STATE CONVENTION - The annual convention for Florida's Department for 2017 will be held in Port St. Lucie at the DAV 113 Chapter headquarters on May 13, 2017. Save the date and start your planning now to join us for this fun, informative event that will include a wonderful luncheon, tours and an interesting business meeting. Cost for attendees is only $25.00 - send your checks to Department Treasurer Vince LaValle, 567 SE Brookside Ter., Pt. St. Lucie, FL 34983.

NATIONAL CONVENTION A "MUST ATTEND" FOR FL MEMBERS - The Association has had annual conventions all over the U.S. in years past, but THIS year, the convention is coming to OUR State, and it is centrally located for all of us, in ORLANDO! It's not too early to start planning now for your Association's annual convention to be held in Kissimmee, Orlando's suburb. If you have never attended one of the national conventions, now's the time! It will be held at the Park Inn Resort and Conference Center from June 9 & 10, 2017. For more information, go to http://amra1973.org/Events/

JROTC MEDAL PRESENTATIONS - This is the season when the Department begins to cooperate with Junior Reserve Officer Training programs in High Schools all over the state to recognize outstanding future leaders; high performing cadets by awarding the 2017 Robert J. Jock Memorial LEAP Award Medal and Certificate. The officers of the Department are not always available to present the awards, usually given at a school assembly or other special event, but we always prefer an AMRA member make the presentation. If you are available to make such a presentation in your area, contact J. B. Kump via email at jb.kump@gmail.com or phone, (321) 543-1608.

JOIN A TEAM, START A TEAM:

Being a member of AMRA is a great start and you immediately gain access to great resources and benefits . . . but you already know that. If you are not already a member of a local Chapter what you MAY NOT know is how much there is to be gained by regular association with other AMRA members. You already have a great deal in common. Military spouses are ALWAYS welcome to our meetings and activities, which broadens the opportunities for friendships and opportunities to serve. Currently there are two chapters: FL1 in Port St. Lucie and FL2 in Brevard County. Contact information for both can be found on line.

If you live too far to actively take part in the life of either of these two great local chapters, why not start one in your area?! It's easier than you think and resources are available to assist. Contact your New Chapter Department Development specialist, J. B.
Kump (321) 543-1608, jb.kump@gmail.com. We have already heard from members in Tampa who are working to establish a Chapter there - more information on that soon.

**FLORIDA EVENTS & INFORMATION:**

**Greeters needed! Honor Flights Resume their Spring 2017 trips! Come Welcome them Home! –Sat. Mar 18** – Orlando Int’l Airport – After a day spent in Washington DC, veterans of WWII and Korean War veterans return home thru Orlando Int’l Airport. The nation-wide organization has three local hubs that take veterans on a single day trip to our nation’s capital where they visit the WWII, Korea, and Vietnam War Memorials, Marine Corps Iwo Jima and the Air Force Monuments, and witness the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. Come welcome these former warriors home! “Welcome Home” receptions at the airports make a difference! Bring your flags, banners and signs! –Dates are:

Sat. March 18: 25 veterans, plus their guardians and staff. Time and Flt# TBD
Wed. March 29: 35 veterans, plus their guardians and staff. Time and Flt# TBD

Information for more will be forthcoming. Contact Cathy Haynes for those details - chaynes11629@yahoo.com 407-239-8468. For the Early Birds - you can wave these veterans off in the morning no later than 5am. They process thru Security early and quickly.

**Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) mtg – Wed. March 22** – Join others who are in this unique status of service to our country. 7 PM at the Orlando Elks Lodge, 12 N. Primrose Dr., Orlando, 32803. Activities include parade participations, and currently working on getting out the JROTC Purple Heart Awards for the local high schools and college ROTC units. It’s always nice for a member to personally present the Award Certificate, Medal and Ribbon at the school awards ceremony. Info: Marcus at mmichles@att.net 407-382-9737 or cell 407-304-6061.

**Poker Run for the Vietnam Moving Wall Tribute fundraiser - Sun. March 26** - Poker run to benefit the Vietnam Moving Wall Tribute (April 27 – May 1 in Eustis) Poker Run is seeking sponsors, large auction items and several volunteers. Will be "open to all vehicles." Info: Peggy S at veteransinfoandeevents@gmail.com 407-484-2159

**Wounded Warfighter & Lone Sailor 5K/10K Run - Sat. April 1** – Central Florida Navy League sponsors this in Blue Jacket Park, 2501 General Rees Ave. Baldwin Park, Orlando, 32814. Sponsors and participants still welcomed! Discount for early registration and for groups of 10 or more. Time: 7:30am - Colors and National Anthem; 7:50am - 10K Race Start; 8:05 - 5K Race Start; 9:15 - Kids Race Start. End of Program: Award Ceremony and Silent Auction. Too early or too busy on that day? Please consider the Virtual Race option: April 1-14. www.cfnl5k.org or www.cfnavyleague.org Info: Chris Townsend at flytowny@gmail.com 407.230.3333

**Melbourne Air and Space Show – Sat & Sun. April 1, 2** – See airandspaceshow.com for hours and ticket info.
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 27 - May 1 - Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall at the City of Eustis. Volunteers, sponsors, vendors for this event are welcomed. Also yearly music Fest event April 28-30th. Info: Erin Bailey 352-483-5491

Thurs. May 4 – Sun. May 7 – Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion –This is the 30th annual gathering and not to be missed. Wickham Park in Melbourne. The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall will be escorted on Sun. April 30 with hundreds of various vehicles. Info: 321-408-2698. Vendors call: 321-652-4185 or vet.reunion.vendor@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

Pro Bono Legal Services - Free Legal Advice Clinic for veterans is being offered in two locations:

- Seminole County Public Library in Casselberry, Meeting Room 1&2, 215 N Oxford Rd, Casselberry, 32707. Every 2nd Thursday of the month from 1 – 4 pm. Contact Kayla Meyer, Pro bono Coordinator, 407-834-1660 ext. 110, coordinator@scbalas.com
- Orlando VA Lake Baldwin in the Medical Center Cafeteria, 5201 Raymond St., Orlando, 32803. The 2nd Tuesday of each month beginning at 3:30pm. Contact Jay Mobley at 407-841-8310 ext. 3163.

