

Military Order of the Purple Heart

AARON A. WEAVER CHAPTER 776



CHAPTER PURPOSE

To preserve the proud legacy of the Purple Heart Medal.

VOL 14, ISSUE 1

www.citruspurpleheart.org

January-February 2017

2016-17 Officers

- Cdr: Richard "Bud" Allen
- Sr. Vice Cdr: Richard Hunt
- Jr. Vice Cdr: Chuck Kanehl
- Adjutant: Curt Ebitz
- Finance Off: Joe McClister
- Judge Adv: Frank Hayes
- Exec Cmte man: Ray Michael
- Alt Cmte man: Mike Schlaudraff
- Sgt-at-Arms: Rick Allen
- Trustee 3-yrs: Andy Viola
- Trustee 2-yrs: Zig Laska
- Trustee 1-yr: Lee Helscel
- Service Off: Joe McClister
- Welfare Off: Gary Bain
- Historian: Curt Ebitz
- Chaplain: Mike Nemesh
- Americanism Off: William Korber



Bimonthly Meeting

The Chapter's bi-monthly meetings are held the third Tuesday of September, November, January, March, May and July. The meeting location is at the Citrus County Builders Association, 1196 S. Lecanto Highway (C.R. 491), Lecanto, which is located on the west side of S. Lecanto Highway approximately 1/2 mile south of S.R. 44. Any member desiring to place an item on the agenda should call Adjutant Ebitz at 382-3847 or e-mail him at info@citruspurpleheart.org.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 19, 1 p.m.
Citrus County Builders Association,
Lecanto

Member News



A warm welcome is extended to Chapter 776's newest member **Francis Glassford** of Spring Hill who transferred from Chapter 1980 (New Port Richey). Patriot Glassford is a Marine Corps veteran of Vietnam.

A well deserved "Thank you" to Chapter 776 Proud Supporters **Paul & Jackie Stevio** who on short notice graciously donated their vocal talents to sing "Amazing Grace" during the memorial service hosted by Chapter 776 to honor the memory of Departed Patriot Rudy Weddle.

Chapter 776 Patriot **Jim Roys** and his wife **Nan** were featured in the November edition of Sugar-mill Neighbors. Believing in giving back to his community, Patriot Roys is actively involved as a community leader and volunteer. In addition to being the president of the Oak Village

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Chapter Activities Completed

November 1-14. During this period, 12 Chapter 776 Patriots participated in the Veterans Appreciation Week Ad Hoc Committee's Veterans in the Classroom program sharing their military experiences with students in 37 classes. Patriots participating were Bud Allen, Rick Allen, John Carlson, Curt Ebitz, Frank Hayes, Lee Helscel, Richard Hunt, Chuck Kanehl, Jon Mills, Mark Riden, Mike Schlaudraff and Andy Viola. Chapter 776 had more participants in the program than any other veterans service organization in the county.

November 5. Cdr. Bud Allen was the master of ceremonies and speaker for the memorial service honoring our nation's veterans at the Old Homosassa Veterans Memorial in Old Homosassa. Other chapter/unit members attending were Anastasia Allen, JoAnn Allen, Troy Allen, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Will & Bonnie



Cdr. Allen presented associate member Pat Michael with the Chapter 776 2016 Associate Member of the Year Award during the chapter's November bimonthly meeting. Pat was also the 2016 Department of Florida Associate Member of the Year.

Korber, Harold & Pat Layman, Mike & Gail Nemesh, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff and Andy & Eileen Viola.

November 5. Patriot Curt Ebitz gave a remembrance during the memorial service for Departed Patriot and WW II veteran Roy Norman. Other chapter/unit members paying their last respects were John Carlson, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair and Ernie Tucker.

November 5. Sgt-at-Arms Rick Allen did yeoman's duty setting up and manning Chapter 776's display at the annual Citrus County Veterans Appreciation Week Veterans Fair. Cdr. Allen and

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Twelfth Annual Purple Heart Ceremony



Please mark your calendars, spread the word and make it a priority to attend!

Chapter 776's Annual Purple Heart Ceremony honoring Citrus County's fallen heroes and wounded warriors will be 11 a.m., Saturday, February 18 at the Citrus County Fairgrounds Auditorium, 3610 S. Florida Ave., Inverness. With approximately 500 persons attending the annual ceremony, this is the chapter's signature activity and the county's premier veterans ceremony. All members are urged to support this event with their attendance. *Recommended dress is the chapter's formal uniform (Chapter overseas hat, white shirt with Purple Heart tie, navy blue or black blazer and gray trousers. If you do not have the chapter's formal uniform, please wear a coat and tie. Purple Heart Medal should be worn on the left lapel of the blazer/coat).* Please make every effort to attend with your spouse and guests!

