our Tower was laid out to be placed where it is someday!

This edition of our newsletter will be featuring, through a number of photos taken by the photographer Phil Welch, an officer with the Support Committee of the Tallahassee National Cemetery, Inc. Phil takes nearly all of the pictures in and around the Cemetery and has graciously given us a disc full of photos he took for us that day, in fact, two discs, Phil also documented February 12, 2021 when the Tower was delivered and erected.

Thanks to a storm coming up the coast, we almost didn't have our event. In fact, the large tent we ordered was brought and put up just after 6 a.m. the morning of the event. But, all said and done, the rains didn't come and instead we were all covered by the tent and most of the time we had a light breeze. Major John Haynes gave a emotional keynote address with one of our guest saying he wished Major Haynes could have given that speech nationally. We also had a couple of addresses from two of our National Representatives, Past Commander of AMVETS National Mr. J. P. Brown and the current President of AMVETS National Service Foundation, Mr. Bill Kilgore, the folks that made a substantial contribution to our local efforts to get the

Continued on Page 2

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

From page 1, Commander's Message.

Tower up.

But most of all I want to thank all those folks that contributed financially to help us build and deliver our Tower to the Tallahassee National Cemetery. And, for those folks there is a beautiful "Wall of Honor" plaque hanging in the Cemetery's Administration Building. It is a one of a kind tribute and gives due recognition to all that helped make this project possible. Please take a few minutes out of your day and visit the Cemetery, listen to the Tower Sing and take a look at our Wall of Honor. Once again, thank you! *Semper Fi, Gordon.*



Finally it happened! On July 8, 2021 after almost six years of fund raising, working through the myriad of regulations, procedures, e-mails and signing contracts the Carillon Bell Tower was officially turned over to the Tallahassee National Cemetery. Already a functioning part of the cemeteries services and signaling the beginning and end of each day it now will fulfill its function of providing solace to the families of loved ones as they are laid to rest with their fellow veterans.



AMVETS seated up front



All heads bowed as AMVETS Post 1776 Eric Smith gives Invocation.



AMVETS Post 1776 Judge Advocate Lowery leads in Pledge of Allegiance.



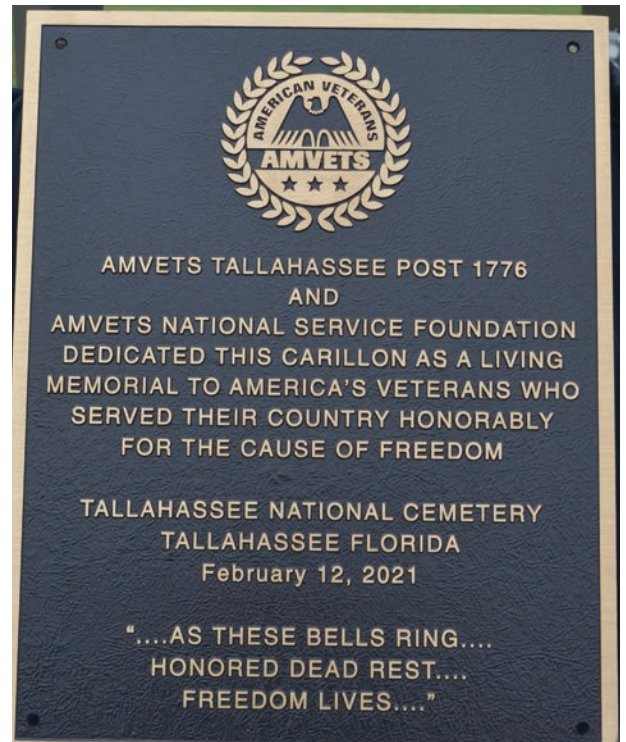
Major Haynes delivers a patriotic speech



Keynote speaker Bill Kilgore, President AMVETS National Service Foundation.



AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 commader Gordon Lightfoot of- ficially turns over the Carillon Belltower to Raymond Miller, V.A. Director of the Tallahassee National Cemetery. The bronze plaaque will be ensconded into a granite Stone where the table is shown.



Patriot riders in attendance.



Shown above from left to right: Commander Lightfoot, AMVETS Post 1776; Past AMVETS National Commander J.P. Brown; AMVETS National Service Foundation President Bill Kilgore; Past AMVETS State Department Commander Terry Corson and Director of Tallahassee National Cemetery, Mr. Raymond Miller.



Commander Lightfoot presents Commemorative wall plaque to Bill Kilgore, President AMVETS National Service Foundation.



