

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 4

www.citruspurpleheart.org

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July-Aug 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: Glen 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

May 3. Chapter 776 Cdr. Bud Allen and Chaplain Fred Daniels represented the chapter at Citrus County's National Day of Prayer event with Chaplain Daniels giving the military prayer.

May 12-13. Cdr. Bud Allen participated in a fishing outing at Cedar Key hosted by Operation Outdoor Freedom for combat wounded and disabled veterans.

May 19. Over 50 Patriots, Associate Members, Auxiliary Members and guests turned out for the chapter's annual Armed Forces Day picnic. Crystal River High School graduating senior Krystina DeSomma was introduced as the 2018 recipient of the chapter's \$1,000 College of Central Florida Endowed Scholarship and was presented a Purple Heart mug. Unit 776 Auxiliary officers were also installed by MOPH Dept. of Florida Auxiliary President Gail Nemesh during the event.

May 26. Attending the Nick
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Bimonthly Meeting



The Chapter's bi-monthly general membership meetings are held the third Tuesday of September, November, January, March, May and July. The meeting location is 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 member desiring to place an item on the agenda should e-mail Adjutant Ebitz at info@citruspurpleheart.org or call 382-3847.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, July 17, 1 p.m.

Citrus County Building Alliance, Lecanto.

Chapter 776/Unit 776 News

A hearty "welcome aboard" to **Bonnie Korber** as Unit 776's newest auxiliary member.



Heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to all **Chapter 776 Patriots, Associate Members, Proud Supporters** and **Unit 776 Auxiliary members** for your support throughout the past year that earned Chapter 776 the proud distinction of being named the Department of Florida Chapter of the Year.

Well deserved congratulations are extended to Cdr. **Bud Allen** as the 2018 Chapter 776 & Dept. of Florida Patriot of the Year; **Fred Daniels** as the 2018 Chapter 776 & Dept. of Florida Associate Member of the Year; **Josh Langston-White** as the 2018 Chapter 776 & Dept. of Florida Volunteer of the Year.

Congratulations on a "job well done" to **Richard Hunt** for his outstanding leadership stint as the Dept. of Florida Commander and for his first class job in organizing and emceeding the 73d MOPH Dept. of Florida State Convention in Jacksonville.

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Past Chapter 776 Cdr. Ray Michael received a tumultuous greeting by family and friends at the St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport upon his return from Washington D.C. with fellow Honor Flights veterans who toured the veterans' monuments in our nation's capital. *Photo by Sandy Cross*

Annual Purple Heart Anniversary Breakfast

Chapter 776's annual Purple Heart anniversary breakfast will be hosted by the West Citrus Elks Lodge No. 2693 on **Saturday, August 4 at 9:00 a.m.** The lodge is located at **7890 W. Grover Cleveland Blvd, Homosassa** about 3/4 mile east of U.S. 19 in Homosassa. The anniversary celebration will feature a delicious breakfast served by the Lodge's Veterans Committee and a short program honoring Purple Heart recipients and commemorating the 236th anniversary of the Purple Heart. All Purple Heart recipients, family members of those who fell in combat, Associate Members, Unit 776 Auxiliary members, Proud Supporters and their guests are cordially invited to attend.

Attendees are requested to register for the free breakfast by contacting **Bud Allen (PH: 352-270- 8436; Email: budsterfd@tampabay.rr.com).**

Please indicate the number in your party and their names.



Completed, continued

Nicholas Ford 2nd Annual Heroes Appreciation event were Rick Allen, Ray & Pat Michael, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff, Fred Daniels and Honorary Member Barb Mills.

May 27. Attending the Fallen Heroes Remembrance Ceremony were Bud & JoAnn Allen, Rick Allen, John Carlson, Sandy Cross, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Zig & Nancy Laska, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Ray & Pat Michael, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff, and Andy & Eileen Viola.

May 28. Cdr. Bud Allen Hunt was the Master of Ceremonies for the Old Homosassa Veterans Memorial commemoration on Memorial Day. Associate Member Troy Allen offered the opening and closing prayers and Associate Member Eve Allen sang "Some Gave All." Other chapter/unit members attending were JoAnn Allen, Rick & Carol Allen, John Carlson, Curt Ebitz, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Will & Bonnie Korber, Zig & Nancy Laska, Joe McClister & Ann Fair, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff, and Andy & Eileen Viola.

May 28. Chapter 776 Chaplain Fred Daniels organized and presided at the Floral City Memorial Day ceremony with scores in attendance.

