



# AARON A. WEAVER CHAPTER 776



**Chapter Purpose - To preserve the proud legacy of the Purple Heart**

## 2019-20 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: Vacant**  
**Trustee 2-yr: Zig Laska**  
**Trustee 1-yr: Glenn Beaulieu**  
**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 9.** Chapter 776 Cdr. Bud Allen, on behalf of the Chapter membership, presented a \$200 donation to Citrus County's Female Veterans Network memorial monument fundraising campaign.

**May 14.** Cdr. Bud Allen and Sr. Vice Cdr. Chuck Kanehl presented the Chapter's \$1,000 Sgt. Dennis J. Flanagan Memorial Scholarship to Hillary Whirle during a Withlacoochee Technical College Law Enforcement Academy ceremony. Dennis Flanagan, father of Sgt. Flanagan, also participated in the presentation.

**May 16.** Before Unit 776's May meeting, Barbara Mills of Honor Flight was presented a check for \$400 from Unit 776 members Sandy Cross, Mickey Hunt, Carol Hayes, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Vikki Pietras, Annie Fair, Nancy Laska, Gail Nemesh, and Linda Golfieri.

**May 18.** Over 50 Patriots, Associate Members, Auxiliary Members and guests turned out for the chapter's annual Armed Forces Day picnic. Citrus High School  
*See Chapter completed page 2*

## Next Meeting

**Tuesday, July. 16, 2019**  
**Citrus County Building Alliance**  
**1196 S Lecanto Hwy.**  
**Lecanto, FL 34461**

The chapter's bimonthly meetings are held the third Tuesday of September, November, January, March, May and July. The meeting location is at 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](mailto:info@citruspurpleheart.org) or call 382-3847.

## Member News

A hearty "welcome aboard" to Robert Matovcik as Chapter 776's newest Patriot member. A resident of Brooklyn, NY, he is a U.S. Navy veteran of Vietnam and was a crew member of Chapter 776 Finance Officer Joe McClister aboard LCM 920. He and Joe were both wounded in action when they were attacked by the Viet Cong in Cu Mau on December 26, 1970.

Warm Happy Birthday wishes to Chapter 776 charter member and WW II USMC veteran **Tom Smith** who was 95 years

young in June. Tom, a former resident of Citrus Hills, who now resides in Glenville NY, celebrated his birthday with family members.

Patriot **Mike King**, who has been contending with a battery of health issues, recently had a heart attack

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

Special thanks to Patriot **Richard Hunt** and **Rick Allen** for volunteering their grill master skills as the Chef du Jour and Sous Chef de Jour, respectively, at the chapter's Armed Forces Day picnic. Also, a well deserved thank you to Patriots **Joe McClister** and **Rick Allen** for getting the picnic food and supplies, as well as Unit 776 members for their delicious dishes and desserts.

Chapter 776 members reelected to the Purple Heart Veterans of Florida Corporation Board of Directors are **Richard Hunt**, President; **Bud Allen**, **Rick Allen** and **J.B. Haskins**, Directors;

*See Member continued page 2*

## Annual Purple Heart Anniversary Breakfast

Chapter 776's annual Purple Heart anniversary breakfast will be hosted by the West Citrus Elks Lodge 2693 on **Saturday, August 3 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 237th 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](mailto:budsterfd@tampabay.rr.com)). Please indicate the number in your party and their names.



**Chapter completed**

graduating senior Kaycee Nichols was introduced as the 2019 recipient of the Chapter's \$1,000 College of Central Florida Endowed Scholarship and Withlacoochee Technical College Law Enforcement student Hillary Whirl as the 2019 recipient of the Chapter's \$1,000 Sgt. Dennis J. Flanagan Memorial Scholarship. Each was presented a Purple Heart mug and Proud Supporter pin.

**May 18.** Patriot Carlos Marxauch presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate at the South Sumter High School AFJROTC annual awards ceremony.

**May 18.** Attending the Nick Nicholas Ford 3rd Annual Heroes Appreciation event were Rick Allen, Ray & Pat Michael, Mike & Linda Schlaudraff, Fred Daniels and Honorary Member Barb Mills.

