



AMVETS Tallahassee Post 1776 Cyber Newsletter

Published Bi-Monthly for the membership and others — Vol. 4 , No. 3, July 2024



In this issue.....

Commander's Message Page 1

Chaplains Corner Page 2

**Eric Smith AMVET of the Year
2024 Page 3-4**

Medal of Honor History Page 5

Trip to a Historic Airfield Page 6

**VFW Post 3308 and Daughters of
the American Revolution Dedicate
a DAR Memorial to the Unknown
Soldier Page 7**

**Vietnam Casualties from Putnam
County Honored by Palatka High
School Class of 1964 and Ameri-
can Legion Post 45 Page 8-9**

**AMVETS Calendar
Page 10**



Commander's Corner

The end of April, May and the beginning of June have been a busy couple of months for our Post. We had a very successful Fourteenth Annual Golf Tournament on April 22, 2024, probably raising more funds than we have in quite a while. Then we turned around at our May meeting and put substantial funds back into our community including our homeless veteran housing programs. And we donated another \$1,000.00 to our State Departments Disaster relief fund. We were told their funds were seriously deficient due to the past couple of years storms in south Florida.

Elections were held in May, and we were fortunate that all officers were reelected. When you have a winning team why change. Our Report of Installation to our State Department shows our leadership as: Gordon Lightfoot, Commander; Tom Carney, First Vice Commander; Ray House, 2nd Vice Commander; Paul Rogerson, Financial Officer; Cecil Taylor, Provost; Henry Lowery, Judge Advocate; and Eric Smith, our Chaplain.

On a proud note, I believe I reported in a past newsletter that we submitted six nominations for special awards to our State Department.

(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

Vol. 4, No. 3, AMVETS Tallahassee Newsletter Page 1, July 2024

(Commander's Corner Continued from page 1)

We receive the “**Outstanding Post Award**”; “**AMVET of the Year Award**” recipient our very own **Eric Smith**; “**AMVETS Officer of the Year Award**” recipient **Paul Rogerson**; the “**Americanism Award**” recipient **Tony Minichiello**; and a “**Green Hat Award**” usually awarded to one of a Posts newest member, **Ray Bogan** recipient.

Of course, nothing goes so smooth as all going to the convention and all receiving all the Awards. Nope, Me, Paul, Eric and Tony were there Saturday morning waiting for the presentations when they announced that the “**AMVET OF THE YEAR AWARD**” would be awarded at the Banquet that night. Well, we were not informed of that award being awarded late that evening and Eric, as astonished as he was that he was going to get it, said he hadn't planned on staying that night. He had other commitments in Tallahassee. Paul and I ended up staying and I received the Award for Eric. Please look at the article I wrote on that experience and take a look at that special trophy Eric will receive at a special dinner for him on June 21st among his friends and family here in Tallahassee. By invitation we have invited the Tallahassee National Cemetery Honor Guard, the Executive Board of the American Legion and of course our membership. The dinner is this coming Friday evening, June 21st and we are looking for a great crowd presenting this most prestigious award AMVETS has in Florida to one of our own.

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

A Prayer for the Protection During Hurricane Season

O God, Master of this passing world, hear the humble voices of your children. We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control. The Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant, can awake from its seeming lethargy, overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land, and spread chaos and disaster. During this hurricane season, we turn to You Father. Spare us from past tragedies whose memories are vivid and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with the passing of time. Please

spare us from the calamities common to this area and animated with a true spirit of gratitude. Amen.

Edited from a prayer originally dedicated to the victims of Hurricane Audrey in 1957.

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 vet-



Eric Smith – AMVET OF THE YEAR – JUNE 2024

(Article by Gordon Lightfoot)

This article is about one of our members and his great work in our community. Eric received one of the most prestigious Awards our AMVETS Department of Florida bestows on its membership. Eric Smith has not only been our Chaplain for over four years, but he is the Big Bend Honor Guards Chaplain, and Chaplain and member of American Legion Post #13. His involvement in both organizations gives great credit for our member that not only represents AMVETS locally, but Eric gives freely of his time and talent to several other organizations that rely on his caring and gentle touch at so many of our veteran services at the Tallahassee National Cemetery.



Eric Smith AMVET of the year

Earlier this year we were asked to nominate some of our membership and even to nominate our Post for some awards that are presented annually at our AMVETS Department Convention. We created a nomination committee made up of Tom Carney, our 1st Vice, David Wilson a member and me. We looked up the qualifying criteria for six different awards and submitted them in early April. Fast forward, we received five of the six we applied for but what is more amazing is that we won several of their top awards including AMVET of the Year, which went to our very own Eric Smith. From there we received AMVETS Outstanding

Post of the Year; AMVETS Post Officer of the Year Award, Paul Rogerson; AMVETS Americanism Award, Tony Minichiello; and the AMVETS Green Hat Award going to our Adjutant Ray Bogan.

