



AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

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Commander's Corner

If you are like me, I am ready for some football! Football usually means fall is close and our long hot summer will be coming to an end. I want to begin with the heat because I think that is part and parcel to the lack of activity for our Post. This heat with its intermittent rainstorms has kept most of us inside. Although I am sure some of us took off on vacation, hopefully to find some cooler climate.

Just a note on our July meeting. We didn't have a June meeting due to some logistical and personal problems, but we did have a robust meeting in July. We got around to our now annual distribution of funds to veterans and veteran service organizations in need. This distribution/donation comes after our major fund-raising event in April. And this year we had a great golf tournament and are able to pass on some of our funds. The following are our recipients this year: 1) Tallahassee Veterans Legal Collaborative, \$2,000.00 for their extraordinary work providing legal council in their weekly clinics to veterans in need; 2) Florida Cares, Inc., \$2,000.00, a local builder that provides veterans in need of decks and accessible ramps; and 3) Family Promise of the Big Bend, a homeless veteran collaborative that helps take care of our homeless veterans throughout our Big Bend area. There were other considerations but due to possible expenditures/donations for immediate storm or other needs that we can't predict we want to
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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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keep our fund healthy and available for those unseen needs.

One other note, Paul is already working on and planning for our 2nd Annual Turkey Shoot. I believe he has set a date of November 18th. We are looking for another successful fun day, and comradeship and hopefully a Mission Bar B Que meal.

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

Chaplain's Corner

Our Prayer for the Sick

O God, in our hearts, we name those who are facing illness and pain. We join our prayers with the prayers of all who love them. Give them renewed comfort and courage. Strengthen in them the healing powers You have placed within us all. Guide the hands and hearts of those who are entrusted with their care. May the knowledge of Your love and ours give added hope to them and to their dear ones. May they find even greater strength because our prayers are linked with theirs.



Chaplain Earnest Reed

Don't Give up the Ship **Submitted by: John Folsom** **by: Military History**

On 1781 – The youngest of eleven children, James Lawrence was born in Burlington, NJ. His parents were Tories who had entertained the Hessian commander as dinner guests at their home during the Revolution, but when the war ended, they remained in America. James was sent to study law at the age of 13 but proved an uncooperative student. Eventually, he was permitted to join the Navy as a midshipman in 1798, and gained experience in action against the Barbary pirates. Commissioned a Lieutenant in 1802, he was a member of Stephen Decatur's raiding party which destroyed the U.S.S. Philadelphia in Tripoli harbor after it was captured by the Tripolitans in 1804. During the War of 1812, Lawrence commanded the U.S.S. Hornet, which captured the H.M.S. Peacock, and was promoted to Captain as a result.



John Folsom

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(Continued from Page 2 Don't Give up the Ship)

On June 1, 1813, commanding a new and untrained crew on the 49-gun frigate U.S.S. Chesapeake off Boston, Lawrence accepted a challenge from Philip Bowes Vere Broke, captain of the 38-gun H.M.S. Shannon. Four years Lawrence's senior, Broke had commanded Shannon for six years, and had the best trained crew in the Royal Navy. In less than 15 minutes, Lawrence's crew was overwhelmed. Mortally wounded, Lawrence shouted, "Tell the men to fire faster and not to give up the ship; fight her till she sinks!" True to his words, every officer in the Chesapeake's chain of command fought until he was either killed or wounded. Even so, the battle was lost in under an hour, the Chesapeake was captured, and Lawrence died four days later, leaving his wife and a daughter. In honor of Captain Lawrence, a group of women stitched the words "Don't Give Up the Ship" into a flag. The flag was presented to Oliver Hazard Perry, commander of the U.S.S. Lawrence – named for Captain Lawrence – in the summer of 1813. Perry went to capture an entire squadron of British ships in the battle of Lake Erie, on September 13, though not before every officer on the Lawrence – except for Perry and his 13-year-old brother – was either killed or wounded. Lawrence's words became the motto of the U.S. Navy, which has named numerous ships in his honor, and Perry's flag now hangs in a place of honor at the United States Naval Academy. Copies may be seen at other Navy installations and, of course, in Burlington. Far less well known is Lawrence's last command to his crew – "Burn her!"

THINK ABOUT IT

BY: John Folsom

Before my grandmother passed on, I had a chance to visit with her. In my youth she and grandfather ran a little country store in Nocatee Florida. To tell you how small the store was, he would butcher his own steers, bring the meat back to the store and cut it as the customer wanted it. Eggs, maybe five dozen, were on the counter in a large container and customers would buy what they needed. In case you did not know, when eggs are freshly laid, if you do not wash them, they can last for up to a month without being refrigerated. Small store indeed.

Grandmother and I were sitting in her living room, and she was telling me stories from her past. One story I recall, she told of a woman who called her and asked, "Mrs. Dye I got laid off from my job and I was wondering if I could charge my groceries at your store?" Grandmother and Granddaddy did run charge accounts for their customers. Grandmother asked the woman, "where have you been buying your groceries?" The woman replied, "Winn Dixie." My dear sweet Grandmother, who always read the bible and went to church every Sunday, told the woman, "Then go to Winn Dixie and ask them if they will let you charge you groceries there."

I wasn't satisfied in letting her story end there, so I chimed in, "Grandmother, I know that in lean times you have prayed to the good Lord to send you customers. Do you think it is possible that the Lord could have been sending you this customer, only you had to give a little also?"

My advice to us all is when you help someone, help them with your heart and not out of resentment.

TOWER OF SONG

Back Up and Running!

(Article by Gordon Lightfoot)

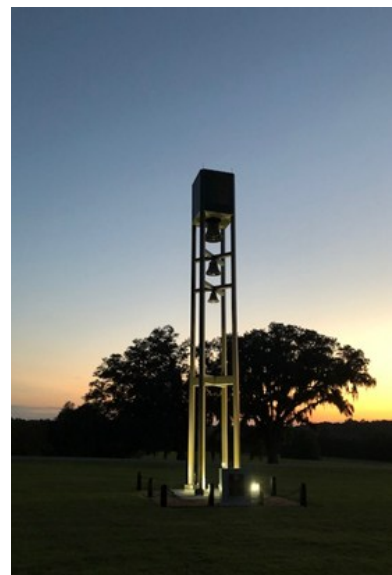
In the Tallahassee Democrat press release of February 2021 the editor titled our article as the “Tower of Song”. A befitting title for what a lot of us considers our legacy as a Post, a Bell Tower that offers our Tallahassee National Cemetery a unique memorial as it states on its granite plaque, “...**AS THESE BELLS RING...HONORED DEAD REST...FREEDOM LIVES...**” Our Tower literally has a catalog of over 700 songs it can play over its loudspeakers. But it doesn’t play continuously. The Cemetery Director, at that time, Raymond Miller, told us that due to the interment ceremonies that are held during the day, usually between 10:00 a.m. and 3 p.m., the Tower can’t sing during those hours.

What a lot of folks don’t know is that our Bell Tower has been down for several months. The computer that runs it was knocked out by lightning, and it took several months for VA to approve the invoice to fix/replace the Carillon (the computer) that actually plays songs. But now we are back in business thanks to Melissa Sheridan, it is playing the National Anthem in the morning around 8:30 a.m. and TAPS around 4:30 p.m. And thanks to Melissa our Tower is back to playing songs on the hour during the weekends and our holidays.

If you are out and about on the weekends stop by our National Cemetery. The Tower is now playing mostly patriotic as well as other memorable songs on the hour. The Tallahassee National Cemetery is a national treasure and is one of over 150 throughout the nation. Since our first interments in 2016 we have over 3,000 veterans and their spouses laid to rest at a premier National Cemetery. And if you want to sit and listen to a few songs, take a minute and take a walk on our memorial walkway. We now have Memorials dedicated to Purple Heart recipients, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Marine Corps League, the Air and Space Force members and a small garden spot from the Daughters of the American Revolution. We are also soon dedicating a POW memorial sponsored by Tom Carney and David Wilson’s efforts through the AFA Chapter here in Tallahassee. And there are more planned.