**May 21-24.** Patriots Richard Hunt and Chris Boreland were selected to participate in the Support U.S. Armed Forces Purple Heart Honor Hunt, a four day outdoor adventure with complimentary hunting licenses, hunting weapons/accessories, hunting guides, lodging and food.

**May 26.** As a Memorial Day remembrance tribute, Unit 776 members Sandy Cross, Linda Golfieri, Mickey Hunt, and Gail Nemesh, joined by Patriot Richard Hunt, placed flags on the grave sites of Chapter 776 namesake CWO Aaron Weaver, Aaron's brother-in-law Randy Billings, as well as other Florida National Cemetery grave sites.

**May 26.** Chapter 776/Unit 776 members attending the Fallen Heroes Remembrance Ceremony were Bud & JoAnn Allen, Rob & Linda Coughlin, Sandy Cross, Fred & Linda Daniels, Al & Linda Golfieri, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Zig & Nancy Laska, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Will & Bonnie Korber, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Gail Nemesh, Leo & Mary Jo Stockmaster, and honorary member Barb Mills.

**May 27.** Cdr. Bud Allen 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, John Carlson, Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz, Richard

Hunt, Chuck & Mickie Kanehl, Will & Bonnie Korber, Zig & Nancy Laska, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Ray & Pat Michael, Gail Nemesh and Andy Viola.

**May 27.** Chapter 776 Chaplain Fred Daniels organized and presided at the Floral City Memorial Day ceremony with Unit 776 President Sandy Cross in attendance.

**May 29.** Unit 776 members Sandy Cross, Annie Fair, Mickey Hunt, Nancy Laska and Gail Nemesh, plus Patriot Richard Hunt, provided dinner for residents of Fisher House at the James A. Haley VA Hospital in Tampa.

**June 6.** Chapter 776 Patriots paying their final respects at the internment of Chapter 776 Charter Member Arvid "A.W." Swanson at the Florida National Cemetery were Bud Allen, Rick Allen, Curt Ebitz, Richard Hunt, Will Korber, Zig Laska, and Joe McClister.

**June 14.** Chapter 776 and Unit 776 flag bearers for the evening Inverness Flag Day ceremony were Cdr. Bud Allen, Rick Allen, Annie Fair and Bonnie Korber. Other chapter/unit attendees were JoAnn Allen, Carol Allen, and Will Korber.

**June 18.** Unit 776 members Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair, Mickey Hunt, Nancy Laska, and Gail Nemesh presented a \$390 donation to the Nature Coast Ministries Dental Clinic to support free dental care to homeless and low income veterans.

**June 19.** On behalf of Unit 776, auxiliary members Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair, Mickey Hunt, Gail Nemesh, and Vikki Pietras presented a \$1,562 donation to the Citrus County Veterans Foundation, which is the Chapter's principal charitable works. Thank you Unit 776!

**Future**

**July 23, 1:00 p.m.** Purple Heart Proclamation, Board of County Commissioners, County Courthouse, Inverness.

**August 3, 9:00 a.m.** Purple Heart Anniversary Breakfast, hosted by W. Citrus Elks Lodge, 2396, Grover

**Member News continued**

and Chapter 776 Honorary Member **Nicole Gaudette**, Secretary.

Kudos to Cdr. **Bud Allen** for another superb performance as the Master of Ceremonies of the Memorial Day observance 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 fifth consecutive year.

Unit 776 member **Marie Williams**, who now resides in Texas, was hospitalized in late May with blood clots in her lungs that necessitated emergency surgery followed by four days in ICU. She is now home living independently and recovering "her get up and go" with walking and swimming. A proud grandmother, she attended her youngest grandchild's graduation from Texas A&M and commissioning in the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant.

Chapter 776 stalwart Mike Schlaudraff underwent cervical surgery on May 20 at Citrus Memorial Hospital. The surgery has diminished the pain that he has had to endure for quite some time, which has raised hopes that as his recovery progresses, the pain will further diminish.

