

The Voice of Experience VETERAN VOICE

35 cents

VOL. 2/ISSUE 24

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2014

Vet takes Patrick AFB to task over POW/MIA table

Mary Kemper

STAFF WRITER

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"I was mad," Mike Tarter said. "I just had to do something about it."

The former Air Force master sergeant and Vietnam veteran, 64, is a Goshen, Ohio, native who stays at the Patrick Air Force Base campground every year with his wife, Gerry.

Last year, he said, he had an unpleasant surprise when he went to eat at the base's Riverside Dining Facility.

The POW/MIA Missing Man Table was ... missing.

"I just couldn't believe it," he said at the recent Valiant Air Command's TICO Warbird Museum Airshow, Titusville.

"They told me it had to do with the Bible," Tarter said, noting that he had discovered the Bible missing from the display last year, which prompted him to investigate. "But to take away the whole table?"

Since then, he has made it a mission to make sure POWs and MIAs are not disrespected.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the symbolism, each POW/MIA Missing Man Table is set with specific items, and the table itself represents a table set by loved ones awaiting the return of those missing in war. One of the items on the table is a Bible.



Staff photo by Mary Kemper

Retired Air Force MSgt. Mike Tarter has challenged the removal of the POW/MIA Missing Man Table from the Riverside Dining Facility at Patrick Air Force Base, and made it a mission to see it reinstated.

Shortly after discovering the table was missing, Tarter wrote a letter to base commanders strongly objecting to its removal.

According to published reports, the Bible was removed due to "someone" complaining about it.

"Base officials confirmed to Fox

News Monday (March 31) that the entire Missing Man Table display had been removed from a dining hall because of the Bible," wrote *Fox News'* Todd Starnes.

"A press statement said the inclusion of the Bible ignited 'controversy and division.'"

Evidently, the base rethought its decision, and issued the following statement both to *Fox News* and *Florida Today*, which had also run a story:

"The 45th Space Wing deeply

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"Hundreds of thousands (of veterans) over the next few years are going to be looking for jobs. We've got to take care of them."

**Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1041
first vice president Ed Maxwell**

"Opportunities galore for vets at job fair," page 4

OUR MISSION STATEMENT AND OUR OBJECTIVE

Veteran Voice is a weekly publication designed to provide information to and about veterans to veterans and to the broader community. Veterans are an integral part of their Florida communities, which currently have individual organizations of their own, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Vietnam Veterans of America and many other groups with a narrow focus, but no convenient way to connect to a wider population of veterans and to the community in general within a limited geographic area, their community.

The mission of Veteran Voice is to publish a weekly source of information that will provide, in one place, a listing of resources available to veterans, articles about changes in policies or organizations affecting veterans and events of interest to veterans as well as articles about veterans of interest to the general public.

Veteran Voice LLC is organized as a partnership of experienced newspaper executives with an interest in veterans and in the communities of Florida veterans and friends. Veteran Voice is a start-up intended to address a perceived lack of information readily available to veterans on programs and policies affecting them and objective reporting of veteran affairs to the public. To our knowledge, and based on comments from leaders of local veterans organizations, there was no media or website currently meeting this need until the launch of Veteran Voice.

We hope you agree, and will support this publication with your subscription. Without subscriptions there will be a limited number of people we can help, without which this mission will not be realized. As part of our commitment to supporting local veteran communities, we will donate 10 percent of our profits each quarter to qualified veteran charities recommended by you, our readers and subscribers. Please let us know what you think by emailing news@veteranvoiceweekly.com or mailing your comments to us at **1919 S.W. South Macedo Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34984.**

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Dorothy J. Conrad Building

(formerly the Walton Road Annex Bldg.)

1664 S.E. Walton Road, Suite 205

Port St. Lucie, FL 34952

By appointment

Mon., Tues, Thurs, Fri * 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Wed * 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Lucie County Community Services Bldg.

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437 N. Seventh St., Fort Pierce, FL 34950

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Help wanted: You can be a part of the Vero Beach Air Show

FOR VETERAN VOICE

TREASURE COAST — Members of the community are hard at work planning the Vero Beach Air Show to be held at the Vero Beach Municipal Airport Saturday, May 10, and Sunday, May 11. Board members include President Todd Howder, vice president Anthony Samons, secretary Laurie Collings, treasurer Patrick Graham, and directors Ellen Ross and Martin Zickert. Robert Paugh is director of operations, and Cory Richter is director of emergency services and security. Rick Grissom is the producer/director of the show, Wayne Boggs is the air boss, and Sonny Everett is the narrator.

The stars of the show will be the Blue Angels, the elite U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Team. Vero Beach is fortunate to be one of only 35 sites where they will perform this year. They will be joined by nationally known award-winning air show acts. The show will also feature static displays, helicopter rides, and a family fun area complete with a mobile rock climbing wall, a free fall ride, zip line, bounce houses, and more.

Putting together a show of this size is a huge task requiring a large number of volunteers and significant resources. If you are interested in helping, you may register to volunteer at the show's website at <http://veroairshow.com/volunteer-form/> or contact Nadine Boltz at Nadine@veroairshow.com.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available; all the details about how to become a sponsor of the show are also at the website. According to Ellen Ross, the sponsorship chair, it's not too late to consider becoming a sponsor of the show. Ross can be reached at Ellen@veroairshow.com.

