



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

July 23. 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, Frank Hayes, Chuck Kanehl, Will Korber, Joe McClister, Paul St. Martin and Associates Annie Fair, Kim Frease, Carol Hayes, Mickie Kanehl, accepted it on behalf of the Chapter and all Citrus County Purple Heart recipients.

July 24. Attending the Associate ladies' monthly lunch get together at Moschello's in Homosassa were Sandy Cross, Annie Fair, Kim Frease, Carol Hayes, Pat Michaels, Vikki Pietras, and Shirley Platt. **All Associate ladies and Patriot spouses are welcome to join them for lunch. Call Sandy at 352-502-1641.**

July 31. Chapter 776 Patriots Dale Fair and Claude Gregoire accepted the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Proclamation designating

Next Meeting

Tuesday, September 17, 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

Chapter 776 Patriots and Associates extend their heartfelt condolences to **Lynn Miholics** on the loss of her beloved husband Chapter 776 Patriot **Michael "Mike" Miholics** who passed away on July 14.

Congratulations to Chapter 776 Associate **Nancy Weaver Dalton** on authoring and publishing her book entitled "American Soldier" that chronicles her life with Fallen Hero Aaron A. Weaver, the Chapter's namesake.

Member News Continued

A rousing cheer and well-deserved congratulations to **Darrick Buettner** on joining Citrus County Tax Collector **Janice Warren** and Operation Welcome Home Founder **Barbara Mills** as an Honorary Life Member. Darrick earned the distinctive designation for his unsurpassed commitment to fostering the proud legacy of the Purple Heart and his selfless championing of our nation's veterans. Chapter 776 Bylaws only allow three living Honorary Life Members at any given time.

An appreciative thank you is extended to Patriot **Dale Fair** for coordinating and accepting the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Proclamation commemorating the 242nd anniversary of the Purple Heart decoration. Our thanks to Patriot **Claude Gregoire** who also attended the proclamation's acceptance.

Chapter 776 extends its sincere gratitude to the **Inverness Elks Lodge No. 2522** for stepping forward to host the Purple Heart anniversary breakfast. Special thanks are extended to Elk **Mike Orndoff** who facilitated the Lodge's hosting of the breakfast.

Chapter 776's deep appreciation is also offered to the members of the

See Member News page 2

Chapter Activities continued

August 7 as Purple Heart Day in Hernando County on behalf of Chapter 776 & Hernando County Purple Heart recipients.

July 27. Chapter 776 Trustee Bill Merryman organized and prepared a spaghetti lunch for 115 Army National Guard soldiers at the Crystal River National Guard Armory on their final summer drill day.

August 6. Associate Nancy Weaver Dalton launched the publication of her book *American Soldier* that chronicles the life of her Fallen Hero husband CWO Aaron A. Weaver with a book signing at Connor's Gifts in Inverness.

August 10. Approximately 75 Chapter 776 Patriots, Associates, Gold Star family members and guests attended a delicious breakfast hosted by the Inverness Elks, Lodge No. 2522 commemorating the 242nd anniversary of the Purple Heart. Honored guests were Gold Star widows Nancy Weaver Dalton and Kerri Surber.
See Chapter Activities page 2

Member News continued

West Citrus Elks Lodge 2623 and its **Veterans Committee**, which generously hosted the annual Purple Heart anniversary breakfast for the past 14 years but had to step down from hosting the breakfast due to the sale of the Lodge.

An extremely appreciative thank you to the **Citrus County Building Alliance** for its faithful support and very generous donation of \$5,000 from a portion of the 29th Annual Family Fishing Tournament proceeds presented to Chapter 776 as the tournament's charitable partner, raising the total donated since 2012 to \$53,644.

A congratulatory salute to Honorary Life Member **Janice Warren** and her **Tax Collector Office Staff** on another highly successful fundraising campaign that raised an astounding \$21,357.11 during its spring fundraising campaign for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation, Chapter 776's principal charity.

Get well wishes for a full recovery are sent to Chapter 776 Sergeant of Arms **Bob Gibson** who was hospitalized for 5-days in August with Covid and pneumonia. Chapter 776 Commander **Richard Hunt** also was down for several days with a less severe bout with Covid.

A job well done to Patriot **Bill Merryman**, who helped raise \$500 to purchase 40 backpacks with school supplies for the families of our local Army National Guard unit in Crystal River.

Chapter activities continued

Among the dignitaries attending were Congressman Gus Bilirakis, State Representative Ralph Massullo, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army Peter Tan, Citrus County Commissioner Holly Davis, Citrus County Clerk of Courts Angela Vick, Citrus County Property Appraiser Cregg Dalton and Asst. Superintendent of Schools Scott Hebert.

August 14. Attending the Associate and Patriot ladies monthly luncheon get together at the Stinky Rose in Beverly Hills were Sandy Cross, Mari-Elain Ebitz, Annie Fair, Kim Frease, Carol Hayes, Lynn Miholics & friend Diane, Vikki Pietras, Shirley Platt, Deborah St Martin.

Veterans Appreciation Week October 26 – November 11

Veterans Appreciation Concert & Massing of the Colors Ceremony, Oct. 27, 3 p.m., Seven Rivers Presbyterian Church, Lecanto.

Homosassa Veterans Memorial Veterans Tribute, Nov. 2, 10 a.m.

Veterans Program, Nov. 7, 2 p.m., Inverness Primary School.

Veterans Appreciation Free Breakfast, Nov. 10, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., Inverness Elks.

Veterans Military Ball, Nov. 10, 4 p.m., Forest Ridge Community Bldg., Beverly Hills.

Veterans Day Parade, Nov. 11, 10 a.m. Inverness.

