

# 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 3

www.citruspurpleheart.org

May-June 2017

### 2017-18 Officers

- Cdr: Richard Hunt**
- Sr. Vice Cdr: Mike Nemesh**
- 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: Glenn Beaulieu**
- Trustee 2-yrs: Andy Viola**
- Trustee 1-yr: Zig Laska**
- Service Off: Joe McClister**
- Welfare Off: Gary Bain**
- Historian: Curt Ebitz**
- Chaplain: Ray Michael**
- Americanism Off: William Korber**

### Chapter Activities Completed

**March 8.** Rick Allen, Richard Hunt and Ray Michael represented Chapter 776 at the Florida National Cemetery quarterly memorial service for unattended veterans.

**March 18.** A Celebration of Life remembering and honoring the life of Departed Patriot Carl "Skip" Bertoch was held at the Plantation on Crystal River. Cdr. Allen, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Richard & Mickey Hunt and Zig & Nancy Laska attended.

**March 21.** Representing Chapter 776 at an Operation Welcome Home event for returning veterans were Chuck Kanehl, Ray & Pat Michael, Mike & Gail Nemesh, Colin Pearl and Andy Viola.

**March 25.** Rick & Carol Allen and Richard & Mickey Hunt attended the 93d birthday celebration honoring WW II U.S Navy WAVES veteran Florence

### 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 chapter member desiring to place an item on the meeting agenda should e-mail Adjutant Curt Ebitz at [info@citruspurpleheart.org](mailto:info@citruspurpleheart.org) or call 382-3847.

#### Next Meeting

**Tuesday, May 16, 1 p.m.**  
Citrus County Builders Association, Lecanto

McCann.

**March 25.** Cdr. Allen, Zig & Nancy Laska, Will Korber Joe McClister and Colin Pearl represented the chapter at the VFW Post 237 dedication ceremony.

**March 25.** Representing Chapter 776 at the Springstead High School AFJROTC Military Ball were Rick & Carol Allen.

**April 8.** For the fifth consecutive year, the Citrus County Jeeps hosted Chapter 776 members, spouses and guests to a BBQ cookout and a morning of off-road adventure driving in the Withlatchoochee State Forest. Participating were Cdr. Allen, Anastasia Allen, Rick Allen, Glenn & Mary Beaulieu, John Carlson, Lee & Willette Helscel w/two guests, Richard and Mickey Hunt, Will Korber, Joe McClister, Mike & Gail Nemesh, Colin & Mary Pearl and Andy & Eileen Viola.

**April 15.** Chapter Adjutant Curt Ebitz presented the Military Tribute at the Blue Star Memorial Marker dedication ceremony at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell. Also attending were Cdr. Allen, Rick Allen and Mari-Elain Ebitz.

**April 16.** Cdr. Allen (USMC), Rick Allen (USA) and Joe McClister (USN) carried their services' colors for the closing *See Completed, page 2*

### Member News



Chapter 776 is pleased to welcome its newest member, Patriot **Nels Christenson** who is an Army veteran of Vietnam and resident of Williamsburg, MA. Thanks to the recruiting outreach of Cdr. Bud Allen, Chapter 776 is becoming a "National" chapter.

A hearty thank you is extended to Cdr. **Bud Allen** on completing five years at the leadership helm of Chapter 776. Under Cdr. Allen's leadership, Chapter 776 has solidified its reputation of being the premier MOPH chapter in the Department of Florida and as a well known and highly respected veterans organization in Citrus and surrounding counties.

Congratulations to **Unit 776 President Vikki Pietras, Officers and Ladies** on a highly successful year. Your support of Chapter 776, our local Gold Star families and veterans is deeply appreciated. You are an amazing group of Lady Patriots. **Officers for 2017-18 are:** President, Vikki Pietras; Sr. Vice President, Shirley Platt; Jr. Vice President, Carol Hayes; Treasurer, Mari-Elain Ebitz; Parliamentarian, Linda Golfieri;

### 2017 Annual Armed Forces Day Picnic

Chapter 776's annual Armed Forces Day picnic will be **11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Saturday, May 20 at the park pavilion (next to tennis courts), Bicentennial Park, Crystal River.** The park is located off of U.S. 19 behind the Crystal River Airport. The 2017-18 officers for the chapter will be installed by Crystal River Mayor Jim Farley and the chapter's scholarship award will be presented to this year's recipient, Citrus High School senior Lauren Philipps. **All officers to be installed are strongly encouraged to make every effort to attend.**

