



# AARON A. WEAVER CHAPTER 776



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

## 2024-25 Officers

**Cdr:** Richard Hunt  
**Sr. Vice Cdr:** Gary Bain  
**Jr. Vice Cdr:** Chuck Kanehl  
**Finance Off:** Joe McClister  
**Judge Adv:** John Carlson  
**Sgt-at-Arms:** Robert Gibson  
**Trustee 2-yr:** Bill Merryman  
**Trustee 1-yr:** Will Korber  
**Adjutant:** Curt Ebitz  
**Service Off:** Joe McClister  
**Welfare Off:** Mickey Hunt  
**Historian:** Curt Ebitz  
**Chaplain:** Troy Allen  
**Americanism Off:** Jerry Frease

## Chapter Activities

### Completed

**March 12.** The Associate Ladies met at KC Wine & Bistro in Beverly Hills for their no-host lunch in March. Attending were JoAnn Allen, Sandy Cross, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair, Kim Frease, Mickey Hunt, Vikki Pietras and Shirley Platt.

**March 21.** Enjoying excellent food and camaraderie at the Chapter's monthly no-host fellowship breakfast at SOCOS House of Eats, Homosassa, were Cdr. Richard Hunt, Patriots Curt Ebitz, Jerry Frease, Will Korber, Joe McClister.

**April 6.** Cdr. Richard Hunt and Patriots Curt Ebitz & Joe McClister participated in the Community Outreach sponsored by the West Citrus Elks Lodge #2693 in

### Next Meeting

**Tuesday, May 21, 2024, 1 p.m.**

**Citrus County Building Alliance,  
Lecanto**

### 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.

### Completed

Homosassa.

**April 13.** Linda & Allison Fentris of Quilts of Valor presented Patriot Mike Miholics with a Quilt of Valor. Joining the presentation were Chapter 776 Cdr. Richard Hunt and Americanism Officer Jerry Frease.

**April 18.** Paying their last respects to Departed Patriot Richard "Rick" Allen, beloved husband of Carol Allen, at the Committal Service, Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, and Celebration of Life were JoAnn Allen, Sandy Cross, Jerry Frease, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Mickie Kanehl, Will Korber, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Pat Michael, Barbara Mills, Colin Pearl, Shirley Platt, and Ernie Tucker.

*Chapter Activities Continued page 2*

### Member News

Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates extend their heartfelt condolences to the loved ones of the following who recently departed our earthly ranks: **Pat Layman**, widow of Departed Patriot Harold Layman, who died March 2; Patriot **Richard "Rick" Allen**, who was called home March 15; and Patriot **Albert "Bill" Clutter**, who passed March 26. Condolences are also conveyed to **Curt Ebitz** on the loss of his younger brother, Duane, who died April 28.

Well-deserved congratulations to **Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates** on being selected as the Department of Florida Chapter of the Year for the second consecutive year, **Gary Bain** as the Department of Florida Patriot of the Year, **Sandy Cross** as the Department of Florida Associate of the Year and **Frank Hayes** as the Department of Florida Jonas Jacobson Volunteer of the Year.

Appreciative thanks to **Gary Marriage**, President/CEO Nature Coast Financial Advisors, for his generous, perennial support as the Purple Heart Sponsor (\$1,500) of the Citrus County Building Alliance Annual Family Fishing Tournament. Any member looking for financial planning advice, Gary is the "Go to person."

A warm "Thank you" to Chapter 776 charter member and past commander **J.B. Haskins**, who honored the Chapter as the installing officer for Chapter 776 officers for 2024-25. A Navy veteran of the Korean and

*Member News Continued page 2*

## 2024 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 18 at the pavilion (next to the tennis courts) in Bicentennial Park, Crystal River. The park is located off U.S. 19 behind the Crystal River Airport. The Chapter's scholarship recipients will attend; please come to greet and congratulate them. **Chapter 776 will provide BBQ chicken, pulled pork sandwiches, BBQ baked beans, and beverages. BBQ ribs provided by Sgt at Arms Bob Gibson. Each lady is asked to bring a salad or dessert. If you plan to attend, indicate salad or dessert and reply to Adjutant Curt Ebitz no later than May 10 by email at info@citruspurpleheart.org or call 352-382-3847. Bring a folding chair because picnic table seating is limited.**

*Chapter Activities continued*

**April 24.** The Associate ladies held their monthly informal lunch gathering at Olive Garden Restaurant in Inverness. Enjoying the food and lively conversation were Sandy Cross, Annie Fair, Mickey Hunt, Mickie Kanehl, Pat Michael, Barbara Mills, Vikki Pietras and Shirley Platt. All Chapter ladies are invited. If interested contact Sandy Cross at 352-502-1641.

**April 25.** Representing Chapter 776 at the Memorial Service honoring the memory of Departed Patriot Albert "Bill" Clutter were Cdr. Richard Hunt, who gave an uplifting eulogy; Patriots Curt Ebitz and Jerry Frease; Associate Mickey Hunt.

**April 25.** Patriot Curt Ebitz presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership medal at the Central High School NJROTC awards ceremony.

