# AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

***Published Bi-Monthly for the membership and others — Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2026***

***In this issue…..***

***Commander's Message Page 1-2***

***Chaplain's Corner Page 2***

**Brief History of AMVETS *Page 2-3***

***Another Monkey Story Page 3-4***

***Woodville School Plaque and David Wilson Page 4-6***

***Another Act of Kindness Page 7***

***AMVETS Monthly Calendar Page 8***

## *Commander's Corner*

My apologies, this issue is a little late. The past couple of months have been pretty busy with elections, Memorial Day events, the 16th Annual Ray House Golf Tournament and other activities we have all been involved in.

I hope you all had a great Memorial Day weekend. The Ceremony at the Tallahassee National Cemetery (TNC) was held on Saturday vs the day of celebration on Monday. A decision was made years ago to schedule the TNC event before the day of observation to allow the VFW Post 3308 and American Legion Post 13 to conduct their respective Memorial Day events on Monday, the day of observance. Difficult to attend all three, I was able to attend the TNC event, and it was well attended with a great program with the Director of the Cemetery, Mr. Andrew Santa-Pinter, giving the keynote address.

On April 27th we had another successful Golf Tournament. We had almost 100 players, a great silent auction and a great meal giving out awards and door prizes. The Golf Tournament is our major fundraiser and again this year we were able to make a nice profit which we will use this year to help fund veterans and veteran organizations in need. We do maintain some monies for emergency relief, and we try to support our State Departments emergency relief fund every year.

**(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 the first Thursday of the month at American Legion Post 13, 229 Lake Ella Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32303. We invite honorably discharge veterans, including Guards and Reserve, from all branches to Join us. We are a small post doing big things

**www.amvets1776.org**

## *(Commander's Corner Continued from page 1)*

A special event was held a couple of weeks ago to honor fallen heroes that graduated from one of the oldest schools in Leon County. See my article on the Woodville School dedication ceremony.

Our annual dinner and installation will be held this year where we have been meeting, at Elks Lodge. They have a kitchen and prepare great meals. Looking forward to their fried chicken and pork tenderloin this year. We will share photos and a complete list of officers and staff shortly after our installation ceremony. For the record, you will have to put up with me for another year, our 1st Vice will be David Wilson; 2nd Vice Ray House; Finance Officer Tom Carney; Judge Advocate Johnnie Roberts; Chaplain Ernest Reed and Provost Cecil Taylor. We are still in need of an Adjutant if anyone wants to apply for that appointed position.

One last thing, we are now beginning to plan for our 3rd Annual Turkey Shoot. It will be held in November at the Tallahassee Rifle and Pistol Club in Woodville.

As always, thank you all for all you do for veterans and your continuing service to our Country, our County and our Post.

Semper Fi

Gordon

## *Chaplain's Corner*

**Chaplain Earnest Reed**

***"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."* (John 14:13-14)**

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: Mercifully accept our prayers, and grant to your servant our sick members. the help of your power, that *their* sickness may be turned into health, and our sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. In closing, let's all find and set a healthy balance in our life; so that we can go the distance in serving others, our veterans', our family, and every team we get to be a part of. Then we can give God all the glory. Amen..

## Brief History of AMVETS

by Finance Officer Tom Carney

AMVETS began with the formation of two independent veterans clubs in Washington DC in August 1943. One of the clubs consisted of government employed veterans and the other club was located on the campus of George Washington University. Their purpose was to sponsor a servicemen's party. During 1944, similar groups began in Louisiana, Florida, California, New York, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Texas. The similarities among the groups' goals were published in a Collier's Magazine article in November 1944 – titled, "12,000,000 in Search of a Leader".

**(Continued on next page)**

## (Brief History of AMVETS Continued from page 2)

Their initial goals were to:

Promote world peace
Preserve the American way of life
Help veterans help themselves

On December 9, 1944, the organization was established as the American Veterans of World War II. The name “AMVETS” was coined by newspaper headline writers. The White Clover was adopted as the official flower- which symbolized the states from where the veterans had come from and the global battlefields they fought.