May 31- June 3. Chapter 776/Unit 776 once again had the largest number of attendees at the Dept. of Florida State Convention in Jacksonville. Members attending during the convention were Bud & JoAnn, Allen Eve Allen, Rick Allen, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Erik Ebitz, J.B. Haskins, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Nancy Laska, Joe McClister & Ann Fair, Ray & Pat Michael, Larry Ness, Gail Nemesh, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff and Honorary Member Janice Warren.

June 10. Attending the Nature Coast Young Marine's 20th anniversary celebration at the National Guard Armory were Bud & JoAnn Allen, Sandy Cross, Fred & Linda Daniels, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Al & Linda Golfieri, Frank & Carol Hayes, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Zig & Nancy Laska, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Ray & Pat Michael, Rob & Vikki Pietras, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff, Andy & Eileen Viola, and Honorary Member Barb Mills.

June 12. Sr. Vice Cdr. Chuck Kanehl, Patriot Richard Hunt and the Dennis & Pat Flanagan, parents of Sgt. Flanagan, presented the \$1,000 Sgt. Dennis Flanagan Memorial Scholarship for 2018 to Jesse Varvaro at the Withlacoochee Technical College Law Enforcement Academy graduation ceremony.

June 13. Rick Allen, Mickey Hunt, Ray Michael, and Mike & Linda Schlaudraff

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From Cdr. Richard "Bud" Allen

Patriots and members,

What a great start to the new/old leadership team meaning you re-elected most of your current officers to lead the Chapter in the coming year. Welcome to Fred Daniels as our Chaplain. Fred is very involved with veterans groups and I feel he will do an excellent job as our Chaplain. As I complete my 7th year as your commander, I am unsure whether I was re-elected because I'm doing such a great job or because no one else was able to step forward at this time. Certainly hoping it was the former not the latter!

We had terrific attendance once again at our annual Armed Forces day picnic. Special thanks to our Auxiliary and Patriot members who helped with setup and cleanup and provided us with wonderful side items and desserts! Our scholarship awardee Krystina DeSomma was pleased to be part of our program and is a very deserving recipient of our College of Central Florida scholarship. She is the second in her family to receive our scholarship and she told me she has a twin brother and sister that will be applying next year. Wouldn't that be something if they were our top recipients next year?

We next did the rededication of the Fallen Heroes Memorial in Bicentennial Park, Crystal River and had our wienie wagon setup. Although it was pouring rain when we arrived, we managed to set up our tent and grill and went to work. The response was great and the attendees enjoyed hot dogs, sausages, cold drinks and chips. We did not charge for the food, but accepted donations, which more than made up for the expense. Well worth our efforts and I think well received by all attendees!

The following morning your commander emceed the Homosassa Memorial Day program and once again we beat the rain and had excellent attendance. Special thanks to all the Patriots, spouses, auxiliary, family and friends who attended all these events.

The Dept. convention was again held in Jacksonville at the Marriott where once again they were so accommodating and helpful. The staff was fantastic, the food was excellent from the included breakfast buffet to the Friday night reception and Saturday night banquet. We had MOPH National Cdr. Van Ess in attendance along with MOPH National Sr. Vice Doug Middleton and Doug Greenlaw, both of whom are running for MOPH National Commander. Also, Region V Cdr. Paco, who's running for MOPH National Jr. Vice Cdr.

We were also honored to have Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam and his wife join us for the Saturday evening banquet where he was presented with a plaque for all his efforts regarding Operation

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News, continued

Guest speaker was Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam, whose agency sponsors Operation Outdoor Freedom outings for combat wounded and disabled veterans. All Purple Heart recipients and veterans present received Quilts of Valor made by Linda & Allison Fentress.

Special thanks to Proud Supporter **Bobby Gaudette** and Sgt at Arms **Rick Allen** for volunteering their grill master skills as the Chef du Jour and Sous Chef de Jour, respectively, for the second consecutive year at the chapter's Armed Forces Day picnic.

Thanks once again to the support of **Chapter 776 members, supporters, and Doug Jennings** of the chapter's Denver Detachment, the chapter got more donations for the Department of Florida Annual State Convention 50/50 and cash raffles than all other Department chapters combined, earning a \$100 prize for the chapter. This is the 11th consecutive year that our chapter has been the top fundraiser. Also, kudos to cash raffle winners **Carol Allen** (\$1,000) and the **Denver Detachment** (\$500).

Chapter 776 members elected or appointed as 2017-18 Dept. of Florida officers are **Richard Hunt**, Coordinator for the Fallen; **Bud Allen**, Finance Officer & Chief of Staff; **Rick Allen**, Sgt. at Arms & Bushnell National Cemetery Representative; **Mari-Elain Ebitz**, Webmaster.