Cdr **Bud Allen** made an unplanned trip to Seven Rivers Regional Hospital with extreme pain in his knee. Pending diagnosis, it appears to be either a meniscus tear or soft tissue issue. Several days later, Cdr. Allen broke a tooth and had to make a trip to the VA dental clinic in The Villages. When it rains, it pours.

**Departed Patriot Arvid "A.W." Swanson**

Patriot Swanson died peacefully at his Inglis, Florida home on June 11 at the age of 90 under

the care of his family and Vitas Hospice. A charter member of Chapter 776, he dropped out of high

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### Arvid "A.W." Swanson

school at age 17 to enlist in the Marine Corps, retiring 23 years later as a Gunnery Sergeant. Upon retirement, he completed his high school education and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida International University.

A combat veteran of the Korean War, Patriot Swanson served with Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. With his battalion encircled by Chinese forces in the area of the Chosin Reservoir, a sniper's bullet shattered his right leg between the ankle and knee. Upon reaching the aid station, the battalion surgeon was mortally wounded, as he crouched down to examine Patriot Swanson's leg. Left unattended in the freezing temperatures amid the frozen bodies of fallen comrades for 24 hours, he was moved to a makeshift medical clearing facility where he again went untreated until airlifted by C-47 to the 118th Station Hospital in Yongpo with follow on treatment and recovery at medical facilities in Japan, Hawaii, California and New York City.

Patriot Swanson also served in Vietnam. During a helicopter assault west of My Lai, as a platoon sergeant with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, his platoon came under heavy enemy mortar and small arms fire. Although he miraculously survived unscathed, 17 of the 21 Marines with him were killed or wounded. Contracting malaria in August 1966, he was returned to the States. He deployed again to Vietnam during the Tet Offensive with the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines as the operations sergeant, returning to Camp Pendleton in August 1968.

Patriot Swanson was interred at The Florida National Cemetery with military honors. He is survived by three sons, two daughters, seven grandchildren, one great grandchild, and two nieces. Another son preceded him in death.

### From the Commander

Patriots, Associates, and Auxiliary,

First of all, here's the latest on the dispute between MOPH U.S. A. and the Purple Heart Service Foundation. No resolution has been reached for funding the Order. All headquarters staff members are still furloughed and the latest notice from National Commander Greenlaw is that the July convention in Branson, Missouri is a "go." The Order is waiting for the outcome of the legal entanglements with the Foundation to determine the direction it will take. Meanwhile the Department of Florida and Chapter 776 are in good financial order and we will continue with all programs and functions, as normal.

I was at my squadron gathering in Pensacola when the Armed Forces picnic was held. I understand there was a good crowd, vittles were superb and camaraderie was in full swing. Thanks to Sr. Vice Cdr. Chuck Kanehl for filling in for me and to all attendees.

The Chapter provided hot dogs, sausage, cold drinks and chips at the Fallen Heroes Monument annual reading of the names of Citrus County veterans who have given all! With Richard at the grill, Curt Ebitz, Joe McClister and myself manning the table with help Rob Coughlin and my nephew David, we served up 50 plus dogs & sausages at no charge. However, the Chapter netted \$100 in donations. Many thanks to those who attended and if I missed a helper's name, sincere apologies!

The Memorial Day service at the Homosassa Veterans Memorial was very well attended. Once again, I emceed with my son Troy as Chaplain, and my granddaughter Eve singing the National Anthem and Some Gave All. County Commissioner Ron Kitchen spoke about Nancy Weaver-Dalton's post about her late husband CWO Aaron Weaver and what this day means to her and the Weaver family. I also recounted past chapter commander Ray Michael's record of distinguished serve to our country so the community could better understand the sacrifices that those who have served have made. Also, as we do each year, the Chapter and Auxiliary celebrated Flag Day by participating in the City of Inverness Flag Day ceremony. Thanks to all who attended.

