



AARON A. WEAVER CHAPTER 776

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



2022-23 Officers

Cdr: Richard Hunt
Sr. Vice Cdr: Bill Merryman
Jr. Vice Cdr: Gary Bain
Finance Off: Joe McClister
Judge Adv: John Carlson
Sgt-at-Arms: Vacant
Trustee 2-ys: Leo Stockmaster
Trustee 1-yr: Robert Gibson
Adjutant: Curt Ebitz
Service Off: Joe McClister
Welfare Off: Mickey Hunt
Historian: Curt Ebitz
Chaplain: Fred Daniels
Americanism Off: William Korber

Member News

Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates extend their heartfelt condolences to Patriot **Will Korber** on the passing of his beloved wife **Bonnie** and to Associate **Vikki Pietras** on the recent death of her mother.

Hearty congratulations to Chapter 776's Patriot of the Year **Curt Ebitz**, Associate Member of the Year **Sandy Cross**, and Volunteer of the Year **Troy Allen**. Their recognition by fellow Chapter 776 members is a well deserved tribute to their selfless commitment and faithful support of the Chapter and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Many thanks to the following Patriots and Associates who stepped forward to serve as Chapter officers for 2023-24: Cdr. **Richard Hunt**; Sr. Vice Cdr. **Bill Merryman**; Jr. Vice Cdr. **Gary Bain**; Finance & Service Officer **Joe McClister**; Sgt-at-Arms **Bob Gibson**; 2-Yr. Trustee **Will Korber**; 1-Yr. Trustee **Leo Stockmaster**; Adjutant & Historian, **Curt Ebitz**; Welfare Officer **Mickey Hunt**; Chaplain **Troy Allen**; Americanism Officer **Chuck Kanehl**;

Next Meeting

Tuesday, Mar. 21, 2023, 1 p.m.
 Citrus County Building Alliance,
 1196 S. Lecanto Highway
 (C.R. 491), Lecanto.

Bimonthly Meeting

The chapter's bimonthly meetings are held the third Tuesday of September, November, January, March, May and July. The meeting time is 1:00 p.m. 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** or call 382-3847.

Judge Advocate **John Carlson**.

An appreciative thank you to Citrus County Tax Collector **Janice Warren** and her office staff with special appreciation to top fundraisers **Sarah C., Melinda Sabloski** and **Darien Winburn** on raising \$6,248.16 during its Fall Campaign for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation (CCVF), which is Chapter 776's principal charity.

A well deserved congratulations to Chapter 776 Cdr. **Richard Hunt** on another superb job in planning, coordinating and acting as the master of ceremonies for Chapter 776's Seventeenth Annual Purple Heart Ceremony. Also, many thanks to the **Patriots and Associates** who turned out in support of the ceremony, which had well over 500 attendees and received many laudatory comments.

Congratulations and a warm welcome to the 60 plus talented musicians of the **Nature Coast Community Band**

Continued above.

(NCCB) on being designated as Chapter 776's 17th Purple Heart Entity in recognition of its patriotic musical support of the Chapter's annual Purple Heart Ceremony and Citrus County's annual Veterans Appreciation Week.

Associate **Mickey Hunt** has made a remarkable recovery from her successful cancer surgery last January at Moffitt and is once again faithfully participating in Chapter activities.

The Chapter's lady Associates meet for lunch each month. It's a lively group, led by Sandy Cross, who sends out a reminder email. The lunch alternates each month from the west side to the east side of the county. It's a fun way to stay in touch. Any lady Associate or Chapter spouse interested in attending should contact Sandy at **mom4sba@tampabay.rr.com** or 352-502-1641.

Chapter Activities

Completed

February 11. Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates turned out in force for the Chapter's Seventeenth Purple Heart Ceremony hosted by Chapter 776 at the Citrus County Fairgrounds Auditorium. Well over 500 persons attended the ceremony honoring our fallen heroes and combat wounded. Stirring patriotic music played by the 60-plus member Nature Coast Community Band. Additionally, the Citrus County School District's 23 schools each had Purple Star displays lining the wall of the auditorium. Numerous attendees commented that it was the best ceremony ever.

February 13. Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz and Frank & Carol Hayes enjoyed a plated appreciation lunch hosted by Citrus County Schools Superintendent Sandra "Sam" Himmel and prepared by Withlacoochee Technical College culinary students for participants in the Veterans in the Classroom Program, which is conducted each November during Citrus County's Veterans Appreciation Week.

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Completed

February 14. Attending the Inverness Primary School 26th Annual Veterans Dinner & Program were Cdr. Richard Hunt, Mickey Hunt, Robert Bendle, Sandy Cross, Fred Daniels, Curt Ebitz, Annie Fair, Joe McClister, Colin & Elain Pearl, Patty Stevens, and Honorary Member Barb Mills who made 240 delicious cupcakes for the dinner.

February 20. Chapter 776 recognized the Citrus County Tax Collector Office and its top three fundraisers for their participation is the Fall 2022 fundraising campaign conducted in partnership with the Chapter for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation. Chapter attendees were Cdr. Richard Hunt, Patriots Curt Ebitz, Chuck Kanehl, Bill Merryman and Associate Mickey Hunt. Also attending was Mickie Kanehl.

