



P.O. BOX 953663
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Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida

Newsletter

July - Sept 2021

From the DVCF President



Greetings,

I am so honored to be serving our Democratic veterans and families in the Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (DVCF). We have an incredibly talented and hard-working membership. One has to look no further than our many volunteers who made our mission to assist veterans and others in Bay County such an extraordinary success. Also, our caucus is thrilled to see the long over-due creation of our new national holiday, Juneteenth!

My vision for our caucus includes many of the goals stated in our mission statement. I hope to see an increase in membership by “getting the word out” about our caucus. A higher profile on social media such as Facebook and other sites could help. Events like our DVCF Retreat and events by our local chapters can also play a role in this effort.

The DVCF can help promote the election of Democratic veterans to local, state and national office and also encourage non-veteran Democratic candidates who are supportive of issues important to veterans to run. The DVCF can support the involvement of all Democratic veterans in the political process in canvassing, phone banking, campaign volunteers, advisors, and as candidates. Our organization should continue to speak out on issues of importance to all Democratic veterans such as sexual assault in the military, health care, benefits, protection of social security, etc. Through these efforts, the DVCF will highlight the importance of veterans and veteran issues within the Democratic Party and throughout Florida.

In closing, I look forward to working with all of you in ensuring the continued success and growth of the DVCF! Thank you for your service, then and now,

H. Elena McCullough, President
Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida

Mission Continues collecting 9/11 stories, share yours

This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It was a day that changed our country and way of life forever—and became the type of “where were you when?” moment for a new generation. It was also an event that inspired millions of people to step up and serve this country then—and in the 20 years after—to turn tragedy into meaning. Mission Continues is collecting the stories of those who were inspired to serve, or to continue serving, in the wake of 9/11. Mission Continues is inviting you and everyone who was impacted by that day—including Veterans, active-duty service members, military family members, caregivers, survivors and civilians—to share the story of where you were, how it impacted you, and how you will honor 9/11 through service. We all have a story to tell. We want to hear yours. We are working to preserve the stories of those who were serving, who were inspired to serve, and those who continue to be inspired by great acts of service in the 20 years following the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The campaign runs through Veteran’s Day.



Photo Credit - The Atlantic

www.missioncontinues.org

US Dept. of Veterans Affairs; #VetResources Newsletter June 23, 2021

Picture by Carlton Cartwright



Bob Keenan, Robert (Bob) Keenan passed away on March 23, 2020, he was President of the Pasco County DVCF and a past member of the Board of Directors of the state caucus. Bob was born in Troy, NY and grew up in the Albany area. He lived in Tampa for over 40 years. Bob served his country in the U.S. Army and spent his professional career in the food sales business, the majority with Sysco Foods Service. He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Linda Keenan and his stepson, Edward Malone (Mary Anne). He is also survived by four grandchildren, Brett Malone (Karen), Matthew Malone (Emily), Ryan Malone, and Megan Malone; along with two great grandchildren, Zayden Malone and Dylan Malone. Bob was the current President of the Veterans Caucus of Pasco County, and he was the former Vice Chair of the Hillsborough County Democratic Executive Party.

He was a 4th Degree Knight with the Knights of Columbus and a current member of the Country Place Homeowners Association Board of Directors. He loved the Bucs, Lightning, and Rays.

Mr. Cornelius Davis, a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen, passed on June 1, 2021. Mr. Davis was an enlisted Aircraft Armament Specialist with the US Air Force. Cornelius Davis was born in Blountstown, Florida and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Pensacola. Mr. Davis moved to Detroit in 1941 and began working with the Ford Motor Company in 1942. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942 with a military leave of absence from Ford. Mr. Davis was stationed at several Air Force bases including Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan and Walterboro Air Force Base, South Carolina before returning to Ford in 1946 after the end of the World War II. While working at Ford he joined the union and became its Staff Time Study Director. He also became a photographer for his union and took pictures of such world-known figures as Nelson Mandela as they visited Detroit and Ford Motor Company. Mr. Davis spoke at the Glenwood Community Center in Panama City for their Brown Bag Luncheon in October 2015. Several members of the BCDVC were in attendance for his speech. Mr. Davis reached 100 years old in March 2021. He lived in Gainesville, Florida at the time of his death. The Florida State Troopers escorted his casket from Gainesville to Marianna for his funeral in Blountstown. Mr. Davis had a truly well-lived life and will be missed by many.



American Forces Travel Privileges Extended to Eligible Veterans

The Department of Defense announced today a policy change to the current shopping privileges on the American Forces Travel (AFT) website. As directed by acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Virginia S. Penrod in a memo signed April 12, 2021, the department will extend online access to the website to honorably discharged veterans of the uniformed services. On average, customers save 35-40% compared to commercial travel pricing by using AFT. This includes discounted rates on hotels (up to 60%), airfare, rental cars, vacation packages, event tickets, and cruises. "Sixteen million veterans will now be able to access the American Forces Travel website, joining the 10 million active duty, Guard and reserve service members, family members, DOD civilians, and other patrons who are already receiving the benefit," said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy Patricia "Patty" Montes Barron. "We are committed to providing quality-of-life programs to our military community, which includes our honorably discharged veterans." The change will not affect access for existing patrons, and the increased customer base will allow AFT to negotiate better prices for its customers. AFT launched in 2019 as the only official joint service morale, welfare, and recreation leisure travel website exclusively for DOD patrons. In addition to improving access to DOD's MWR benefits, every booking on American Forces Travel generates revenue to support critical quality-of-life programs for service members and families.

To access the exclusive military discount pricing on travel products, visit the American Forces Travel website. Proof of eligibility is required.

About Military Community and Family Policy

Military Community and Family Policy is directly responsible for establishing and overseeing quality-of-life policies and programs that help our service members, their families and survivors be well and mission-ready. Military OneSource is the gateway to programs and services that support the everyday needs of the 5.2 million service members and immediate family members of the military community. These DOD services can be accessed 24/7/365 around the world.