In October 1945, the first national convention was held in Chicago. In 1946, AMVETS petitioned Congress for a federal charter, which was granted on July 23, 1947. On that day, President Harry Truman signed Public Law 216, which made AMVETS the first World War II group to be federally chartered.

Initially, AMVETS membership was limited to World War II veterans. During the Korean War, AMVETS requested Congress to expand membership to include Korean War veterans, and in 1984 to include all honorably discharged veterans from World War II to the present. This helped to broaden the organization’s reach to serve all generations of US military service members.

Today, AMVETS is a non-Partisan, volunteer led organization with a national, district, department, and post structure. Officers are elected annually and the National Convention is held each August to set policies and priorities. Its mission remains focused on preserving freedom, supporting America’s defenders, and serving communities – with some 250,000 members nationwide. There are over 70 AMVETS post throughout Florida and that our Post was chartered in 2009.

**Bruce Ruks**

*A Pelican pilot from the 1967-68 era*

## AGTMS Another George the Monkey Story

As all are aware, we often got in late and the mess hall was closed but we tried to call in and ask them to make some of those really lousy sandwiches for us when we got in. SURE! The crew chief and gunner spent the next two hours cleaning and checking the guns/ship. The pilots would try to help but often just got in the way or screwed up the process and were told to go away.

After one late arrival we went back to the hooch, and somebody came up with the great idea of going over to the local Marine Air Group Club cause you could get an almost real stateside pizza? Then another fellow suggested we take George the monkey along. I think we had a few toddies in us by this time and seemed like a good idea. Somehow we got a jeep and four of us and George jumped in. We did have George on a leash, and he seemed to enjoy the ride, as his girlfriend Snoopy had gotten out of Dodge.

As we entered the club, you were required to check your side arms (which turned out to be very wise).

**(Continued on next page)**

## (AGTMS Another George the Monkey Story Continued from page 3)

The club was nothing more than a large hooch with about 8 10ft tables/chairs, a make-shift bar and a "kitchen" that was accompanied by a pizza oven that could only cook two pizzas' at time. Other food offerings were not available this late and we were the only army folks amongst about twenty Marine pilots in sweaty flight suits who also appeared to be hungry and just completed their missions. We grabbed the end of a ten-footer with George on a leash, sent someone up the bar to order 4 pitchers of beer (well, there were 4 of us!) and started figuring out how to stay alive and get home safe.

At the other end of our table were two marines had been there about an hour before us and anxiously were waiting for their pizza. When their number was called, one fellow went to get the pizza and the other went to get more beer. The pizza guy came back, left the pizza on their end of the table then went to help his pal bring back the beer-leaving the long-awaited pizza unattended. George saw it and was uncontrollable.

I am not sure if we unleashed him or he broke loose. He ran down the tabletop and proceeded to sit in the middle of the pizza and feast on the artificial sausage they put on those things. We were all hysterical with laughter as we had never seen a monkey eat pizza, let alone sit in the middle of it!

Now here come the two marines, hungry as hell. All they see is a monkey sitting on their pizza and eating. I think it was a good thing weapons were checked!

We almost had to fight our way out but gave the marines our pizza number and were told never to return! Just one of those fun memories I'd like to share.

---

## Woodville School Plaque and David Wilson

By Gordon Lightfoot

David Wilson has done it again. As we know, David has become quite the historian on writing about and honoring our fallen heroes throughout the Big Bend Area. David scours the local cemeteries looking for veterans that have served and died and been laid to rest in, sometimes a remote cemetery or public or private cemeteries throughout the Big Bend. David does historical research on the veterans he finds and for the Vietnam Veterans he finds prepares County Books with the history of their service, what happened to them and where they are buried. But most importantly, David pulls together fellow veterans and visits these gravesites and conducts a simple ceremony that follows this order of service:

1) We begin by doing minor cleanup around the grave if needed.
2) We have a short introduction of the man and how he died.
3) We will place a new American flag on the grave and remove old ones.
4) we place a "memory rock" on the grave to let his friends and relatives know that someone came to visit him.
5) We also place a "hero rock" on the grave.
6) We "ring the bell" for the deceased.
7) We perform "honors" for the man by providing a salute to him and thanking him for his service.
8) We will have a short prayer for the man, and his family.
9) We conclude our visit with the playing of "taps."

