



P.O. BOX 953663  
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# Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida

Newsletter

April - June 2023

## DVCF Mixer at the FDP Leadership Blue Weekend

DVCF VP Danny Fuqua is organizing a mixer/DVCF membership drive to be held in the later evenings at the FDP Leadership Blue weekend in Miami Beach on Friday, July 7th and Saturday, July 8th. This is to elevate the visibility of the caucus at the FDP's main fundraising event, and to increase membership. He has begun gathering sponsors to help defray the cost, and is putting his regular hotel room rental cost toward the cost of the suite to be used for the event. The total cost of the event is currently expected to be no more than \$2000. Sponsors will be listed in announcements for the event. Though any donation is gratefully appreciated, specific sponsorship levels are Platinum (\$500), Gold (\$250) and Silver (\$100). If you wish to contribute, please contact Danny Fuqua at 386-566-8914 or [dannyfuqua62@gmail.com](mailto:dannyfuqua62@gmail.com). To become a sponsor, mail a check made out to the DVCF and mail to DVCF, PO Box 953663, Lake Mary, FL 32795. Any interested in becoming a member or supporting the DVCF please stop by the event, the specific place will be announced right before the meeting. Treasurer Marian Williams is also assisting in the organization of the event.

### DVCF Leadership

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## Dr. Johnson gets Star Treatment

Dr. R. LeWayne Johnson, a DVCF member and a Director of Compliance was interviewed by Star Jones. Star Jones is an attorney and award-winning media personality. Dr. Johnson is a CEO, Attorney, County Planning Commission member and a retired US Army veteran. Dr. Johnson first reviewed his military career. He then spoke about his work with the problem of homeless veterans. There are over 60,000 homeless veterans in the state of Florida. He first encountered two veterans that were homeless which

began his quest to find a way to reduce homelessness among veterans. He first spoke about being approached by a person asking for money that was homeless. Upon further speaking with the individual, he learned he was a veteran and had a pregnant wife. The other situation was encountering a female homeless veteran with four children who became homeless after being booted out of the military after complaining of a sexual assault by a person in her chain of command. Dr. Johnson is the CEO of the Florida Coalition to Prevent Veterans Homelessness. Florida is the state with the second largest veteran homeless population. He also discussed the problem of the high rate of veteran suicides. Dr. Johnson concluded his interview by encouraging young people to finish and further their education.

## Sparks Elected to TAI Board of Directors

At the September 2022 Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (TAI) National Convention, DVCF Newsletter Editor Reuben Sparks was elected to the TAI Board of Directors as President of the TAI Central Region. TAI has 55 chapters of which 19 chapters are in the Central Region of the US. Lt Col Sparks will represent those chapters to the Board of Directors. Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. was founded by Original Tuskegee Airmen. The organization was founded to celebrate the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen, to encourage young people to seek aviation and STEM careers and to provide scholarships to aide young people in seeking those careers. TAI has approximately 1600 members. In one of his first acts of duty, Lt Col. Sparks attended the dedication of two statues and a highway marker at Freeman Field near Seymour, Indiana in October 2022. The statues and the highway marker were constructed to honor the Tuskegee Airmen who participated in the “Freeman Field Mutiny in 1945.” The Freeman Field Mutiny was considered one of the seminal acts of civil disobedience that led to the desegregation of US Society and the US Military. Sparks is a retired Lieutenant Colonel who served in the US Air Force and the Florida and Alabama Air National Guard. TAI looks forward to increasing its programs with young people to encourage them to seek careers in aviation and to also honor the tremendous legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen.



Doglione and Fuqua on a previous Deployment to Bay County

## Toiletry Bags for Homeless Daytona Veterans

Mr. Danny Fuqua President of the Volusia County Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (VCDVCF) handed over 50 toiletry bags to our contact at the local Catholic Church. The church members were most grateful for them and excited to get them into the hands of homeless veterans. The bags contained items like soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, and combs. The bags were assembled by VCDVCF member Frank Doglione, Thanks to Frank for the good work and thanks to all members who contributed to the project.

## USNS Montford Point Visit

In March, members of the Jacksonville Chapter #29, National Montford Point Marine Association, Inc. visited the USNS Montford Point moored at Blount Island, Florida. Blount Island is the site of the United States Marine Corps' Blount Island Command. The visit was led by George Gillis, President of the chapter accompanied by his wife, Hazel Gillis, DVCF Secretary. Also in attendance was Original Montford Point Marine, Corporal George McIvory, former Florida State Senator Tony Hill and former US Congresswoman Corrine Brown.

At the Montford Point National Convention in Jacksonville, Florida in 2007, chapter members discussed with Florida State Senator Hill the desire to have the Montford Point Marines receive the Congressional Gold Medal. Senator Hill brought the idea to the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) beginning with US Representative Corrine Brown. They also spoke with the Veterans Braintrust of the CBC. In September 2007 the Montford Point Marine Association Inc. President along with five Original Montford Point Marines told their stories to members of Congress and those in attendance. US Representative Corrine Brown asked to sponsor the bill to get the Montford Point Marines the Congressional Gold Medal.

The USNS Montford Point has undergone some serious budget threats and the possibility of being decommissioned over the past few years. Despite this possibility, the ship will likely continue its maritime mission of supporting the US Navy and the United States of America.

The Montford Point Marines are the first African-Americans to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps after President Franklin Roosevelt issued the Executive Order establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission in June 1941. The recruits trained at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, NC from August 26, 1942 until the camp was decommissioned on September 9, 1949. More than 20,000 African-Americans trained in segregated facilities between 1942 and 1949 at Montford Point, NC, and became the first African-Americans to serve in the United States Marine Corps. Today, the Montford Point Marines Museum is located in one of the original buildings on the grounds of Camp Montford Point, now called Camp Johnson, at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. In 1974, Montford Point was re-named Camp Johnson and today serves as the home of the Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools.

The visit to the namesake ship was a glorious day for the Montford Pointers! Semper Fidelis!



## VA Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound allowance

VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits provide monthly payments added to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified Veterans and survivors. If you need help with daily activities, or you're housebound, find out if you qualify.

### *VA Aid and Attendance eligibility*

You may be eligible for this benefit if you get a VA pension and you meet at least one of these requirements.

*At least one of these must be true:*

You need another person to help you perform daily activities, like bathing, feeding, and dressing, or

You have to stay in bed—or spend a large portion of the day in bed—because of illness, or  
You are a patient in a nursing home due to the loss of mental or physical abilities related to a disability, or

Your eyesight is limited (even with glasses or contact lenses you have only 5/200 or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less)

### *Housebound benefits eligibility*

You may be eligible for this benefit if you get a VA pension and you spend most of your time in your home because of a permanent disability (a disability that doesn't go away).

Note: You can't get Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound benefits at the same time. If you're in a nursing home, you'll also need to fill out a Request for Nursing Home Information in Connection with Claim for Aid and Attendance (VA Form 21-0779).

### *Apply in person*

You can bring your information to a VA regional office near you.

How long does it take VA to make a decision?

It depends. We process claims in the order we receive them, unless a claim requires priority processing.

Veterans Benefits Administration

Veterans Benefit Newsletter June 2023