**April 27.** Cdr. Richard Hunt presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership medal at the South Sumter High School AFJROTC awards ceremony.

**April 27.** Chapter Patriots and Associates supporting the Chapter's charitable partnership with the Citrus County

*Member News Continued*

Vietnam wars, he is the recipient of two Silver Stars and three Purple Hearts.

Words of support are extended to **Linda Golfieri**, wife of Chapter 776 Patriot Al Golfieri, who was recently diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's.

Congratulations to Citrus High School seniors **Macie Waller** as the recipient of the Chapter's \$1,500 College of Central Florida (CF) Endowed Scholarship and **Cortlyn McClain** as the recipient of the Chapter's \$1,500 Sergeant Dennis J. Flanagan Memorial Scholarship.

A most appreciative thank you to the following Patriots who presented the MOPH JROTC leadership Medal to deserving cadets in Citrus, Hernando and Sumter counties: **Curt Ebitz, Dale Fair,**

*Chapter Activities continued*

Building Alliance (CCBA) at the annual fishing tournament "Captain's Meeting" in Old Homosassa were Curt Ebitz, Sandy Cross, Bob Gibson, Dale Fair, Jerry Frease, Richard & Mickey Hunt, Joe McClister & Annie Fair, Rob & Vikki Pietras and Bill Merryman.

**April 27-28.** Chapter members who enjoyed a free fishing outing in the CCBA annual fishing tournament generously donated by Captain Suzie Holstead Pruikma were Dale Fair, Jerry Frease, Richard Hunt, and Joe McClister.

**May 3.** Patriot Chuck Kanehl presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership medal at the Crystal River High School NJROTC awards ceremony.

**May 3.** Patriot Dale Fair presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal at the Brooksville High School AFJROTC awards ceremony.

**May 6.** Patriot Jerry Frease Fair presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal at the Lecanto High School AJROTC awards ceremony.

**May 9.** Cdr. Richard Hunt presented the College of Central Florida (CF) Scholarship to Macie Waller and the Sergeant Dennis J. Flanagan Memorial

*Chapter Activities continued*

Scholarship to Cortlyn McClain during the Citrus High School Seniors Awards Ceremony.

*Future*

**May 18, 11:30 a.m.** Annual Armed Forces Day picnic, Bicentennial Park Pavilion, Crystal River.

**May 21, 1:00 p.m.** Chapter 776 Bimonthly business meeting, CCBA, Lecanto.

**May 26, 8:30 a.m.** Placement of Flags for the Fallen, Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell.

**May 27 10:00 a.m.** Memorial Day Ceremony, Old Homosassa Veterans Memorial, Homosassa.

*Member News Continued*

**Jerry Frease Chuck Kanehl, and Richard Hunt.**

A hearty thank you to fellow Chapter 776 Patriot **Bob Gibson** for voluntarily donating and preparing the BBQ ribs for the Chapter's Amed Forces Day picnic this year.

Best wishes for a full and speedy recovery to Patriot **Rob Coughlin** who recently had hip replacement surgery.

*From the Commander*

Patriots & Associates:

March was a difficult month for Chapter 776 with the passing of Patriots Rick Allen and Bill Clutter, as well as the death of Pat Layman, devoted wife of Departed World War II veteran Harold Layman. Regardless as to how well you may or may not have known a Departed Patriot, paying respect to a fellow Purple Heart recipient is not only the right thing to do, but also a source of great comfort to the loved ones left behind.

On a brighter note, Chapter 776 once again had a clean sweep of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) Department of Florida annual awards with the Chapter once again being selected as the Chapter of the Year, Patriot Gary Bain as the Patriot of the year, Associate Sandy Cross as the Associate of the Year for the second consecutive year, and Patriot Frank Hayes as the Jonas Jacobsen Volunteer of the Year. My congratulations to the recipients and my appreciation to all Chapter Patriots, Associates and Supporters who have clearly made Chapter 776 the best Chapter in the MOPH Department of Florida.

My thanks to the Chapter members who "showed the flag" at the Citrus County Building Alliance 29th Annual Family Fishing Tournament Captains Meeting & Social, our Purple Heart tournament sponsor Gary Marriage, President/CEO Nature Coast Financial Advisors, and Wyoming Guns & Hunting Supplies for providing a handgun at cost for the gun raffle.

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Chapter 776 Patriot Mike Miholics, a recipient of the Army Commendation Medal with “V” Device for heroism in ground combat, was recently presented a Quilt of Valor. Left: Jerry Frease, Chapter 776 Americanism Officer; Linda Fentris, Quilts of Valor; Mike Miholics; Richard Hunt, Chapter 776 Cdr.; Lynn Miholics.

### *Commander, continued*

Don't miss the Chapter's annual Armed Forces Day picnic 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., May 18 in Bicentennial Park, Crystal River. In addition to the Chapter providing pulled pork and BBQ baked beans, Sergeant at Arms Bob Gibson will grill his specialty BBQ ribs. If that's not enough to entice you, the delicious salads and desserts of the Chapter's ladies should do the trick.