Chapter 776 members selected to serve on the Purple Heart Veterans of Florida Corporation Board of Directors are **Richard Hunt**, President; **Bud Allen**, **Rick Allen** and **J.B. Haskins**, Directors; and Chapter 776 Proud Supporter **Nicole Gaudette**, Secretary.

Unit 776 Ladies elected or appointed as Dept. of Florida MOPH Auxiliary officers are **Gail Nemesh**, President; **Ann Fair**, Sr. Vice President; **Pat Michael**, Treasurer; **Linda Schlaudraff**, Sgt at Arms; **Mickey Hunt**, Parliamentarian & Marshal; **Nancy Laska**, 1-Yr. Trustee; and **Sandy Cross**, Secretary.

A "job well done" to **Bud Allen** for his outstanding job as the Memorial Day Master of Ceremonies at the Old Homosassa Veterans Memorial.

A very appreciative "thank you" to Proud Supporter **Gary Marriage** of Nature Coast Financial Advisors for his generous support as the CCBA annual fishing tournament's \$1,500 Purple Heart Sponsor for the fourth consecutive year.

World War II veteran Patriot **John Foley** has been valiantly battling terminal cancer under the home care of Hospice. John's condition is stable and he considers every day a blessing, as he stoically faces this enemy with the same courage that he displayed

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Commander

Outdoor Freedom. This is a program that provides hunting, fishing and other outdoor adventures for disabled and combat wounded veterans. We also had three Heartstrings for Heroes guitar presentations by Wade Saborin and a number of quilt presentations to deserving veterans, which was a very meaningful and heartfelt honor for the recipients.

Your 2018-19 Dept. leaders are: Commander, Jack Brunton from the Punta Gorda Chapter; Sr. Vice Cdr., Eddie Harrison from the Jacksonville Chapter; Jr. Vice, Charlie Dykes from the West Palm Beach Chapter; Sgt. at Arms & Bushnell National Cemetery Coordinator, Rick Allen; and myself as the Chief Financial Officer and Chief of Staff.

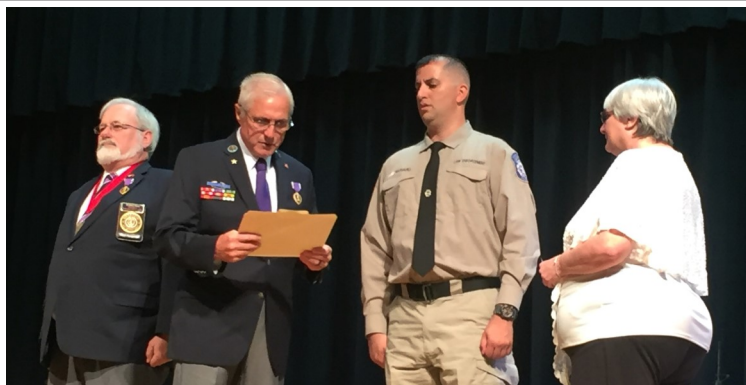
Chapter 776 was the premier ticket selling Chapter again for the 11th time in both the cash raffle and the 50/50 raffle selling 2 ½ times more than any other Chapter. We also had two winners in the cash raffle with Carol Allen winning 1st prize of \$1000 and our Denver Detachment winning 2nd prize of \$500. Congrats to the winners and thank you so much for the Chapter support in sales. Convention delegates voted to have both drawings again next year.

Chapter 776 was once again in force with many convention attendees to celebrate Chapter 776's clean sweep of Department honors with Chapter 776 being Chapter of the Year, Bud Allen Patriot of the Year, Fred Daniels Associate Member of the Year and Josh Langston-White Volunteer of the Year. Thanks to all who felt I deserved this Chapter and Department recognition and to all our Chapter and Auxiliary members who make Chapter 776 the best in the state.

The shed installation on the CCBA's Lecanto property is complete. The bureaucratic process with the county is a long story for another time. Most of the Chapter's property is now stored in one place at a central location. Take a peek next meeting and, if you want to see inside, grab the Sgt. at Arms or myself and we'll "get er done"!

Come join us and get in on the action as we are "Working for the benefit of all."

Cdr. "Bud"



Sr. Vice Cdr. Chuck Kanehl presented Chapter 776's Sgt. Dennis Flanagan Memorial Scholarship Award of \$1,000 to WTC Law Enforcement Academy graduate Jesse Varvaro, flanked by Patriot Richard Hunt and Patricia Flanagan (mother of Fallen Hero Sgt. Flanagan). Dennis Flanagan, father of Sgt. Flanagan also was present.