Piper Aircraft is the presenting sponsor of the show, and *Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers/TCPalm.com* is the media sponsor. Southern Eagle Distributing, Treasure & Space Coast Radio, Moulton Layne, P.L. Architecture, and *Vero Beach Magazine* are major sponsors. Other early sponsors include AMC Amherst Consulting, Atlantic Financial Services, Captain Bob's Airboat Adventure Tours, Center State Bank, Continental Jet Aviation Inc., Eclipse Jet, Flight Safety Academy, Florida Eye Institute, Glenn J. Romer Wealth Management & Tax Advisory, Holiday Inn Oceanside, Home Instead Senior Care, John's Island Real Estate Company, Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc., Kmetz Nuttall Elwell Graham PLLC, Legacy Flight



Todd Howder, Patrick Graham, Marc Richardson, Rorie Ainbinder, Cory Richter, Brian Holmes, Anthony Samons, Eric Menger, Ellen Ross, Marty Zickert, Leslie Spurlock, Robert Paugh, and Laurie Collings are busy planning the 2014 Vero Beach Air Show to be held May 10-11.

Photo courtesy of Jan Binney

Training, Manpower, Marlyn Justice CPA, MBV Engineering Inc., McCain and Samons LLC, MOAA of Indian River County, WPTV News Channel 5, Paris Air Inc., Sifford's Exxon Service Center, Springhill Suites, Strickland Automotive, Sun Jet Center, The Majestic 11 Theaters, TKDA, US Generator, Vero Beach Magazine, Vero Eye Center, Vero Insurance, and WAVE 92.7 Clear Channel Radio.

Discount tickets for the Vero Beach Air Show are available at the Piper Pilot Shop, Center State Bank, C.J. Cannon's Restaurant, Marine Bank and Trust, Schlitt Services, Seacoast Bank, and the Victory Center at Indian River Mall. Special discounted tickets for active and retired members of the military are at the Victory Center until May 7. Tickets may also be purchased online. All parking is free; handicapped parking is available.

Vero Beach Air Show Inc. is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Its mission is to promote volunteerism, support the prevention of child abuse, honor men and women who are serving or have served in the armed forces, encourage military recruiting, provide wholesome affordable family entertainment and aviation education, and promote the city of Vero Beach, the Vero Beach Municipal Airport, and area businesses. Proceeds benefit the Exchange Clubs of Indian River, Treasure Coast, and Vero Beach for prevention of child abuse and the Veterans Council of Indian River County.

For further information about the show, go to the show's website at <http://www.veroairshow.com> or send an email with your request to info@veroairshow.com.



Photo courtesy of Jan Binney

Blue Angel No. 7 U.S. Navy Lieutenant Ryan Chamberlain, Blue Angel No. 8 and Event Coordinator Lieutenant Commander Michael Cheng discuss the Vero Beach Air Show with board member Martin Zickert and air show producer/director Rick Grissom at the Pre-Season Flight Briefing held at Piper Aircraft in Vero Beach.

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Opportunities galore for vets at job fair on college campus

Mary Kemper

STAFF WRITER

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“This is really good,” one veteran was overheard to say to a friend. “I’ve probably applied to like, 10 places here already.”

Billed as being “veteran preference,” the Job Fair held April 9 at Indian River State College Chastain Campus, Stuart, hosted representatives from more than 40 businesses, government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

They offered jobs in fields ranging from kennel staff at The Fur Seasons, to machinists at Paradigm Precision, both of Stuart.

Members of Vietnam Veterans Association of America Chapter 1041, Martin County, took a leading role in organizing the Job Fair.

“I’d say there’s been better than 100 show up so far,” said Frank Tidikis, treasurer of VVA Chapter 1041 and coordinator of the chapter’s Job Fair participation. “It’s a good crowd. We’re glad to see it.”

Veterans from the Vietnam era to the present were plentiful among the jobseekers.

Steve Lewis, an Army Signal Corps veteran of the Vietnam era, recently moved to Port St. Lucie from Dagsboro, Del.

“I was in sales for a long time,



Staff photo by Mary Kemper

Jed Wood, left, a manager at Whiticar Boat Works, and Jim Dragseth, owner and president, man a table at the Job Fair conducted at Indian River State College Chastain Campus, Stuart, April 9.

but found I got tired of it,” he said. “And then I drove a propane truck for many years. So I’m looking for something similar here today.”

Michael Magill, Palm City, served in the Navy in the Gulf War. “I’d really like to get into helping veterans, doing vocational counseling, things like that,” he said.

“But I’m trained in IT, so there’s that, too.”

Magill added praise for the veterans of VVA Chapter 1041. “It’s so good they made this possible for us. I’m going to thank them personally,” he said.

Steve Kerruish, an Army veteran of the Gulf War, said he was “just looking in general — I’ve never been to a job fair. This is great.”

Jobs aplenty were on offer for these and other veterans. However, people were on hand to help veterans with more than just job-seeking.

Raul Diaz, Ph.D., is a major in the Army Reserves, and served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Under the auspices of the Veterans Administration, he is a clinical psychologist who works at the Jupiter and Palm Beach Vet Centers. Their mission is to help returning veterans cope with every kind of readjustment issue. There is also a Vet Center in Melbourne.

