

Military Order of the Purple Heart

AARON A. WEAVER CHAPTER 776

CHAPTER PURPOSE

To preserve the proud legacy of the Purple Heart Medal.



VOL 15, ISSUE 3

www.citruspurpleheart.org

May-June 2018

2018-19 Officers

Cdr: Richard "Bud" Allen
Sr. Vice Cdr: Chuck Kanehl
Jr. Vice Cdr: Chris Boreland
Finance Off: Joe McClister
Judge Adv: Frank Hayes
Sgt-at-Arms: Rick Allen
Trustee 3-yrs: Zig Laska
Trustee 2-yrs: Glenn Beaulieu
Trustee 1-yr: Andy Viola
Adjutant: Curt Ebitz
Service Off: Joe McClister
Welfare Off: Gary Bain
Historian: Curt Ebitz
Chaplain: Fred Daniels
Americanism Off: William Korber

Chapter Activities

Completed

March 14. Rick Allen and Sandy Cross represented Chapter 776 and Unit 776 at the Florida National Cemetery quarterly memorial service for unattended veterans.

March 16. Citrus County's Operation Welcome Home community tribute to the late Tim Donovan, a U.S. Navy veteran and dedicated supporter of Honor Flight, was attended by Cdr. Allen, Department Cdr. Hunt and Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz. The chapter donated \$100 to Honor Flight in honor of Tim's memory.

March 24. Chapter 776 Jr. Vice Cdr. Chris Boreland represented the chapter at the Springstead High School AFJROTC Military Ball.

March 25. Cdr. Allen, Department Cdr. Hunt, and Sgt at Arms Allen conducted the flag raising to kick off the annual Citrus County Fair.

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 Building Alliance, 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 or call 382-3847.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 15, 1 p.m.
 Citrus County Building
 Alliance, Lecanto

March 30. Attending the community's 93rd birthday tribute to WW II Navy Waves veteran Florence McCann, organized by Chapter 776 Honorary Member Barb Mills, were Cdr. Bud & JoAnn Allen, Rick & Carol Allen, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, and Ray & Pat Michael.

April 7. Chapter 776 Chaplain Emeritus Ernie Tucker officiated and Chapter 776 Chaplain Fred Daniels presented the farewell at the committal ceremony for Departed Patriot John Auble at the Florida National Cemetery. Also paying their last respects from the chapter were Cdr. Bud Allen, Rick Allen, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Department Cdr. Richard & Mickey Hunt, and Liz Tucker.

April 14. Chapter & Unit 776 turned out for a fun filled weekend of trail rides, fellowship and good food during the Purple Heart DIRTea Camper event in the Withlacoochee State Forest sponsored by the Citrus County Jeepers and attended by four other Jeep clubs. Participating were Cdr. Allen, Rick Allen, Sandy Cross, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Will & Bonnie Korber, Zig & Nancy Laska, Frank & Carol Hayes and their grandson, and Mike Nemesh and his niece. Also participating were Chapter 705 Patriot Earl McMillan and Chapter 524 Patriot Chris Vedvick.

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Member News

Chapter 776 is pleased to welcome its newest member, Patriot **David Maloney** who is a resident of Ocala. An Army veteran of Vietnam, he is the recipient of the Bronze Star for Valor and two awards of the Purple Heart.



A hearty thank you to Proud Supporter **Nichole Gaudette** who organized the "Jeepers" DIRTea Camper event April 13-15 in honor of Purple Heart recipients. The weekend camping and trail riding event had five Jeep clubs participate. Also kudos to Cdr. **Bud Allen** and **Rick Allen** for their yeoman manning of the chapter's wienie wagon to feed the hungry masses and raise funds for the chapter.

Congratulations to **Unit 776 President Vikki Pietras, Officers and Members** on another highly successful year and a heartfelt Patriot "thank you" for your stellar support. Best wishes are also extended to Unit 776 officers for 2018-19: President, **Sandy Cross**; Sr. Vice President, **Mickey Hunt**; Jr. Vice President, **Carol Hayes**; Treasurer, **Mari-Elain Ebitz**; Secretary, **Annie Fair**; Parliamentarian,

See Members, page 3

2018 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 19** at the pavilion (next to the tennis courts) in Bicentennial Park, Crystal River. The park is located off of U.S. 19 behind the Crystal River Airport. The chapter's two scholarship recipients will attend; so please come to greet and congratulate them.