Chapter 776 will provide hamburgers and hotdogs with all the fixings plus beverages. **Each lady is asked to bring a side, salad or dessert. If you plan to attend, please contact Adjutant Curt Ebitz no later than May 18 at 352-382-3847 or e-mail at [info@citruspurpleheart.org](mailto:info@citruspurpleheart.org) and indicate side, salad or dessert.**



### Completed

ceremony of the 13th Gathering of Vietnam Veterans' Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall in Inverness. Chapter members Tony & Karen Skrapits were volunteer name locators for the Wall's fallen. Also attending the ceremony were Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Will & Bonnie Korber and Ray & Pat Michael.

**April 19.** Patriot Boreland presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Springstead High School AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

**April 21.** Patriot Michael presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Citrus High School AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

**April 21.** Chapter & Unit 776 members supporting the chapter's charitable partnership with the Citrus County Builders Association at its annual fishing tournament "Captains' Meeting" event were Cdr. Bud Allen, Rick Allen, Chris Boreland, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Al Golfieri, Lee & Willette Helscel, Richard Hunt, Zig Laska, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Mike Nemesh, Colin Pearl, Vikki Pietras and Robert & Sarah West.

**April 22 & 23.** Chapter 776 Patriots participating in the Citrus County Builders Association fishing tournament as guests of boat captains were Cdr. Bud Allen, Rick Allen, Al Golfieri, Lee Helscel, Richard Hunt, Zig Laska, Joe McClister, Mike Nemesh and Colin Pearl.

**April 30.** Patriot Kanehl, accompanied by his wife Mickie, presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Crystal River High School NJROTC annual awards ceremony.

**May 2.** Cdr. Allen presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Dunnellon HS AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

**May 4.** Patriot Riden presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Lecanto HS AJROTC annual awards ceremony.

**May 4.** Patriot Michael presented the Chapter 776 2017 Scholarship Award to Lauren Philipps at the Citrus HS Senior Awards Ceremony.

**May 5.** Patriot Ebitz presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Central HS NJROTC annual awards ceremony.

**May 5.** Patriot Helscel presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Hernando High School AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

### Future

**May 16, 1:00 p.m.** Chapter 776 bimonthly meeting, Builders Assn., Lecanto.

**May 20, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.** Chapter 776 annual Armed Forces Day picnic with installation of 2017-18 chapter officers.

**May 20, 6:30 p.m.** South Sumter HS NJROTC annual awards ceremony (Patriot Marxuach).

**May 24, 8:30 a.m.** Academy of Environmental Science flag-pole dedication, W. Ft. Island Gulf Trail.

**June 7-10.** Department of Florida 72d Annual State Convention, Jacksonville.

**June 14, 7:00 p.m.** Inverness annual Flag Day ceremony, Inverness.

**August 5, 9:00 a.m.** Annual Purple Heart Anniversary Breakfast, hosted by W. Citrus Elks, Homosassa.

### From the Commander

#### Patriots & Associate Members,

We continue to be an active group! In late March, we presented a \$400 donation to the Fallen Heroes Monument Foundation to assist in repairing the Fallen Heroes Monument in Bicentennial Park, Crystal River. In April, thanks to Patriot Andy Viola informing the chapter of a possible H&R Block donation program, I met with an H&R block representative to place our chapter on the list of organizations to receive a donation for next year. Your Commander, Sr. Vice Cdr. and Adjutant also met with a Chronicle reporter to do a profile on the MOPH and Chapter 776, which should be published shortly.

We then did a trail ride through the Withlacoochee State Forest followed by a delicious BBQ hosted by the Citrus County Jeepers on April 8. The chapter had a terrific turnout with 20 chapter members and guests participating. We had a blast and it was fun seeing Sr. Vice Cdr. Richard Hunt all covered in mud!

The following week, the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall came to Wallace Brooks Park in Inverness and Chapter 776 members setup the Department of Florida Afghanistan/Iraq Memorial Portrait Mural for public viewing and took it down at the conclusion of the five-day event. Your Commander, Sergeant of Arms and Finance Officer also participated in the closing ceremony carrying our respective service flags. Also, at the ceremony were the Ebitz', Kanehl's, Korber's, Michael's and Skrapit's.

