

Celebrate Veterans Group

Newsletter

May 2023



Medal of Honor Recipient to Speak in Fredericksburg at CVG Veterans Day Celebration

On November 9 of this year, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient **Colonel Walter Joseph Marm Jr.** will address a gathering of Celebrate and Fredericksburg area residents and dignitaries. The evening will be the centerpiece of an entire CVG organized “Celebration of Veterans” during Veterans Day week. The event will be held at the Riverside Performing Arts Center just a few miles from our Celebrate community. Additional details will be forthcoming shortly.

Colonel Marm was awarded the United States military's highest decoration for valor, the Medal of Honor, for his actions during the battle of Ia Drang in the Vietnam war in 1964. The battle marked the first major engagement of U.S. troops in the war and has been chronicled in books and motion pictures.

Colonel Marm was born in Washington, PA. He graduated from Duquesne University with a business degree in 1964. He then joined the United States Army, graduated from Officers Candidate School, and attended Ranger School.



On November 14, 1964, he was a second lieutenant and leader of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. On that day, during the Battle of Ia Drang, he single-handedly destroyed an enemy machine-gun position and several of its defenders, suffering severe wounds in the process. Marm survived his wounds and was subsequently promoted to first lieutenant. On December 19, 1966, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions.

Marm reached the rank of colonel before retiring from the army in 1995. Marm is an Eagle Scout. He is one of only eleven known Eagle Scouts who also received the Medal of Honor.

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Steve Roberts Elected President of CVG

At the General Membership meeting on April 26, Stephen Roberts was elected the President of CVG. Steve succeeds Don Cook and becomes our organization's 2nd President.

Steve and his wife Susan have been residents of Celebrate since 2019. Since the departure of Pulte, he is a charter member of the reconstituted Celebrate Board of Directors. Steve is a Florida native, a graduate of the University of Central Florida, and received his MBA from Averett University.

Steve's military service spanned eight years in the United States Naval Reserve. His professional experience in the private sector includes logistics, facilities management and contract negotiation for an engineering consulting firm. In the not-for-profit sector, he has served as the Executive Director and CEO of a non-profit organization. His professional credentials include Certified Association Executive (CAE) and Certified Facility Manager (CFM).



In brief comments after the election, Steve spoke about his goals and objectives for CVG which include:

- ◆ Continued growth in CVG membership including non-veteran members.
- ◆ Growth in the number of veterans causes associated with CVG, and the amount of donations we provide to each.
- ◆ Greater presence and influence in Stafford County and the City of Fredericksburg.
- ◆ Broader participation, from CVG membership and the Celebrate community at large, in CVG fund raising efforts and community events.

Prior to his Board duties, Steve's commitment to and involvement in Celebrate included the Facilities, Communications and Transition Committees. Combined with his professional and military background, he brings relevant experience and significant energy to CVG.

We look forward to Steve's vision, ideas, and leadership of CVG for the years to come.

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The 6th Annual Battle of the Branches Golf Tournament

SAVE THE DATE - September 13th

The Gauntlet Golf Club



The Battle of the Branches is open to all residents of Celebrate, friends and relatives.



Please "hold the date" of Thursday, September 13. Look for more information in the near future as slots for foursomes do sell out quickly.



If you have questions please contact

Bill Wright

billw1316@gmail.com

405-590-8700



America 250 - Theodore Roosevelt Colonel, U.S. Army, 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment

Theodore Roosevelt Jr. was born in New York City Oct. 27, 1858, to Theodore Roosevelt Sr., who was the founder of the American Museum of Natural History. Despite being diagnosed with asthma, Roosevelt's father encouraged him to experience the wilderness and live an athletic life. Roosevelt excelled not



only at physical activities, but he also took a keen interest to reading, enticed by the novels of James Audubon, William Bartram, Alexander Wilson, Mayne Reid and Frank Forester.

Roosevelt initially joined the New York National Guard in 1882, but experienced tragedy in 1884 after the death of his first wife, Alice Hathaway Lee Roosevelt, and his mother, who both passed on the same day. He took a leave of absence from a nascent New York political career that same year to grieve and later left the Guard. Roosevelt focused on being both a rancher and a natural scientist. It was not until 1895 that he returned to politics and became superintendent of police from 1895 to 1897.