As is the tradition, Chapter 776 will provide hamburgers, hotdogs and sausages 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 17 at 352-382-3847 or e-mail at info@citruspurpleheart.org and indicate side, salad or dessert.**



Completed

April 17. Cdr. Allen presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Dunnellon HS AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

April 20. Patriot Skrapits presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Crystal River High School NJROTC annual awards ceremony.

April 26. Patriot Boreland presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Springstead High School AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

April 26. Cdr. Allen presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Lecanto HS AJROTC annual awards ceremony.

April 27. Patriot Riden presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Citrus High School AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

April 27. Chapter & Unit 776 members supporting the chapter's charitable partnership with the Citrus County Building Alliance at its annual fishing tournament "Captains' Meeting" were Cdr. Bud & JoAnn Allen, Rick Allen, Gary Bain, Chris Boreland, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, J.B. Haskins, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Will & Bonnie Korber, Zig & Nancy Laska, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, and Vikki Pietras. Also attending were Chapter 758 Patriots Jim Holland and Mike Ford.

April 22 & 23. Chapter 776 Patriots participating in the Citrus County Building Alliance fishing tournament as guests of boat captains were Cdr. Bud Allen, Gary Bain & Lawana, Chris Boreland, Will & Bonnie Korber, and Zig Laska,

April 30. Chapter 776 and Unit 776 presented the Nature Coast Young Marines checks for \$200 and \$100, respectively. Attending the check presentation for Chapter 776 were Cdr. Bud Allen, Curt Ebitz, Richard Hunt, Will Korber and Zig Laska. Present for Unit 776 were President Sandy Cross, JoAnn Allen, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Mickey Hunt, Nancy Laska and Vikki Pietras.

May 4. Patriot Ebitz presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Hernando High School AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

May 10. Cdr. Allen presented the Chapter 776 College of Central Florida Endowed Scholarship Award to Krystina DeSomma at the Crystal High School Senior Awards Ceremony.

May 11. Patriot Boreland presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the Central High School NJROTC annual awards ceremony.

May 12. Patriot Marxuach presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the South Sumter HS NJROTC annual awards ceremony.

Future

May 15, 1:00 p.m. Chapter 776 bimonthly meeting Building Alliance, Lecanto.

May 19, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Chapter 776 annual Armed Forces Day picnic.

May 30-June 3. Department of Florida 73d Annual State Convention, Jacksonville.

June 10, 3-6 p.m. Nature Coast Young Marines 20th Anniversary, Armory, Crystal River.

June 14, 5:00 p.m.. Inverness annual Flag Day ceremony.

July 3, 6 p.m., Inverness Patriotic Evening featuring the MOPH 2018 Purple Heart Truck Run vehicle.

August 4, 9:00 a.m. Annual Purple Heart Anniversary Breakfast, hosted by W. Citrus Elks, Homosassa.

From the Commander**Patriot, Associate & Auxiliary Members,**

The spring/summer season is upon us and there are events to attend. First, let me thank the Patriots who recently handled the JROTC presentations. I think it is vital that we be present and thank the cadets for their hard work and dedication. They are our future and we should be proud of the ones that choose JROTC and learn some basics before graduation. Someday, they may make great recruits and even leaders!

Now to events. We recently had the Jeepers event at Holder Campground and had a good turnout. Sincere thanks to Nichole Gaudette for her exhausting efforts to pull it all together. Thanks for a great job. All members had a fun time and the wienie wagon did lunch and made some money for the treasury.

Special thanks to our worker bees, Rick Allen, Richard Hunt, Mike Nemes and Mike Winslow, and a bunch of the ladies! Next came the CCBA fishing tournament and what a perfect weekend! A tournament record was set with 181 boats registered. Several of our members, including me, got to fish on Sunday. A big thank you to the boat captains who donated their time, crafts and equipment to take us all out; you are very special people! Patriot J.B. Haskins won the Smith & Wesson M&P 45 caliber gun raffle; congrats JB, a couple hundred entries and you get picked---awesome! If you haven't participated in one of these events, you really need to talk to some that have. They can tell you what an amazing experience it is!