The weekend of April 21-23, the chapter participated in the Annual CCBA Fishing Tournament. This tournament is by far our biggest fundraiser and I am so pleased that CCBA asked us to partner with them, as it has been a partnership made in Heaven. We had a great showing of members for the Captains' Meeting, providing recognition and support for this tournament as a Charity Partner. Many members got to fish for two great days on the Gulf! Heartfelt thanks are extended to chapter members and ladies for your continued support at this important fundraising and fun event.

We have a new Department of Florida Cdr., Mike Mason of the Lakeland Chapter. He succeeds Patriot Lee Brown of the Jacksonville Chapter who was just elected as the Region IV Cdr. Good job guys; keep up the good work!

Our next Chapter meeting is May 16 at 1 p.m. followed by our Armed Forces Day picnic at Bicentennial Park in Crystal River from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, May 20. This is always a wonderful get together for members, friends and family; so please try to join us. Remember also that our Department State Convention is in Jacksonville from June 7-11 at the Jacksonville Marriot. Information regarding hotel and dinner options should be out shortly.

Always moving forward,  
CMDR "Bud"

#### Annual 50/50 Drawing Reminder

The Dept. of Florida's annual 50/50 drawing will be held June 10 at the state convention in Jacksonville. One need not be present to win. Chapter members, auxiliary ladies and supporters are encouraged to make and/or solicit 50/50 ticket donations. Tickets are \$1 for 1, \$5 for 6, \$10 for 12 and \$20 for 25. If more tickets are needed, call Cdr. Allen at 352-270-8436. You may win a substantial cash prize while helping our chapter, which receives a percentage of each donation.

**Chapter 776 has been the Dept's top 50/50 fundraiser for nine consecutive years; let's make it 10 years!** Turn in your donations and tickets at the May 16 bimonthly meeting or mail to Bud Allen at 5019 N. Perry Dr., Beverly Hills, FL 34465 to arrive no later than May 26.

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5569 W. Gulf to Lake Hwy, Crystal River, FL 34429 795-6633

## Members

Sgt at Arms, Annie Fair; 1-Yr. Trustee, Mickey Hunt; 2-Yr. Trustee, Heather Stants; 3-Yr. Trustee, Linda Schlaudraff; Secretary, Annie Fair; Chaplain, Pat Michael; Patriotic Instructor, Sandy Cross; Historian, Annie Fair; Marshal, Linda Schlaudraff.

Thanks to the noteworthy initiative of Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran **Chris Boreland**, who recently joined our ranks, Chapter 776's Facebook page was launched on March 21. Since being launched, the Facebook page (*Military Order of the Purple Heart – Aaron A. Weaver Chapter 776*) instantly proved to be an excellent vehicle for getting the word out about chapter activities and events to the membership and general public. Thank you Chris for a job well done!

**Pat Michael**, wife of Past Commander Ray Michael underwent successful surgery in March at Citrus Memorial Hospital. A tireless supporter of Chapter 776 and Unit 776, all are pleased to see her back into the swing of things.

Sr. Vice Cdr. Hunt's wife, **Mickey**, underwent heart surgery for over nine hours to correct an irregular and often rapid heart rate at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point in Hudson on April 10. After a post-op hospital stay of several days, Mickey is back home on the road to full recovery.

A special "shout out" to **Robert West, Bud Allen and Rick Allen** who did yeoman's work in setting up the MOPH Dept. of Florida Afghanistan/Iraq Memorial Mural for the 13th Gathering of the Vietnam Veterans' Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall, as well as **Sarah West, Chuck Kanehl and Joe McClister** who helped take the mural down. Also, "hats off" to **Tony and Karen Skrapits** for serving as locators for the Wall's fallen.

Thanks to the "behind the scenes" efforts of Sr. Vice Cdr. Hunt, Patriot **Will Korbor** was "ambushed" at his church, the Inverness Temple of God. During Easter Sunday services, the church pastor called Will forward and presented him his service ribbons, which were acquired by Hunt, to the thunderous applause of the nearly 300 parishioners in attendance.