Roosevelt then accepted the offer of becoming Assistant Secretary of the Navy under the McKinley administration from 1897 to 1898. After the

USS Maine exploded on February 15, 1898, Roosevelt, as he was leaving office and preparing to rejoin the Army, sent out standing orders to several naval forces without the approval of the Secretary of the Navy John Long or McKinley, who were trying to achieve a peaceful resolution. He did this knowing there would be war with the Spanish. In April that same year, Congress declared war on Spain, thus starting the Spanish-American War.

Roosevelt rejoined the Army, forming the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, which became famously known as the Rough Riders. He fought in the Spanish-American War at Las Guasimas and later San Juan Hill, where he received a Medal of Honor in 2001. After the war, Roosevelt returned to politics and became the governor of New York. Since he was a progressive Republican, Roosevelt was seen as a threat to the party and other political rivals. Therefore, he became McKinley's vice president as

In this issue:

On July 4, 2026 the United States will celebrate its 250th birthday (the "semi-quintennial"). The Veterans Administration is partnering with America250, the commission established by Congress, to honor one amazing Veteran per week for the 250 weeks leading up to July 4, 2026.

We will reprint one of these articles in each CVG Newsletter until July, 2026. In most instances, the veteran is an ordinary American with a record of distinguished military service. While anything but an ordinary citizen, we felt a good place to begin was with President Theodore Roosevelt.

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America 250 - Theodore Roosevelt

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the position held no power, and it united the party. When an assassin killed McKinley, Roosevelt became the 26th president of the United States.



Roosevelt expanded America and demonstrated the power of the president. The first thing he did was enforce the Antitrust Laws and Sherman Act, breaking up the Big Three: Rockefeller, Morgan and Carnegie. As President from 1901 to 1909, he signed legislation establishing five new national parks. He also enacted the Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906. The Antiquities Act enabled Roosevelt to proclaim historic landmarks, and other objects of historic or scientific interest in federal ownership as national monuments.

Roosevelt ensured the construction of the Panama Canal and received a Nobel Peace Prize for his mediation of the Russo-Japanese War. He is the only man in history to have received both a Nobel Peace Prize and a Medal of Honor.

Grandson of Celebrate Resident Sworn into the U.S. Space Force

In a brief ceremony at the military monuments outside the Lodge, 2d Lt Zachary Russell Farr was sworn into the U.S. Space Force Command. The commissioning oath was administered by Celebrate resident and very proud grandfather, Hank Farr, Major, USAR. Hank served as the first chaplain of CVG from its inception until late 2022.



From L to R - Russell and Kerri Farr,
2d Lt Zachary Farr, Hank Farr

2d Lt Farr is a graduate of Colonial Forge High School and Virginia Military Institute (VMI) with a degree in Computer Sciences. He is currently training in cyber security at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi Mississippi while he awaits his first permanent assignment.

In attendance were his parents Russell and Kerri Farr, who reside in Spotsylvania County. His father is a cyber systems engineer and his mother works as an administrator for a firm in Spotsylvania. They were joined by his paternal grandmother and several members of CVG. Also attending was 2d Lt Farr's girlfriend who graduates from Annapolis this year and is transferring to Space Force Intelligence.

Unable to attend, were 2d Lt Farr's maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Marfuggi, originally from the Maryland/Virginia area, and now living in Florida. Hank reports that they have always been an important influence in his life. 2d Lt Farr also has a brother Joshua, who currently attends VMI and will be commissioned this month as a 2d Lt in the Army MP Corps.



VA Burial and Memorial Benefits

We have received several questions in recent months regarding burial benefits for veterans and spouses. Below is a summary of the benefits and the process to determine and secure eligibility. If you have questions, you may contact Jim Delgado at jkadelg@yahoo.com or call 540-479-6899.

Benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration (NCA) include opening and closing of the grave in a national cemetery; grave liner (vault); perpetual care and maintenance; government headstone, marker or medallion for any eligible veteran buried anywhere in the world; Presidential Memorial Certificate; Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) page; burial flag; and military honors – all at no cost. Spouses and eligible dependents can be buried with the veteran in a national cemetery even if they predecease the veteran. There were nearly 150,000 interments in VA national cemeteries in fiscal year 2021.

In addition to 155 VA-run cemeteries, the VA funds more than 120 state, territorial and tribal veterans' cemeteries, which provide very similar benefits to those available in a national cemetery. The NCA regards its mission to provide dignified burials for veterans in “national shrines” as one of the most sacred in the federal government.