**(Continued on next page)**

## (Woodville School Plaque and David WilsonContinued from page 4)

David has been doing these tributes since 2019. He has produced numerous books for counties throughout the Big Bend including one he did for me honoring Vietnam casualties from Putnam County.

But now, in his recent studies he found that a small school in Leon County, Woodville School, in fact the oldest school in Leon County, 1856, caught fire and burned down in 1980. And in that fire was lost a memorial plaque commemorating seven veterans that died during World War I, World II and Korea. All graduates from Woodville School.

David came to our Post and shared with us the research he had done on these veterans and asked if we might purchase a new plaque to replace the one that burned with the school. It took about two minutes for us to vote on that one.

**The New Memorial Plaque**

Then on May 19th I was asked to say a few words along with Leon County Superintendent Rocky Hanna. The principal, Ms. Cari Molinaro, had seven students read a short paragraph on each veteran with a bell ringing for each. It was quite an honor to pay a tribute to these seven veterans: Ira Oliver Gerrell; Wando Amos Hart; William Archie Herring; Enoch Elijah Kelly; Herman Edgar Lawhon; James Hamilton Lawhon and Maurice Hulburt Watson. In attendance was a number of our members, always willing to participate in our community service. Once again, David did the research and put together most of the program along with a book for the school's archives. Thank you, David, for another job well done.

**Superintendent Rocky Hanna. The principal, Ms. Cari Molinaro, had seven students**

**(Continued on next page)**

(Woodville School Plaque and David Wilson Continued from page 5)

**AMVETS Members with the Leon County Superintendent Rocky Hanna at Woodville School Presenting the new Memorial Plaque.**

**David Wilson and Leon County Superintendent Rocky Hanna**

**Woodville Memorial Participants**

## Another Act of Kindness

By Gordon Lightfoot

In 2020 I wrote an article about an Act of Kindness a Marine's son-in-law brought to our attention a request from his father-in-law that wanted to donate to our Bell Tower. This Marine was in failing health, and he wanted to contribute to our Bell Tower that was proposed to help memorialize all veterans laid to rest at our Tallahassee National Cemetery. And that is how we receive donations a lot of times. A veteran or a family member of a veteran will want to give a donation to show their devotion to other veterans.

As most of our readers know our Post raises funds through our Golf Tournament and now our Turkey Shoot. But it is not uncommon for us to get a call from someone that wants to donate something of value be it furniture or another item of value. We have a nice car, a scooter, a couch and other gifts that we have turned into funds or re-donate so that we in-turn can support our veterans or veteran organizations in need in our community. In fact, throughout the years, our Post has generated thousands of dollars for worthwhile veterans or organizations that provide for veterans. And just a couple of weeks ago we had another Act of Kindness, referring to a gift from a veteran that wanted his and his wife's gift to go to another veteran. In this case we decided to keep this gift on our records and give it to a veteran in need of mobility. The only condition is that it won't be sold and when and if there is not a continuing need for it that it be returned and we will give it to another veteran in need.

**Donated Scooter**

Meg and John Paschal are the kind folks that gifted us a GOGO Pride Scooter. And it didn't take us long to find a home for it. Ray House, our former Post Commander and founding member of our Post is the recipient of this nice scooter. It has been delivered and Ray is enjoying that extra mobility. His kind words back to me were that it was quicker than he thought it would be, he felt the wind blowing in his hair! (oh, Ray doesn't have that much hair, but he has a great sense of humor!) Thank you to the Paschal's and enjoy Ray.

**Ray House on his Scooter**

# AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776

## June 2026

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3<br>**American Legion Commander's Coalition** | 4<br>**AMVETS Post 1776 Monthly Meeting** | 5 | *6* |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | |