

# Florida 24th IDA Vets

April — June 2013

*The Newsletter of the Florida 24th Infantry Division Association Members Group, initiated July 2009.*



## May 1 luncheon turnout lousy — but a great meeting nevertheless!



**Y**es the meeting turnout was lousy—but everyone was welcome and all contributed to an excellent discussion afterward.

From left standing: Don Williams, Frank Jennings, Bill Simunek, Tom Thiel, Paul Boulay, Bob Chalupa, Sandra and Harley Joseph, and Hank Whittier. Seated from left: Maxine Jennings, Ted and Marilyn Jansen and Flossie Kespert and Paul Miller.

Actually, our attendance was bolstered by two members who arrived a bit late for the photo—Zillah Gaston and Don Van Beck.

While comradeship is by far the

primary reason we continue to get together, we do other things as well.

### **Donations to Veterans**

One of these has been distributing donated items to veteran's homes.

Paul Miller and Flossie Kespert have given a lot of their time and effort to get this program off and going. We are most grateful and thank them profusely. They have done this despite what can at best be described as a lackadaisical group attitude.

We have donated items on multiple occasions each to the VFW Vet-

erans Home in Fort McCoy, and the Malcolm Randal Medical Center in Gainesville. Reports on some of these have appeared in previous newsletters and *Taro Leafs*.

But as we reported in the last issue of this newsletter, Ted Jansen agreed to take the program over now.

And as also reported in the last issue we embarked on a "ditty bag" distribution program.

Group members are either making or obtaining from mainly sewing groups small ditty bags that are being filled with toiletries and oth-

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er such small items that will fit in the small bags. Donors of items for this project were: the Women's Mission Sewing group of the First Presbyterian Church of Inverness donated ditty bags and a pillow all delivered by Florence Kespert.

There also was a bag of assorted items contributed by TD Bank of Inverness.

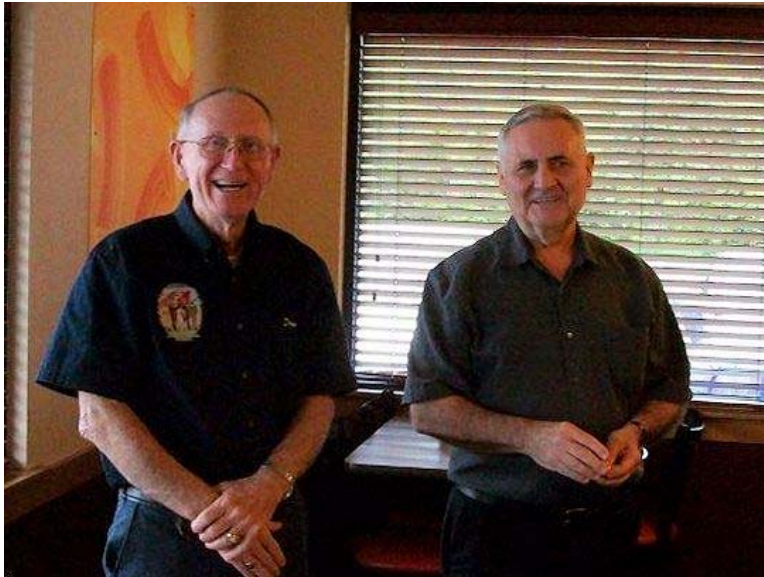
And I know that Carol Becker brought many ditty bags as well.

Paul had asked members to identify homes in their areas, and come to today's meeting not only with items to put into the ditty bags, but also to then take filled ditty bags to these homes, and give them to residents, mainly veterans.

### **Vets Helping Vets**

However, instead of depending on our members to get filled ditty bags to vets, Ted and Marilyn Jensen identified an organization with headquarters in Ocala named Vets Helping Vets (VHV) that they thought might be a better means of getting our items directly to veterans.

They came across this organization largely through their daughter and son-in-law who regularly donate



Don Williams, Director, and Hank Whittier, Executive Director of Vets Helping Vets, Ocala, speakers at today's mtg.

food items to VHV

Ted asked me, and we agreed to invite Hank Whittier, Executive Director of VHV to address us today.

Vets Helping Vets services include, but are not limited to, employment referrals, information regarding benefits and transportation for VA medical care. A food pantry, and limited financial assistance is available on a case-by-case basis.

"Currently, we are experiencing a significant uptick in the number of young vets needing our help. The economy is making it tougher for them to transition. Sometimes they will start with just a request for job referrals and over time end up asking for food and rent help," Whittier said.

"We are also seeing more mental health issues, with 30 percent of our veterans being affected. Family

members will come seeking help for loved ones they are seeing fall apart."

Some veterans are unaware of benefits that often are available, or can't cope with the cumbersome paperwork to initiate them.

Some veterans, many with service-connected disabilities, have no transportation to health care providers, accord-

ing to Whittier.

Vets Helping Vets has adapted to serving veterans' needs since its inception in 1997.

"We have our basic fixed overhead, which includes office space and transportation vehicles, covered. The actual work is performed by volunteers, and we rely on donations for our food bank and monetary disbursements," Whittier said.

"We have over 44,000 veterans residing in Marion County, a high percentage of them elderly or unable to drive and at the poverty level. We serve as a referral source for many social service organizations and a great deal of our work centers on referrals to appropriate agencies. We follow up to ensure that the vets' needs are being addressed," he added.

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While Marion County is the epicenter of VHV, Hank explained to us that they are expanding their services to Alachua County to the north, and also to Lake, Sumter and Citrus Counties to the south.

Hank introduced Don Williams, one of the Directors of VHV who was with him today, and also mentioned Joe Alfano, also one of the founders of VHV. Joe is an Inactive Member of the Korean War Veterans Association of Ocala.

Since there has been reluctance on the part of our own 24th group members to jump in and help Paul and Flossie with the dissemination of most recently ditty-bags, Ted offered them to Hank, who accepted all our ditty-bags, as well as all other items we had on the donations table. He assured Ted that these will go directly to veterans.

I also want to relate my own experience with Hank today. Lately Jean and I have been “housecleaning,” well admittedly mostly Jean. And we had some bags of stuff—clothing, in date food, some household items, a puzzle, a carpet and more. The kind of items you might take to a thrift shop. That’s where I planned to take it. after the meeting.

I offered them to Hank, and he gladly took them all. I was relieved to not have to make a thrift store stop on the way home!

### **So, where does that leave us?**

Ted told me that he gladly will continue on in the role Paul has played for the last few years. He will accept and store all items you members bring to the meetings. He will then, if agreeable with you all, see to it that these items find their way to VHV!

Based on Hank’s presentation, I see us changing what we bring. Clothing, food items (storable and in date), and other items that VHV can either use or convert to cash would also be appropriate. And we might also consider taking a collection to provide them with funds.

*So, begin now to collect your surplus items to bring to the Aug. 7 luncheon!*

We will need to get photos for publicity and recruiting purposes.

### **Other items we discussed today**

We mentioned that one of us, Ed Browne passed away on Feb. 15; his obituary is on page 5.

We had some current *Taro Leaf* copies for non-members, and members, and a bunch of older copies for delivery to VA Clinics. Don Van Beck took these.

**The Association’s Website** — [www.24thida.com](http://www.24thida.com) — which I do, now has almost 300 issues and 9,195 pages of the *Taro Leaf* going back to 1947 digitized and online.

We are always looking for your sto-

ry for web and also the *Taro Leaf*. We also have begun digitizing and uploading *Battle Stars*, the 5th RCT newsletter on the 24th Web site.

### **Florida Reunion**

As you all know, one of my goals has been to have a Florida 24th IDA Reunion. One like Dan Rickert and his colleagues did with the West Coast 24th Reunion now held each March in Laughlin, NV. But we have never had enough member support to pull that off. Bill Kane and Tony Polemeni invited us to come with their 5th RCT Reunion in St. Augustine—but we even decided to abandon that last Nov. because of lack of attendance. I have written an appeal in the *Taro Leaf* for a Cruise—only one member called me on that. And last issue of this paper appealed to you all—but none of you responded.

So, finally, very reluctantly, I have come to the conclusion that I’m the only one that wants a FL Reunion!

And today, when I announced that I’ve given up on that, no one objected. Sigh!!!

### **24th Reunion Louisville, KY Sept 22-25.**

The Association Reunion looks very good, but I have no indication of how reservations are coming in. I am looking for someone(s) to ride with me. See your last *Taro Leaf* for details.