Pre-Need Eligibility

To assist veterans and families in planning funeral arrangements, NCA developed pre-need eligibility determination. Families no longer need to wait until the time of death to find out if a veteran is eligible for burial in a national cemetery.

Pre-need applications require some basic information such as the veteran's social security number and a copy of the veteran's DD-214 or other separation documents. Applications can be found on the NCA website (www.cem.va.gov) or contact Jim Delgado for a copy. Pre-need is popular because it gives veterans peace of mind that family will not have to search for their discharge documents after their death.

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NCA applications can be found on line or contact Jim Delgado for a copy. NCA website www.cem.va.gov

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The American Bald Eagle

The bald eagle has been the national bird of the United States since 1782, when it was placed with outspread wings on the Great Seal of our country. It appears in many government institutions and on official documents, making it the most pictured bird in all of America. The eagle appears on the president's flag, the mace of the House of Representatives, military insignia, and billions of one-dollar bills.

The bald eagle first appeared as an American symbol on a Massachusetts copper cent coined in 1776. Since then it has appeared on the reverse side of many U.S. coins, notably the silver dollar, half-dollar and quarter, as well as the gold coins which were christened the eagle, half eagle, quarter eagle, and double eagle.

For six years, the members of Congress held a bitter dispute over what the national emblem

should be. In 1789 the bald eagle was finally chosen to represent the new nation.

One of the most prominent opponents to the bald eagle's status was Benjamin Franklin. In a letter to a friend, Franklin wrote:

I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. The turkey is a much more respectable bird and withal a true, original native of America.

But not all of Congress shared Franklin's sentiments. Bald eagles, like other eagles world-wide, had been seen by many as symbols of strength, courage, freedom and immortality for generations. And, unlike other eagles, the bald eagle was indigenous only to North America.

Some eagles have become notable in American history. "Old Abe," the mascot of a Wisconsin regiment during the Civil War, was a constant target of enemy riflemen, but survived 42 battle engagements relatively unscathed.

Today, the American bald eagle is protected under the National Emblem Act of 1940. Although once plentiful throughout the continental United States, the bald eagle population has greatly declined in recent times. Farmers and fishermen have killed many eagles for getting



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The American Bald Eagle

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too close to their poultry or fishing nets; game keepers have captured them for falconry; and pesticides have killed many eagles. Most of the bald eagle population can now be found in northern regions of North America and Florida breeding sanctuaries.

President John F. Kennedy wrote to the Audubon Society:

The Founding Fathers made an appropriate choice when they selected the bald eagle as the emblem of the nation. The fierce beauty and proud independence of this great bird aptly symbolizes the strength and freedom of America. But as latter-day citizens we shall fail our trust if we permit the eagle to disappear. The American Bald Eagle.



VA Burial and Memorial Benefits

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Headstones, Markers and Medallions

Veterans do not have to be buried in a national cemetery to receive VA memorial benefits. The VA furnishes, at no charge, a government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of when they died. Granite, marble and bronze flat markers and granite and marble headstones are available, as well as bronze niche covers to mark columbarium where cremated remains are kept.

For veterans who already have a privately purchased headstone, marker or niche cover at the interment site, families may receive a government-furnished bronze medallion with the word "Veteran" and the appropriate branch of service on it. The VA will mail the medallion along with a kit that will allow the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the device to a headstone, grave marker or columbarium niche cover.

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Celebrity Veteran Contest

How many can you identify? Some are dead giveaways, others may not be so easy.

Email kevinconnelly525@gmail.com with answers for pictures a. through i.

Win a \$50 Gift Certificate to *6 Bears & A Goat*.

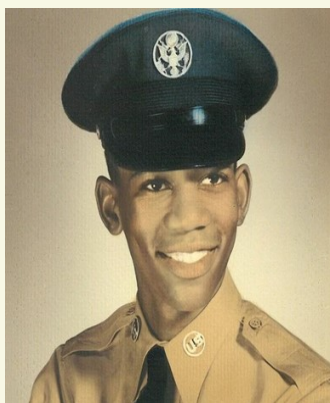
The first correct response based on arrival time in my email inbox wins!

Should a tie occur, we'll flip a coin.