As our ranks age and grow thin, I encourage Chapter members to attend Chapter meetings, social events and other activities to help sustain the Chapter's purpose of “promoting the proud legacy of the Purple Heart” earned by each of us with our selfless service to our country and to each other in combat.

Take care of yourselves and each other!  
Richard Hunt, Commander



Newly elected Chapter 776 officers

The 2024-25 officers for Aaron A. Weaver Chapter 776 Military Order of the Purple Heart were administered the Oath of Office by Past Chapter 776 Commander J.B. Haskins during the Chapter's March bimonthly meeting. Left: Jerry Frease, Americanism Officer; Gary Bain, Sr. Vice Commander; Richard Hunt, Commander; Robert Gibson, Sergeant at Arms; Joe McClister, Finance Officer; Mickey Hunt, Welfare Officer; Curt Ebitz, Adjutant; Will Korber, 1-Year Trustee. Not present: Chuck Kanehl, Jr. Vice Commander; Bill Merryman, 2-Year Trustee; John Carlson, Judge Advocate; Troy Allen, Chaplain.



Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates had an enjoyable time of fellowship on a delightful evening at the CCBA 29th Annual Family Fishing



### **MOPH National Convention, hosted by Department of Florida - July 15-18, 2024**

**Rosen Plaza Hotel, 9700 International Blvd. Orlando, FL**

**To register, for the convention;** copy link and paste in your browser. Deadline to purchase registration ends Jun 1, Midnight EDT

<https://www.purpleheartflorida.org/events>

**To reserve hotel room,** CALL THE ROSEN PLAZA HOTEL 407-996-9702 or 1-800-627-8258 and ask for the Military Order of the Purple Heart National Convention rates. There is no deadline to make reservations.

### Departed Patriot Richard “Rick” Allen



Patriot Rick Allen of Inverness departed our ranks on March 15, 2024 after a long illness, days short of his 79th birthday. A native of Michigan, Rick proudly served our country in Vietnam with distinction as an Army Combat Engineer with B Company, 26th Engineer Battalion, 23rd Infantry Division (Americal). Seriously wounded in action by an IED, he was awarded the Purple Heart.

In August of 1968, Rick married the love of his life, Carol, while stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. Upon his honorable discharge from the Army, Rick worked as a supervisor at Mortano Salt in Marysville MI until it closed and later owned, with his wife Carol, Signs by D'Sign in Lewiston, MI. Rick was a big NASCAR fan and loved anything to do with cars and racing. He spent many family vacations in his treasured Jeep CJ5 at Silver Lake Sand Dunes in Western Michigan.

After retiring to Citrus County, Rick became an indispensable member of Chapter 776. As the Chapter 776 Sergeant of Arms his dedicated support of the Chapter and numerous hours of volunteer work earned him selection as the 2012-13 Chapter 776 Patriot of the Year.

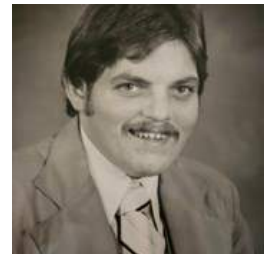
Rick was preceded in death by his daughter Michelle Labonte and his mother Evelyn Maples. Survived by his beloved wife Carol, daughter Kimberly Allen, and half-sister Christine Maples, Rick was laid to rest at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell on April 18, 2024 with full military honors.

### Departed Patriot Albert “Bill” Clutter

A proud Marine hailing from Wilmette, IL, Patriot Bill Clutter of Homosassa died March 26 at the age of 74. A two-tour combat veteran of Vietnam, Bill served with the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines 1st Marine Division, exemplifying honor and faithfulness. During his second combat tour, he was seriously wounded by a mine, resulting in the loss of both legs above the knee.

Following his honorable discharge after a lengthy and courageous recovery and rehabilitation, Bill dedicated himself to helping fellow veterans as a National Service Officer for the Disabled American Veterans. Retiring to Homosassa, Bill spent his days enjoying his dogs, Buddy and Roxy and hunting and fishing.

Survived by his beloved wife Linda, daughters Jeannine, Lois, Barbara and Billilyn; brother Robert; sisters, Marjorie, Phyllis Jean and Catherine; 9 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, he was remembered at a Memorial Service, followed by committal at the Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, with full military honors on April 26.



### Patricia “Pat” Layman



Pat Layman, devoted wife of Departed Patriot Harold Layman, passed away in Homosassa at the age of 82 on March 2, 2024. Born in Mount Clemens, MI, she spent most of her youth in St. Clair, MI. After graduating from Eastern Michigan University, she taught high school English for several years.

She and Harold were married in 1968 and resided in Troy, MI until retiring to Sugarmill Woods in 1986. Pat and Harold loved to travel, visiting many European countries, the Panama Canal, South America, Russia, China, and Antarctica. Pat was a member of Southern Woods and Sugarmill Woods golf clubs and First United Methodist Church of Homosassa, serving on many committees and singing in the choir. She was a devoted member of People International Organization (PEO), where she held numerous offices and chaired many committees.

Pat is survived by her sister, brother, nephew, 5 nieces, and several great nieces and nephews.