Tallahassee Honor Guard opens the Dedication Ceremony and the benediction to close the ceremony is given by American Legion Post #13 Chaplain, John Folsom.

Finance Officer's Report....



Paul Rogerson



Tom Carney, President of the Air Force Association accepted a \$1500.00 donation from Tallahassee AMVETS Post 1776 at the July Post meeting. This amount plus a \$500.00 donation at the June Post meeting totals \$2000.00 that will allow AFA to supporting the Jr. ROTC program that they have supported through the years.

A Tradition is Carried Forward. . . 1949 - 2021

AMVETS Post 1776 carries forward a unique tradition from our National AMVETS; by dedicating a Patriot Tower and Carillon to the Tallahassee National Cemetery on July 8, 2021. Below is an excerpt from our National AMVETS page describing where this tradition comes from and when the first Carillon was dedicated. Below find President Truman's immortal words at Arlington National Cemetery on December 21, 1949.

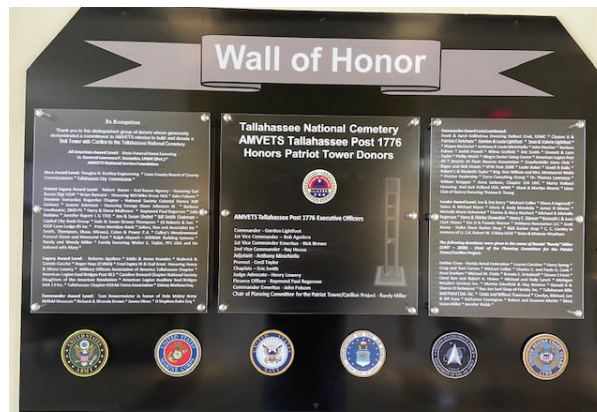
"The history of the program dates back to 1948 when AMVETS sought an appropriate memorial to honor those who had given their lives in World War II. After studying the tributes presented by other organizations and groups memorializing the dead of other wars, AMVETS decided that a "living" memorial, a carillon whose bells, symbolic of Thomas Jefferson's historic words, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," tolling as a constant reminder would be the most appropriate.

A carillon not only affirms that the sacrifices made by those who died were not in vain, but also serves to remind us of our legacy and of our debt to those who fought to preserve freedom throughout the world.

The first carillon was installed at Arlington National Cemetery. Accepted by an act of Congress in October 1949, this carillon was dedicated by President Harry S. Truman on December 21, 1949, with his now immortal words, "...As these bells ring ...honored dead rest ... freedom lives..."



2021



And a big "Thank You" to all our Donors!
 Plaque with names of Donors may be viewed in entrance to Administrative Building



1949

Chaplain's corner. . . .



Eric Smith

Invocation given at the dedication of the Patriot Bell Tower July 8, 2021

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise to all who bring us together today as we honor the completion and dedication of the Patriot Bell Tower and Carillon. We acknowledge that we did not do this on our own, but did with your love and guidance, and we gratefully thank and bless all who made this day possible.

We are grateful for your wisdom that guided us through our lengthy mission to complete this undertaking, and we pray that the tower and the carillon be a blessing and comfort to all who visit the Tallahassee National Cemetery.

Lord please guide our AMVETS Post as we continue to support our veterans, the Patriot Bell Tower, and the Tallahassee National Cemetery.

We ask this in your holy name.

Amen.

AMVETS Thank You Dinner

Special from Commander Emeritus John Folsom

September 30th at 6:30pm at the American Legion Hall, AMVETS Post 1776 will have a thank you dinner for the Patriot Guard and the Big Bend Hospice Valor Team. The Patriot Guard stands silently holding American Flags at the interment site of a deceased veteran. The Big Bend Hospice Valor Team offers support to a veteran who is in Hospice and will show up at the funeral to show their continuing support.

The members of both these organizations are volunteers. Many are thanked at the time of their service, but after that maybe not so much. When I do my part at a service and see both the Patriot Guard and or the Big Bend Hospice Valor Team I have a good feeling of comfort that others have that same feeling of devotion to help other veterans.

If you think you would like to help set the hall up then you need to contact me and let me know so when we find out a time to meet I can inform you. Chuck Howell and his wife have volunteered to lead the set up group. They do it every month for the Legion socials. The American Legion Auxiliary will be lending their assistance as well. Their contribution will be in the form of lending us their table cloths and center pieces for the tables.

The AMVETS had passed a motion to donate a new American Flag to the American Legion Auxiliary as theirs had disappeared. This was a good pr move because we were able to secure their help. Brenda Austin is allowing me to assist her in planning the event. She has been my go to lady for a number of events. I can honestly say she is the one person that can make an event like this hassle free and fun. She knows what she is doing.