A warm "welcome home" to Past Chapter 776 Commander **J.B. Haskins and wife Anita** who have completed their phased move from Melbourne, FL back to Citrus County. J.B. has reoccupied his home in Crystal Glen, Lecanto and Anita is in a private room at Diamond Ridge Health & Rehabilitation Center located at 2730 W. Marc Knighton Ct., Lecanto. Anita would welcome visitors.

Chapter member and WW II veteran **Henry Norman** is recovering from a mild stroke and has no paralysis or residual motor or speech effects. Also, **Bonnie Korber** underwent surgery at Citrus Memorial Hospital to replace a heart valve.

Snowbird **Sue Guard**, wife of Departed Patriot Don Guard, returned to her summer home in Leesburg, IN on May 3. We look forward to her return in October.

## Patriot Carl "Skip" Bertoch



Patriot Carl "Skip" Bertoch, a past Chapter 776 Judge Advocate, departed our ranks on February 28 at the age of 90.

An Ohio native, Patriot Bertoch joined the U. S. Army at the age of 18 where he earned the parachutist badge and served in the Pacific Theater of Operations with the elite Alamo Scouts that were the forerunner to the Army's Special Forces. Upon discharge from the Army in 1947, he joined the Marine Corps Reserves and enrolled at Ohio State University.

While a student at the university, he was activated for the Korean War and was wounded in action while serving with the 1st Marine Division during the historic battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Following his deactivation, he returned to Ohio State University to earn a law degree.

His 50-year career in the practice of law began in Ohio where he was a member of the Ohio Bar and worked with the Division of Securities. In 1964, he relocated to Florida where he was the Executive Director of the Florida Installment Land Sales Board. In 1968, Patriot Bertoch became a member of the Florida Bar and founded the National Land Council in 1969. In 1976, he opened a law office in Tallahassee and operated a second law office in Crystal River after relocating there in 1981 until his retirement in 2008.

With 20 years of active and reserve military service, Patriot Bertoch was put to eternal rest with military honors at a private ceremony for family at the Florida National Cemetery. He was predeceased by three sons and is survived by his beloved wife, Sarah, three sons, one daughter, one stepson, several grandchildren and great grandchildren plus one great, great grandchild.



## 13th Gathering of Vietnam Veterans' Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall

Chapter 776 Patriots carried the Army, Marine Corps and Navy Colors during the closing ceremony of the 13th Gathering of Vietnam Veterans' Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall in Inverness. *Left:* 1st from left Rick Allen (Army), 2d from left Joe McClister (Navy) and 5th from left Cdr. Bud Allen (Marine Corps).

### CCBA Fishing Tournament Captains' Meeting Event



Global War on Terror combat wounded members of Chapter 776 enjoying the festive Captains' Meeting event. *Left:* Robert West (Army) and Chris Boreland (Marine Corps).



Chapter 776 Patriots participating in the fishing tournament received embroidered tournament fishing shirts. *Left:* Patriots Mike Nemesh, Richard Hunt and Al Golfieri.



*From left:* Unit 776 Ladies Vikki Pietras, Willette Helscel and Linda Schlaudraff raised \$100 in donations for Chapter 776 at the Captains' Meeting event. Also helping to sell were Mari-Elain Ebitz and Annie Fair. Sarah West also attended with her children.

A large crowd attended the Captains' Meeting event to kick off a weekend of fishing competition and family fun.



Chapter 776 Adjutant Curt Ebitz had the honor of presenting the Military Tribute at the Blue Star Memorial Marker dedication ceremony at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell. The dedication ceremony was hosted by the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and the Florida State Elks.

CCBA 22d Annual Fishing Tournament Sponsor banner greeted the participating 137 boat captains at the Captain's Meeting kickoff event.



Chapter 776 donated \$400 towards the immediate repairs needed for the community's Fallen Heroes Monument located in Bicentennial Park, Crystal River. Chapter 776 also committed to an annual pledge to support a cyclic maintenance program for the Fallen Heroes Monument. *Left:* Curt Ebitz, Chapter 776 Adjutant; Ray Michael, Chapter 776 & Fallen Heroes Board Member; Bud Allen, Chapter 776 Cdr.; Barbara Mills, Fallen Heroes Board Member; Patricia Flanagan, Gold Star Mother & Fallen Heroes Board Member; Richard Hunt, Chapter 776 Sr. Vice Cdr.; John McKee, Fallen Heroes Board Member.