Veterans Resource Radio – Rob Newton on the radio: Thursday’s at 1pm on WLBE 790 – my790am.com; Friday’s at 2pm WQBQ 1410 “The Q” on tune in radio, and at my-oldies.com. (Both stations are in Leesburg.)

Univ. of Central FL Business Incubation Program for Entrepreneurs – Assistance with the many aspects of starting or advancing businesses, including veteran owned businesses. Expert advice, mentoring, and classes available – See incubator.ucf.edu/ for more information and enrollment. A wide variety of class topics are offered on various dates and locations - held in Apopka, Winter Springs and Kissimmee. This is a must if you want to start or grow a business.

Research Project - Active military, reservists, guardsmen and veterans needed – If you or someone you know has experience overseas, a research project is ongoing at the UCF RESTORES lab at the University of Central Florida. The project determines if smells influence their experience in virtual environments similar to those we use in the treatment of combat-related PTSD. Participation takes approximately one hour, and
those who volunteer will be compensated for their time. You can help others who suffer from PTS by your participation. Call UCF RESTORES: 407-823-3910.

**OIA USO** - Volunteers and donations needed - USO at the Orlando International Airport averages over 100 guests daily and over 7500 guests since the opening in September. This USO is unique in that ALL veterans are welcomed, not just active duty and retired military. It is open from 6am to 10pm, 365 days a year. It is staffed by 400 volunteers (and parking is free for volunteers). There are no government monies received to operate the facility – it operates by our donations. For more information or to volunteer, contact Annamae at annamae@usocentralflorida.org or 407-825-8761.

**Shades of Green** – This resort on Disney property for military and DOD personnel has some very tempting rates, especially during the months of January and September. The “Salute to Our Veterans” program is designed to give all military veterans who have received an honorable discharge (proof required & verified by current DD-214) Check out the website at www.shadesofgreen.org or call 1-407-824-3400.

**Help for Veterans and their Families** - Life isn’t always easy after a deployment. With 71 percent of the staff members comprised of veterans, Vet centers are committed to assisting veterans and their families achieve successful adjustment in or near their communities. Vet Centers provide all readjustment counseling services at no charge. Those using vet centers are not required to enroll in the VA Health Care System or to have received a service connection for conditions caused by military service. Vet centers provide services regardless of the nature of a veteran’s discharge. The vet center program also has a Veterans Call Center staffed with qualified counselors who will answer your calls after office hours at 1-877-927-8387. See www.va.gov

* **Clermont Vet Center** - 1655 East Highway 50, Suite 102, Clermont, FL 34711
  Phone: 352-536-6701 Or 877-927-8387

* **Daytona Beach Vet Center** - 1620 Mason Ave., Suite C, Daytona Beach, FL 32117
  Phone: 386-366-6600 Or 877-927-8387

* **Melbourne Vet Center** - 2098 Sarno Road, Melbourne, FL 32935
  Phone: 321-254-3410 Or 877-927-8387

* **Orlando Vet Center** - 5575 S. Semoran Blvd., Suite #30, Orlando, FL 32822
  Phone: 407-857-2800 Or 877-927-8387

**Veterans in crisis** – For you or someone you know. Suicide is a medical emergency. If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, know that you are not alone and care should be sought immediately by calling 911. Free, confidential resources are instantly available through the Military Crisis Line to aid you if you are in crisis. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, OR chat online now for 24/7 access to trained counselors who understand what service members and military families are coping with. Website at veteranscrisisline OR: text 838255 for 24/7 confidential assistance. They are there because they care.
Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry - Gulf War Syndrome veterans - The VA is urging veterans who serviced in the Southwest Asia Theater of operations to complete an online survey and report any concerns or symptoms that they may be experiencing as a result of airborne hazards during active duty in that region. Info: www.hillandponton.com /airborne-hazards-open-burn-pit-registry/

Veteran Pension Scams - Veterans' benefits, including their pensions, are being targeted in a new scam. As part of the scam, criminals pose as attorneys or financial advisers and extend an offer to assist the veteran with their pension. The scam involves convincing veterans to transfer their assets into a special trust account, then charging them exorbitant fees to help complete lengthy, complicated paperwork associated with the transfer. The veteran is told the asset reallocation will allow the person to qualify for aid and attendance benefits. But, this is not true. If you are approached by scammers, contact your local police or sheriff's department. (per Military.com | Week of January 30, 2017).

Hepatitis C – It is imperative that veterans get tested! If positive, get treated. The VA will test you, and treat you. Consult your primary care team. One in 10 Vietnam veterans, and one in 30 baby-boomers, will test positive for this liver problem “time-bomb" that may lead to liver cancer. Blood Banks already test for this – if Hep C negative, your blood will help save a life. (FYI – Hepatitis C was formerly known as Hepatitis Non-A, Non-B until the 1980’s.)

Camaraderie Foundation in Central Florida provides resources for private and confidential Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) counseling for warriors and their families. And for First Responders. They also have connections in other areas, other states. It works. It HAS saved lives, saved marriages and saved families. camaraderiefoundation.org Contact 407-841-0071