



## AMVETS Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

Vol.2, No.3 • Published via Internet 6 times annually from AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 • February, 2021



### In this Issue

Commander's  
Message. Pgs 1,2

Chaplain's Corner  
Pg, 2

Military Humor  
Pg, 3

My Cousin Vinnie  
Page 4

Silent Auction Pg 5

Finance Officer Pg 6

Comment on War  
Pg 7

Do you like to Shoot?  
Pg 9

Vietnam: One man's  
Story Pg 10



## Happy 2021!

I hope this February finds all our comrades safe and healthy. I hope you had a great Holiday season and are looking forward to a Happy New Year. I do not have to tell you 2020 was a rough year in more ways than we can count. And if you missed it, there was no formal event for our annual Wreaths Across America in December at the Tallahassee National Cemetery but Raymond Miller Director of our National Cemetery and Marianne Trussell the Chair of the Support Committee for the Cemetery both worked tirelessly to make sure wreaths were purchased and they were laid on all our Veteran gravesites. Below, in the Chaplain's Corner you will find a photograph of the wreaths laid out at the Cemetery in December. Photograph taken by Phil Welsh our photographer extraordinaire with the Support Committee for the Tallahassee National Cemetery, Inc. Phil has been documenting the building and growth of our Cemetery for over 5 years now.

Moving on, January and December have been eventful for me as a Post Service Officer for VFW Post 3308 and as Commander for AMVETS Post 1776. Sometimes events collide. As you may know I receive requests from time-to-time from veterans in need. It may be a veteran that is shopping around trying to look for a handout as one female veteran asked me recently. She literally said she was calling around the different Veteran organizations. Wondering if we could give her some money to help with living expenses. She was having to live with her daughter at the time. She was not a VFW member and not an AMVETS member and did not appear to be in any dire need. She called the Post and I get the message and spent some time returning her calls trying to determine if we as a Post could help her financially. Eventually, I was able to help connect her with some networks that might be able to help her with some employment opportunities, which is what she re-

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

Continued from page 1

ally wanted and needed. But, in another case, a veteran called and needed a Service Officer to help him upgrade his disability payments. He was at about 10% compensation and his service-connected disability was turning into a severe back problem. He had a lot of documentation that he sent me and after a couple of calls I forwarded his information to an AMVETS National Service Officer. For your information, AMVETS, VFW, American Legion, and DAV all maintain an active Service Officer program. Some like the State Department of VFW provide training and Certification to become a Certified Service Officer. It requires an intense week or two of training. The weekend training, I went through only certified me as a Post Service Officer that allows me to counsel and make referrals to regular Service Officers generally attached to VA Hospitals or in our case a VA Clinic. We have exemplary SO's at our Clinic. And we also have a County Veteran Service Officers in every county in Florida. Ben Bradwell is our County Service Officer and has Service Officer certificates from several Veteran organizations. The point I want to make is that, and I have written about this before, is that a Post Service Officer cannot receive and maintain veteran files that contain personal information, e.g., social security numbers, military identification, or other personal medical information that may become a security violation, a HIPPA violation. The case in point with the veteran that sent me his medical information, that I sent on a national AMVETS Service Officer, came close to that kind of a violation. The important thing was that this veteran did connect with an AMVETS National Certified Service Officer that is currently helping move his case along. Sort of brings home a point that Jason Smith, the VFW State Department Service Officer, when he told me why Post Service Officers do not maintain files. There is way too much liability for all parties involved. Therefore, please feel free to give me a call for a variety of veteran issues; benefits, disability compensation upgrade, discharge upgrades, predetermination need application for burial at our National Cemeteries and many other issues. I may be able to answer your questions and if I cannot, I will make every effort to get you to a person that can help. As usual if you would like more information please give me a call.

Semper Fi Gordon

Chaplain's Corner.....

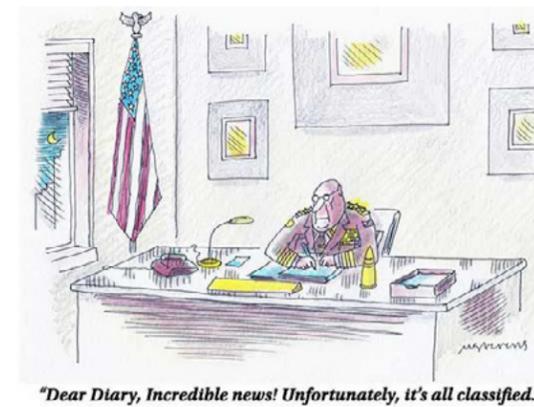
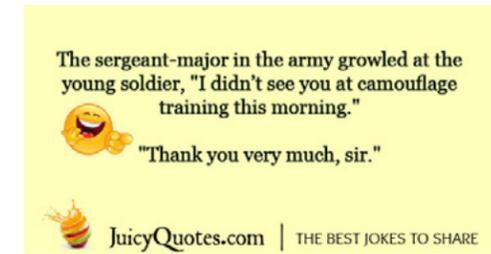


