

OFFICERS 2014

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<u>Jr.Vice Cmdr:</u>	Rafael Rodriguez	<u>SGT at Arms:</u>	Ronald Butt
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Service Officers

Earl Mason, Brian Mitchell, JoAnn Ashton, Rafael Rodriguez, Jim Daniel,
Louis Velez, Rick Eastwood, Anita Moore, Henry Stallings

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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2015

SERVICE HOURS – MONDAY, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY - 9AM – 1PM

E-mail: info@FLDav32.org Website: WWW.FLDav32.Org.

BOOSTERS

Donations from our DAV Boosters help defray the chapter costs. The donation will be \$10.00 annually; you may use the form below for the newsletter or booster donation. Check boxes indicating what you are donating for -Thank you.

BOOSTERS 9/12014 through 12/31/2014

James Adams	Jose Albaladejo	James Carleton
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NEWSLETTER

Please send the coupon below and your check for \$10 to subscribe to our newsletter. If you're due for renewal, don't forget to do so. If you have anything for the newsletter let us know.

Make check payable to:

J.L. GOLIGHTLY CHAPTER #32
2265 NORTH HARBOR CITY BLVD
MELBOURNE, FL 32935-6653

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TAPS

Since our last newsletter, the following comrades have passed:

Donald Alford	Edgar Allen	Raymond Braz	Terry Carlson
Gerald Carnes	James Congdon	Harold Darby	Frank DeAngelo
Irving Feingold	Richard Kaminski	Mathew Lashure	Herbert Marble
Manuel Moreno	Jorge Rivera	Stan Ross	Gary Sakowski
Warren Smyth	Fernand StAmand	Henry Taylor	William Thorpe

COMMANDER'S CORNER

Happy New Year! By the time you are reading this we will have made history of 2014 and all of the great, not so great, and awful things that happened. We lost a few of our members, as always happens with an organization like ours, and gained some new ones. There were lots of changes in the VA, not the least of which was the resignation of Eric Shinseki following the scheduling snafu in Arizona and elsewhere. Of course, the real problem was located several layers beneath him, in the cadre of previously untouchable senior civil servants actually making policy and implementing procedures. Thanks to our Congress, new laws and regulations are in effect where these guys and gals can actually be dismissed!

Speaking of Congress, a whole new power structure will be seated in January, following the elections last November. Whether you are Republican, Democrat, Independent, or any other breed of political cat, we all need to let these folks know that they still have a lot of work to do to make things right by us and our new crop of disabled veterans. Just the other day, our Commander in Chief announced the end of our longest ever war, the one in Afghanistan. Does this mean that we are now in a period of peacetime like between the Korean conflict and Vietnam and between the end of the Vietnam war and 9/11? If so, the “forgetting” will start anew among our populace and our elected representatives. I, for one, am not going to let that happen and I implore each and every one of you to help keep the plight of our disabled veterans up front with our leaders.

We don't hurt any less because there isn't a “shootin' war” going on somewhere. The widows of retired service members whose spouses paid for years for an annuity called the Survivor Benefit Plan who are eligible for Dependency Indemnity Compensation are still being messed over by an antiquated law that requires an offset of one from the other. Medically retired service members who did not complete 20 years of service have no concurrent receipt protection and often have to forfeit their service retired pay completely when their VA payment are higher, if their disability is not considered “combat related”. Retired service members with a disability rating less than 50% also must forfeit a dollar of retired pay for every dollar VA compensation received. Does any of this sound wrong to you? If so, make sure that your elected representatives know how you feel.

In closing, a few thoughts; A moment of patience in a moment of anger saves a hundred moments of regret. The best use of a life is to live it for something that will outlast it. Start every day with the expectation that this is going to be the most memorable day of my life!

“The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits.” ..Albert Einstein

ELECTIONS

Election of officers will be in March and we, more than likely, will be needing some candidates for a few key positions. A very few of us have been carrying the load of keeping your Chapter up and running and every one of these people is also serving as a Chapter or Department Service Officer. Volunteering is rewarding but it does take its toll, physically and emotionally and it would be nice to spread the load around a bit more. At this time I would just ask that you think about what it is that you are doing with your spare time and could a few hours a month be re-directed to helping your Chapter. (You get to have your name on the menu board in the building and on the title page of the newsletter, too!)

“Never look down on someone unless you're helping them up.”

Wheelchairs, etc.

We still have a number of manual wheelchairs, in good condition, should anyone have a need for one, even temporarily.

We have several motorized chairs, including:

Pride Jet 3, needs batteries

Pride Jet 7, needs batteries

Mini Jazzy, needs batteries

Jazzy Select 6, batteries good (?) seat raises and lowers

Jazzy 1-101, needs batteries and possibly some work

Hoveround, needs batteries

Permobil Chairman Entra has control issues, has multifunction seat

Quantum 600, multifunction seat, needs batteries, original cost over \$25K

Quantum 1650, total multifunction, needs batteries, cost over \$45K, used 4 months

The two large chairs use group 24 batteries (Two @ around \$160) the smaller chairs use smaller batteries (Two @ \$55 to \$90 each)

These items are available, as is, at no cost to members and family members, although a donation to the Chapter would be greatly appreciated. We can save you the tax on the batteries if you want us to get and install them; we would just ask for reimbursement for the cost of the batteries. Delivery to your home can also be arranged.

Also available is two “BRUNO” derrick-type scooter lift for a small scooter and one Harmar chair and scooter platform lifts. All require power to be brought to their location but either of the two local dealers will do it for a nominal fee.

“The US Constitution does not guarantee happiness, only the pursuit of it. You have to catch up with it yourself” ...Benjamin Franklin

ALUMINUM CANS

We are still collecting aluminum cans and other aluminum material for recycling which provides the Chapter with additional funds to support our service programs. The last trip to the recycling center was somewhat of a chore since the first sample bag contained steel cans, aluminum pie plates, plastic bottles and other items that they really didn't want. Guess what? They had one of their employees spend better than 2 and one half hours opening **EVERY** bag and sorting through the contents. Of course our volunteers had to stay there the whole time, too. Please, please, please, aluminum only, remove all labels from pet food and other cans (Spam cans have a plastic printed label that needs a sharp knife to remove it) and rinse those items which had food in them. We appreciate you folks who are contributing to this effort.

Explore VA Benefits

Learning about and applying for VA benefits shouldn't be complicated for Veterans and their families. That's why the VA improved Explore.VA.gov, the website that makes it easy to see all the benefits that VA has to offer to help Veterans buy homes, earn degrees, start careers, stay healthy, and do so much more after service.

“If we don't feel grateful for what we already have, what makes us think we'd be happy with more?”

Here's what Veterans will find at Explore.VA.gov:

- # An intuitive design for seamless navigation of nine VA benefit areas.
- # A Benefits Navigator to learn in minutes which benefits they may be eligible for.
- # A video gallery featuring overviews of VA benefits and stories of how Veterans successfully used VA benefits.
- # A centralized location to receive VA application assistance and forms. **Remember**, except for making changes to dependency status through the e-benefits portal mentioned in the last newsletter, we do NOT recommend that you submit anything to the VA except through a DAV service officer. If you wish to print out a form so you will know what information is required, OK, then bring that form to us for review and submission so that our cadre of National Service Officers in St. Pete can insure that the right stuff is being submitted to the right people.
- # A social media hub with VA benefits information that can be shared with friends, family members, and social networks.
- # A page to sign up for upcoming online events about benefits and to get other informational materials.

Simplifying benefits information through ExploreVA.gov is part of VA's ongoing effort to improve the delivery of services and foster excellence in everything we do on behalf of Veterans and their families. #ExploreVA today to learn more and apply.

“Never test the depth of the water with both feet.”Anonymous

WISH LIST

On Veterans Day a group of student athletes spent part of the day outside our Chapter Home trimming shrubs, pressure washing sidewalks and providing new plantings around the flagpole and monuments and in front of the building, along with nice new red mulch. Thank-you very much.

There is still a list of things needing attention:

- * The Chapter trailer needs a new bed and paint job.
- * The A/C ducting in the attic needs sealing.
- * The doors and jambs on the service offices need varnishing.
- * The two outside doors need sanding and painting.
- * The main electrical panel needs to be “rung out” and relabeled.

If you or anyone you know has the skills to perform any of these tasks, contact us at the Chapter home. Donations of time and/or materials are always appreciated.

PENSION SALESMAN

The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) and the Attorney General's office will investigate and pursue those who are illegally charging Veterans for benefits that we provide for free. If you know of a salesman or business that is charging Veterans to file for VA benefits, i.e. pension and aid and attendance, please send their name and contact information to our Chapter at info@fldav32.org we will forward it to the FDVA.

BREVARD COUNTY PARATRANSIT SERVICES

Space Coast Area Transit operates Paratransit services to serve the mobility needs of those who are unable to utilize fixed routes by providing wheelchair accessible Paratransit vehicles, which carry passengers throughout Brevard County on a daily basis.

Paratransit is generally a curb-to-curb service, accessed through a trip-by-trip reservation. Space Coast Area Transit provides such services in order to meet the needs of the transportation-disadvantaged citizens of Brevard County. Transportation disadvantaged individuals are defined as: “Those persons who, because of physical or mental disability, income, status, or age, or who for other reasons are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to healthcare, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other sustaining activities, or children who are disabled or high risk” as defined in chapter 411.202.F.S.

The fare for a rider is \$3 and a reduced fare of \$1.50. Those eligible for a reduced fare include seniors (60 +), transportation disadvantaged, veterans and students. For questions, or to find out whether or not you are eligible for Space Coast Area Transit's Paratransit service, call (321)633-1878 and ask a Space Coast Area Transit Paratransit Representative or visit <http://www.ridescat.com/special-services/paratransit-services/>

ESTABLISHING SERVICE CONNECTION

There are five primary ways of establishing that a disability is service connected:

- a. **Direct** – Service medical records show that the condition claimed was diagnosed during military services, and the condition continues to affect the individuals industrial capacity.
- b. **Aggravation** – By demonstrating that a condition that existed prior to military service was aggravated beyond normal progression during military service.
- c. **Presumption** – Radiation claims, Agent Orange claims, Persian Gulf claims, certain disabilities (ALS), tropical diseases, and certain POW conditions. The veteran must have served 90 continuous days or more during a war period.
- d. **Secondary** – By demonstrating that a condition is approximately the result of, or linked to, an existing service-connected condition.
- e. **Injury as a result of treatment** – Where disease, injury, death, or the aggravation of an existing disease or injury occurs as a result of having submitted to an examination, medical or surgical treatment, hospitalization, or the pursuit of a course of vocational rehabilitation under any law administered by the VA, and not the result of his or her own willful misconduct, then disability or death compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation will be awarded as if such conditions were service connected.

If you have disabilities that you think might be service-connected, contact a veteran service officer for assistance.

SERVICE CENTER

If you noticed on the outside of the newsletter we now have nine service officers available to help our veterans with their claims. We said sayonara to Hank Merckson who pulled the plug after eight years helping our clients and welcomed Rick Eastwood and Anita Moore. With all of this person power available, we are now open three days a week, Monday (except for federal holidays), Wednesday and Friday (except the Friday after Thanksgiving).

MEETINGS

We have been having our (poorly attended) general membership meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except in November and December (third week) and the question has been asked if attendance would improve if we had the meeting during daylight hours. Since a lot of us are not all that keen on driving after dark, maybe a shift into illuminated time would get more of you out of your houses and into the Chapter Home. The suggestion was to keep it on Wednesday and start at 1400 or so after we close up service hours for the day. Let us know by email: info@FLdav32.org or put a note in with your newsletter subscription or booster donation.

“Politics is the entertainment branch of industry.” ...Frank Zappa

CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS:

Veterans who discover errors on their Discharge Documents, or wish to upgrade a Less than Honorable Discharge, have a right to request such action from the branch of Service that issued the Discharge. National Veteran Service Organizations provide representation to Veterans seeking to change or upgrade their Discharge. Application for Discharge Review must be made within Fifteen (15) Years after the Date of Discharge or Dismissal.

Application for Corrections to Military Records to include Level and Type of Decorations, Training, and other errors is made on the DD Form 149. Application must be filed with the Service Secretary within Three (3) Years of discovery of the error or injustice.

For more information on Discharge Review Boards and Correction of Military Records, contact a Nationally Accredited Veteran Service Officer.

REQUESTS FOR MILITARY RECORDS:

All Requests for Military Records to include Medical, Personnel, Discharge (DD214), Awards and Decorations can be submitted on a Standard Form 180 (SF 180). You can also request Military Records on the internet via the National Archives by visiting;

www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/index.html .

“Doing what you like is freedom. Liking what you do is happiness.”

Disclaimer: The Disabled American Veterans, J.L. Golightly, Inc. Chapter #32 publishes this newsletter as a service to its members as well as a public information service on Veteran’s Affairs. The contents do not reflect the views or opinions of the membership, the Chapter officers or National parent organizations of the DAV.