



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-yrs: 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

March 13. Participating in a fishing excursion for Chapter 776 members hosted by Black Dog Hunting were Cdr. Richard Hunt, Bud Allen Dale Fair, Bob Gibson and Bill Merryman.

April 22. Cdr. Richard Hunt presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal at the Citrus High School AFJROTC awards ceremony.

April 23. Chapter Patriots and Associates supporting the Chapter’s charitable partnership with the Citrus County Building Alliance (CCBA) at the annual fishing tournament “Captain’s Meeting & Social” in Homosassa were Bud & JoAnn Allen, Sandy Cross, Curt Ebitz, Dale Fair, Bob Gibson, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Zig & Nancy Laska, Joe McClister & Annie

Next Meeting
Tuesday, May 18, 2021, 1 p.m.

IN PERSON MEETING!

**Citrus County Building Alliance,
 Lecanto - Please wear a **mask.****

Bimonthly Meeting

The Chapter's bimonthly meetings are held the third Tuesday of September, November, January, March, May and July at 1:00 p.m. at the Citrus County Building Alliance, 1196 S. Lecanto Highway (C.R. 491), Lecanto, 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 call Adjutant Ebitz at 382-3847 or e-mail him at info@citruspurpleheart.org.

Fair, and Bill Merryman.

April 24 & 25. Chapter 776 members who enjoyed a free fishing outing donated by generous boat captains participating in the CCBA annual fishing tournament were Bud Allen, Dale Fair, Bob Gibson, Cdr. Hunt, Zig Laska, Joe McClister, and Bill Merryman.

April 29. Chapter Associates who gathered for an outdoor lunch at Cavallo's in Lecanto to let their COVID-19 hair down were JoAnn Allen, Sandy Cross, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair, Nancy Laska, Pat Michael, and Linda Schlaudraff.

May 7. Patriot Bud Allen presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal at the Crystal River HS NJROTC awards ceremony.

May 10. Cdr. Hunt presented the Sergeant Dennis J. Flanagan Memorial Scholarship

Continued page 2

Member News

The Patriot and Associates of Chapter 776 extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of Patriot **James “Jim” Stants** and Patriot **Arturo Trujillo** (See Departed Patriots).

A fond farewell and a hearty thank you for their support is extended to Chapter 776 Jr. Vice Cdr. **Andy Viola** and his wife **Eileen** who relocated back to their old stomping grounds of Long Island, New York to be near family, especially their grandchildren.

An appreciative thank you to Patriot **Bill Merryman** for stepping forward to fill the shoes of Patriot Andy Viola as Chapter 776 Jr. Vice Cdr. and for volunteering to represent the Chapter at the Department of Florida 75th Annual State Convention in Daytona Beach.

Congratulations are also conveyed to Chapter 776 Jr. Vice Cdr. **Bill Merryman** on his appointment by the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners to serve as a member of the Citrus County Veterans Affairs Advisory Board. If you have any veteran-related issue with the county, please apprise him by email at hernando09@gmx.com.

A big hooah for **John Carlson**, who has recovered from a bout with COVID-19. The only side effect was a weeks long loss of his ability to taste.

A patriotic thank you to **Gary Marriage**, President/CEO Nature Coast Financial Advisors, for his generous perennial support as the Purple Heart Sponsor (\$1,500) of the

Continued page 2

2021 Annual Armed Forces Day Picnic

Chapter 776’s annual Armed Forces Day picnic will be held 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Saturday, May 15 at the pavilion (next to the tennis courts) in Bicentennial Park, Crystal River. The park is located off of U.S. 19 behind the Crystal River Airport. The Chapter’s two scholarship recipients will attend; please come to greet and congratulate them. As is the tradition, Chapter 776 will provide hamburgers and hotdogs with all the fixings, plus beverages. Each lady is asked to bring a side, salad or dessert. If you plan to attend, indicate side, salad or dessert and reply to Adjutant Curt Ebitz no later than May 12 at 352-382-3847 or email info@citruspurpleheart.org.

Chapter Activities continued

to Leighton Stack at the Seven Rivers Christian School Warrior Awards.

May 13. Patriot Dale Fair presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal at the Central HS NJROTC awards ceremony.

Future

May 15. Annual Armed Forces Day picnic, Bicentennial Park Pavilion, Crystal River.

May 18, 1:00 p.m. Chapter 776 Bimonthly business meeting, CCBA, Lecanto.

Member News continued

Citrus County Building Alliance Annual Family Fishing Tournament.

Congratulations to Citrus High School Senior **Kailee Nadler** and Seven Rivers Christian School Senior **Leighton Stack** as this year's recipient of the Chapter's \$1,250 Endowed Scholarship with the College of Central Florida (CF) and \$1,000 Memorial Scholarship. **Kailee** is a relative of a Purple Heart recipient, a dual enrollment student at CF and Captain of the Citrus HS Volleyball Team. **Leighton** is a relative of a veteran and is the Captain of the Seven Rivers Christian School Volleyball Team.