Father we thank you for seeing us through the past year 2020 and ask your blessings in 2021 on our members and our families for the coming year as we work to honor our veterans and those currently service around the world. We pray that you will bless us, Lord, for our unselfish service in the continual struggle to preserve our freedoms, our safety, and our country's heritage. Bless us for the hardships we have faced, for the sacrifices and contributions many of us have made to America's victories over tyranny. Father we especially pray for our comrades we have lost this past year that have contributed so much to our work on behalf of our AMVETS Post.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Military Humor.....and Jokes.



HOW DIFFERENT BRANCHES AVOID IEDS



My granddaughter's husband was complaining about how spell-check changes the meaning of e-mails when an Air Force officer told him this story: He'd sent a message to 300 of his personnel addressed to "Dear Sirs and Ma'ams." It was received as "Dear Sirs and Mamas."

—Phyllis Howard



## A different "My Cousin Vinnie" By Adjutant Anthony "Tony" Minichiello

My cousin Vincent DiMazo enlisted in the U.S. Navy during WWII and was Assigned to one of the new "Essex" Carriers the U.S.S. Franklin (CV 13), nicknamed "Big Ben". In 1944 she sailed to the Pacific where on 13 October 1944 off the coast of Formosa she was damaged when a Kamakazi crashed into her forward elevator.

Again on 15 October off Luzon she suffered bomb damage and on 30 October off Samar she was hit by another Kamakazi and sent to the West Coast for repairs then returned to the Pacific in March of 1945. While conducting bombing missions off mainland Japan she was struck by 2 amour piercing bombs while aircraft were preparing a second mission. The resulting conflagration took the lives of over 800 sailors and aviators (at that period in the war Marine Aviators were allowed to participate in carrier operations). The whole deck was consumed with flames and many sailors jumped overboard to escape being burned alive.

Eventually the fires were brought under control and she returned stateside. While being repaired, the war ended. The Dimazo family, having learned of the attack and damage, worried for two weeks until finally receiving word that Vincent was alive.

*Cyber News welcomes other readers to send articles sharing experiences or stories while in service. Photos are also welcomed.*



**Far left:** CV 13 under-way before the bombing.  
**Right:** My cousin Vincent DiMazo.



**Bottom left:** Gun turret full ablaze. Unknown if it was occupied. **Below:** with a leavy list, a Destroyer comes alongside to assist.

## First Items donated for "Silent Auction"



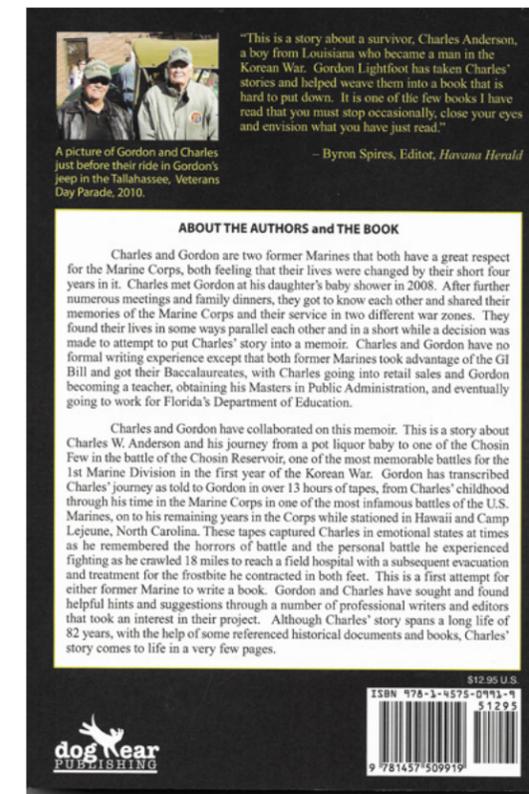
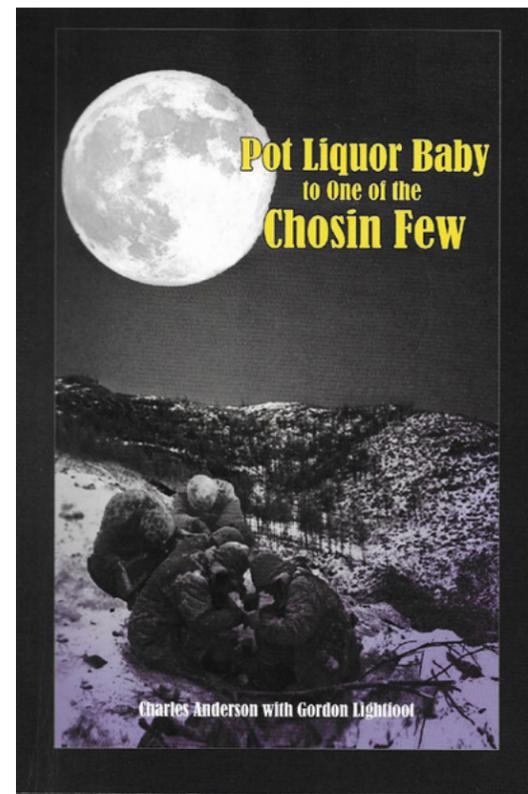
"Reclaimed Flag". Wooden Pallet American flag by AMVETS member Rick Brown. Brought inside and repainted with oil based and Acrylics, clear coated. "She's ragged but proud". Suitable for "Man-Cave" or outdoor display.  
Min. bid \$45.00



