



AARON A. WEAVER CHAPTER 776

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



2023-24 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: Robert Gibson
Trustee 2-yrs: Will Korber
Trustee 1-yr: Leo Stockmaster
Adjutant: Curt Ebitz
Service Off: Joe McClister
Welfare Off: Mickey Hunt
Historian: Curt Ebitz
Chaplain: Troy Allen
Americanism Off: Chuck Kanehl

Chapter Activities

Completed

July 13. Chapter 776 Cdr. Richard Hunt represented the Chapter at the Citrus County Building Alliance (CCBA) "Red, White & Blue BBQ." Cdr. Hunt, on behalf of the Chapter, accepted \$83 from the event's 50/50 drawing.

July 19. Attending the Associate ladies' monthly luncheon get together at Two Guys from Italy in Homosassa were JoAnn Allen, Sandy Cross, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair, Vikki Pietras and Shirley Platt. All Associate ladies and Patriot spouses all welcome to join them. **Call Sandy at 352-502-1641.**

July 25. The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners presented a Proclamation to Chapter 776 designating August 7 as Purple Heart Recognition Day in Citrus County. Cdr. Richard Hunt, joined by Patriots Curt Ebitz, Jerry Frease, Bob Gibson, Chuck Kanehl, Joe McClister and Associates Sandy Cross, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair, Mickey Hunt, accepted it on behalf of the Chapter all

Next Meeting

Tuesday, September 19, 1 p.m.
Citrus County Building Alliance
1196 S Lecanto Hwy.
Lecanto, FL 34461

Bimonthly Meeting

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 or call 382-3847.

Member News

A very warm welcome to Chapter 776's newest Patriot member, **Mike Krebs**. Mike is a former Naval Aviator and Vietnam War veteran. He and his wife, Nancy, reside in Hernando. For more about Patriot Krebs, see page 4.

Past Chapter 776 Sergeant of Arms **Rick Allen** is now residing at the New Horizon Assisted Living Residence located at 1745 Forrest Dr., Inverness, FL 34453. Rick is in Room 42 and would welcome visitors (best time is afternoons

between 1-4 p.m.). Cards of encouragement would also lift his spirits.

Patriot **Rob Pietras** is recovering from a painful bruise on his upper left thigh after being intentionally knocked to the ground by a patron pushing his way to get a seat for the Chicago Tribute Band performance at the Citrus Springs Community Center.

Chapter 776 Patriot **Mike Lobo**, a Global War on Terror (GWOT) veteran, relocated to Malta, New York. We wish Mike and his family good health, happiness and prosperity in their new locale.

An appreciative thank you is extended to Patriot **Dale Fair** for coordinating and accepting the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Proclamation commemorating the 241st anniversary of the Purple Heart decoration.

Chapter 776 extends its sincere gratitude to the West Citrus Elks Lodge No. 2693, a designated Purple Heart Entity, for hosting the Purple Heart anniversary breakfast for the 14th consecutive year. Also, special thanks to Chairwoman Joanne Hepner and her fellow members of the Lodge's Veterans Committee and kitchen staff for making the breakfast its usual first class experience.

See Member News page 2

Chapter Activities continued

Citrus County Purple Heart recipients.

July 25. Chapter 776 Patriot Dale Fair, on behalf of Chapter 776 & Hernando County Purple Heart recipients, accepted the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Proclamation designating August 7 as Purple Heart Day in Hernando County.

July 27. Cdr. Hunt participated in a celebratory ceremony at Grand Living in Hernando honoring World War II veteran Terri Osteen-Mahler on her 101st birthday.

August 5. Approximately 100 Chapter 776 Patriots, Associates, Gold Star family members and guests attended a delicious sit down breakfast hosted by the West Citrus Elks, Lodge No. 2693 commemorating the 241st anniversary of the Purple Heart. Honored guests were Gold Star widows Nancy Weaver Dalton

See Chapter Activities page 2

Member News continued

An extremely appreciative thank you to the **Citrus County Building Alliance (CCBA)**, for its very generous donation of \$5,000 from a portion of the 28th Annual Family Fishing Tournament proceeds presented to Chapter 776 during the annual Purple Heart breakfast as the tournament's charitable partner.

A congratulatory salute to honorary member **Janice Warren** and her **Tax Collector Office staff** on another highly successful fundraising campaign that raised \$10,453.04 for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation, Chapter 776's principal charity.

Get well wishes are extended to Associate **Carol Hayes**, wife of Patriot Frank Hayes, who is recovering from ankle surgery following a fall the evening before the Purple Heart breakfast.

Chapter activities continued

and Bonnie Lee. Among the dignitaries attending were the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army Peter Tan, Citrus County Commissioners Holly Davis and Diana Finegan, and Citrus County Property Appraiser Cregg Dalton. The Citrus County Building Alliance also presented the Chapter with a generous \$5,000.00 check from its fishing tournament proceeds, raising the total received to \$48,644 since 2012.

August 23. Chapter 776 recognized the Citrus County Tax Collector Office and its top three fundraisers for their recent fundraising campaign that raised \$10,453.04 for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation, Chapter 776's principal charity. To date, the partnership has raised \$260,747.

Future

September 19, 1:00 p.m. Chapter 776 bimonthly meeting, Citrus County Builders Association, Lecanto.

October 28 - November 12. Veterans Appreciation Week (See details page 2).

December 7, 4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Chapter 776 Pearl Harbor Dinner and

Christmas Social, at the **Citrus National Golf Club** (Formerly Southern Woods Golf Club), 1501 Corkwood Blvd, Homosassa, FL 34446.

**Veterans Appreciation Week
October 28 – November 12**

Veterans Appreciation Concert & Massing of the Colors Ceremony, Oct. 29, 3 p.m., Seven Rivers Presbyterian Church, Lecanto.

Homosassa Veterans Memorial Veterans Tribute, Nov. 4, 10 a.m.

Military Ball, Nov. 4, 5:30 p.m., West Citrus Elks Lodge, Homosassa; \$50 pp.

Veterans Program, Nov. 9, 2 p.m., Inverness Primary School

Veterans Day Parade, Inverness, Nov. 11, 10 a.m.; lineup begins 8:30 a.m., Citrus High School parking area located off of Highland Blvd.

Memorial Service, Nov. 11, after parade, Old County Courthouse Heritage Museum, Inverness.

Operation Welcome Home Veterans Lunch, Nov. 11, after memorial service, Depot, Inverness.

Veterans Appreciation Free Breakfast, Nov. 12, 8 a.m.-11 a.m., YMCA, Lecanto.

NOTE: Chapter members desiring to participate in the Veterans in the Classroom should register at www.veteransofcitruscounty.com. Questions? Call Adjutant Ebitz, at 352-382-3847.

From the Commander

Patriots and Family of Aaron A Weaver Chapter 776,

The West Citrus Elks Lodge 2693 hosted a great Purple Heart Breakfast. This is a very special event like no other Chapter that I know has the honor of attending, absolutely free. If you have not attended, please plan on it next year. You are encouraged to bring guests so that they may learn more about the Purple Heart legacy that we share as combat wounded veterans.

At the breakfast, the Citrus County Building Alliance presented the Chapter, as the tournament's charitable partner, a \$5,000 check from a portion of the tournament's proceeds. Also at the breakfast, I had the pleasure, on behalf of the Department of Florida Commander Craig Wertheim, to present our Chapter Adjutant, Curt Ebitz, with the Department of Florida Patriot of the Year Award and our Chapter Chaplain, Troy Allen, the Department of Florida Jonas Jacobsen Volunteer of the Year Award. I also want to thank Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates for their dedicated support that earned for the Chapter the distinction of being selected for the Department of Florida Service Award.

Speaking of breakfast, Patriots interested in meeting for breakfast are invited to join me and fellow Patriots at 9:15 a.m., Thursday, September 14 at SOCOS House of Eats, 7364 W. Grover Cleveland Blvd., Homosassa (formerly Dan's Clam Stand). The owner-chef is a Marine Corps veteran. I hope to do it on a monthly basis so that we can build camaraderie by getting to know each other better.

