



# AARON A. WEAVER CHAPTER 776

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



## 2021-22 Officers

**Cdr: Richard Hunt**  
**Sr. Vice Cdr: Rob Coughlin**  
**Jr. Vice Cdr: Bill Merryman**  
**Finance Off: Joe McClister**  
**Judge Adv: John Carlson**  
**Sgt-at-Arms: Richard "Bud" Allen**  
**Trustee 2-yr: Leo Stockmaster**  
**Trustee 1-yr: Zig Laska**  
**Adjutant: Curt Ebitz**  
**Service Off: Joe McClister**  
**Welfare Off: Richard "Bud" Allen**  
**Historian: Curt Ebitz**  
**Chaplain: Fred Daniels**  
**Americanism Off: William Korber**

## Chapter Activities

### Completed

**November 1-10.** Cdr. Richard Hunt and Patriots Bud Allen, Curt Ebitz and Frank Hayes participated in the Citrus County Veterans Appreciation Week Veterans in the Classroom Program, sharing their military experiences and adventures with local students.

**November 6.** Chapter 776 Cdr. Richard Hunt was the guest of honor and keynote speaker at the Citrus County Veterans Appreciation Week Military Ball sponsored by the Marine Corps League Detachment No. 819. Other Chapter Patriots & Associates attending the event were Bud & JoAnn Allen, Rick & Carol Allen, Sandy Cross, and Mickey Hunt.

**November 7.** Cdr. Richard Hunt and Adjutant Curt Ebitz carried the National and MOPH Colors at the Citrus County Veterans Appreciation Week Massing of the Colors Ceremony hosted by the First Lutheran Church of Inverness.

**November 11.** Chapter 776 members participating in Citrus County's Annual Veterans Day Parade were: Bud & JoAnn Allen; Gary & Lawana Bain; John Carlson; Sandy Cross; Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz; Bob & Kathy Gibson and brother

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## Next Meeting

**Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022, 1 p.m.**

Due to the remodeling of the Citrus County Building Alliance facility, the January and March meetings will be at the **Disabled American Veterans Chapter 70 facility at 1039 N. Paul Dr, Inverness, FL 34453**, near the intersection of US Hwy 41 and N. Independence Hwy. Any member desiring to place an item on the agenda should call Adjutant Ebitz at 382-3847 or e-mail him at [info@citruspurpleheart.org](mailto:info@citruspurpleheart.org).

## Member News

With the heaviest of hearts, the heartfelt sympathies of Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates are extended to Chapter 776 members **Rick & Carol Allen** on the passing of their daughter, **Michelle**, who died on December 16 from COVID-19. As Carol posted on her Facebook page, "A beautiful Soul earned her Angel Wings last night...This Beautiful Soul was my Daughter, Michelle...her loving memory will be forever in my heart."

After a fourth pleural tissue biopsy at the VA hospital in Gainesville, Past Chapter 776 Cdr. **Bud Allen** has been diagnosed with malignant pleural mesothelioma, which is a cancer found in the lining surrounding the lungs. The only known

cause is exposure to asbestos. Please keep Bud in your prayers as he undergoes treatment.

Chapter members **Mike & Linda Schlaudraff** both suffered separate falls in November with neither incurring serious injuries. While Linda recovered at home with the assistance of family and friends, Mike was hospitalized for a week to aid in his recovery, which was followed by a 22-day stint at a rehab facility to strengthen his ability to walk.

Congratulations to Chapter 776 Cdr. **Richard Hunt** on being the guest of honor and keynote speaker for the Citrus County Veterans Appreciation Week Military Ball hosted by the Marine Corps League Sgt. Ted Archambeau Detachment 819. As always, Cdr. Hunt did the Chapter and his fellow veterans proud.