1975 Bottle of Old Grand-Dad 86 proof\* Kentucky Bourbon Whisky unbroken seal. Taken from "The Alibi Lounge", Cliffside Park, N.J. when it closed in 1978. Donated by AMVETS member Harry Mulhearns whose Father owned the lounge.  
Min. Bid \$100.00

*Remember.... we need items for the "Silent Auction" at our Golf Tournament We will be e-mailing periodic updates as numbers of items to auction grows.*

## A bit of history written in the true Venacular of the Marine who was there.



## Becoming AMVETS Post 1776 Finance Officer



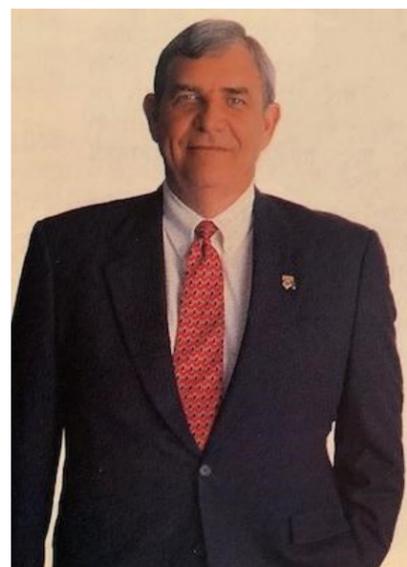
How could this happen to me especially since my occupation for my entire life was in telecommunications? Spending twenty years in the military, money requirements were handled by financial officers. Working as a Telecommunications Director the financial work I had done was projecting the annual money requirement to run the directorate. I joined AMVETS in 2018 and enjoyed attending the meetings. My career as AMVETS financial officer began at the end of 2019 due to my shooting buddy Randy Miller's encouragement to take the job. Randy and I shot trap every Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. I learned that he was in the military and made Captain while serving a three-year tour of duty. Since he was the finance officer for the shooting club, he had the knowledge on financial issues. His bookkeeping was exceptional. I asked

Randy to join AMVETS and he never understood why he should join since he only did 3 years of military service. Little did he know I was thinking of him becoming the AMVETS Financial Officer but that completely backfired! After he joined AMVETS, I tried to convince him to run for the financial officer since he was trained and knew the accounting business. He stated that running the finances for the shooting club was a big obligation already and that I should take the job since I had strong telecommunications background. Randy said he would help me to get set up and he did.

At an AMVETS monthly meeting the Commander asked if I would take the finance officer job and update their bookkeeping using QuickBooks Application. I knew Randy had a play in this because he was sitting nearby with the biggest smirk on his face! I took over the AMVETS financial responsibility in late September 2019.

It took two weeks to input the information (from bank statements and stored paperwork) and modernize the AMVETS Post 1776 financial system. I believe Randy purposely set me up and he laughed when we discussed AMVETS accounting. What a guy!!!!