Yours in Patriotism,
Richard Hunt, Commander



Chapter 776 Patriot Dale Fair (center) accepted the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Proclamation recognizing August 7 as "Purple Heart Day" in Hernando County on behalf of Hernando County's Purple Heart recipients and Gold Star family members.

2023 PURPLE HEART BREAKFAST



The Citrus County Building Alliance (CCBA) presented a donation of \$5,000 from its 28th Annual Family Fishing Tournament to Aaron A. Weaver Chapter 776 Military Order of the Purple Heart as the tournament's charitable partner.



Chapter officers with distinguished guests left: Cdr. Richard Hunt; Chaplain Troy Allen; Finance Officer Joe McClister; Staff Assistant to Congressman Gus Bilirakis Angel Osteen, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army Peter Tan; Citrus County Commissioner Diana Finegan; Citrus Co. Property Appraiser Cregg Dalton; Adjutant Curt Ebitz; Trustee Will Korber; Americanism Officer Chuck Kanehl; and Citrus Schools Coordinator of Special Academic Programs Darrick Buettner.



Left: Cdr. Hunt with Department of Florida Patriot of the Year Curt Ebitz and Department of Florida Jonas Jacobsen Volunteer of the Year Troy Allen.



Peter Tan, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army with Associate Members Pat Michael and Shirley Platt.



Members of West Citrus Elks Lodge 2693 Veterans Committee who graciously volunteered as servers for the Purple Heart Breakfast and kitchen staff.

Other News



Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates accepted the Board of County Commissioners Proclamation recognizing August 7 as “Purple Heart Recognition Day” in Citrus County on behalf of Citrus County’s Purple Heart recipients and Gold Star family members.



The Citrus County Tax Collector Office and its top three fundraisers were recognized for their recent fundraising campaign that raised \$10,453.04 for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation (CCVF).



Patriot Mike Krebs

Patriot Mike Krebs was born and raised in Kenosha, Wisconsin. After graduating from high school, he enrolled at Marquette University where he majored in Electrical Engineering and was a midshipman in the NROTC unit at the university. Upon graduation, he was commissioned as an ensign and directed to report to flight school in Pensacola, Florida.

After 18 months of training, Mike was designated a Naval Aviator in June 1966 and assigned to Attack Squadron 44 at Cecil Field, Florida for additional training in the A4 Skyhawk, a single-seat jet light attack carrier aircraft. After completion of A4 training, he reported to VA34 located at Cecil Field, Florida, which deployed to Vietnam on the USS Intrepid (CVA/S 11) as part of Carrier Air Wing 10 for participation in Operation Rolling Thunder (May-November 1967), the campaign to bomb North Vietnam. On November 7, 1967 on a mission over North Vietnam, Mike’s plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire, damaging the left wing and setting the plane on fire. He was able to fly out to a rescue ship where he ejected near the Belknap (CG 26) that recovered him. Later that day, he was returned to the Intrepid.

Upon his squadron’s return from Vietnam, it was reassigned to Air Wing 17 and deployed aboard the USS Forrestal (CVA 59) to the Mediterranean for 10 months. After returning to Cecil Field in May of 1969, Mike and Nancy had a full military wedding. Mike wrapped up his six years of active duty service as an A7 instructor pilot. During his service, he accumulated 267 carrier landings of which 50 were at night and 76 were combat missions. His personal awards include the Purple Heart, 7 Air Medals, Navy Commendation Medal with “V” for Valor and Navy Achievement Medal with “V” for Valor.

In January 1971, Mike left the Navy for a position with Electronic Data Systems (EDS), managing computer systems for clients and stayed with EDS for 29 years, making 6 cross-country moves. After retiring from EDS, he worked another 11 years at KB Home and Avery Dennison before retiring a second time. Mike and his wife Nancy have been married 54 years and have two grown children and two precious grandchildren. They relocated to Florida in 2016 for the warmer weather and have traveled extensively domestically and internationally since retirement.