



AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

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Commander's Corner

It has been a couple of months since our last newsletter and veterans and veterans' events in Big Bend continue to move along at a rapid rate. On February 20th we attended a Florida Veterans Council (a statewide legislative council meeting) at the Capitol; on February 22nd, the Lieutenant Governor presented medals to one veteran of each of our last four Wars at the Capital. Our very own Harry Mulhearn represented AMVETS as a Korean War veteran. And then the very next day I and several other AMVETS members attended the 79th Anniversary First Flag on Mt. Suribachi at the "Boots" Thomas Veterans Memorial Park in Monticello.

At our March meeting we kicked off a tribute to our Patriot Guard Riders buying dinner and presenting an "Appreciation Certificate" to the principals of the PGR. Brief articles on our dinner and the above ceremony at "Boots" Thomas Veterans Memorial Park are included in this newsletter.

And now we focus on our 14th Annual Golf Tournament, our annual fundraiser at the Golden Eagle Golf and Country Club. We are being told we are becoming one of the must attend golf tournaments in town. It will be held April 22, 2024, and we are looking for another successful tournament. ***(Continued on page 2)***

AMVETS National was chartered in 1947 and the Tallahassee AMVETS Post 1776 was chartered in July 2009. AMVETS Post 1776 meets the first Thursday of the month at American Legion Post 13, 229 Lake Ella Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32303. We invite honorably discharge veterans, including Guards and Reserve, from all branches to Join us. We are a small post doing big things

www.amvets1776.org

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Brochures have been printed and distributed, letters of invitation have been sent and we are still collecting items for our silent auction. And we are still looking for sponsors and a few more teams. Contact me or Paul for more information, contact numbers are posted in this newsletter.

As always, thank you all for all you do for veterans and your continuing service to our Country, our County and our Post.

Semper Fi

Gordon

Chaplains Corner

Eric Smith, Chaplain AMVETS Post 1776



My Promise to Be a Better Veteran

God, help me to greet this wonderful Springtime of year with a smile and a promise to do better for You and my life as a supporter of all veterans. Please help us to start fresh by taking care of our body and mind. Help us to become more organized

so that we can use our time wisely and give more time to You and to veterans throughout the day. Help us to be motivated, have a clear mind, and stay focused so we can get things done promptly. Help us to “weed out” all the unnecessary noises and voices that prevent us from being more productive in our lives. In Your name, we ask these things.

Amen.

AMVETS

(American Veterans)

Is the nation's most inclusive congressionally-chartered Veterans Service Organization (VSO), representing the interests of 20 million veterans. AMVETS is open to and fighting for all who honorably served in the U.S military, including the Reserve and Guard. With more than 250,000 members nationwide, we are veterans serving veterans.



79th Anniversary of First US Flag on Mt. Suribachi

A Dedication at “Boots” Thomas Veterans Memorial Park

Monticello, Florida

February 22, 2024

(Article by Gordon Lightfoot)

For those that don't know, there were two flags raised on Mt. Suribachi 79 years ago. The story is of legend now but a Marine from Monticello, Florida, Sgt. Ernest Ivy “Boots” Thomas USMCR helped raise the first flag. A close childhood friend of his, Dr. James Sledge, has kept the story alive. In a prolog to “Call Me No Hero” Dr. Sledge writes,

“Call Me No Hero is the story of two small town boys whose plans for their lives were terribly changed by a world at war. Two boys – one destined for fame, only to be overshadowed by a twist of fate – the other who felt compelled to keep his friend's memory alive. The book's title captures the personality of a modest, responsible, and confident young man described by his company commander as “one of the few born leaders of men I have met.”

Dr. Sledge goes on to say, “After his platoon raised the flag and Sergeant Thomas arrived aboard the ship of General Holland Smith, Don Pryor, a CBS correspondent, asked Thomas about raising the flag. The response, “No, Mr. Pryor. The honor belongs to every man in my platoon.” The credit was sufficient for all his men to share.

And yes, there was a second flag raising which has become the iconic flag raising photo at Mt. Suribachi.

The ceremony in Monticello at the “Boots” Thomas Veterans Memorial Park had a nice crowd and served a couple of purposes. We changed out the worn out American and Marine Corps flags and with Commander of American Legion, Otto Walker, Post 49, Ed Gifford emceeding the event and Commander Dennis Baker, USN (ret) giving the keynote address. And then Commander Gifford presented a permanent bronze plaque placed next to the Thomas Monument honoring Dr. Sledge for his life-long personal dedication to preserving Sgt. “Boots” Thomas legacy.

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79th Anniversary of First US Flag on Mt. Suribachi (continued from Page 3)

Then Commander Baker presented Dr. Sledge with a Florida Department of Veteran Affairs new medallion for continuing support for all veterans.

The event was well attended and as usual our very own Patriot Guard Riders stood at attention with their flags raised. They are a familiar site at most veteran events throughout our Big Bend area and we truly appreciate their dedication. A couple of photos help tell the story.

Cmdr Dennis Baker, USN (ret) giving the keynote address.