OK, on to upcoming events. Armed Forces Day picnic is May 19 from 11-2 at Bicentennial Park pavilion, Crystal River. We always have a great turnout, but it can be even greater if some new folks join us. We provide burgers, dogs, sausages, drinks and condiments and the ladies supply us with a variety of sides and desserts to be enjoyed. This is free gang---just show up and bring your grandkids, your honey and yourself for some fun and comradery! Please let us know what you might bring as a side so we may make sure most bases are covered?

On May 27 the rededication of the Fallen Heroes Monument at Bicentennial Park will be held and the Chapter will be providing burgers, dogs, chips and drinks for a donation from attendees. I believe it starts around 6 pm. On the 28th, starting at 10 am, the Memorial Day program at the Homosassa Veterans Memorial will be held and your CMDR is the emcee. If you can spare a little time to honor our Patriots and veterans, please plan to join us! The Memorial, for those who are not familiar with it, is across the street from the Homosassa Elementary School.

Just a couple of days later, the Dept. of Florida convention will be held at the Marriot in Jacksonville. You should have received your registration packet by now giving all the instructions and details. We look forward to all Patriots who will be able to attend. We enjoy the reputation of being the premier Chapter in the state of Florida and another strong showing at the convention will only enhance that reputation.

We are quickly running out of time for the Department's annual raffle. Some tickets are still available but we need to close this out by the Chapter's May bimonthly meeting. If you have not gotten tickets yet, please contact me ASAP so that we may complete your stubs and get you entered. Thank you for the strong support and the probability that we will be the top Chapter in sales again. It strengthens our general fund and provides funds to continue our support programs.

Working for the benefit of all,
CMDR "Bud"

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Members

Vikki Pietras; Sgt at Arms, **Annie Fair**; Marshal, **Linda Schlaudraff**; 1-Yr. Trustee, **Heather Stants**; 2-Yr. Trustee, **Linda Schlaudraff**, 3-Yr. Trustee, **Nancy Laska**; Americanism, **Nancy Laska**; Historian, **Annie Fair**; Publicity, **Mari-Elain Ebitz**.

A sincere appreciation is extended to Patriot **Richard Hunt** for not only serving as the chapter's liaison to the CCBA 23d Annual Family Fishing Tournament, but as its vice chairman. Thanks to his dedicated efforts, the tournament was a smashing success and a fun and profitable event for chapter members.

A special "shout out" to chapter Patriots who volunteered to present the MOPH Leadership Medal to deserving JROTC students of the eight high schools that our chapter supports with the award: **Bud Allen (2)**, **Chris Boreland (2)**, **Curt Ebitz**, **Carlos Marxuach**, **Mark Riden**, and **Tony Skrapits**.

Chapter Patriot and Marine Corps veteran "**Bill**" **Clutter** recently had surgery to remove shrapnel from his Vietnam wounds due to it moving close to the bone.

Patriot **Mike King** was knocked down hard and hospitalized by the flu that plagued many this flu season, but has since recovered.

Charter Member and WW II veteran **Harold Layman** is doing well physically and is now a resident at the Sunshine Gardens Memory Care Facility located at 311 NE 4th Ave., Crystal River. Visitors are welcome.

Associate Member **Mike Weaver**, father of Fallen Hero Aaron Weaver, retired after 31 years of service as a press assistant at the Citrus County Chronicle newspaper. Mike was the "go to guy" and will certainly be missed by all at the Chronicle.

Anita Haskins, wife of past chapter commander J.B. Haskins has completed one year as a resident in a private room at Diamond Ridge Health & Rehabilitation Center, 2730 W. Marc Knighton Ct., Lecanto. She is always pleased to have visitors, so stop by to say hello, if in the area.

Snowbird **Sue Guard**, wife of Departed Patriot Don Guard, returned to her summer home in Leesburg, IN on May 9. At present, she plans to return in October for another "snowbird season."