A very appreciative "Thank You" to Proud Supporter **Gary Marriage**, President & CEO/Owner of Nature Coast Financial Advisors, Inc. for his continuing generous support. During the Chapter's annual Pearl Harbor dinner & holiday social, Gary not only generously participated in the auction, but also donated \$2,000 to the Chapter. Gary also is the Purple Heart sponsor for the Citrus County Building Alliance

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## Sixteenth Annual Purple Heart Ceremony

**Please mark your calendars, spread the word and make it a priority to attend!**

Chapter 776's Annual Purple Heart Ceremony honoring Citrus County's fallen heroes and combat wounded warriors featuring patriotic music by the Nature Coast Community Band will be held **11 a.m., Saturday, February 19** at the Citrus County Fairgrounds Auditorium, 3610 S. Florida Ave., Inverness. With hundreds attending the annual ceremony, this is the Chapter's signature activity and the county's premier veterans' ceremony.

**Recommended dress is the Chapter's formal uniform (Chapter overseas hat, white shirt with Purple Heart tie, navy blue or black blazer and gray trousers. Purple Heart Medal should be worn on the left lapel of the blazer/coat. If you do not have the Chapter's recommended uniform, please wear appropriate attire.**

**All Chapter Patriots and Associates are urged to make every effort to attend with spouses and guests!**



*Chapter completed*

Lynn; Richard & Mickey Hunt; Joe McClister & Annie Fair; and Mike King.

**November 11.** Chapter 776 Chaplain Fred Daniels conducted the "Unseen Guest" ceremony honoring our nation's POWs/MIAs with Chapter 776 Associate member Sandy Cross the special guest during the annual Veterans Day memorial service at the Old County Courthouse Heritage Museum in Inverness. Other Chapter members in attendance were: Bud & JoAnn Allen; Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz; Richard & Mickey Hunt; and Joe McClister & Annie Fair.

**November 11.** Attending the Veterans Day luncheon hosted by Operation Welcome Home founder and Chapter 776 Honorary member Barbara Mills at the Inverness Depot were: Bud & JoAnn Allen; Rick & Carol Allen; Sandy Cross; Richard & Mickey Hunt; Joe McClister & Annie Fair.

**November 11.** Cdr. Richard Hunt, in cooperation with the Dunnellon Quilters' Guild, presented 61 Quilts of Honor to veterans residing at the Grand Living senior living facility in Citrus Hills.

**December 7.** Thirty-eight Chapter 776 members and guests attended the Chapter's annual Pearl Harbor dinner and holiday social held at the Southern Woods Golf Club. Guest of Honor at the event was Nancy Weaver-Dalton accompanied by her husband, Citrus County Property Appraiser Cregg Dalton. Other special guests were Gary Marriage of Nature Coast Financial Advisors, Inc, and Robin Mecler and Jen Dooley-Houston of the Citrus County Tax Collector Office.

**December 12.** Associate Members Sandy Cross and Mickey Hunt prepared 984 Christmas cards with Purple Heart stamped envelopes that were given to inpatient veterans at the James T. Haley VA Hospital in Tampa to send to their family and friends.

**December 19.** Cdr. Richard Hunt and Associates Annie Fair and Mickey Hunt participated in the Wreaths Across America wreath laying at the Florida National Cemetery, placing wreaths at the burial sites of Chapter 776 namesake CWO Aaron Weaver and Aaron's brother-in-law CWO Randy Billings, who were lost in Iraq and

*From the Commander*

Patriots & Associates,  
I hope this finds all healthy and happy in this New Year.

The Citrus County Building Alliance has found it necessary to sell its building. The good news is that the new owners will continue to allow us to keep our shed on the property and still meet in the building. That said, the building will be undergoing renovation from January through March. Accordingly, the January and March meetings will be held at the DAV Chapter 70 building located on N. Paul Dr. in Inverness near the intersection of US Hwy 41 and N. Independence Hwy.

The Chapter's annual Purple Heart Ceremony is planned to go ahead, as scheduled, at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, February 19th, barring any unforeseen events. The Nature Coast Community Band will be playing at this event. There will be a Lifetime Achievement Award presented to ??? You will have to be there to find out to whom. This individual is definitely worthy of the recognition.