With regrets we were all (excepting Ray Bogan who was out of State) awaiting the awards presentation Saturday morning when they announced the “AMVET of the Year Award” would be presented at the banquet that night. Because of the secrecy of the announcements, we did not know Eric’s award would be that evening and he had other commitments in Tallahassee, and he could not stay. We stayed that morning and were given four of our awards and Paul Rogerson and I along with Paul’s wife Bridget and his sister Nora stayed for the banquet. It was late in the evening when the Department Commander Mr. Furgeson presented the AMVET of the Year Award to me on behalf of Eric.



Commander Lightfoot Presented AMVET of the Year Award on behalf of Eric Smith

Continued on Page 4

Eric Smith – AMVET OF THE YEAR – JUNE 2024

(Continued from Page 3)

By far the most prestigious Award of the day was the AMVET of the Year Award. The Department's Executive Director Horace Johnson personally picked out the Award, a beautiful bronze statue of the American Eagle on a pedestal. And to follow up on the tremendous honor we will be having a dinner for Eric June 21, 2024, at the American Legion Hall. Because of Eric's involvement in the Big Bend Honor Guard and his membership and work with the American Legion Post #13, we are inviting the Honor Guard and the Executive Board of the American Legion Post #13 as well as our membership. We expect a small crowd honoring our very own special AMVETS member Eric Smith. Just in case you can't make the dinner, here is a photo of the Award.



AMVET of the Year Prestigious Award Recipient

Eric Smith

Medal of Honor
By: This Day in History
Submitted by John Folsom

July 12, 1862 – President Abraham Lincoln signs into law a measure calling for the awarding of a U.S. Army Medal of Honor, in the name of Congress, “to such non-commissioned officers and privates as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities during the present insurrection.”

The previous December, Lincoln had approved a provision creating a U.S. Navy Medal of Valor, which was the basis of the Army Medal of Honor created by Congress in July 1862. The first U.S. Army soldiers to receive what would become the nation’s highest military honor were six members of a Union raiding party who in 1862 penetrated deep into Confederate territory to destroy bridges and railroad tracks between Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Atlanta, Georgia. In 1863, the Medal of Honor was made a permanent military decoration available to all members, including commissioned officers, of the U.S. military. It is conferred upon those who have distinguished themselves in actual combat at risk of life beyond the call of duty. Since its creation, during the Civil War, almost 3,400 men and one woman have received the Medal of Honor for heroic actions in U.S. military conflict. The Web site for the US Army Center of Military History: www2.army.mil/cmh-pg/moh1.htm.

**Yours in Service,
John Folsom
Florida Veterans Hall of Fame
Chaplain/2nd District
American Legion
Department of Florida
Chaplain VFW Post 3308**



TRIP TO A HISTORIC AIRFIELD

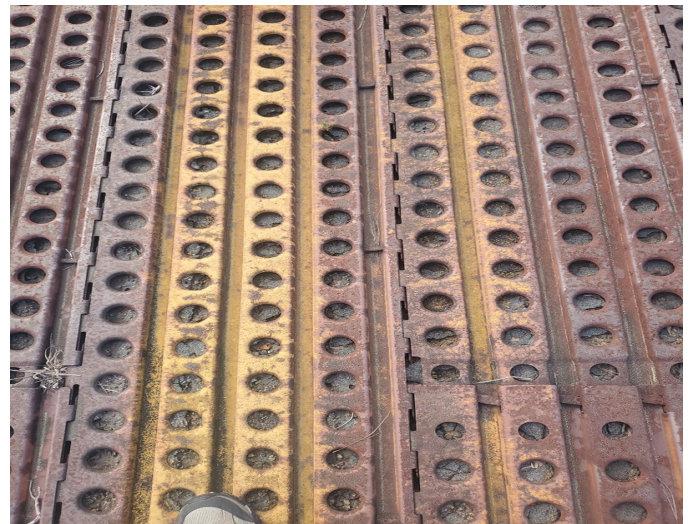
On 22 February 2024, AMVETS Chapter 1776 members Buddy Perryman and David Wilson took a trip to the airfield where the Doolittle Raiders trained for their carrier takeoffs to bomb Japan during WW2. This was one of the most daring raids in all of WW2. The airfield at Eglin AFB FL is the Runway that Jimmy Doolittle and his flyers trained on for their mission to Japan in 1942. The Japanese Leaders had told their people that Japan would never be bombed from the air. Doolittle and the Raiders took off from the deck of the aircraft carrier, USS Hornet in their B-25 bombers. It was a daring move and even though the tactical results were not that great, the strategic results were over the top for both countries. American morale was thru the roof. When asked where the US Bombers took off from President Roosevelt replied "Shangri-La." Japan's leaders lost face. Many historians believe that it forced Japan to plan their mission on Midway Island, resulting in the great American victory that changed the course of the Pacific War. Before the Battle of Midway, Japan had experienced all victories. After Midway, America was on the March toward Japan.

This Runway was of major importance to our winning the war in the Pacific. What a historic place!

God Bless America and the Greatest Generation!



I never knew that the Runway used by the Doolittle Raiders was made of Marston Mats.