February 22, Chapter 776's 16 designated Purple Heart entities flew the Purple Heart flag or paid tribute to General George Washington in commemoration of the 291st anniversary of his birth and as the creator of the historic Purple Heart decoration.

February 22. The Citrus County Property Appraiser Office staff donated \$125 to Chapter 776 in celebration of General George Washington's 291st birthday anniversary. Accepting the donation on behalf of the Chapter were Cdr. Hunt, Chuck Kanehl, accompanied by wife Mickie, Joe McClister and Associate Mickey Hunt.

February 22. Representing Chapter 776 at the Daughters of the American Revolution, Fort Cooper Chapter Colonial Ball honoring General George Washington were Curt & Mari-Elain Ebitz and Chuck & Mickie Kanehl.

February 23. Attending the Veterans Town Hall hosted by Congressman Gus Bilirakis were Patriots Bill Merryman, Curt Ebitz, Chuck Kanehl and Associate Fred Daniels.

March 5. Cdr. Hunt designated the Nature Coast Community Band as a Purple Heart Entity in recognition of its musical support of the Chapter's annual Purple Heart Ceremony during the band's "Music Around the World" Concert. Also in attendance were Patriots Bill Merryman, Curt Ebitz, J.B. Haskins and Earl McMillan, as well as Associate Mickey Hunt.

From the Commander

Patriots & Associates,
Since this time last year, Chapter 776 suffered the loss of Patriots Michael Ujwari, Donald Paddy, Andrew Viola, Richard S. "Bud" Allen and Mark Riden. All were stalwart members of our Chapter and will be greatly missed in our ranks.

The Chapter hosted the Seventeenth Annual Purple Heart Ceremony at the Citrus County Fairgrounds Auditorium, which had a turnout of well over 500 attendees, to include two dozen local elected officials and a contingent of JROTC cadets. Citrus County Schools all had awesome displays. Hope to see more Chapter members and their guests at next year's ceremony.

The Chapter 776 officers for 2023-24 will be installed during the March 21 bimonthly meeting by Past Chapter 776 Commander J.B. Haskins.

March 7. Patriots Curt Ebitz and Chuck Kanehl represented Chapter 776 at the Daughters of the American Revolution Fort Cooper Chapter's luncheon honoring Vietnam veterans.

Future

April 28, 6:00 p.m. CCBA's 28th Annual Family Fishing Tournament Captain's Dinner. Chapter members are requested to "show the flag" by their presence.

April 29-30. CCBA's 28th Annual Family Fishing Tournament. Chapter members interested in participating in the tournament as guests of fishing boat captains should contact Cdr. Richard Hunt at 407-579-6190 or obakesan@att.net.

May 16, 1:00 p.m. Chapter 776 Bimonthly business meeting, CCBA, Lecanto.

May 20, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Annual Armed Forces Day picnic, Bicentennial Park Pavilion, Crystal River.

It is important that all elected and appointed 2023-24 Chapter officers attend the meeting to be officially sworn in.

The next Citrus County Building Alliance (CCBA) Fishing Tournament is **April 29 and 30 with the Captain's Meeting Friday evening, April 28.** As in past years, Chapter members are invited to participate in the tournament with professional boat captains for free. Chapter members interested in fishing should contact me at 407-579-6190 or obakesan@att.net.

As age thins our ranks, I urge Chapter members to keep their eyes and ears tuned for new members. Without new blood, our Chapter faces the fate of some other Department of Florida chapters that have slowly faded away.

Semper Fidelis!
Richard Hunt, Commander

Medical Equipment Program

Thanks to the personal efforts of Chapter 776 Cdr. Richard Hunt, Chapter 776 has a program for providing medical equipment, as available, to Chapter members, local veterans and their family members. The Chapter acquires donated medical equipment such as power scooters, power/manual wheel chairs, walkers, canes, hospital beds, shower seats and other durable medical equipment for distribution to veterans upon request. If any Chapter member needs or knows of a local veteran needing medical equipment, contact Cdr. Hunt at 407-579-6190 or obakesan@att.net.

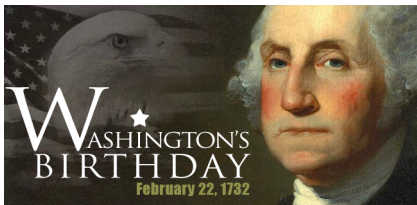




Members of Chapter 776 and the Citrus County Veterans Foundation (CCVF) recognized the Citrus County Tax Collector Office and its top three fundraisers for raising \$6,248.16 during its fall campaign for the benefit of the CCVF, which is Chapter 776's principal charity.



In celebration of General George Washington's 291st birthday anniversary, the Citrus County Property Appraiser Office staff donated \$125 to Chapter 776.



During the March 5 NCCB concert at Seven Rivers Church, Cdr. Hunt designated the symphonic band as the Chapter's 17th Purple Heart Entity.



2023 Purple Heart Ceremony