Congratulations to Mike Schlaudraff, Chapter 776 Patriot of the Year; Mari-Elain Ebitz, Associate of the Year, and Mickey Hunt, Volunteer of the Year.

Happy Birthday wishes to Patriot of the Year **Mike Schlaudraff** who celebrated his 80th birthday in April.

Departed Patriot James E. Stants, Sr.

Patriot "Jim" Stants of Homosassa, Florida passed away on March 24 at the age of 90. He was born in Detroit, raised in Indiana, spent his working years in Michigan as a home builder/remodeler and with the Ann Arbor Police Department before retiring to Homosassa.

He entered the United States Marine Corps in February, 1951 and saw combat duty in Korea as a weapons company sergeant with the 1st Division, 5th Marines. He was wounded in action on Hill 90 in July 1953 and discharged in January 1954. In addition to the Purple Heart Medal, Patriot Stants was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Service Medal w/5 stars, United Nations Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Citation, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation and Korean War Service Medal.

He is survived by his beloved wife Peggy, three sons, one daughter, seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Memorial services are planned for October 2021 followed by inurnment at the Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell.

**Departed Patriot Arturo Trujillo**

It was recently learned that Chapter 776 Patriot Arturo Trujillo of Spring Hill, Florida passed away on April 20, 2019 at the age of 72. He was a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War and was wounded in action in 1965. He retired from the Ohio National Guard with the rank of 1st Sergeant in 1988. Among his awards are the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w/2 stars, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Ohio Commendation Medal, Ohio Award of Merit, Ohio Faithful Service Ribbon, and Recruiter Badge. He is survived by his loving wife Jean; daughters Sherry, Carol, and Christie; 11 Grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

From the Commander

I have good news to share with this newsletter. We have just completed the 26th Annual Citrus County Building Alliance (CCBA) fishing tournament. It was a huge success. We are honored to be partners with them in this endeavor. It is the Chapter's largest source of revenue.

The Captain's Meeting & Social was well attended by both Chapter Patriots and Associates. An outstanding showing! Thanks to all who attended.

A group new to us, Confederation of American Patriots, Inc. presented us with a check for \$200.00 earmarked for veterans' assistance. Five vets in the audience also donated \$110.00 in support of our efforts.

Freedom Boat Club took six of our members out Saturday for a day of fishing for free. Bill Merryman and a veteran guest went on one boat, Zig Laska and Dale Fair paired up and Bud Allen with Joe McClister went on their third boat. Professional Captain Susie Martin took Bob Gibson and his son Saturday

and Bob again Sunday. Saturday evening found Zig Laska on the leaderboard for most spots on a redfish. He was unseated on Sunday.

Freedom Boat Club says they want to set up a monthly trip with Purple Heart vets. I will let you know when the details are completed.

One of our functions with CCBA is to assist with a gun raffle. I am pleased to announce we sold out all 200 tickets for the first time ever.

With things getting back to normal, I hope to see a good turnout of Chapter members for our annual Armed Forces Day picnic to renew our bonds of camaraderie and to greet our scholarship recipients. I sincerely hope all are safe and well.

Please take care of each other.

Yours in Patriotism
Richard



Aaron A. Weaver Chapter 776 Military Order of the Purple Heart officers for 2021-22 were installed on March 16 by Past Chapter 776 Commander Ray Michael during the Chapter's in-person business meeting. *Left:* Fred Daniels, Chaplain; Leo Stockmaster, Trustee; Bud Allen, Sergeant-at-Arms & Welfare Officer; Bill Merryman, Jr. Vice Commander; Ray Michael, Past Commander; Richard Hunt, Commander; Joe McClister, Finance Officer; Will Korber, Americanism Officer; and Curt Ebitz, Adjutant & Historian.

Also, during the March meeting, Commander Richard Hunt presented awards to Chapter 776 members for their distinguished service and faithful support of Chapter 776. *Left:* Mari-Elain Ebitz for Chapter 776 Associate Member of the Year; Glenn Beaulieu for gaining legislative approval for a Purple Heart motorcycle license tag; Andy Viola for notable service as Chapter 776 Jr. Vice Commander and Trustee; Commander Hunt; Mike Schlaudraff for Chapter 776 Patriot of the Year; and Mickey Hunt for Chapter 776 Volunteer of the Year.



Crowd of anglers enjoying the Captain's Meeting & Social.



Patriots Joe McClister, Dale Fair and Bud Allen enjoying camaraderie on a balmy evening at the CCBA Captain's Meeting & Social.



Purple Heart Sponsor and Charitable Partner banner.



Chapter 776 Associates Annie Fair and Mickey Hunt, "showing the flag" in support of the Chapter's charitable partnership with the CCBA Annual Family Fishing Tournament.



Chapter 776 Patriot of the Year, Mike Schlaudraff, proudly wears his 80th birthday T-shirt.