The interment service for charter member A.W. Swanson, a USMC veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, was held at the Florida National Cemetery with a strong contingent of Chapter members in attendance. Thanks for taking the time to celebrate the life of one of our own!

There will be a DEC meeting in Jacksonville July 20 & 21. Due to a previous commitment, I may not be able to attend. Hopefully, another member can attend and report back as to what transpired. Also, the County Purple Heart proclamation will be presented o/a 1 p.m., July 23 during the Board of County Commissioners' meeting. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please meet at the courthouse lobby by 12:45! Our next Chapter meeting is July 16, 1 p.m. at the CCBA building in Lecanto.

Due to some health issues, our Sgt at Arms Rick Allen had to step down. We will be seeking a replacement to fill that position. If you'd be willing to accept, please contact either myself or Adjutant Ebitz. "Working for the benefit of All."

Cdr. "Bud"

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to increased first class mail costs, Chapter members at the May bimonthly general membership meeting voted to discontinue the mail-out of the Chapter bimonthly newsletter and minutes to members without an email address **unless they "opt in."** Chapter members currently receiving the newsletter/minutes by mail who desire to "opt in" should so request in writing by mail or email **no later than August 31**. If you have an email capability, please provide your email address to receive the newsletter/minutes by email. Chapter 776 mail and email addresses are: Chapter 776 MOPH, P.O. Box 1345, Lecanto, FL 34460-1345 and [info@citruspurpleheart.org](mailto:info@citruspurpleheart.org).

In the early morning on Memorial Day, Unit 776 Auxiliary members honored the memory of service members who fell in combat by placing U.S. flags on the grave sites of service members interred at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, with the first flag placed on the grave site of Chapter 776 namesake CWO Aaron A. Weaver who was killed in action while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Left: Gail Nemesh; Mickey Hunt, Sandy Cross and Linda Golfieri.



The 2019 recipients of Chapter 776's two scholarships were recognized and presented Purple Heart coffee mugs and Proud Supporter pins at the chapter's annual Armed Forces Day picnic. Left: Nancy Weaver-Dalton, widow of chapter namesake CWO Aaron A. Weaver; Hillary Whirle, Sgt. Dennis J. Flanagan Memorial Scholarship recipient; Kaycee Nichols, Chapter 776 Aaron A. Weaver/College of Central Florida Endowed Scholarship recipient; and Chapter 776 Sr. Vice Cdr. Chuck Kanehl.



Cdr. Bud Allen, on behalf of the Chapter 776 membership, presented a \$300 donation to the Nature Coast Ministries Dental Clinic to support its provision of free dental care to homeless and low-income veterans. Since 2014, the Nature Coast Ministries Dental Clinic has provided free dental care valued at \$440,100 to a total of 1,819 veteran and

non-veteran homeless and low-income patients. Left: Adjutant Curt Ebitz, Cdr. Bud Allen; Sue Grable, Nature Coast Ministries Director; Bonnie McMullin, Nature Coast Ministries Director of Public Relations and Finance Officer Joe McClister.



Chef du Jour Richard Hunt volunteered his grill master skills to provide delicious burgers and dogs for the appreciative members and guests attending the chapter's annual Armed Forces Day picnic.

Chapter 776 provided hot dogs, sausages, chips and soda at the request of the Citrus County Fallen Heroes Monument, Inc prior to its annual Memorial Day eve reading of the names of those Citrus County service members who gave their lives while serving during wartime. Left: Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair, Cdr. Bud Allen, Richard Hunt, Joe McClister. Will Korber and Rob Coughlin.



Unit 776 Auxiliary presented a \$1,562 donation to the Citrus County Veterans Foundation (CCVF), which is the Chapter's principal charitable works. Left: Bob Huscher, CCVF; Annie Fair, Mickey Hunt, Gail Nemesh, Vikki Pietras, and Mari-Elain Ebitz, Unit 776; Adm "Mac" McLeod, Vicki Phillips, Barb Mills, CCVF; and Phil Watson, Citrus Co. Veterans Service Ofc Mgr. Kneeling left: Curt Ebitz and Richard Hunt, CCVF.