Congratulations to Crystal River High School student **Krystina DeSomma** on her selection as the 2018 recipient of the chapter's \$1,000 College of Central Florida endowed scholarship and Citrus Chamber's Golden Scholar Award for English/Literature/Journalism. Also, congratulations to Withlacoochee Technical College Law Enforcement Academy student and Army veteran **Jessee Varvaro** who is the 2018 recipient of the chapter's \$1,000 Sgt. Dennis Flanagan Memorial Scholarship.



Patriot Henry Clay Norman, Jr.

Patriot Norman, a Marine Corps veteran of WW II and resident of Spring Hill, FL, departed our ranks on April 21 at the age of 94.

Born and raised in Michigan, Patriot Norman enlisted in the Marine Corps in December 1942 following his graduation from Harrison High School, Harrison, MI. Patriot Norman served with the 2d Marine Division in the South Pacific participating in the battles for Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands and the battles for Saipan and Tinian in the Marshal Islands, during which time he earned two Purple Hearts.

Near the end of the war, he was assigned to guard President Roosevelt in Warm Springs, GA prior to the president's death in April 1945. Following his discharge from the Marine Corps in October 1945, Patriot Norman would go on to serve as a security analyst for over two decades with the National Security Agency in Ft. Meade, Maryland until his retirement.

Patriot Norman is survived by his wife of 55 years, Shirley Jeanette (Henderson) Norman; his son, Paul Norman and daughter-in-law Laura (Fenimore) Norman, four granddaughters, Katie, Sarah, Gracie and Lila; and his brother Russ Norman.



Patriot Francis C. Dancsecs, Sr.



It was recently learned that Chapter 776 Patriot Dancsecs passed away on June 29, 2015 at the age of 69. Originally of Edison NJ, he was a resident of Weeki Wachee, FL at the time of his death.

Patriot Dancsecs was an Army veteran of the Vietnam War serving with the 46th Engineer Battalion from 1966 to 1967 and as an aviator with the 190th Assault Helicopter Company during the 1969 Tet Counteroffensive with the call sign "SPARTAN One Nine." He attained the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 2 and was a proud member of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Chapter 776.

Patriot Dancsecs was interred in Arlington National Cemetery and is survived by his loving wife of 51 years, Connie, and their two children, Anita Reynolds (Dancsecs) and Frank Dancsecs Jr.



Newly elected Chapter 776 officers



The 2018-19 officers for Aaron A. Weaver Chapter 776 Military Order of the Purple Heart were installed at the chapter's recent bimonthly meeting by Michael Lobo Assistant Citrus County Veterans Service Officer, who is a Purple Heart recipient. Front row, left: Andy Viola, Rick Allen, Chris Boreland, Bud Allen, Chuck Kanehl, Frank Hayes, Curt Ebitz, Glenn Beaulieu. Back row, left: Zig Laska, Gary Bain, Fred Daniels, Joe McClister, Will Korber.

CCBA Fishing Tournament Captains' Meeting Event



Purple Heart recipients were saluted by the attendees during the Citrus County Building Alliance 23d Annual Family Fishing Tournament "Captains' Meeting" at the Riverside Resort in Old Homosassa.



Chapter 776's Americanism Officer Will Korber mixing and mingling during the CCBA fishing tournament's "Captains' Meeting".

Purple Heart DIRTea Camper event



Department Cdr. and Chapter 776 member Richard Hunt got "down and dirty" during a trail ride with the Citrus County Jeepers. *Photo by Sandy Cross.*



Patriot Mike Nemesh and daughter Malina with trail ride hosts at the Jeepers event. *Photo by Sandy Cross.*

Presentation to Nature Coast Young Marines

Chapter 776 Patriots donated \$200 to the Nature Coast Young Marines in support of its advocacy of the core values of discipline, leadership and teamwork and appreciation for its service to the Citrus County community. Left: Chapter 776 Adjutant Curt Ebitz, Department of Florida Commander Richard Hunt, Chapter 776 Commander Bud Allen, Young Marine MSgt Adam Ault, Young Marine Adult Leader Liza Gonzales, Chapter 776 Trustee Zig Laska, and Chapter 776 Americanism Officer Will Korber. *Photo by Mari-Elain Ebitz.*