**Tallahassee National
Cemetery
Bell Tower
Of Song**



SPOTLIGHT ON Butch Topicz

Butch Topicz is seen here explaining to a home school youth group from Monticello a veterans view of the Korean War in front of Tallahassee's Korean War Memorial. Just one of the monuments included in our Military Heritage Trail Program offered to youth groups in our community. Butch volunteers to be one of our veteran docents as we offer these youth a tour of the many Veteran memorials throughout our area.



Butch Explaining Veterans' View of Korean War to Home School Youth

But there is a lot more to know about Butch. Butch Topicz served 21 years in the US Navy, 15 years of sea service and 6 years shore service. While serving he was awarded the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, (2) Battle Efficiency E, 5 Good Conduct Medals, a National Defense, an Armed Forces Expeditionary and a Sea Service Deployment Medal. Butch not only is a valued member of AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776, but he is also a member of these following veteran organizations: Fleet Reserve Association, VFW, American Legion Post 13, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association and our Patriot Guard Riders.

Butch has received numerous awards recently that only enhances his value to our Post. He received the Fleet Reserve Association Southeast Region 2021-2022 Shipmate of the Year for Public Relations, Fleet Reserve Association Southeast Region 2021-2022 Shipmate of the Year for Americanism and Nominated for Fleet Reserve Association Shipmate of the Year National for Americanism/Patriotism Awards. Butch has been instrumental in his Fleet Reserve Association Branch 34 receiving awards both Regionally and Nationally.

Butch is an active member of our Post participating in all our events including our annual golf tournament and he concurrently serves in other capacities as Executive Officer of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association 20-12, Tallahassee and Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) Branch 34 Secretary and FRA Branch 34 Americanism/Patriotism Essay chairman. Butch has been successful having his essay students in grades 9 and 10 reach national recognition.

Butch is active in fundraising activities raising more than \$14,000.00 by his Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association 20-12 for Honor Flight Tallahassee and he raises money and places flags on Memorial Day throughout Wakulla County cemeteries and at graves at Southside Cemetery on Memorial Day. All this while raising money for Wreaths Across America at their annual December events here in Tallahassee.

We are proud here at AMVETS Post 1776 to have this highly decorated veteran that is active in local, state and national veteran organizations including a focus on our youth, taking leadership roles in these organizations leading to great success for himself and all those he touches.

Thank you Butch!

A Brief History of the Purple Heart

by 1st Vice Tom Carney



On Thursday, August 7, 2025 – our nation will observe the 243rd anniversary of the establishment of the Purple Heart military decoration – which was ordered by General George Washington's general orders to the Continental Army. The general orders were written by General Washington at the Continental Army's Headquarters at Newburgh, New York on August 7, 1782. Originally known as the Badge of Military Merit – the Purple Heart was intended by General Washington as a military order for soldiers who exhibited "not only instances of unusual gallantry in battle, but also for extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way". The Badge of Military Merit was an award for non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the Continental Army. It is considered America's first military decoration and the world's second oldest – after the Cross of St George was established in 1769.

Most historians believe there were only 3 such awards issued during the American Revolution and presented by General Washington himself:

May 3, 1783

Sergeant William Brown of the 5th Connecticut Regiment of the Connecticut Line

Sergeant Elijah Churchill of the 2nd Regiment Light Dragoons

June 10, 1783

Sergeant Daniel Bissell of the 2nd Connecticut Regiment of the Connecticut Line

Following the Revolutionary War, the Badge of Military Merit had largely fallen into disuse but was never officially abolished. In honor of President Washington's bicentennial birthday in 1932, the United States War Department authorized the new Purple Heart Medal for soldiers who had previously received either a Wound Chevron or the Army Wound Ribbon. The War Department had also determined the Purple Heart Medal would be the official successor to the original Badge of Military Merit. Initially, any soldier who received such a wound chevron or Army Wound Ribbon retroactive to April 5, 1917 (the day before America's entry into World War I) was eligible to receive a Purple Heart. Subsequently – criteria were established for any soldier who may have received a Wound Chevron or Army Wound Ribbon dating back to the Civil War and in all conflicts since. To date, there have been over 2 million Purple Hearts awarded – with some individuals receiving as many as 10.



AMVETS Tallahassee

Post 1776

AUGUST 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 American Legion Commander's Coalition	7 AMVETS Post 1776 Monthly Meeting TBD	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						