Photo by Mickie Kanehl



Chapter & Department Associate Member of the year Fred Daniels with Chapter & Department Patriot of the Year Bud Allen.

Photo by Sandy Cross

**Completed, continued**

represented Chapter 776 & Unit 776 at the Florida National Cemetery quarterly memorial service for unattended veterans.

June 14. Associate Member Fred Daniels was the organizer of the Floral City Flag Day Ceremony.

June 14. Chapter 776 and Unit 776 flag bearers for the evening Inverness Flag Day ceremony were Rick Allen, Curt Ebitz, Sandy Cross and Ann Fair. Other chapter/unit attendees were Bud & Jo-Ann Allen, Sandy Cross, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Frank & Carol Hayes, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Chuck Kanehl, Joe McClister, Vikki Pietras and Mike & Linda Schlaudraff.

Future

July 3, 5:30 p.m. Inverness Patriotic Evening, Wallace Brooks Park & Liberty Park, Inverness.

July 24, 1:00 p.m. Purple Heart Proclamation, Board of County Commissioners, County Courthouse, Inverness.

August 4, 9:00 a.m. Purple Heart Anniversary Breakfast, hosted by W. Citrus Elks Lodge, 2396, Grover Cleveland Ave., Homosassa.

News

during the battle for Okinawa as a Marine infantryman and as a NYPD officer.

Patriot **Mike Nemesh** completed his chemo and radiation treatment for lung cancer and is now in a rehab facility in Gainesville to regain his strength following a short hospital stay for dehydration. A Vietnam veteran, he is fighting this battle with the airborne spirit of his beloved 173d Airborne Brigade.

Chapter 776 Commander **Bud Allen** underwent the first of two surgeries for carpal tunnel at the VA Hospital in Lake City on June 11.

Fearing a stroke, Sgt at Arms **Rick Allen** was rushed to the Citrus Memorial Hospital emergency room in May with a severe headache and blurred vision. Fortunately, tests showed no stroke followed by a big sigh of relief from family and friends.

Past chapter commander and Vietnam veteran **Ray Michael** participated in the June 5 Honor Flight to Washington D.C. for an escorted tour of the nation's memorial tributes to our veterans. Ray had nothing about praise for all involved and said the fantastic turnout by young and old upon their return to the St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport truly touched him. He highly recommends this memorable experience.

Warm thanks to Associate Member **Larry Ness** for his donation of a signed print entitled "Flags Over the Capitol" by American painter Thomas Kinkade. The print was presented to Citrus County Tax Collector Janice Warren in appreciation of her support of the Chapter 776/Tax Collector Office fundraising partnership that has raised approximately \$150,000 since 2004.

2018 Armed Forces Day Picnic



Unit 776 Auxiliary members enjoying the picnic: Mari-Elain Ebitz, Treasurer & Publicity Chair; Annie Fair, Sgt. at Arms, Secretary & Historian; Sandy Cross, President; Vikki Pietras, Parliamentarian; Mickey Hunt, Sr. Vice President; Nancy Laska, 3-Yr Trustee & Americanism Officer; Gail Nemesh, Chaplain & Dept. of Florida Auxiliary President; Carol Allen; and Linda Schlaudraff, 2-Yr Trustee & Marshal. Not shown: Carol Hayes, Jr. Vice President; 1-Yr. Trustee, Heather Stants.



Crystal River High School graduating senior Krystina DeSomma, accompanied by her father, was presented with a Purple Heart mug by Cdr. Bud Allen as a memento for being the 2018 recipient of the chapter's \$1,000 College of Central Florida Endowed Scholarship.



Linda Schlaudraff "pins" outgoing Unit 776 Auxiliary President Vikki Pietras with a Past Auxiliary President pin in recognition of her service at the unit's leadership helm the past two years.



Picnic attendees Patriot Mike Schlaudraff and auxiliary member Linda Schlaudraff can always be counted upon to support chapter activities and community events honoring veterans. Your faithfulness is an inspiring example.

73rd MOPH Department of Florida and 32nd MOPH Department of Florida Auxiliary State Convention



Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam was the honored guest at the convention banquet.



On behalf of Chapter 776 Patriots, Associate Members, and Unit 776 Auxiliary Members, Chapter 776 Cdr. Bud Allen accepted the Dept. of Florida Chapter of the Year Award from Dept. of Florida Cdr. Richard Hunt during the state convention banquet.



Chapter delegates to the 73d MOPH Department of Florida & 32d MOPH Department of Florida Auxiliary at the convention banquet from left: Rick Allen, JoAnn Allen, Joe McClister, Cdr. Bud Allen and Ann Fair.