Member

Property Owners' Association and the vice president of the Sugarmill Woods Civic Association, he is a cold case volunteer with the Citrus County Sheriff Office and a volunteer boat driver at Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park.

Patriot **Romy Camargo**, was featured in the November 11 telecast of "The Green Berets of 7115" episode of the History Channel's *The Warfighters: Real Stories of True Courage*. The episode chronicled their fight for survival when Romy and his fellow soldiers with the 7th Special Forces Group were caught in a fierce ambush in Zabul province, Afghanistan.



Congratulations to Chapter 776 Sr. Vice Cdr. **Richard Hunt** on receiving the Withlacoochee Chapter Florida Sons of the American Revolution "Good Citizens Award" during its November meeting.

A "job well done" is extended to Chapter 776 Sgt-at-Arms **Rick Allen** and associate member **Carol Allen** for designing and crafting the chapter's award winning float for the fifth consecutive year during Citrus County's Annual Veterans Day Parade by garnering "Best Theme." Many thanks also to the following volunteers who assisted in decorating the float: Cdr. **Bud Allen**; **Joe McClister**; **Pat Michael**, **Mike Nemesh**, **Shirley Platt**, and **Mike & Linda Schlaudraff**.

Kudos to **Ray Michael** for another superb job in organizing and serving as the master of ceremonies for the Veterans Appreciation Program & Ice Cream Social hosted by Cornerstone Baptist Church during Citrus County's Veterans Appreciation Week.

The chapter extends its appreciation to those **Chapter 776/ Unit 776 members** who sold and/or purchased raffle tickets for the Homosassa Craft & Seafood Festival. Thanks to their support, over 500 raffle tickets were sold. Also, congratulations to Chapter 776 Patriot **Mike Nemesh** who won the fishing package.

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Jr. Vice Cdr. Kanehl also assisted in manning the display.

November 6. Cdr. Bud Allen carried the national colors, Patriot Mike Nemesh the MOPH colors and Annie Fair the LAMOPH colors during the annual Massing of the Colors ceremony hosted by the Submarine Veterans of America Sturgeon Base. Other chapter and unit members attending were Rick Allen, Barbara Bradshaw, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Shirley Platt, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff and Honorary Member Barbara Mills.

November 6. Patriot Ray Michael was the organizer and master of ceremonies for Cornerstone Baptist Church's Veterans Appreciation Program & Ice Cream Social. Chapter 776/Unit 776 members attending were Cdr. Allen, Rick Allen, Barbara Bradshaw, Mike Nemesh, Pat Michael, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff and Honorary Member Barbara Mills.

November 9. Withlacoochee Forest Trail 13 in Citrus County was designated a Purple Heart Trail in a dedication ceremony attended by Florida Secretary of Agriculture Adam Putnam, State Senator Wilton Simpson and state forestry officials. Chapter 776/Unit 776 members attending were Cdr. Bud Allen, Project Officer Gary Bain, Sr. Vice Cdr. Richard Hunt and Zig & Nancy Laska.

November 9. Volunteers who assembled and decorated the chapter's Veterans Day parade float were Cdr. Bud Allen, Rick & Carol Allen, Joe McClister, Pat Michael; Mike Nemesh, Shirley Platt; and Mike & Linda Schlaudraff.

November 10. Chapter 776 associate member Sandy Cross and Unit 776 member Mickey Hunt represented the chapter & unit at the 21st Annual Veterans Program hosted by Inverness Primary School.

November 11. Chapter 776/Unit 776 Patriots and Ladies participating in Citrus County's annual Veterans Day parade were Cdr. Bud & JoAnn Allen, Rick Allen, Gary Bain with his daughter and four grandchildren, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Will & Bonnie Korber, Mike Nemesh, Shirley Platt, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff, Mike Williams and Andy Viola. Also participating were Proud Supporters Dolores Mutton and Dave Murphy.

November 11. Patriot Ray Michael participated in the Florida National Cemetery Veterans Day ceremony representing the Department of Florida and Chapter 776.

November 11. Once again, Chapter 776 Patriots and Unit 776 Ladies turned out in force for the annual Military Ball sponsored by the Marine Corps League Sgt. Ted Archambault Detachment. Attending the gala were Bud & JoAnn Allen, Rick & Carol Allen, Sandy & Gregg Cross, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Zig & Nancy Laska, Harold & Pat Layman, Ray & Pat Michael, Mike & Gail Nemesh, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff, Jim & Peggy Stants and Andy & Eileen Viola. Also attending was Chapter 776 Honorary Member Barb Mills accompanied by her husband, Jim.