(Continued on page 5)



## Bill Allen gets POW/MIA display—Tampa Bay Vets Hospital

After almost a two-year effort, Bill Allen<sup>1</sup> was able to complete his project to place a POW/MIA display at the Tampa Bay Veterans Hospital!

Bill says: "Now I go after the POW/MIA Flag as a Forever Stamp." "Freedom Is Not Free"

Congratulations Bill from all your fellow Taro Leafers!

<sup>1</sup> Bill (Helen) Allen, 421 4th Ave. N., Tierra Verde, FL, 33715-1730, 19th Inf, C, Life #1695, POW 01 Jan 51 to 11 Aug 53, wallen2@tampabay.rr.com

Photos:

Upper right: Display at POW/MIA wall at the Tampa Bay Veterans Hospital.

Right: View of Bill Allen's section of the display at POW/MIA wall at the Tampa Bay Veterans Hospital.

Below: Close-up of Bill Allen's display at POW/MIA wall at the Tampa Bay Veterans Hospital. Notice the 24th logo on the plate.



**Wanted—** we still would like someone consider leading the Florida 24th Group. It does not require that much time. And I have a situation wherein I may suddenly not be able to serve in this role. Call me at 352-408-6612. TJT

*(Continued from page 3)***Future Luncheon Dates**

Our future Dutch Treat luncheons will be Aug. 7 and Nov. 6, at 11:45 a.m. Golden Corral, 1720 Citrus Blvd, Leesburg, FL. As usual, the location is open to any other FL location approved by the group. We might still explore a sit down dinner on Nov 6 in Leesburg.

**2014?**

The group decided to continue in into 2014; we may adjust our meeting dates to concur more with our snowbird schedules.

**Financing**

The FL 24th IDA Group has no dues; we rely on a fifty-fifty drawing to help offset mailing and other costs. Today's fifty-fifty was a total of \$47.00; \$23 to the group and \$24 to the winner. Visitor Don Williams won the drawing, and promptly donated all of it back to the group.

Thank you very much Don!

And Zillah Gaston gave another special donation; thank you very much Zillah!

**Honor Flights**

Paul Miller and Bill Simunek each has taken a recent Honor Flight to Washington, DC. Though they were on different trips, both extolled how truly "honored they were treated" all along the route, and recommended we all apply.

The Villages Honor Flight organization is described in the following link. [www.villageshonorflight.org/](http://www.villageshonorflight.org/)

**Thanks again to everyone**

Thanks again to everyone for coming today. Special thanks are due Sandra and Harvey Joseph who come from Miami. They have missed but one of our luncheons. And thanks to our speaker Hank and to all the rest of you who come



## **Major Edward J. Browne**, Ret., died on

Feb 15, 2013, at Arbor Village, in Wildwood, Florida. He had been a resident of The Villages, FL prior to becoming a patient at the Arbor Village care facility.

Edward J. Browne was born to Edward Francis Brown and Pauline Anastacia Scherer Brown at South Point, Ohio, on Nov 13, 1924. He attended school at Green Township, Franklin Furnace, Ohio, until leaving school at the age of sixteen to join the U.S. Army in Jan of 1941.

He was at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, with the 24th Infantry Division, 21st Infantry Regiment, Co. D, when the Japanese attacked on Dec. 7, 1941. He served in the South Pacific during World War II participating in battles at Kwajalein and the Leyte invasion in the Philippines. He later served with General MacArthur's Honor Guard in Japan.

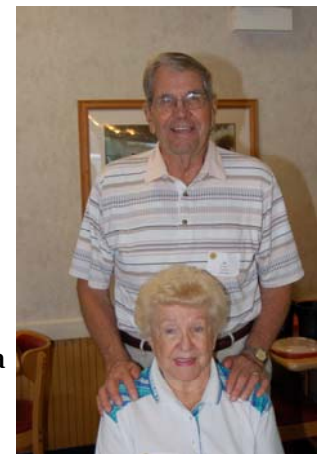
He served with the 1st Cavalry Division in Korea receiving two purple hearts. He was commissioned as Lt. when serving in the Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Ga. He served in Thailand during the Vietnam War and also in Alaska. He retired from the military July 1969.

