



A Special

Holiday issue

AMVETS Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

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In this issue

Commander's Report. Pg. 1

Chaplain's Message Pg. 2

Spotlight on a Veteran. Pg. 3

The V.A. System My View. Pg. 4

What is HBOT? Pg. 5

Military Humor Pg. 7

*Merry Christmas!
Happy New Year!*

2021!



COMMANDER'S CORNER.....

First, I want to wish everyone a joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year. Welcome to our December issue of our cyber newsletter. Our Post has decided to try to publish a newsletter bi-monthly and we wanted to start off with our first December issue to bring in the new year.

Our small Post continues to be working on big things and this past month has been no exception. But first let me share with everyone our heartfelt condolences to the Randy Miller family. As most of you know by now Randy passed November 27th a day after Thanksgiving. Randy contracted COVID-19 a few weeks earlier and fought the virus with everything he had. Wendy, Randy's wife kept me informed of his progress but Randy did have some other health issues that exacerbated his condition and the day after Thanksgiving went on his final journey to see the Lord. Some of us attended his service at Bevis' Funeral Home and Chapel and from there Randy went on to receive military honors at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. Wendy asked that I say a few words and on behalf of our Post I shared all our heartfelt prayers and best wishes to Wendy and his daughter Holly and the rest of his family. Randy had told Wendy from the moment he first visited our National Cemetery he knew where he wanted to be laid to rest. Randy's burial site is just a few rows back but in full view of where our Patriot Bell Tower/Carillon will be placed. Randy worked tirelessly to help us all raise the monies for the Tower and it is regrettable that he passed almost without days of seeing the final approval from VA. And, now within the past few days, in negotiations with Campbellsville Industries in Kentucky, we have a date for delivery and installation of the Tower. * February 8, 2021 is that magic date and Wendy has told me she wants to be there when that first bell is rung and that first song is played. We will make sure she gets her wish. And we

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

cont. from Page 1

will make sure Randy receives due recognition when we conduct our dedication ceremony as soon as possible after our Tower is raised.

At our November meeting we have begun to move into the age of technology. For the second meeting in a row John Folsom has introduced us to Zoom meetings. We were glad to see Ben Balding join us this month, along with John. Sort of a small step but we have grown by a couple of members recently and I believe, with some of the projects we are beginning, e.g., working with the Dale Maybre Museum; continuing to work on our Heritage Trail Project; and other veteran service projects in discussion we will continue to grow in the Big Bend area.

And one last thought, we all need to thank Val Frailey, Commander of American Legion Post #13 for allowing us to meet at their Hall on Lake Ella. It is a spacious facility, centrally located with ample parking and Val is gracious enough to let us meet at their hall with just a token monthly donation to his Post. Thank you, Val,

And thank all of you for all you do everyday for veterans. And remember, we are a small Post doing big things.

*This date in February is marked for delivery and installation of our Patriot Bell Tower unless some unforeseen circumstance keeps us from pouring the concrete base/foundation to receive it. Everyone will be getting regular updates on our progress.

Semper Fi., Gordon



Male Model Calendar Available from the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA 20-12)

This Calendar parodies the Chippendale Calendars except the models are all veterans. Also they are not nude BUT they are men who have served our country during times of war. The monies raised will be for the Tallahassee Honor flight.

If anyone would like to purchase a calendar They can contact Alex topicz at topicza@bell-south.net or call (727) 741-1860. He would be glad to bring one to them.

Or they can reach the website via Facebook Combat Vets Ch 20-12 Calendar or on the website <https://combatvetscalendar.com>

Have a DD 214? You qualify to join the American Veterans AMVETS. Reservist or Guard all qualify. We welcome you to visit us on January 7, at 1830 hours for our meeting at Lake Ella.

Chaplain's Message. Christmas 2020

With pride and respect we pray for a safe and happy Christmas season. We are grateful for the promise that this season holds, and I pray for those in our military family who will find merriment difficult this year. For those who are grieving the loss of loved ones. For those who are separated by deployment away from friends and family. And for those still carrying around the wounds of war, whether visible or invisible. Bless us all, I pray, not with presents and packages wrapped up with bows, but by answering the deepest longings of our hearts.

I pray that the promise of peace on earth, good will among all will come to pass and that it will come, at least in a small way, because of the work that we do and the people that we are.