The Patriot Guard and the Big Bend Hospice Team are not looking for rewards. They are rewarded from the feeling they get by doing what they do. However each of us knows that feeling when someone lets you know that they appreciate what you are doing. I hope with this dinner we can let both these organizations know what a difference they make in our community. Once again “thank you Patriot Guard and Big Bend Hospice Valor Team”.

John Folsom

The Florida Vietnam POW/MIA Bracelet Memorial

Special from Joe West, President, Big Bend Chapter 96, Vietnam Veterans of America

Three years ago this month VVA 96 member, Jim Dafoe, and his wife, Sandy, were visiting Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile, AL. On that visit Jim and Sandy saw a seven foot tall replica of the POW/MIA bracelet worn by millions since its release on Veterans Day 1970 by VIVA (Voices in Vital America) and subsequently distributed by the National League of POW/MIA Families. Jim, a Vietnam combat Veteran, was so awestruck, he took a few pictures and attended our next meeting to ask the Chapter why we couldn't make one of those for Tallahassee. I would invite you to read the history of the POW/MIA bracelet on the National League of POW/MIA Families website. As veterans, you will be amazed by the story and as most know, it is still sold and available today. That began a 3-year odyssey that hopefully will culminate in mid-September 2021 with the unveiling of The Florida Vietnam POW/MIA Bracelet Memorial next to the state's Vietnam Memorial on South Monroe Street.

We immediately received approval from The Battleship Park Board of Directors and Dr. Barry Booth, the Battleship Park Board Member who oversaw the bracelet project in Mobile, was a tremendous asset. With his support we began a fundraising drive. We sent bid requests to a dozen stainless steel fabricators in the Southeast US.

A Raleigh company earned the winning bid and by the summer of 2019, we had the bracelet in a warehouse in Tallahassee. A Georgia memorial stone working company completed the polished black granite explanatory piece that will sit next to the bracelet. By fall of 2019 we had begun discussions with the Florida Department of Management Services to place the bracelet near the Vietnam Memorial. We then learned we needed approval from the Florida legislature to erect anything on Capitol complex property. That became our challenge as Covid hit during the 2020 legislative session.



Fortunately, in December 2020, one of our primary sponsors introduced us to Steve Winn of Stephen R. Winn and Associates, legislative consultants. Steve, a Vietnam era veteran, pretty much said, here, hold my beer, and he accomplished in six weeks what we had failed to do in two years! In mid-April both houses of the Florida legislature unanimously approved SB 416. The Bill, using absolutely no public funds, was reviewed by three Committees in both the House and the Senate and never ONCE received a negative vote. Governor DeSantis signed the Bill into law and as I write this, we are just a few short steps away from seeing the bracelet unveiled at the Vietnam Memorial.

A POW bracelet (or POW/MIA bracelet).

The bracelet is a nickel-plated or copper commemorative bracelet engraved with the rank, name, and loss date of an American serviceman captured or missing during the Vietnam War.

The bracelets were first created in May 1970 ^[1] by a California student group called Voices in Vital America (VIVA), with the intention that American Prisoners Of War in Vietnam not be forgotten.

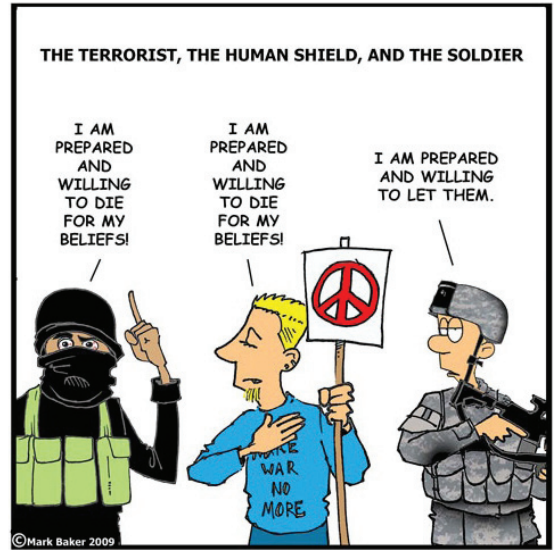
The bracelets sold for \$2.50 or \$3.00.

Those who wore the bracelets vowed to leave them on until the soldier named on the bracelet, or their remains, were returned to America.

Between 1970 and 1976, approximately 5 million bracelets were distributed.

Military Humor.....

IN-COUNTRY



How Warrant Officers think