*We lost Randy 27 November 2020 due to the pandemic. I miss him a lot...*



### 2020 brought grief and cheer

Randy Miller  
1947-2020  
Capt, USA  
Loved by all  
Fellow  
Members  
AMVETS  
Tallahassee  
Post 1776

After 5 1/2 years  
of paperwork  
Commander  
Lightfoot Views  
beginning  
construction of  
the Foundation  
on which the Bell  
Tower will rest



## A noteworthy comment on the cost of war

### Ending of Craig Tschetter's Memorial Day Speech

ARLINGTON AMERICAN LEGION

Arlington, South Dakota

Monday, May 25, 2020

"Washington DC is home to some of the most heart wrenching monuments of war anyone will ever see. Some are monuments depicting historic battles, another depicts soldiers walking the frozen earth of Korea, there's Arlington National cemetery filled with many of our fallen heroes, and a wall with 58,318 names carved in black granite.

Millions of visitors each year stand staring at the wall filled with the names of those "declared dead" during our country's Conflict in Vietnam. For many Vietnam combat veterans, the wall comes alive as a *reflection* of buddies inside the wall with arms reaching out as if to say, "Come get me."

The first names to appear on the wall are from an event that happened on July 8, 1959 and the last names listed are from an event that happened on May 15, 1975. What you might not know is:

97 National Guardsmen, 8 female, 31 sets of brothers, 3 sets of father and son, 54 from one school (Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia, PA), 6 are from Beallsville, Ohio (population 475), 997 died on their first day in Vietnam, 1,448 died on their last day, 245 died on January 31, 1968 (the most killed in one day), 2,415 died in May 1968 (the most killed in one month), 40,042 died in 1967-1969 (more than the total deaths in the Korean War), Youngest is age 15, Oldest is age 63. And . . . 192 . . . are from South Dakota, my home state. (*editor note...1954 from Florida*).

Most of those who die in war are young. . . Whether teenaged troops or commanders a few years older . . . they left us too early. But can any of us who are living . . . say that we accomplished more in our fuller life span . . . than those who we honor today.

Our fallen have given what President Lincoln called their "last full measure of devotion." They did it to serve America. They did it to serve us.

Let us live up to their sacrifice.

Once again, thank you for being here to honor those who gave the greatest sacrifice in our nations armed forces. May you be blessed, and in this time of continuing war may those blessings fall upon the United State of America."

*The complete speech can be seen on our web page at [www.amvets1776.org](http://www.amvets1776.org), I highly recommend the read.*

Craig is the Author of "15 Minutes ago" a Vietnam War Memoir. [www.Fifteen Minutes Ago.com](http://www.Fifteen Minutes Ago.com)

**If you're Mobile, breathing and Have a DD214; WE WANT YOU!** **AMVETS Post 1776 Tallahassee**  
Call Roberto Aguilera  
(850) 274-2934

Veterans are people who, at one point in their lives, wrote a blank check made payable to The United States of America for any amount, up to and including their lives.



## **Veterans helping Veterans** **8th Annual Golf** **Tournament, April 5th, 2021**

**Golden Eagle Golf and Country Club**

*Prizes, Lunch and Silent Auction at this event*

Contact us at: [aminichiello42@comcast.net](mailto:aminichiello42@comcast.net) 850 528-2125

**Funds raised help support the following organizations:**

Tallahassee Honor Flight, American Legion Baseball  
Disabled American Veterans Inc. Vietnam Veterans of America Inc.  
and other veteran relief organizations.

**Sponsored by**

# **AMVETS Post 1776**

**Tallahassee, Florida**

## **Do you like to Shoot?** By Post Commander Gordon Lightfoot

Then you might want to join the Big Bend Honor Guard (BBHG)! They are looking for some men and women that have some time on their hands and want to be a part of something that is remarkable in its service to our veterans being laid to rest at our Tallahassee National Cemetery.

The BBHG was started in the early days of the building of the Tallahassee National Cemetery by Donald Trussell and John Folsom. Donald passed before the Honor Guard took its final shape, but he and John (American Legion #13 Commander at that time) worked with the American Legion as they had some service rifles and the two of them were able to negotiate with the Army to use and maintain these rifles for use at the Cemetery. Jim Geuin got involved in the early days as well and provided leadership to create a well-oiled Honor Guard that is now known nationally through VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA). In fact, members of our Honor Guard must follow the rules of the NCA and apply to become a member. Membership currently is around 20 members with them needing 7 members attending for each service. They are not called on to perform at more than one service at a time. They would like to increase their membership looking to the future and the attrition that normally occurs in organizations like these.