“We only counsel combat veterans and their families,” he said.

“There can be a tendency for veterans to ‘bunker up’ — to isolate themselves when they return home. When they come back, it’s

culture shock. It’s hard to find civilians who understand.”

At the Vet Centers, he said, returning veterans know they’ll be helped by their own.

Diaz said he works in tandem with county veterans’ services offices; at the table next to his, Tony Reese, of the Martin County Veterans’ Services Office, fielded

“Hundreds of thousands (of veterans) over the next few years are going to be looking for jobs. We’ve got to take care of them.”

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1041 first vice president Ed Maxwell

numerous inquiries from attendees on benefits “many vets don’t even know they’re eligible for,” Reese said.

In turn, Reese’s office works closely with VVA Chapter 1041 to help veterans in need.

“They (Veterans’ Services) are a tremendous service,” said Ed Maxwell, VVA Chapter 1041 first vice president.

The former Army infantry captain said the chapter often gets calls from needy vets, which he forwards directly to Reese.

“How many calls would you say we’ve sent along to you in the last year, Tony?” he asked Reese.

“Jeeze, over 100,” Reese answered. “Probably hundreds.”

Maxwell said when veterans call the chapter, the call goes to voicemail — but the voicemails automatically alert on Maxwell’s email, so they are answered quickly and forwarded to Reese.

“There is an emergency response fund available (through the county),” Maxwell said. “It’s not big money — but it’s enough to help out someone in a jam, who can’t pay their rent, their electric, whatever, temporarily.”

A good job ranks high on the scale for returning veterans seeking to become civilians once again. And there are a lot of them — and many more to come.

Maxwell said that’s why his chapter wanted to become involved in the Job Fair.

“Let me tell you about the reduction in force the government is involved in,” he said.

“If you serve 20 years, you’re OK. If you serve 15 years, you may get a partial retirement. But

“It’s so good they made this possible for us. I’m going to thank them personally.”

Gulf War veteran and Job Fair attendee Michael Magill, Palm City

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POSTAL STATEMENT

Veteran Voice (USPS# 9749, ISSN 23302267) is published weekly by Veteran Voice LLC, 1919 SW South Macedo Blvd, Port St Lucie, FL 34984. Periodicals Postage Paid at Ft Pierce, FL

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Veteran Voice, 1919 SW South Macedo Blvd, Port St Lucie, FL 34984

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FAIR from page 4

if you serve less than 15 years, chances are, you're out.

"They're reviewing all the occupational specialties to see where there might be overstaffing," he said.

"Now, I've only heard this anecdotally, but I'm hearing it: If you step slightly out of line, you'll be one of the first ones kicked out.

"Hundreds of thousands over the next few years are going to be looking for jobs. We've got to take care of them."

And, judging from the enthusiasm of the would-be employers at the Job Fair, there are plenty of jobs they're eager to staff with veterans.

Once such company is Whiticar Boat Works, based in Stuart.

Jim Dragseth, owner and president, was there with one of the managers, Jed Wood.

"We would love to hire veterans," Dragseth said. Wood added, "We've already got a large percentage of them in-house."

Why veterans?

"They've already gotten the training, the discipline and the structure we're looking for as good employees," Dragseth said.

"They're team-oriented," Wood said, and Dragseth nodded agreement.

"A lot of people don't think of recreational boating as belonging



Tony Reese, left, Veterans' Services Officer for Martin County, and Raul Diaz, Ph.D., team leader at the Jupiter and Palm Beach Vet Centers, man tables at the Job Fair conducted at Indian River State College Campus, Stuart, April 9.

Staff photo by Mary Kemper

to the trades," Dragseth said. He pointed to a list of skills posted on his table: electronics, engine repair, engineering, and service writing, in logistics departments in garages and warehouses.

In fact, Dragseth was at the Job Fair representing not only his own company, but affiliated members of the Marine Industry of the Treasure Coast, having agreed to put out information on its various members' opportunities at his table.

The potential jobs open to veterans increased by thousands, just

on that one table alone.

"Plus, it helps us promote our industry, while helping veterans find jobs, so that's a win-win," Wood said.

In addition to hosting employer tables, the fair offered free workshops on resume writing and interviewing tips, including one-on-one coaching.

Along with VVA Chapter 1041, the fair's other partners included the United Way, Martin County Library, Indian River State College, Martin County Veterans' Services, Senior Corps of Retired

Executives, and Scripps Circulation.

Tidikis said VVA Chapter 1041 helps coordinate job fairs twice a year.

"It's so important," he said. "We do this to try and reach as many people as we possibly can."

Needy veterans, or those seeking information in Martin County, can call VVA Chapter 1041 at (772) 678-0025, or Tony Reese at (772) 288-5448. For more information on the VA's Vet Centers, call Diaz at (561) 422-1220.

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VA reminds vets to create or update advance directives

Patrick McCallister
 FOR VETERAN VOICE
 patrick.mccallister@yahoo.com

It's a possibility nobody likes considering: being unable to communicate when a major health-care decision — that could literally be a matter of life and death — has to be made.