Marston mat was used throughout the Pacific to construct airfields in a hurry

VFW Post 3308 and Daughters of the American Revolution

Dedicate a DAR Memorial to the Unknown Soldier

(Article by Gordon Lightfoot)

Our local VFW Post 3308 is unique, we think, to any other VFW Post in the Country. We (I am a member) were given a Cemetery just south of town by Leon County many years ago. Our Cemetery has a limited capacity, but we still serve our members that want to be buried there.

On Memorial Day each year, we have our own Memorial Day Ceremony, and it is open to the public. But this Memorial Day was particularly special. One of the DAR Chapters helped us dedicate a special DAR memorial at our cemetery. Ms. Margaret Lewis Rankin, Chapter Regent of the Fort San Luis Chapter NSDAR spoke at our ceremony dedicating a Commemorative Marker on the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, complete with granite markers, benches and a garden. DAR has a couple of Chapters here in Tallahassee and they generously offer their memorials to various organizations. The memorial stone says, "This Garden is a living tribute to all of America's Veterans and their families, in silence and respect, this is a place to remember why millions of Americans have fought and died for our liberty and our freedom. Here we renew our promise to fulfill America's sacred duty to never forget. Here we renew our mutual pledge to support them with "Our Lives, our Fortunes and our Sacred Honor." What a special Memorial on this Memorial Day. Thank you from all our veterans in and around Leon County,



Speaker Ms. Margaret Lewis Rankin, Chapter
Regent of the Fort San Luis Chapter



100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
Commemorative Marker

Vietnam Casualties from Putnam County Honored by Palatka Senior High School Class of 1964 and American Legion Post 45

(Article by Gordon "Butch" Lightfoot)

A lot of us don't bother to go to our Class Reunions but some of us do and my Class of 1964 is one of those special classes that draws a pretty good crowd considering we were a class of 229. We just had our 60th Reunion and we had a great turnout. We had a dinner and program for over 80 folks, 57 of those graduating with me in 1964. What makes this class special was summed up by one of our classmates at our 50th reunion when Lynn Henry Weddington was asked what makes our class so special. And she simply said, "Because we all grew up together." And what a joy it is to visit old friends and literally talk about our first-grade class or our third or sixth and especially those high school years. I could go on and on and tell some special stories that we shared but at this reunion we celebrated all our classmates. We read out all the names of our classmates that have passed, almost half, and we recognized almost sixty of us that joined the military.



Monument on Courthouse Square Palatka

After these presentations were made and before dinner, I had a very special honor to recognize a very special group of veterans that are engraved on a memorial stone on Palatka's Courthouse Square. The Vietnam memorial sits along with all the rest of the memorials honoring fallen veterans from WWI to WWII, Korea and those of the Afghani-stan War. The Vietnam Memorial has a casualty list of twenty-seven Marines and Soldiers that died in Vietnam during the period from 1964 thru 1975.

I have visited this memorial a few times on my trips back home because I know several of these fallen heroes. And after talking to David Wilson, a member of our AMVETS Post 1776 here in Tallahassee, I asked David to do some research on these special casualties from Putnam County as he is doing for several counties in our Big Bend area. This is a special passion of David's and in short order he supplied me with a thumb drive that I was able to access and put together a two-volume set of books that chronicles biographies, newspaper articles, military documents and just a lot of information about each and every veteran on this memorial. We plan to present these books to Putnam County Board of County Commissioners along with the Petition mentioned below.

(Continued on page 9)

Vietnam Casualties from Putnam County Honored by Palatka Senior High School Class of 1964 and American Legion Post 45 (Continued from Page 8)



American Legion Post 45 Color
Guard

What made this presentation extra special was that after contacting the local American Legion Post 45 they enthusiastically provided a Color Guard to help us give a dignified salute to all these veterans with the ringing of a bronze bell and calling out each and every name. It was quite a solemn moment. And of course, we were able to give just a brief oral summary of these veterans.

Out of our list of casualties we have a Medal of Honor recipient by the name of Robert Henry Jenkins Jr., one of only nine (9) Medal of Honor winners in Vietnam from Florida. We then shared that there were 3 Silver Stars, 23 Purple Hearts; 13 Bronze Stars, 3 Air Medals, 5 Good Conduct medals, and 1 Distin-

guished Service Cross Not too many counties in Florida per capita can match our Heroes service to God and Country.

Then when conducting the research on these 27 heroes we came upon one (1) more. A PFC Johnny Lee Proctor a Marine from Melrose, Florida. I asked the Class to sign a Petition I prepared that our Class of 1964 will present to Putnam County to add one more name to the Memorial. It was gladly signed by those attending and we are hoping to deliver the Petition to the Putnam County Board of County Commissioners as soon as possible.



Presenters Butch, Rollin and
Kelly



Gary with American Legion
Posting Colors

To close, to the Class of 1964 you are one of the best classes from Palatka and we have the stories and histories and heroes from our class to prove it. God Bless you all. Butch

Remembering our Friends...



AMVETS Tallahassee

Post 1776

JUNE

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7 AMVETS Convention	8 AMVETS Convention
9 AMVETS Convention	10	11	12	13	14 Flag Day	15
16 Father's Day	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

This Month!

AMVETS Florida Department Convention 7-9 June 2024

Want More Information?

Contact: Gordon Lightfoot