



AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

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Commander's Corner

Well, we try to put out our newsletter every couple of months but there are times we can't due to all our busy schedules. And this is one of those times. From our last newsletter in January a lot has been going on in the AMVETS world.

In February I was invited to give a presentation to over 40 Leon County High School principals discussing our Military Heritage Trail Program for students in the 13-to-17-year age group. We recently updated our program booklet adding Mike Terhune's 911 Memorial and we edited our program guide updating our syllabus and tour schedule. Superintendent Hanna's letter endorsing our program has been added and he was at the principal's meeting once again helping us promote the program. We sure hope we can get into the teacher's field trip schedules soon, stay tuned.

In March I was asked to be a co-Keynote speaker at the 10th and Final Vietnam Commemoration Ceremony at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. Quite an honor, see article.

In April Lew Wilson and I presented Ms. Danielle Galvin with an AMVETS Certificate of Appreciation for her generous work and original sponsorship of the Veterans Blanket drive we have been conducting the past three years. Here is Danielle with Lew and Me at the Tallahassee Board of Realtors office presenting to Ms. Galvin.

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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 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

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Ms Dannielle Receives AMVETS Certificate of Appreciation



Newly Elected AMVETS Officers



Left to right: John Folsom, Judge Advocate; Cecil Taylor, Provost; Ray House 2nd Vice Commander; Gordon Lightfoot, Commander; Ernest --- Chaplain; Tom Carney, 1st Vice Commandant and Paul Rogerson, Finance Officer.

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Also, April brought us our 15th Annual Golf Tournament a huge success this year. See article on renaming our Golf Tournament.

And finally on May 1st we held our Annual Elections and Installation. Here is a photo of our crew with list of new officers for fy 2025/26, sans an Adjutant. We will be appointing one soon.

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

Chaplains Corner

Ernest Reed, Chaplain AMVETS Post 1776



For the Sick Members and Family

O God of heavenly powers, by the might of your command you drive away from our bodies all sickness and all infirmity: Be present in your goodness with our sick members, that *their* weakness may be banished and *their* strength restored; and that, *their* health being renewed, *they* may bless your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Biography Professional Summary

Ernest is dedicated veteran and ministry leader with over 60 years of combined service in military, municipal, and religious leadership. Retired U.S. Navy Senior Chief with extensive experience in electronics, leadership, and training. Longtime community servant and ordained elder with a passion for mentoring and faith-based outreach.

Military Experience

U.S. Navy & Navy Reserves

Senior Chief Fire Control Technician

1971 – 2000 (Active Duty + Reserves, 29 years)

- Served aboard USS Hawkins (DD-873) and USS Tattnall (DDG-19), with multiple Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Middle East deployments
- Roles included Division LPO, MAA, Nuclear Security Team member, and Sailor of the Quarter
- Shore duty at Fleet MAG Mayport and multiple Reserve Detachments including SIMA Mayport, USS Flatley, and USS Blakely

Held leadership positions: Command Career Counselor, Training Officer, Executive Officer, and Command Senior Chief

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(Continued from Page 3 Ernest Reed)

Ernest Reed Civilian Career

City of Tallahassee, FL

E&I Technician

1977 – 2010 (33 years incl. wartime service credit)

- Instrumental in the maintenance and operation of critical infrastructure

Retired with full honors after three decades of municipal service

J.C. Penney (Jacksonville & Tallahassee, FL)

Automotive Service Manager

6 years

- Oversaw service operations and staff management for high-volume retail automotive centers

Ernest Reed Religious Leadership

Worldwide Christian Ministry Inc. | Miracle Deliverance Center #2

Elder | Sunday School Superintendent | General Coordinator

1990 – Present

- Saved in 1990 and has served in multiple ministry roles since. Active member of Elder Board, responsible for Sunday School curriculum and leadership development

Fleet Reserve Association

President, Branch 34 – Tallahassee

National Chaplain (2012–2013)

Southeast Regional Chaplain (6 years)

- Provided spiritual guidance and ceremonial leadership across regional and national platforms

Education

Valdosta Technical School

Diploma, Electronic Technology – September 1971

Military Training

- Fire Control Technician “A” School (Class Leader, 4th in Class)
- Recruit Training Command, Orlando, FL (Platoon Leader, Most Outstanding Recruit)

Personal

Married to Elder Shirley J. Johnson since 1971; proud father of three children. Devoted to faith, family, and community service.

VIETNAM WAR
10th and Final Salute
50th Anniversary Commemoration
Tallahassee National Cemetery
March 27, 2025

(Article by Gordon Lightfoot)

Last year I wrote a brief piece on our 9th year celebrating the 50th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of the Vietnam War. Lieutenant Colonel Rick Stanford gave a great keynote on his experiences in the Marine Corps with emphasis on his tour in Vietnam and the young men that served with him. I was lucky this year to co-Keynote this 10th and final salute to the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War. I



I am not sure, but March 29th will become Vietnam Day, even if not officially, for all of us Vietnam veterans.

I was lucky in a couple of ways. I got to share the stage with a Vietnam nurse that did her tour in Vietnam the same year I left Vietnam in 1968. I spoke on the many services provided by support to our troops in the field. It is reported that at least 40% of Vietnam veterans were exposed either directly (in the field by my definition) or indirectly. By indirect I mean those of us that provided administrative or logistical support through a variety of means, e.g., serving as

Keynote Speaker Gordon Lightfoot

support in Battalion areas where Marine and Army gave support to the Companies, Platoons and Squads that ventured on out to confront the Viet Cong or the many other factions of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). By support, I mean providing services from delivering mail to the front not that there was much of a front to writing home to loved ones when we had casualties. And support meaning when you have to move an entire Battalion encampment from one geographical area to another or in our case with the 2nd Battalion 3rd Marines, several times to the USS Princeton and the USS Tripoli conducting Battalion Landing Teams.