Commander Gifford presented a permanent bronze plaque honoring Dr. Sledge



Patriot Guard Riders



Cmdr Baker presented Dr. Sledge with a Florida Department of Veteran Affairs new medallion



Veterans Memorial Park had a nice crowd



Thank You Captain Roger Murray USN (RET)

(Article by Gordon Lightfoot)

Although our AMVETS Post raises funds every year at our Golf Tournament it is unusual for us to receive an outright “gift” that we can have to sell and use those funds to put back into our veteran community. Just this past week we had such a benefactor. Captain Roger Murray USN (Ret) gifted our Post a 2006 Buick Lucerne that we were able to title and within one day turned it around for a nice profit, that we will in turn put back into helping veterans and veteran service organizations in need.

Thank you, Roger, for your kind and generous gift. We will put it to good use. And it was good to see you at Mission Bar B Que just before our 9th Vietnam Commemorative Ceremony at our Tallahassee National Cemetery.

Respectfully,

Gordon
Commander,
AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776, Inc.



Gordon and Roger



2006 Buick Lucerne

VIETNAM WAR
50th Anniversary Commemoration
Tallahassee National Cemetery
March 29, 2024

(Article by Gordon Lightfoot)

Some of you might not know that the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War is actually a 10-year celebration. On March 29, 2024, last week, we had our 9th Celebration at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. We have had small and large crowds over the years, but this year was modest, probably 75 in attendance. I am hoping we will have a significant event next year, the 10th and final year of our 50th Anniversary Commemoration. Before next March I hope to put a call out and especially to the public to attend. Stay tuned.

Lt. Colonel Rick Stanford, USMC (Ret) was our keynote and LtCol. Stanford did an outstanding job relaying his time in Vietnam, his commands and although he didn't give a whole lot of detail, he did mention he received a Silver Star and a Purple Heart not long after he arrived in country. LtCol. Stanford spoke directly about his commands and his relationship to other young Marines. He made a pretty strong argument that the 18- to 20-year-olds in Vietnam were a breed apart. Whether or not they were drafted or volunteered they all knew they had a job to do and they did it. They were young, strong, focused and determined young men and women. LtCol. Stanford's speech was inspirational and for those of us that were there we understood. And he left us with a quote that surely represents all of us, he said a friend of his said to him that when someone asks about Vietnam, he replies, "...if you weren't there, I can't explain it to you, if you were I don't have to...".

Our new Tallahassee National Cemetery Director Ms. Eugenia Simmons emceed the ceremony. Butch Topicz led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and a Ms. Judy Lynn Stewart a soloist sang the National Anthem. Thaddeus and Nancy Horbowy, USA Chaplains provided the invocation and the Benediction. She recognized the Vietnam veterans in attendance and distributed the memorial pins to all Vietnam veterans. Michael Slagle presented a Marine Corps wreath and Johnnie Roberts presented the all-branches wreath. We had our Honor Guard present to present colors and the Patriot Guard Riders stood by securing the event. Let's hope we have a grand celebration next year. Here are just a couple of photos.

VIETNAM WAR
50th Anniversary Commemoration
Tallahassee National Cemetery
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Lt. Colonel Rick Stanford – Keynote
Speaker

Marine and Patriot Guard Rider
and Michael Slagle
Presenting the Marine Corps
Wreath



Our Patriot Guard Riders

Patriot Guard Riders Appreciation Night

(Article by Gordon Lightfoot)

At our Meeting in March, we invited a few of the Patriot Guard Riders' leaders to a dinner to present them with an AMVETS Appreciation Certificate. The certificate reads:

"The Officers and Staff of AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 awards this certificate in grateful appreciation of your outstanding support for your service to Veterans in the Big Bend through your service at interment services at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. Further we appreciate your efforts to stand guard at these services in honor and respect for our fallen comrades. This service for you and your Patriot Guard Riders is recognized by our Post and every other veteran service organization in the Big Bend area. Further your participation and leadership for this service is especially recognized by the families of these veterans as we have discovered in heartfelt testimonies from these same families."

This message needs to be shared. We have participated in events for our Tallahassee National Cemetery Honor Guard, and we have written a couple of stories about them, but this is our first recognition of our Patriot Guard Riders. I believe they are some of our most unsung veterans here in Tallahassee even though they are not all veterans, they all have veteran connections and if we in Tallahassee supported our veterans like these Patriot Guard Riders do the world would be a better place. Thank you, Don Reeder, David and Pam Esposito and Michael Slagle. We appreciate all you do in your time and effort.

And we want to thank another Patriot Guard Rider that works tirelessly with his wife in multiple veteran organizations and still finds the time to stand and hold our flag at veteran interments, and other veteran events throughout the Big Bend area. Thank you Butch and Melinda Topicz. (You will see Butch's smile in these photos below, Melinda was taking photos.)

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Patriot Guard Riders Appreciation Night (Continued from page 8)



**Don Reeder, Butch Topicz
and Gordon**



**Michael Slagle, Butch Topicz
and Gordon**



**David and Pam Esposito, Butch Topicz
and Gordon**



AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776

APRIL 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 6:30 PM AMVETS monthly meeting at Happy Days Restaurant	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 AMVETS Golf Tournament Earth Day	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	Secretaries Day			

This Month!

Our 14th Annual "Veterans Helping Veterans"

Golf Tournament — April 22, 2024

Want More Information?

Contact: Gordon Lightfoot

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