But it's important to consider. "You can imagine a family called in a moment of stress, and they're trying to work out in their minds what Dad would want," said Stephanie Dill, social worker at the West Palm Beach Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

On Wednesday, April 16, VA medical facilities participated in the seventh annual National Healthcare Decisions Day. Many of the VA's medical facilities will have kiosks with folks urging vet-

erans to select substitute health-care decision-makers to contact if they're unable to communicate healthcare wishes, and to give advance directives that'll be on their medical files.

"What we find is a reluctance, because it's something that's a little uncomfortable to talk about, to think about," Dill said. "Once we explain what an advance directive is, they'll tell us stories about someone needing an advance directive and didn't have one."

While numbers specific to the VA are not available, Dill said surveys have repeatedly found that less than half of severely or terminally ill individuals have advance directives in their medical files. According to www.nhdd.org even when people have written ad-

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Slots still open for golf tourney

FOR VETERAN VOICE

The 22nd Annual United Veterans of St. Lucie County, Inc. Golf Classic will take place Saturday, April 26, at Fairwinds Golf Course, Fort Pierce.

Organizers say 100 percent of the proceeds will go toward van transportation for veterans needing treatment at VA medical centers.

There are still slots available for players. The \$100 cost includes a complimentary bucket of range

balls prior to the start, continental breakfast, greens fees, a United Veterans golf hat, buffet lunch and raffle.

There will be a 7:15 a.m. check-in, 8:30 a.m. shotgun start, and a four-person scramble.

Awards will be given for first-, second-, third-, and last-place teams, least amount of putts, longest drive and closest to the pin on all par 3s.

For information, call (772) 342-2653.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



Contact
 Mary Kemper
 (570) 317-8795

St. Lucie hopes Tradition land donation will get state veteran home in town

Patrick McCallister

FOR VETERAN VOICE

patrick.mccallister@yahoo.com

A possible donation from the Tradition Land Company might make Port St. Lucie home of the next state veteran nursing home. St. Lucie County is making the bid to get the facility when it's built.

"Tradition has agreed to donate a 28.5 acre site," Wayne Teegardin, veterans services manager, said. "It appears to be the best fit for the criteria (the state) put out."

Tod Mowery, county commissioner, said that the donation hasn't been completed.

"We're hoping it'll all come through together," he said. "We're working on a contract."

Veteran Voice attempted to reach the development company for comment, but was unsuccessful by press time.

During its 2013 session, the Florida Legislature approved about \$100,000 for an independent study to determine whether a new veteran nursing home was needed, and if so where it should go. Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Cabinet considered the study, which Health Strategies did, at a February meeting in Tampa.

Steve Murray, communications director at the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, said that the governor and cabinet opted to send letters to the top 10 counties the study identified as good places for veterans homes

requesting letters of interest back from them.

"Eight of the 10 counties did send us letters of intent telling us they were interested in bidding," Murray said in a previous interview.

Murray said that St. Lucie and Palm Beach counties were in that list. Palm Beach didn't send a letter of intent. Others on the list were Lee, Collier, Polk, Manatee, Hillsborough, Marion, Putnam and Sumter.

Among other things, the state veterans department operates six nursing homes with 120 beds each, and an assisted living facility with 150. The nursing homes are, by far, the FDVA's largest function.

The closest veteran nursing home to the Treasure Coast is the Alexander "Sandy" Nininger Veterans' Nursing Home, 8401 W. Cypress Drive, Pembroke Pines. The next closest is the Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home, 1920 Mason Ave., Daytona Beach. Bennett was built in 1993, Nininger in 2001.

Murray said the last home was built in 2010. That was the Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home in St. Augustine. That home cost about \$30 million to build. The state paid about 35 percent of the costs. The federal Department of Veterans Affairs — which is separate from the state veterans agency — paid about 65 percent.

Other homes are in Land O' Lakes, Panama City and Port Charlotte. The assisted living facility is in Lake City.

Murray said the FDVA has the needed money for its share to go forward with building a state veterans nursing home, because of changes the legislature made to its trust funds last session. The trust has about \$47 million.

"It will be from a trust fund for this home," he said. "No general revenue will be used for this home."

The governor's proposed 2014-2015 budget included an additional \$20 million, for a total of \$111 million, to the FDVA. Part of that is for construction of two new veterans homes. It's most likely that the state will only be able to build one this upcoming fiscal year, which goes from July to June.

Teegardin said there are numerous reasons Tradition, St. Lucie and the Treasure Coast would benefit from a veterans facility.

"They're supposed to hire around 190 people to run it, in addition to the construction jobs it'll create," he said.

The home would serve veterans for about a 75-mile radius. Teegardin said that makes Tradition an ideal location for a veterans home.

"(The local) 75-mile radius is estimated to have 211,647 veterans in it," he said "Of those, 112,758 are over age 65, which is the target of the nursing home."

Competing counties will make presentations to the state in May. A decision and construction timetable will be announced after.



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- Rev. Roszon and Vivian
Robert's son and daughter-in-law

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YOUR VOICE
 NEWS & VIEWS

United Veterans of St. Lucie County, Inc.
 a 501 (C) 3 tax exempt veterans organization

10401

Are you a disabled vet?

By Ken Pruitt
 Saint Lucie County Property Appraiser

Do you know about the different property tax exemptions available to disabled veterans?

There is a \$5,000 service connected disability exemption for Florida residents who are honorably discharged veterans with a service connected disability rating of at least 10 percent may qualify for this exemption. If filing for the first time, you will be asked to present a current letter from the Veterans Administration. The un-remarried surviving spouse of a disabled veteran may also qualify for this exemption if married at least five years at the time of the veteran's death.

There is also a permanently disabled veteran's property tax discount on homestead property.

Veterans who meet the following specific criteria and have a qualified homestead exemption may be eligible for an ad valorem tax discount.

The discount will be the percentage of your disability applied against the ad valorem taxes owed.

- Age 65 or older
- Disabled in combat
- Honorable discharge

There is also a property tax exemption for deployed active duty military personnel. Those who qualify are active military personnel who claim a homestead exemption and who were deployed to certain military operations during the previous calendar year.

Honorably discharged veterans who qualify for homestead exemption, certified by the federal government with a service-connected total and permanent disability, may be eligible for total exemption.

For additional information about property tax exemptions, please visit our website at www.pasl.org or contact the Property Appraiser's Office at (772) 462-1021 or visit the Fort Pierce office at 2300 Virginia Ave. or the Port Saint Lucie office at 1664 S.E. Walton Road.

TABLE from page 1

desires to honor America's Prisoners and War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) personnel. Unfortunately, the Bible's presence or absence on the table at the Riverside Dining Facility ignited controversy and division, distracting from the table's primary purpose of honoring POWs/MIAs. Consequently, we temporarily replaced the table with the POW/MIA flag in an effort to show our continued support of these heroes while seeking an acceptable solution to the controversy. After consultation with several relevant organizations, we now intend to re-introduce the POW/MIA table in a manner inclusive of all POWs/MIAs as well as Americans everywhere."

As of press time, the public affairs office at Patrick AFB declined to answer repeated requests for clarification from *Veteran Voice*.

However, *Florida Today's* R. Norman Moody wrote, "(Commanders) said Friday (March 28) that the table would again be displayed at Riverside, but they did not specify a time for the reintroduction of the table or what items will or will not be included on it."

Each item on the POW/MIA Missing Man Table is deeply

"They told me it had to do with the Bible. But to take away the whole table?"

Retired Army MSgt. Mike Tarter
Vietnam veteran

symbolic. In Tarter's letter, he explained them:

"The table is round to show our everlasting concern for our missing men and women. Remember them!

"The table is set for one, which symbolizes the frailty of one prisoner against his/her oppressors. Remember them!

"The table cloth is white, which symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms. Remember them!

"The single rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades in arms who are keeping the faith awaiting their return. Remember them!

"The red ribbon so prominently tied on the vase, is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn on the label and breast of the thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to a proper accounting of our missing. Remember them!

"A slice of lemon on the bread plate is to remind us of their bitter fate. Remember them!

"The salt on the bread plate is symbolic of the of the family's tears as they wait. Remember them!

"The Bible represents the strength gained through faith to sustain those lost from our country, founded as "One Nation Under God!" Remember them!

"The glass is inverted because they cannot toast with us. Remember them!

"The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, and into the arms of a grateful nation. Remember them!

"The chair is empty; they are not here. Remember them!"

The language of the statement by Patrick AFB is vague as to which items may be included.

Will the Bible be one of these?

"Probably the Bible won't go back on," Tarter said. And, if that's the case, "I'll go on asking where the Bible is."

By tradition, the table has always included a Bible as part of its symbolic message, since shortly after the Vietnam war,

when the tables evolved. Tarter said he didn't understand how anyone could be offended by it.

Currently, there are no official, defense-based regulations governing the tables.

A bipartisan bill is currently in a U.S. Senate committee (S2053) which would enact a commemorative chair memorial in Washington, D.C., to honor all prisoners of war and missing in action.

A list of all prisoners and those missing in action from all wars, beginning with the American Revolution, can be viewed at www.gmasw.com/pow_list.htm

(Editor's note: The list does not include Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, Alaska, who is being held by the Taliban in Afghanistan.)

Tarter said he's sent his letter to the commanders of several Air Force bases, the secretaries of all four armed services, the secretary of defense and even the president.

"The letter includes lots of signatures" from fellow veterans, he said.

He made it clear he will monitor Patrick AFB and the replacement of the POW/MIA table.

For more information on efforts to bring prisoners and the missing home, visit www.pow-miafamilies.org.

Firefighter cyclists get heroes' welcome at SEAL museum

Mary Kemper

STAFF WRITER

mkemper@veteranvoiceweekly.com

Even before the bicyclists rolled onto the grounds, the hundreds waiting for them started cheering.

On a bright, sunny April 5, the 13 firefighters from the Fire Department of New York were weary after their 15-day, 1,400-plus mile trip from New York to Fort Pierce, but they grinned, waved and shot fists into the air.

Their mission: to show support for the National Navy-UDT SEAL Museum, North Hutchinson Island, and Memorial's Trident House, and to bring a piece of history to the museum.

Along with them, on a trailer, was a piece of a structural I-beam retrieved from the wreckage of the World Trade Center after Sept. 11, 2001.

"About four months ago, I was approached by Kevin McCormick (Engine 9, Ladder 6, Manhattan) with the idea of this bike ride," said museum executive director Rick Kaiser, in his remarks to the crowd.

"I said, 'Are you nuts?' But they were serious. And just like the Post Office, they came through snow, sleet and rain to get here, to support us and to support the Trident House.

"Right now, they're walking like cowboys," Kaiser joked. "I don't think they'll be getting back on bikes anytime soon."

The Trident House, located along the Indian River in Sebastian, offers a refuge for families of SEALs who have lost their lives, injured SEALs and their families, or other military members in need.

As a courtesy, some of the firefighters stayed at the Trident House before their trip back to

New York.

At each stop on their route, the firefighters spoke on local media, helping to raise awareness of the Trident House, and sold T-shirts to help raise money for the house.

Before the official welcome, which included an FDNY Honor Guard bearing the colors, rider Salvatore Torcivia, 48, a firefighter with Engine 16, Ladder 7, Manhattan, reflected on the ride.

"It was great – I really enjoyed it," he said.

He noted the extreme differences in weather between his home and here.

"Yesterday really kicked our butt, with the wind and the heat," he said. "But as you can see, we made it!"

Torcivia has been a firefighter for 15 years, and was a police officer in New York previously.

"All of us wanted to show our support for the Navy SEALs. They've sacrificed so much for us," he said.

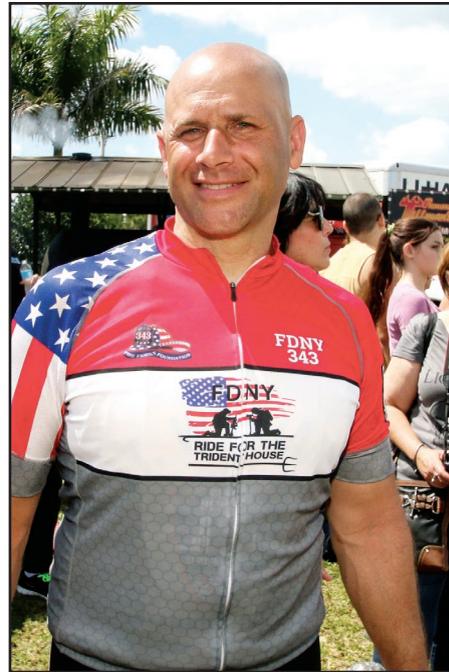
And, in addition to bringing the I-beam from the World Trade Center, the firefighters presented the Trident House with two bicycles, donated by Schwinn, for guests to use, and commemorative T-shirts for Kaiser and his staff.

McCormick, as the leader of the riders, was given a plaque by his fellow firefighters.

"It was a huge emotional and physical thing," McCormick said of the ride. "Everything imaginable happened. We battled all the elements. But we got such an overwhelming response from everyone all along the way.

"And to us, bringing this piece of steel – that was the most important thing.

"We know what it's like to put your life on the line, and to lose



Staff photo by Mary Kemper

Salvatore Torcivia, of Engine 16, Ladder 7, Manhattan, Fire Department of New York, was one of the 13 firefighters who rode from New York City's World Trade Center to the National Navy-UDT Museum and Memorial, North Hutchinson Island, Fort Pierce, arriving April 5.

your brothers. SEALs are out there doing that every single day."

After McCormick received his plaque, Kaiser called up each of the firefighters by name. He then presented the riders with a specially designed SEAL plaque, containing porthole and trident symbols.

"But, here's something you might like a little better," Kaiser said – and then presented the riders with specially commemorated bottles of Jack Daniel's sour-mash bourbon whisky, whose labels bore SEAL-themed logos.

"For the rest of you out there,

"All of us wanted to show our support for the Navy SEALs. They've sacrificed so much for us."

FDNY firefighter and cyclist Salvatore Torcivia

you can get one of these for \$500," Kaiser joked.

There was much laughter and hugging among the firefighters and their SEAL hosts as the bottles were handed out, and appreciation from the riders examining the plaques.

In his closing remarks, Kaiser grew serious.

"We have a strong brotherhood with these firefighters," he said. "They lost a lot of their own on 9/11 – and the SEALs have lost 90 men since then.

"This effort has only made our relationship stronger. This piece of steel – that's exactly what we're all fighting for."

Along with the firefighters and their New York entourage were local organizations, some of whom provided escort duty, like the St. Lucie County Fire Department and Legion Riders Chapter 39, Vero Beach.

Legion Rider Paul Kliemisch, Vero Beach, and his wife, Sheryl, were two who assisted in the event.

"We escorted (the riders) from Trident House," Kliemisch said. "And we did traffic duty, so they didn't have to stop for lights."

Navy veteran Alessandro Amara came with a contingent from the Vero Beach Cycle Club. "I wouldn't have missed this for the world," he said.

And members of the FDNY Florida Retirees, Martin and St. Lucie

See SEALS page 10



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Help cover Blue Angels to Vero Beach Air Show

FOR VETERAN VOICE

PATRIOT MISSION launches www.PatriotWeekend.com to help raise \$40,000 to cover the out-of-pocket expenses to bring the Blue Angels to the Vero Beach Air Show on May 10-11.

Most people think the government picks up the tab when the Blue Angels come to town. Not exactly. Washington only covers the cost of jets, gas, pilots, crew and some travel expenses. Vero Beach has to pay for many expenses including transporting military ground equipment to support the F/A 18 fighter jets. This misconception is one reason business sponsorships for our air show are much lower than expected.

The Blue Angels' performance is a thunderous display of United States military might as well as a reminder of the veterans who have served our nation.

Hosting the Blue

Angels and the other fantastic performers will be great for Vero Beach. Ultimately, the big financial benefit should go to the charities like the Veterans Council and Exchange Clubs. Sadly, they will be the big losers if sponsorships don't pick quickly and substantially.

Retired Col. Martin Zickert, Vero Beach Air Show board member and president of

Indian River County Veterans Council, "The out-of-pocket expenses necessary to host the Blue Angels will likely reach \$40,000."

The issue is not whether the Air Show can cover the costs; the question is what will be left to give to the charities.

To help raise \$40,000 to cover these costs, PATRIOT MISSION designed a strategy that appeals to small business sponsors, since many smaller companies do not have branding budgets to support events like the Air Show. Small businesses need to invest marketing dollars into campaigns that will produce tangible products or services that can directly drive traffic to their product or service.

PATRIOT MISSION's creative plan honors America's Veterans, raises funds for the Air Show and produces custom video content for a local company to use on their website, email promotions or stand-alone DVDs. The video production can also be used to record family, community or other personal content.

For more information, go to www.PatriotWeekend.com

PATRIOT MISSION Inc. is a Florida-based for-profit corporation. For more information on the Best-selling book, "The PATRIOT MISSION Story," including interviews or speaking engagements; go to <http://www.PatriotMission.com> or call toll free 855-To-Rebuild (855) 867-3284.

SEALS from page 9

Division, also came to show their support. Many of them are military veterans, as well as former firefighters.

"I have such pride in the FDNY – these guys are really something," said Army veteran Tom White, who divides his time between Bayside, N. Y., and Port St. Lucie.

"It's nice that the coat of armor is still shining, and not dull. That's a good thing."

Army Korean War veteran Dan Dooley, who divides his time between Mount Sinai, Long Island, N.Y., and Stuart, said, "This brings back such memories.

"There's a proud hook between the FDNY and the Navy SEALs. They truly deserve each other."

Kaiser said the I-beam will be developed into a special memorial at the museum in the coming weeks.

"I hope we're able to show these guys (the FDNY) just how much what they've done means to us," Kaiser said. "It's pretty hard to put into words. It's incredible.

"But I do know that we have a strong bond, and what they've done just makes it stronger."

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DIRECTIVES from page 6

vance healthcare directives, only about 25 to 35 percent of their physicians have them on file.

"One of the biggest mistakes we find is veterans put (advanced directives) in a safe place, but it's too safe," Dill said. "We want everybody to know about this."

The Patient Self-Determination Act, a 1990 law, requires many healthcare providers to give patients information about advanced healthcare directives. The VA is among them. It has forms to help patients craft advance medical directives.

Dill said that in the absence of a named healthcare decision-maker, the VA has a strict default priority list of who can make medical decisions that's similar to most healthcare providers: spouses, followed by adult children, parents, adult grandchildren, and grandparents. If the VA doesn't have a named decision-maker, and cannot find a patient's spouse, children, par-

ents, grandchildren or grandparents, then other relatives, such as cousins, can become healthcare decision-makers.

"We do have a few veterans who have no family whatsoever," Dill said. "We have to put our detective hats on when there's no (healthcare-decision) surrogate and find those people who are closest."

Spouses, Dill said, are not always the best healthcare decision surrogates.

"I had a veteran say, right in front of his wife, he said, I love her with all my heart, but she's not going to do what I want" Dill said. "She laughed, and said, 'You're right.'"

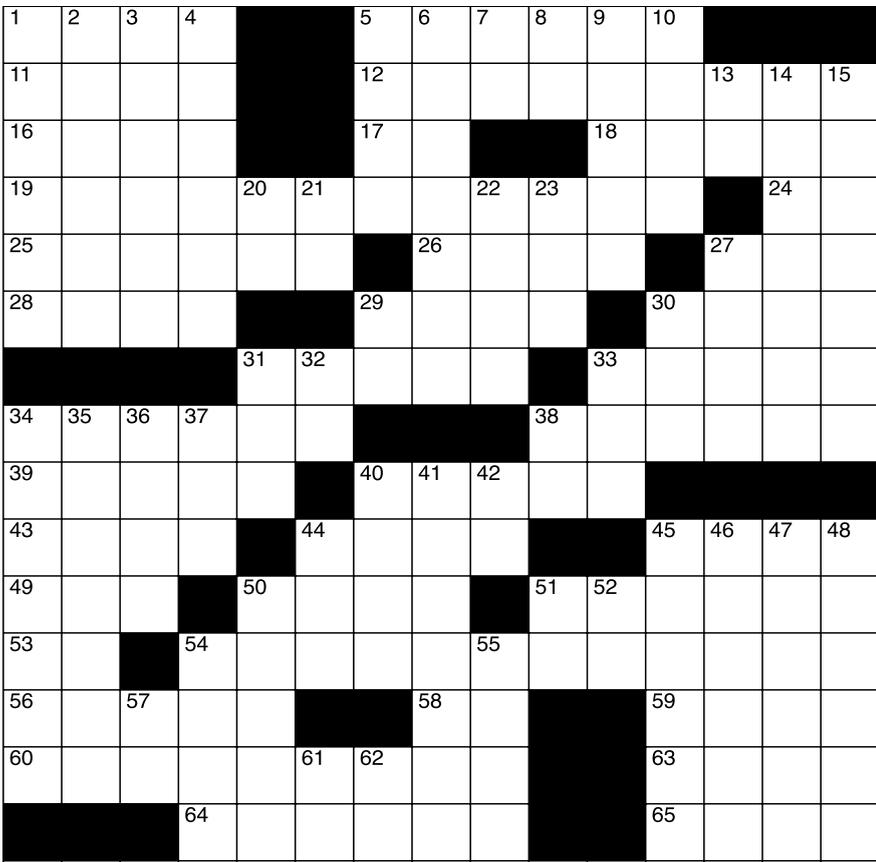
Dill said that National Healthcare Decision Day was a good time for folks who've made advance directives to take a look at them and make sure the VA has them on file. She said life circumstances sometimes change and information becomes obsolete. Dill, however, said that VA social workers will review advance directives with patients any time.