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

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

QUESTIONS? Call Adjutant Ebitz, at 352-382-3847.

Chapter activities continued

August 21. Chapter 776 recognized the Citrus County Tax Collector Office and its top fundraisers for their recent fundraising campaign that raised \$21,357.11 for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation, Chapter 776's principal charity.

August 30. Commander Richard Hunt gave a presentation on the Military Order of the Purple Heart at the Citrus Memorial Health Foundation YMCA Veterans program's Coffee with Comrades

From the Commander

I hope this finds all of you well.

Our breakfast hosted by the Inverness Elks Lodge 2522 was outstanding in all ways. We were notified that the Lodge was donating a prominent specific space on a wall for our Chapter to display whatever we wish. With many awards and memorabilia this is an outstanding opportunity.

The Citrus County Builder's Alliance presented the Chapter with a check in the amount of \$5,000.00 as our part of the annual fishing tournament we so proudly partner in.

Darrick Buettner of the Citrus County School District was designated an Honorary Life Member during the Purple Heart breakfast in a classic ambush. Adjutant Curt Ebitz explained our criteria for this prestigious award and the history of the three who have held it. Per our bylaws, only three persons may be an Honorary Life Member at any given time. Neville Anderson was a recipient until his passing some nine years ago. Janice Warren and Barbara Mills currently are Honorary Life Members. Welcome to the Family, Darrick!

Wayne Shelby from the Wounded Warrior Sportsman Fund has contacted me looking for as many as seven Purple Heart recipients to go on an all-expenses paid fishing trip out of Boca Grande. To apply, Google these folks and apply on their web page. They do a great job of honoring Purple Heart recipients. They also have a dove hunt coming up for those who might be interested.

Nancy Weaver's book "American Soldier" about our Chapter namesake Aaron A Weaver is an outstanding read. I will have a few copies at our next meeting should anyone be interested. This book has been approved for inclusion in the school libraries for our local high schools. Very highly recommended and also available on Amazon.

Yours in Patriotism,
Richard Hunt, Commander

Future

September 17, 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 & Christmas Social, Citrus National (formerly Southern Woods Country Club.)

Departed Patriot Michael “Mike” Miholics



Patriot Michael “Mike” Miholics of Homosassa passed away July 14 at the age of 76 after a valiant battle with cancer. He was born in Bronx, New York and graduated from St. Angela and later Taft High School in the Bronx. He furthered his education at Baruch College in New York, New York.

Mike proudly served in the Army from January 1968 until honorably discharge in January 1970, serving with distinction in Vietnam as an infantry rifleman with Company C, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, 1st Infantry Division.

During counterinsurgency operations east of Loc Ninh in September 1968, his company was attacked by a North Vietnam Army force seriously wounding his platoon leader and platoon sergeant. Under a hail of bullets, Mike bravely crawled forward to assist in pulling the wounded platoon leader and sergeant from the kill zone to a covered position for medical aid. As the fighting continued, Mike valiantly assaulted an enemy recoilless rifle position to successfully neutralize it. For his courageous actions and selfless concern for his fellow soldiers, Mike was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with “V” device for valor. Mike’s other awards include the Purple Heart, Air Medal and the coveted Combat Infantryman Badge.

After his military service, Mike embarked on a successful career, initially managing at MetLife Insurance Company and later owning and operating MCMETS. He was known for his quiet loving nature, sense of humor, and passion for boating, traveling, gardening, and fishing.

Mike is survived by his beloved wife Lynn, four siblings, six children, two step-children, and five grandchildren. Memorial Services will be conducted at the Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, with the date to be determined in the near future. In lieu of flowers, well-wishers may donate to Aaron A. Weaver Chapter 776 Military Order of the Purple Heart, P.O. Box 1345, Lecanto, FL 34460 in remembrance of Michael's life and service.



Chapter 776 Patriots Dale Fair and Claude Gregorie accepted the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners Proclamation recognizing August 7 as “Purple Heart Day” in Hernando County.



The Citrus County Tax Collector Office/Chapter 776 fundraising partnership’s spring campaign raised \$21,357.11 for the benefit of the Citrus County Veterans Foundation (CCVF).



2024 PURPLE HEART BREAKFAST



Chapter 776's newly designated Honorary Life Member Darrick Buettner, Director of Special Academic Programs, Citrus County School District. Welcome to our ranks!



During the Purple Heart breakfast hosted by the Inverness Elks Lodge #2522 commemorating the 242nd anniversary of the Purple Heart, the Citrus County Building Alliance (CCBA) presented a \$5,000 donation from the CCBA's 29th Annual Family Fishing Tournament proceeds to the Aaron A. Weaver Chapter 776 Military Order of the Purple Heart as the tournament's charitable partner. Left: Curt Ebitz, Chuck Kanehl, Will Korber, Bob Gibson, Kayla Carroll, John Porter, Dusty Porter, Marie Brotnisky, and Richard Hunt.



Chapter 776 was honored to have Congressman Gus Bilirakis, who is an avid veterans advocate, to attend the breakfast and to make commemorative remarks.

Chapter members with Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA) Peter Tan. Left: Rob Pietras, Chick Kanehl, Frank Hayes, Curt Ebitz, Bill Merryman, Jerry Frease, CASA Tan, Robert Bendle, Will Korber, Cdr. Richard Hunt, Colin Pearl, Bob Gibson, and Paul St. Martin.



2024 Sergeant Dennis J. Flanagan Memorial Scholarship Award

During the Chapter 776 July meeting, Cdr. Hunt presented Cortlyn McClain with Chapter's \$1,500 Sergeant Dennis J. Flanagan Memorial Scholarship Award for 2024