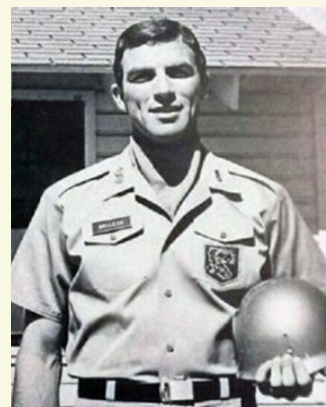
a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.



g.



h.



i.



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Did You Know?



Actor Charles Bronson was born in Pennsylvania as Charles Dennis Buchinsky in 1921. He was the eleventh of fifteen children and raised in a Lithuanian-American coal mining family. He spoke Lithuanian as a child not learning English until a teenager. Besides English, he could also speak Russian and Greek.

In 1943, he enlisted in the United States Army Air Forces during WWII and became a B-29 aerial tail gunner. He flew 25 missions and was awarded a Purple Heart for wounds received in battle.



Wreaths on headstones at Arlington National Cemetery after the 2021 Wreaths Across America Day

Inside NOVA, April 14, 2023 - "Mission BBQ has donated \$369,590 to Wreaths Across America from the sale of the company's American Heroes Cups.

The donation will help to sponsor the placement of 24,000 wreaths to remember fallen U.S. service members at 101 participating locations during the 2023 holiday season.

Mission BBQ co-founder Bill Kraus presented the donation to Wreaths Across America Executive Director Karen Worcester in Columbia, Md.

"We remain proud and humbled to stand with Wreaths Across America and the amazing work they continue to do to remember, honor and teach," Kraus said."

NOTE: Mission BBQ in Fredericksburg is a consistent sponsor of the CVG Battle of the Branches Golf Tournament. Please do support them whenever possible.



The first McDonald's drive-thru was built in 1975 in Sierra Vista, Arizona near a military installation called Fort Huachura to serve military members who were not allowed to exit their vehicles off-post while wearing a combat uniform.

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Pancake Breakfast

“If you feed them, they will come”

The first CVG Pancake Breakfast of 2023 was held in March and continues to grow. The breakfast was attended by over 185 Celebrate residents and included pancakes, breakfast sausage, coffee, tea, and juice. Breakfast is provided to all Celebrate residents without charge. Nevertheless, we received over \$1,200 in voluntary donations.

The Breakfast can not occur without the help of our fantastic volunteers who set up, prepare and serve the meal. Our thanks to three couples teams who, along with many others, can always be relied upon to lend a helping hand: Kathy and Ed Keehan, Theresa and John Leonetti and Debbie and Chris Kozel.

Our sincere thanks to all Celebrate residents. Your generosity enables us to continue making donations to deserving and worthwhile veteran causes.





Don Cook Bids Farwell as CVG President

Thank You Don!

A General Membership meeting of CVG was held on January 25 this year. The meeting was the most heavily attended in memory, and the centerpiece of the session was Don Cook's send off as the first and only President of CVG to date. Attired in his trademark khaki shorts, Don provided a few "semi-emotional" remarks as only he could. He then formally resigned his post as the leader of CVG. Don's wonderful spouse Sylvia, who also made many and significant contributions to CVG projects and events, was presented with a bouquet of flowers and the gratitude of all CVG members.



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CVG Executive Committee Members

President

Steve Roberts
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Treasurer

Dennis Taets
drtaets@gmail.com

Secretary

Walt Egee
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Jim Delgado
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Chaplain

Fred Soto
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Communications

Kevin Connelly
kevinconnelly525@gmail.com

Two Key Upcoming Events

**Quantico National Cemetery
Memorial Day Flag Planting
May 23rd, 24th & 25th - 9am each day**

**Cemetery staff is looking for volunteers to assist
with placement of flags**

- ⇒ Sign up sheet at the Lodge; select the day(s) you can help
- ⇒ Meet at the Lodge at 8:15 on the day you can help (or drive to the cemetery on your own); car pooling will be arranged among the volunteers
- ⇒ Children and relatives are welcome
- ⇒ Work as long as you wish.

Celebrate July 4th Parade and CVG Annual Barbecue

- ⇒ Fire engines, motorcycles, cool golf carts, color guards, Uncle Sam & Betsy Ross
- ⇒ Bring youngsters and get a roadside seat early
- ⇒ Followed in the afternoon by the CVG Annual Barbecue
 - ⇒ Hamburgers, hot dogs, salads and beverages
- ⇒ Jim Delgado's Grill Team is in early training perfecting their charring technique and hamburger flipping skills
 - ⇒ Don't miss a fun packed day!