On behalf of Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates, I extend heartfelt condolences to Chapter 776 members Rick and Carol Allen on the recent death of their daughter Michelle, as well as to MOPH Sr. Vice Cdr. and Past Department of Florida Cdr. Christopher Vedvick on the untimely death of his wife, Tiffany.

Please continue to be safe and take care of each other. We are family!

Yours in Patriotism,  
Richard Hunt, Commander

Afghanistan, respectively.

*Future*

February 19, 11:00 a.m. Chapter 776 Sixteenth Annual Purple Heart Ceremony, Citrus County Fairgrounds Auditorium, Inverness.

*Members continued*

annual fishing tournament, which is the Chapter's primary source of income.

A job well done is extended to Associate Member **Sandy Cross** on her successful fundraising efforts as the Chapter's program director for its annual National Wreaths Across America program. With a goal of 500 wreaths, her dedicated efforts and steadfast commitment to the program enabled the goal to be exceeded with sufficient funds raised for 715 wreaths to be placed on the burial sites of veterans at the Florida National Cemetery on December 19.

Kudos to Associates **Sandy Cross** and **Mickey Hunt** who teamed up to prepare and provide 100 packs of four Christmas cards with stamped envelopes to inpatients at the VA hospital in Tampa to send to their family and friends. Mickey also prepared and mailed Christmas cards from the Chapter to 21 inactive Patriots and Associates who are shut-ins or unable to attend Chapter meetings or activities.

Special thanks to the **Chapter's lady Associates** who provided delicious homemade baked goods, candies and crafts, which included Christmas stockings and placemats, needle point art, hot pads and blankets that made the Pearl Harbor dinner and holiday social auction a fun and rewarding activity with the Chapter raising over \$1,000.

Patriot **Gary Bain** had minor surgery in November at the VA Hospital in Gainesville.

**Rita Carlson**, wife of Patriot John Carlson, is scheduled for heart valve replacement surgery at Citrus Memorial Hospital on January 11. Please keep Rita in your prayers for a successful surgery and recovery.

**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR**

## Chapter 776 Pearl Harbor Dinner & Christmas Social



Chapter 776 Cdr. Richard Hunt reads the Pearl Harbor Message from MOPH National Commander James McCormick.



Chapter 776 Proud Supporter Gary Marriage, President & CEO/Owner, Nature Coast Financial Advisors, Inc. and his friend, Karin were the guests of Past Cdr. Bud Allen. *Left:* Karin, Gary, Bud Allen, JoAnne Allen and Joe McClister.



Adjutant Curt Ebitz recounted the early minutes of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by Imperial Japan's naval forces.

Pearl Harbor dinner and holiday social attendees. *Left:* Pat Michael, Nancy Laska, Annie Fair, Mickey Hunt, Gregg Cross, husband of Associate Sandy Cross, and Shirley Platt.



Chapter members and wives. *Left:* Chaplain Fred Daniels, Linda Daniels, Rita Carlson and Judge Advocate John Carlson.



Patriot Bob Gibson, with wife Kathy and brother Lynn, participated with his 1977 Dodge Dart Swinger classic car. *Left:* Kathy, Bob & Lynn.

## Veterans Day Parade November 11, 2021

Chapter 776's Judge Advocate John Carlson and Finance Officer Joe McClister in the parade's staging area.



The Chapter 776 banner was carried by two Nature Coast Young Marines, as Cdr. Hunt holds the Order's Colors high.

Chapter members awaiting the start of Citrus County's Veterans Day parade. *Left:* Sandy Cross, Mickey Hunt, Annie Fair, Mike King, JoAnne Allen & Bud Allen.



Chapter 776 Associate Mari-Elain Ebitz hobnobs with State Representative Ralph Massullo's District Aide/Executive Secretary Dorothy Dilworth and Citrus County Commissioner Jeff Kinnard prior to the Veterans Day parade.