As mentioned above I was lucky that I was there and came home but I am even more lucky to know veterans like Lt.Col. Rick Stanford a silver star and purple heart recipient that left us with a memorable quote from when folks asks him about Vietnam, his reply is usually: "...if you weren't there, I can't explain it to you, if you were I don't have to...". And there are many other Vietnam veterans I know like Richard Duley a Vietnam helicopter pilot and Jon Shebel a decorated purple heart recipient with the Recon Battalion at the same time I was there. And I can't not mention Major John Haynes a silver star and purple heart recipient serving in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, and there are many others.

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**VIETNAM WAR
10th and Final Salute
50th Anniversary Commemoration
Tallahassee National Cemetery
March 27, 2025
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Keynote Dr. Deanna Epley

Lieutenant and later Dr. Epley contributed the most compelling and emotional speech of the day. Dr. Epley spoke of the horrors of war like most of us can only image. Dr. Epley took care of our casualties in Vietnam and shared with all of us stories that I am sure many of the 7,000 plus women and nurses could share about their service in Vietnam. Dr. Epley like so many other Vietnam veterans is truly one of our Vietnam heroes. She left Vietnam to become a civilian nurse and later would finish her Doctorate and teach at FSU and Barry University.

Our Tallahassee National Cemetery Director Ms. Eugenia Simmons emceed the ceremony. She recognized the Vietnam veterans in attendance and distributed the memorial pins to all Vietnam veterans. We had our Honor Guard present to present colors and the Patriot Guard Riders stood by securing the event. It was an honor to participate in this final salute to our Vietnam veterans. I close, like I did in my brief talk, Welcome Home!

Here are just a couple of photos that represent the day.



Dr. Epley with Jim Geuin



Big Bend Honor Guard

AMVETS Spotlight on Ray House



Ray House Receiving Proclamation Award

Ray House, a proud Navy veteran was one of our 12 founding members chartering our AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776, Inc. on July 11, 2009. He was listed on our original Articles of Incorporation with the State Department as a finance Officer/Treasurer. Ray went on from there to serve as our Commander for over six years. Our original membership meetings were held at the “Hootch” on Lake Ella next to the American Legion Hall. We then moved to Cherry Laurel and then back to the American Legion Hall and now at a restaurant meeting room. Although we don’t have a home, so to speak, Ray has been the glue that has held this Post together.

Ray in 2011 started up a program giving “Care Bears” to the Tallahassee Police Department to give to young children in traumatizing situations. The police officers keep the bears with them in their cars to distribute on an as-needed basis. And in 2011 Ray began presenting FSU and High School ROTC programs with AMVETS

achievement awards. A program that John Folsom picked up the mantle on years ago.

And in 2012 with the help of John Folsom and Richard Duly they put together our first AMVETS Golf Tournament with the theme of “Veterans Helping Veterans” that has become our major fund raiser. This year we held our Fifteenth Annual Golf Tournament (I think we misnumbered but maybe not!). From these humble beginnings AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 has gone on to become one of the major veteran service organizations in the Tallahassee area. We have raised funds for numerous veteran programs that directly help veterans, e.g., The Homeless Coalition, Tallahassee Veteran Legal Collaborative and Florida Cares a builder that helps provide ramps and decks for disabled veterans. We help individual veterans when called on to help along with a fairly new program helping to provide blankets and clothing usually in December. But one of our major accomplishments was raising funds for, constructing and donating to the Tallahassee National Cemetery a Bell Tower and Carillon, quite an accomplishment for a small Post.

Ray continues to provide leadership and at this years Golf Tournament current Commander Lightfoot with a consensus from membership, officers and staff of our Post present Ray at our most recent Tournament with a Proclamation honoring him by renaming our Golf Tournament to: “AMVETS Ray House Golf Tournament”, a dedication with a plaque that will remember Ray in perpetuity. And as the Plaque says, “Thank you Ray for a Job Well Done. “ Please enjoy a couple of photos from our event on April 28th.

AMVETS Ray House Golf Tournament Event Photos

Silent Auction Table



Rick Stanford



Tony Minichello



Thank you Sponsors

We had a great Golf Tournament this year in large part because of a full house of teams using up all 50 golf carts at Golden Eagle Golf and Country Club but more importantly we added another dozen sponsors this year. Some adding to our Platinum and Gold Sponsor lists. Here are just a few of our Certificate of Appreciations delivered after the tournament when most of the certificates were given out to those attending our luncheon.

THANK YOU ALL, See you next year!!!!

AMVETS FIFTEENTH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT April 28, 2025 Golden Eagle Golf and Country Club - SPONSORS



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Budget Blinds
Suzanne Latacz – Ketcham Realty Group
Sportsclips Haircuts – Liz Crawford
Camilla Savardi – DMD
Fleet Reserve Association Branch 34



Thank You Richard Duley and Team

Richard Duley, and his team has been working our registration table for most of the years we have had a Golf Tournament. Richard and his team did an excellent job of managing this year's Tournament. His team raised over \$1600.00 in ticket sales, \$600.00 alone in a 50/50, they processed 100 veterans at registration on top of the ticket sales all within one hour of the opening of the tournament. **Thank you, Richard and your Team. With a big thank you to: Debbie and Michael Mann, Lois Duley, Robert McGuire, Eric Smith, Pam, Margie McNeill, Nell Hewitt.**