Amen.

Portions copied from Mitchel Lewis December 2012

Spotlight on a Veteran...

Willy Williams, the most decorated enlisted sailor in Navy history

[Doug Sterner](#)

November 8, 2018

James Elliott “Willy” Williams



In the history of the U.S. Navy only seven men have earned all of the “Big Three” valor awards: Medal of Honor, Navy Cross and Silver Star Medal. Six were World War II officers, including one aviator and four submarine commanders. The seventh was enlisted sailor James Elliott “Willy” Williams in Vietnam.

In 1947, Williams, a 16-year-old from Fort Mill, South Carolina, enlisted in the Navy with a fraudulent birth certificate. His first 19 years in the Navy included service aboard the destroyer USS Douglas H. Fox during the Korean War and tours on a variety of naval vessels from 1953 to 1965.

In May 1966 Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Williams was assigned to River Squadron 5 in South Vietnam to command Patrol Boat, River 105. The approximately 30-foot fiberglass boat usually carried a four-man crew who patrolled inland waterways to prevent the Viet Cong from using them to transport troops and supplies. On July 1 Williams led a patrol that came under fire from a Viet Cong sampan. His deft maneuvers and accurate fire killed five VC and resulted in capture of the enemy boat, earning Williams a Bronze Star Medal with a “V” for valor. Twenty-two days later the capture of another sampan brought Williams a second Bronze

Star for valor. Less than a month later, he received a Silver Star and his first Purple Heart.

On Halloween, Oct. 31, 1966, Williams was commanding a two-boat patrol on the Mekong River when he was fired on by two sampans. He and his crew killed the occupants of one and then went after the other. That pursuit put the Navy boats into a VC staging area containing two junks and eight sampans, supported by machine guns on the river banks. Williams called for helicopter gunship support while holding the enemy at bay. During this movement

he discovered an even larger force. Not waiting for the armed helicopters, Williams attacked. Maneuvering through devastating fire from enemy boats and the shore, his two-boat patrol fought a three-hour battle that destroyed or damaged 65 VC boats and eliminated some 1,200 Communist troops. For his actions, Williams was nominated for the Medal of Honor.

On Jan. 9, 1967, the Navy dredge Jamaica Bay was blown up by mines in the Mekong Delta, and PBR-105 arrived to pick up seven of the survivors. Another man was trapped in the rapidly sinking dredge. Williams dove into the water and, with a rope attached to a nearby tug, pulled clear an obstruction, then swam through a hatch to recover the sailor.

Six days later Williams was wounded while leading a three-boat patrol that interdicted a crossing attempt by three VC heavy-weapons companies of 400 fighters. He and his boats accounted for 16 VC killed, 20 wounded and the destruction of nine sampans and junks. Williams was awarded the Navy Cross.

When Williams returned home in spring 1967, he had a list of awards unmatched by any enlisted man in Navy history. He retired after 20 years of service and began a career in the U.S. Marshals Service.



Money to cover Maintenance Fund delivered!

Commander Lightfoot (l) and Finance Officer Paul Rogerson (r) are shown here presenting the check for maintenance funds, required by the VA, to Raymond Miller, Director of the Tallahassee National Cemetery on December 1. Formal letters from the VA and AmVets have been received and construction will begin on the Bell Tower with a projected date of February 8, 2021 for Installation.

The “Boots Thomas V.A. Clinic in Tallahassee, Florida



The V.A. System, My View.

By Linda Minichiello

The VA system gets a lot of attention by the media, and, I imagine, some of it is true. Much of it, however, is isolated to certain VAs in certain parts of the country. All doctors are not created equal in the private sector, or the VA system. Some care, and for some it is just a job. The same is true in the VA.

I grew up in the VA system. My father was “shell shocked” as a result of WWII. He went into the VA when I was a baby, and never got out. Today we call it PTSD, but after WWII it was known as Battle Fatigue or Shell Shocked. WWII never ended for my dad, but the VA took care of him for the rest of his life: in the VA hospital in Gulfport, MS, in a halfway house there, and finally in what I call foster care. He lived with a rural farm couple until he had to go into a nursing home with Parkinsons. The VA paid this couple to take care of him, and a social worker was sent regularly to see if my dad needed anything. Daddy died in 1998 in a nursing home.

The VA not only took care of my dad, it also took care of my mom and me. Mothering was not a good skill for my mother, so the VA assigned a legal guardian for me that monitored my care and always saw to it that I was never neglected. I had good medical care growing up in rural AL, better than many of my friends. Before I started school I always received a Christmas gift signed “Love, Daddy.” This would have been done by a VA Social Worker since my dad was not capable. I, however, always believed the gifts were from my daddy.

My mother remarried when I was 10, and she married a man in the Air Force. When we returned from a two year assignment in Turkey, a social worker was sent by the VA to check on me. My room was checked, my clothes were checked, and I suspect, the school questioned to make sure no signs of neglect were observed. I was checked on until I turned 18. Still not forgotten, they paid for me to go to college and get my degree in teaching. The VA was set up to not only take care of the veterans, but also take care of the widows and orphans left behind, and they did! I have nothing but praise for them.

I now volunteer at the VA in Tallahassee, Florida. It is pay back for all they did for me and my dad. Tallahassee has an excellent VA system. The volunteers and employees go out of their way to help all the veterans that come through the doors. Many go above and beyond.

One such point would be the veteran who had walked and hitchhiked from Maine on his way to South FL. He arrived in FL with third degree burns from the hot sun, as well as other problems from sleeping in the woods, etc. The first VA he went to in FL would not see him because he was not one

Continued from Page 4

of their patients and he had no primary care doctor there. Someone told him to get to Tallahassee if he could; they would help him. He came here and was sent by a volunteer into the office that would move his care from Maine to Tallahassee. Then he was given a primary care doctor and a social worker. The social worker took him into our walk-in clinic so medical care could begin until he could see his doctor. A hotel room was rented for him so he could get a shower and a good night's sleep. He was taken to a Good Will store and clothes were purchased for him. He was fed in our cafeteria. When he talked to me, he had nothing but the highest praise for our VA. I did not see him again after that, but I am sure the VA helped him find his way home. This certainly shows the VA at its best and doing what it was set up to do!

So, the next time you listen to the news down rate our VA system, please remember that all VAs are not created equal, just like anything else. There are good VAs out there, and I have been very fortunate to have seen the VA at its best both times in my life. Certainly the one in Gulf Port and the one in Tallahassee are vet centers that this country can be proud of.



Veterans Day Grand Marshal



American Legion Post 49, Monticello member, Harry Mulhearns accompanied by his wife, Diana, ride in the Veterans Day Parade in Monticello, Florida.

Harry was selected as the Grand Marshal to represent his Post in this annual event. Harry proudly served in Korea during that conflict as a Marine. Harry is also a member of the VFW, Marine Corps League and AMVETS Post 1776 Tallahassee.

2021 will see the return our Annual Veterans helping Veterans Golf Tournament

April 5, 2021 at Golden Eagle Golf and Country Club will be the site of our seventh Annual Tournament. The format this year will be a little different due to the new norm concerning the Covid situation. We are adding a Silent Auction to curriculum which will be handled by Bruce Sellers, Manager of the GECCC.

We are asking our supporters to consider donating articles to be put up for auction during this event to help raise funds for our projects: The Honor Flight, DAV, Dale Mabry WWII Aviation Museum, Bell Tower and other programs to support Veterans in need.

Donated items to be auctioned must be of good quality and value. Donators may estimate a dollar value and receive an acceptance letter from the Post that will not establish a value but the donator may take to his/her accountant for a write-off at tax filing time.

Items can range from Paintings, Electronics, Sports Memorabilia, Antiques or anything of value. **No Fire Arms**, however. For further information contact Post Adjutant Tony Minichiello, (850) 528-2125, Ray House (850) 364-9140 or Gordon Lightfoot (850) 322-6515

What is HBOT?

This could be an article about Major John Haynes. I am not sure any veteran in Tallahassee doesn't know who the Major is. He is something of an icon in our area. I mentioned him in my article about my Dad that was in China in 1945-1946. John was in China in WWII, then in Korea and in Vietnam. But once again, I digress.

A member of AMVETS Post 1776, Tony Minichiello our Adjutant asked Major Haynes to speak at his American Legion Post #49 in Monticello recently. Major Haynes gave a talk about hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), something he knows a lot about but something most of us don't know anything about. At breakfast this morning Major Haynes shared with me an article written in 2015 by Robert Beckman, PhD entitled *Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: Treatment for Brain Injuries Hiding in Plain Sight*, AUSN, Health Talk, APR/MAY/JUN 2015 and another file of medical research and other articles on the subject of HBOT. Altogether a collection of high level research that is way above my head but after reading through a lot of it and of course googling the subject looking for more recent articles I found I wanted to report on this subject but am afraid I can't do it justice in my short space here but I do want to introduce everyone to the topic and if you don't personally have an issue with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) maybe you do know a friend or a relative that does have problems. For the sake of brevity, I am going to quote a few paragraphs that, I think, will give you enough information that you might want to do some follow up on your own or at least have enough information to ask some relevant questions of our VA medical staff at our VA Clinic.

First, from Dr. Beckman's article he describes what HBOT is: "Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HPOT) is an FDA approved medical treatment which enhances the body's natural healing process by inhalation of 100% oxygen in a chamber where the atmospheric pressure is increased. It has been employed for decades to treat a variety of conditions but is particularly useful in the fields of neurology and wound care. The treatment process is safe, painless, and has few side effects....to help treat and heal TBI and PTSD....So what is being done?"

From a case control study published in 2017 in Medical Gas Research (downloaded free from <http://www.medgasres.com>) "HBOT was found to be safe and significantly effective for veterans with mild to moderate TBI...PTSD in all four outcome domains....Veterans also experienced a significant reduction in suicidal ideation and reduction in psychoactive medication use."

From a Press Release: House VA Committee Testimony, July 21, 2010 in part entitled: "Evidence Presented on Safe and Cost-Effective Solution to TBI/PTSD...."The study findings are further supported by improvements in brain injured active duty service members treated with the HBOT 1.5 protocol by Drs. Eddie Zant and James Wright (USAF, retired). In the Zant/Wright case series all of the Airman were retained in service. This retention saved the government millions of dollars in future medical care, disability payments, and recruiting/training costs to replace the injured Airmen."

And finally, a testimony from Brigadier General Patt Maney, US Army Reserve (Ret.): "The place was a dirt road in Paghman, Afghanistan. "I was alive, I was grateful". I lost short term memory, reasoning, word finding, reading, comprehension, problem solving, I had headaches. I couldn't concentrate.

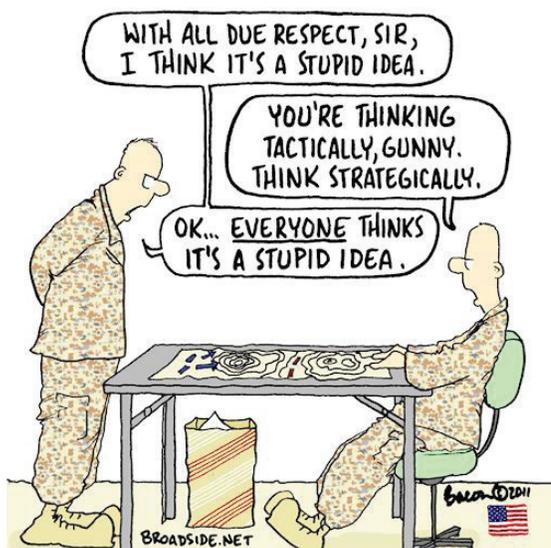
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I could not solve simple arithmetic. I was told by a Physician that "tincture of time" was the only way to treat TBI. A friend of mine, Dr. Eddie Zant, suggested Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy. I received 40 HBOT treatments. While I was not able to stay in the Army, I was able, through HBOT treatments, accompanying therapies, and my own fear of failure, to go back to my civilian job (Judgeship). I can continue a life of rewarding service because of the gift I was given. I strongly believe HBOT should be made available to all TBI wounded warriors within the Department of Defense and the VA. I believe making HBOT available will not only improve the quality of lives of our TBI wounded and their families, but will also save money that would have been required for lifetime care and pharmaceutical expenses. I believe HBOT treatments will very likely reduce the suicide rate. We must keep faith with America's battle wounded."

As usual, if you would like more information please give me a call.

Semper Fi, Gordon

Military Humor



Vindication



Merry Christmas 2020!

*We wish you and yours a
joyous Christmas and Happy New Year!*

AMVETS Post 1776
Tallahassee, Florida

Let us never forget the sacrifices we made to get here.....