Edward was preceded in death by his wife Phyllis Kirshbaum whom he married in 1946, while stationed in Japan. He later married Clara Simmons in Lady Lake, FL, and she died Nov 5, 2010.

Graveside services with full military honors were conducted in Apr 2013 at Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell.

Find A Grave Memorial# 105643799

Photo at right of Ed and Clara taken at our Jul 1, 2009, Luncheon event.





## Thank you our Korean-American Friends



**A**pr. 6, 2013, Ocala, FL: Seventy Central Florida Korean War Veterans, spouses and friends, were honored by The Korean Baptist Church of Ocala, FL, in recognition of the 60th Anniversary of the Cease Fire in July 1953.

We were treated to very tasty Korean foods, each veteran was presented a lovely living orchid, and the Korean ladies gave a lovely rendition of the Song of Arirang, which we better remember as “ah di dong.”



Gordon Talbot receives orchid.



Church pastor Kim, and Korean ladies give beautiful rendition of Song of Arirang, aka “ah di dong.”

We Korean Veterans greatly appreciated this beautiful occasion to remember us for our service defending Korea, and making it the symbol of freedom and democracy in Asia.

This was the first ever such event in this area. It was facilitated by Rever-

Veterans attending were from Korean War Veterans Chapters 169 Lake County, 16 Ocala, 188 South Lake County, and 267 GEN James A. Van Fleet in Gainesville.

end Joseph Ryu, and Pastor Kim of the Korean Baptist Church. Tom Thiel Chapter 169 past president coordinated the Veteran participation.



Carol Becker, God Bless America on piano.

**We welcome our new Korean American friends!**

Korean Baptist Church, 7710 SW 38th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34476.

Many in the photo above are from the FL 24th Group. TJT



## THE 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



I desire to be: Enrolled ☐ (or) Reinstated ☐; as a Member ☐ (or) Associate Member ☐  
(please check the proper two boxes)

*of the*  
**24th "Victory Division" Association**  
The Greatest Combat Division the United States Army has ever known.

☐ Annual Dues - \$15.00 (1) Year From date of joining in The Association.