Correction

Your Voice News & Views and Veteran Voice incorrectly stated that the United Veterans of St. Lucie County Annual Golf Tournament, 100 percent of the proceeds of which go to fund trans-

portation services for veterans to receive medical care, was slated for April 20. It will take place Saturday, April 26, at Fairwinds Golf Course, Fort Pierce. We apologize for any inconvenience.

CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. A braid
- 5. Print errors
- 11. Any of 3 avatars of Vishnu
- 12. Odor masking toiletry
- 16. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 17. An enlisted person
- 18. Any speed competitor
- 19. Manitoba hockey team
- 24. The Bay state
- 25. Trees with conelike catkins
- 26. Central area of a church
- 27. 2 year old sheep
- 28. Interpret written words
- 29. Greek goddess of youth
- 30. Bullfighting maneuver
- 31. Shapes
- 33. Decreased
- 34. Fly
- 38. Unbelief
- 39. Traditional Hindu rhythms
- 40. Yemen capital
- 43. Prayer leader in a mosque
- 44. A sheep up to the age of one year
- 45. Soldier in an airborne unit
- 49. What a cow chews
- 50. K particle
- 51. 50 cent pieces
- 53. Trauma center
- 54. 2011 Stanley Cup winners

- 56. Inner bract of a grass spikelet
- 58. The Show-Me State
- 59. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 60. Offshoot interests
- 63. Amounts of time
- 64. Salty
- 65. Guinea currency 1971-85

- 10. River between Iran and Armenia
- 13. Carrier's invention
- 14. Banes
- 15. Catastrophe
- 20. Atomic #77
- 21. A note appended to a letter
- 22. Licks
- 23. Adam's wife
- 27. Counterbalance
- 29. Brokeback star's initials
- 30. Golf score
- 31. Manuscripts (abbr.)
- 32. Old English
- 33. Pod legume
- 34. Upper arm muscle
- 35. Japanese warrior
- 36. Oh, God!
- 37. A Scottish cap
- 38. Expresses surprise
- 40. Carbon particles
- 41. 4th cognomen
- 42. "Joy Luck Club" actress

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Existing before a war
- 2. Open to change
- 3. Gunsmoke actress Blake
- 4. Converted into leather
- 5. Boundary
- 6. Predominated
- 7. Royal Observatory
- 8. Promotion
- 9. Rich multilayered cake

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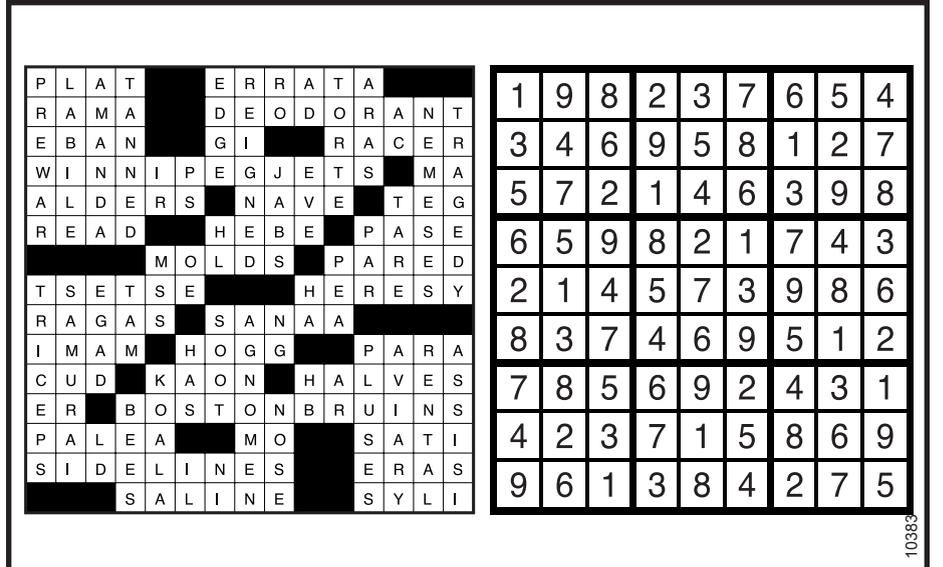
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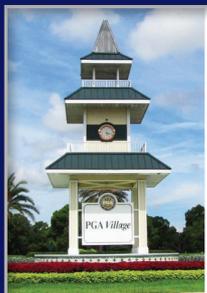
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