November 11. Associate Member Fred Daniels conducted the "Unseen Guest" ceremony honoring our nation's POWs/MIAs during the annual Veterans Day memorial service at the Old County Courthouse Heritage Museum in Inverness.

November 12. Volunteer parking attendants for the Dragon Boat Festival were Cdr. Bud Allen, Rick Allen, Joe McClister, Jon Mills and Mark Riden. Thanks to their efforts close to \$2,000 in parking fees were earned for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation, the chapter's principal charity.

November 14. Chapter 776 Chaplain Emeritus Ernie Tucker presided at a memorial service hosted by Chapter 776 to honor the memory of Departed Patriot & Chapter 776 Charter Member Rudy Weddle. Attending the service were Rudy's wife Jeane Weddle, family members and Chapter 776/Unit 776 members Cdr. Bud Allen, Rick Allen, Barb Bradshaw, Curt Ebitz, J.B. & Anita Haskins, Harold & Pat Layman, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Zig & Nancy Laska, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Ray & Pat Michael and Andy Viola.

November 17. Chapter 776/Unit 776 members attending the inurnment service for Departed Patriot Ed Daniels at the Florida National Cemetery were Cdr. Bud Allen, Rick Allen, Gary Bain, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Zig & Nancy Laska, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Mike Nemesh, Vikki Pietras, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff, and Ernie Tucker.

December 7. Forty-two members and guests attended the Chapter 776/Unit 776 Annual Pearl Harbor Dinner and Holiday Social at the Southern Woods Golf Club. World War II veterans John Foley, Harold Layman and Florence McCann were honored and presented WW II

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From the Commander

Patriots and families,

I sincerely hope that you had a beautiful Christmas and are looking forward to a prosperous New Year!

We've been very busy since our last meeting with Veterans Appreciation Week (more like 3 weeks) and our holiday social activities. Once again your float designer did an outstanding job creating our "Remember Korean Veterans" float. For the fifth year in a row, we won an award winning "Best Theme Float." We want to thank Carol & Rick Allen for their creativity and effort along with some of our members who helped to assemble the winning entry!

We had new Patriots step up this year and join our Veterans in the Classroom program along with our regulars. Thanks to Rick Allen, John Carlson, Curt Ebitz, Frank Hayes, Lee Helscel, Richard Hunt, Chuck Kanehl, Jon Mills, Mark Riden, Mike Schlaudraff, Andy Viola and myself for participating. If I missed someone let me know and we'll get it in the next newsletter.

The Pearl Harbor dinner & holiday social was an event I hope you didn't miss! Mari Elain Ebitz did a fantastic job securing the venue and selecting the buffet dinner that was outstanding! We had 42 in attendance and everyone had a most enjoyable time. The auction raffle table was amazing with baked goods, wine and other beverages, jewelry, handmade crafts and other donated items. I, along with Unit 776 president Vikki Pietras and Mari Elain Ebitz, had an absolute blast auctioning items and enjoying the crowd's reactions! We raised a few dollars, but more importantly, we all had so much fun! It just raises the anticipation of our next get together so we can have more fun again!!

Your Commander, Sr. Vice Cdr. Richard Hunt, Adjutant Curt Ebitz and Zig & Nancy Laska, after several attempts to coordinate a time and date, presented Chapter 776 Patriot Romy Camargo and his wife Gabriela with a \$1000 check at their Stay In Step Spinal Recovery Center in Tampa to help fund the great work they are doing. The chapter previously voted to devote 10% of our fundraising monies to assist their efforts. We look forward to making more donations to this very worthwhile endeavor of offering rehabilitative assistance to combat wounded vets and civilians with spinal cord injuries.

We're working on 2017's events, starting with our Annual Purple Heart Ceremony on February 18th at the Citrus County Fairgrounds Auditorium in Inverness. This has always been a heartwarming program honoring our fallen and wounded comrades and their families. We request that you make every effort to be in attendance with your family, neighbors and friends to show support for all veterans, but especially our wounded and fallen heroes! This will be the 12th Annual program we've conducted and funded to honor the memory of those fallen heroes connected to our community and to perpetuate the legacy of the Purple Heart.

In April we have the CCBA fishing tournament that we have partnered with for the past 5-6 years, which gives some combat wounded vets a chance to go fishing with a professional charter captain. This tournament has one of the largest entries and biggest prize packages in the area and has been a strong supporter of our chapter financially since the start of our partnership. There will be more information upcoming on how you can assist and participate in this very worthwhile adventure!