☐ Life Member - \$200.00 Payable in one sum or 5 yearly payments of \$40.00 each.

~~~~~

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE+4 \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

***Served IN the 24th Division, OR was Member of Any Unit Ever Attached TO the 24th at any time.***

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Squad \_\_\_\_\_ Plt/Bat \_\_\_\_\_ Co \_\_\_\_\_ Bn \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g., 5th, 19th, 21st, 3rd Eng, etc.)

Location Served: \_\_\_\_\_ From (Yr.) \_\_\_\_\_ To (Yr.) \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g., Pearl H., WWII, Japan, Korea, Germany, Ft. Stewart, Lebanon, Somalia, Desert Storm, Ft. Riley, etc.)

POW: From (Yr.) \_\_\_\_\_ To (Yr.) \_\_\_\_\_

Other Unit Served With: \_\_\_\_\_ From (Yr.) \_\_\_\_\_ To (Yr.) \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor (not necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks in above amount payable to the **"24th Infantry Division Association"**  
And mail with this completed application to:

**John A. Dunn, Secretary/Treasurer**  
**24th Infantry Division Association**  
**9150 Hwy. 51**

**Westover, AL 35147-9527**

**FLORIDA 24TH IDA**  
January 2012, 24th IDA WEB

## Mark Your Calendars

**Aug. 7, 2013**, FL 24th IDA Dutch Treat Luncheon, Leesburg, or alternative location TBD.

**Sept. 22-25, 2013**, 24th IDA Reunion, Louisville, KY. (see TL)

**Nov. 6, 2013**, FL 24th IDA Holiday and Christmas Sit Down Luncheon, Leesburg.

## Eagle Canes

The bad news is that the Lake County Carvers Club no longer has funds for making Eagle Canes gratis for veterans.



The good news is that one of the Club members is still making Eagle Canes! But they are no longer free; he charges \$35 each. Please contact: Ralph Rossignol, 8001 Arcadian Court, Mt Dora, FL 32757, 352-385-0483, rossignolrpp@comcast.net for information.

## 24th IDA REUNION AGENDA See Taro Leaf for full description and registration.

### Sunday, 9/22 Arrivals All Day

1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

HOSPITALITY ROOM - MEZZANINE

2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION LOBBY AREA

5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

RECEPTION - HOSPITALITY ROOM - MEZZANINE

6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

HOSPITALITY ROOM - MESSANINE

### Monday, 9/23

8:00 a.m. to Noon

REGISTRATION LOBBY AREA

9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon

CITY AND CHURCHILL DOWNS TOUR

9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

HOSPITALITY ROOM - MESSANINE

12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

VIEW HISTORIC AND MODERN MILITARY VEHICLES

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

BOARD MEETING

### Tuesday, 9/24

8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

LADIES BREAKFAST

8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

10:00 a.m. to Noon

MEMBER ANNUAL MEETING

Noon to 9:00 p.m.

HOSPITALITY ROOM - MEZZANINE

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

FRAZIER AND LOUISVILLE SLUGGER MUSEUM

4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

VIEW HISTORIC AND MODERN MILITARY VEHICLES

### Wednesday, 9/25

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

HOSPITALITY ROOM - MEZZANINE

9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

FORT KNOX MUSEUM/LUNCH WITH A SOLDIER

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

HAWAIIAN BANQUET

8:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

HOSPITALITY ROOM - MEZZANINE



# Featured Veteran



0003243147-01

## William Allen

*81 Years Old*

**Hometown:** Trenton, Mich.

**Branch:** U.S. Army

**Rank:** E-5 Sergeant

**Years of Service:** 1949 - 1953

**Commendations:** Combat Infantry Badge, Purple Heart Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Prisoner of War Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Japanese Occupation, National Defense Medal, South Korean Defense Medal (with two silver stars), United Nations Defense and United Nation Service Medal

When William Allen hobbled across the Bridge of No Return into South Korea in 1953, following 31 months in a North Korean prisoner of war camp, he wrapped himself in the American flag. It was his most rewarding moment in the service.

Allen had hoped that his new assignment in Japan would expand on his role as physical training instructor at Fort Bragg, N.C., his favorite duty station. Within a month of his arrival in Japan, the outbreak of war in Korea changed everything.

On Jan. 1, 1951, Allen and his fellow soldiers were overrun and captured by Chinese soldiers and whisked north to a prison camp on the Yalu River, which separates North Korea and contemporary China.

"If you can imagine what a prison camp would be like, figure this was 10 times worse," Allen says. "Those who survived the first winter had a good chance of getting out alive. There were 3,000 prisoners in the camp and we buried more than 1,600 of them that first win-

ter. Most died of starvation and lack of medical care."

Following the war, Allen filled a cardboard box with everything related to his Korean ordeal and tried to forget everything that happened. For 40 years, until 1995, the box remained sealed. Allen contemplated the contents for two years, then wrote his self-published book, "My Old Box of Memories." He has generously donated all income from the book, nearly \$40,000 so far, to worthwhile charities.

A recent and lengthy panic attack led Allen to embark on two new missions. The first is training to be able to speak to Iraq and Afghan veterans about how post-traumatic stress disorder affects people as they age. The second is to have the POW/MIA flag printed on a forever postage stamp. He welcomes inquiries about his book or stamp project at [wallen2@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:wallen2@tampabay.rr.com).

— KENNETH HALL



# Florida 24th IDA Group 2013 Dutch Treat Luncheons

**Aug. 7; Nov. 6** (possibly a sit down Holiday Dinner)

**11:45 a.m. Golden Corral  
1720 Citrus Blvd, Leesburg, FL 34748**

Space limited to about 50—please contact: Tom Thiel, 352-408-6612 or [fl24thida@gmail.com](mailto:fl24thida@gmail.com) or Bill Stokes, 352-750-6741 [wsswrit-er@centurylink.net](mailto:wsswrit-er@centurylink.net) to reserve.

This newsletter produced and delivered with only the financial support realized from the 50:50 drawings held at the Luncheons.

Please help us cut mailing costs.  
If you have email, please send me an email at [fl24thida@gmail.com](mailto:fl24thida@gmail.com)



Golden Corral  
1720 Citrus Blvd  
Leesburg, FL 34748-3424  
(352) 728-3911

## FL 24th IDA Web Page

[www.24thida.com](http://www.24thida.com) — click on Florida 24th IDA at bottom of home page



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