The BBHG is currently a subcommittee of the Support Committee for the Tallahassee National Cemetery, Inc. and as such Honor Guard members receive some benefits to support their effort. Members will invest in their first white shirt, black trousers, and black shoes but the Support Committee supplies the patches and collar emblems representing the Honor Guard. Each member of the Honor Guard can wear the cover of the veteran organization they might belong to. The Support Committee also supplies raincoats when necessary and jackets for the winter months. And there is what I call, in endearing terms, a "guard shack", although it is a nice Honor Guard building housing dressing rooms, storage for the rifles and a place for the volunteers to assemble and spend some quiet time before services.

Our BBHG in less than 5 years have provided rifle salutes (3 volleys) at over 600 of our veteran services at the Tallahassee National Cemetery and have been called for their service at other private and public cemeteries in and around the Big Bend Area. Today they are beginning to restrict their services to our National Cemetery mainly due to the need to be on call there. In talking to Jim Geuin their average number of services is 10 plus a month. That is, they are requested through a funeral home or individual family to provide the rifle salute, TAPS and folding and presentation of the flag to the family. Under normal circumstances the branch of service the veteran served in will provide at least two regular service members to fold the flag and present it to the family.

If you are interested in volunteering some of your time to a worthy cause honoring our fallen veterans, please give Jim Geuin a call at 850-508-9433 or you can give me a call at 850-322-6924 and I will direct you to someone at the Support Committee that can help.



## Vietnam: One Soldier's Story

From the Collection: [Vietnam War](#)



### No Choice

Some volunteered to go to Vietnam. But many of the soldiers who went were drafted into the service, ineligible for a student deferment because they had never been to college. Twenty-year-old Mike Troyer had taken classes at the local college in Urbana, Ohio, studying during the day and working at the Navistar truck plant by night. But he dropped a course, fell below the minimum threshold for a deferment, and was drafted in 1967. Troyer was like other soldiers in that he didn't question the draft or the Vietnam conflict. His father and grandfather had served in war, so that's what he would do; Troyer felt he had "no choice in it." As for the struggle against communism, Troyer didn't care if he was "fighting against Flamenco Dancers, okay? We're going to do

whatever the government says -- they own me, I got to do it." Nor was Troyer concerned about being a member of the Black Lions battalion, which was so well known that the Viet Cong had allegedly offered a bounty for every Black Lions soldier killed. Like other twenty-year-olds, both in the service and out, he felt invulnerable. "There hasn't been a gook born yet that is going to get me," he wrote.

### Frustrations

Men like Troyer had to deal with several frustrations particular to the war in Vietnam. Many were brought in piecemeal as replacements within existing units, which made them feel disconnected from the larger group. And with no geographical lines separating friend from foe, the GI in the field couldn't trust anyone. Villagers might be innocent civilians or Viet Cong sympathizers. Areas temporarily cleared of enemy forces could become dangerous again the next week. What particularly galled Troyer was his feeling that superior officers "wouldn't leave [a soldier] alone to fight the war with the knowledge he learned to fight with." Flying by safely in their helicopters, men like Battalion Commander Terry Allen pressured the enlisted men on the ground to move more quickly and kill more of their foes. Then, dog-tired from marching through the jungle all day with 50-pound packs, the soldiers faced the prospect of some general swooping down and declaring that the way they had set up their perimeter did not comport with Army regulations. As Troyer put it, the war "is run by the book and Charlie can't read English so he gets all the breaks and we usually get killed." Troyer told his family that he didn't "feel like marchin' in any protest march against Vietnam, but this war is worthless."

### The Battle

The majority of American soldiers never witnessed large-scale battles or suffered through the terror of a jungle ambush during their one-year tours. But when they did, dozens of men could die within minutes. For Mike Troyer, an acting squad leader within Delta Company, the ambush of October 17 came just three months after he arrived in Vietnam, and what mattered on that terrible day was whether you were in the shade or sunlight. Crouching for cover behind an anthill, Troyer stayed out of the light and watched more exposed comrades get shot. He later crawled across the battlefield, "trying to find somebody that was alive." But the bodies had been so shot up that many were unrecognizable. Troyer identified one victim only by his 101st Airborne tattoo.

### Coming Home

Troyer was lucky; he survived the year until his Date Eligible for Return from Over Seas, or DEROS, and came back to Ohio in one piece. But Troyer had no illusions that returning soldiers would be greeted as heroes; other than his parents, he wasn't sure anyone would be happy to see him. And so before he left Vietnam, Mike Troyer made sure to do one more thing: he sent a self-addressed letter home, welcoming himself back to civilian life.