In May, we have our Annual Armed Forces Day picnic where the chapter provides burgers, dogs and drinks and the ladies bring a variety of sides and desserts that we all enjoy. If you haven't attended yet, this is your year to come out and join us. We install our newly elected and appointed officers and just have an overall great time.

One more item, especially to those who have said they didn't know about an event, most all are printed in the newsletter regularly. Items or events that come up last minute we email you about as soon as we know. If you don't have email and want to be notified, please let the Adjutant know and we'll create a call list. Bear in mind that if we call you a few times and you still don't participate we have to assume you're not interested and we won't keep calling.

If you change any of your contact info, address, phone or email please let the Commander or Adjutant know ASAP so that we may make a correction on your file. If you haven't been getting information items, please check with the Adjutant to make sure your info is correct!

Thanks for all you do in keeping us Florida's premier Chapter!

CMDR "Bud"

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Victory pins, as well as Marie Archambault and Sue Guard, the wives of Departed WW II veterans Ted Archambault and Don Guard, respectively. In addition to being a lot of fun, the post-dinner auction garnered over \$400 for the chapter thanks to the donations of the Patriots & Ladies in attendance.

December 9. Sandy Cross, Frank & Carol Hayes, and Chuck & Mickie Kanehl represented the chapter & unit at an Operation Welcome Home event for two returning service members.

December 13. Cdr. Allen, Sr. Vice Cdr. Hunt, Adjutant Ebitz, Trustee Laska and wife Nancy presented a \$1,000 check to the Stay In Step Spinal Cord Recovery Center in Tampa. The Center was founded and is operated by Chapter 776 Patriot Romy Camargo and his wife Gabriela.

December 14. Chapter 776/Unit 776 members attending the Florida National Cemetery's quarterly Veterans Without Families service were Cdr. Allen, Rick Allen, Sandy Cross, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Zig & Nancy Laska, Bill Merryman, Ray Michael and Mike & Linda Schlaudraff.

December 17. Participating in the Wreaths Across America memorial service and wreath placement at the Florida National Cemetery were Rick Allen, Sandy Cross, Mickey & Richard Hunt, Joe McClister & Ann Fair, Shirley Platt and Linda Schlaudraff.

Future

January 14, 6 p.m. Sgt. Dennis J. Flanagan Foundation's 11th Annual Dinner and Sports and Celebrity Memorabilia Auction, Chester V. Cole Life Enrichment Center, Crystal River.

February 18, 11 a.m. Chapter 776 Twelfth Annual Purple Heart Ceremony, Citrus County Auditorium at the Fairgrounds, Inverness.



2016 Veterans Appreciation Week

Chapter 776/Unit 776 members aboard the chapter's award winning Citrus County Veterans Day parade float. Thanks to the talented duo of Carol & Rick Allen, the chapter's float was judged the parade's best entry for the fifth consecutive year.



Cdr. Bud Allen, Mike Nemesh and Ann Fair proudly carried the national and organizational colors during the Annual Veterans Appreciation Week Massing of the Colors Ceremony. *Front center: Shirley Platt. Left back row: Chuck Kanehl, Cdr. Allen, Mike Nemesh, Ann Fair, Rick Allen & Barb Bradshaw.*



Chapter 776 presented a \$1000 check to the Stay In Step Spinal Cord Recovery Center founded and operated by Chapter 776 Patriot Romy Camargo and his wife Gabriela. *Left: Cdr. Bud Allen, Richard Hunt, Romy Camargo, Zig Laska, Gabriela Camargo, Nancy Laska and Curt Ebitz.*



Thanks to the initiative of Chapter 776 Patriot Gary Bain, Withlacoochee Forest Trail 13 in Citrus County was designated as Florida's first state forest Purple Heart Trail in a November 9 dedication ceremony attended by Florida Secretary of Agriculture Adam Putnam, State Senator Wilton Simpson and state forestry officials.

Pearl Harbor Dinner Holiday Social



Chapter 776 Patriots, Unit 776 Ladies and guests at the Annual Pearl Harbor Dinner and Holiday Social at the Southern Woods Golf Club. The golf club has been booked for December 7, 2017. So mark your calendars now.



During the chapter's Pearl Harbor dinner & holiday social WW II veterans were presented a WW II Victory pin affectionately called the "Wounded Duck." *Left: Navy veteran Florence McCann, Sr. Vice Cdr. Hunt, Cdr. Allen, Army veteran Harold Layman and Marine Corps veteran John Foley.*

Cdr. Allen (center) presented Carol & Rick Allen with the Citrus County Veterans Day Parade Award of Merit for earning "Best Theme" for the chapter's float.

