**Del Webb Naples Veteran’s Club Meeting**

**Saturday, April 3, 2021**

**10:00 AM**

**delwebbnaplesveterans.com**

**President: Joseph Tillman**

**First Vice President: Bob Greiss**

**Second Vice President: Ed DeMaio**

**Treasurer: Rick Bachofner**

**Secretary: Helen Scorsone**

**The Meeting was called to order by Joe Tillman.**

**The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.**

**Joe Tillman thanked all the Members who were in attendance. This is the largest group so far since COVID began last year. 39 Members were in attendance. Joe is hoping even more Members will be coming back to the Meetings in May and June.**

**Three new Members were in attendance and one guest: Jim Barnum, who served in the US Coast Guard, Search and Rescue, has lived in Del Webb for the last 10 years, Dave Parillo, who served in the Navy from 1968 to 1971 and has lived on Constitution Street for the last five years as a “Snowbird” with his wife, Cecelia, returning to Connecticut in the Summer Months and Gene Plumlee, a new resident of Del Webb and his wife, Joyce, who are also “Snowbirds”. Gene is a Veteran of the US Air Force from 1962 to 1965.**

**Joe Tillman requested a motion to approve the Minutes from the March 5, 2021 Meeting. Motion made and approved.**

**Rick Bachofner provided a current Treasurer’s Report: As of February 28, 2021 the check book balance was $10,660.33. In March, 2021, $225 was deposited for dues. $10,125 was deposited from the Golf Tournament and $30 from shirts. A total deposit of $10,380.00. Checks written total $895.68 that included $9.99 for flagpole rope, $93 to Panther Run Shirts, reimbursement to Ed DeMaio in the amount of $76.08, reimbursement to Bobby Pitts in the amount of $529.21, reimbursement to Ed DeMaio and Claudette Sang for raffle tickets in the amount of $87.40 and $100 Del Webb Veterans, J. Cady donation distribution. March total checks amounted to $895.68. As of 3/31/2021, check book balance was $20,144.65. Monies allocated for the Memorial Fund is $115.00, 2021 Veteran’s Cup Challenge is $3,500 and Honor Flight, $1,200 giving an available balance for general expenses of $15,329.65. In the month of April, 2021 a deposit of $4,125 was made. $2,025 for the Golf Tournament, Cruise Raffle deposit was $2,050 in checks and $50 in dues. Checks written, $700. Total bank balance as of the Meeting is $23,569.65. Rick thanked everyone for their support.**

**Bill Kaufmann gave an update on the Golf Tournament. Since there were several new members and guests present, Bill gave a brief talk about the start of this Golf Tournament. The Golf Tournament started in 2017 and has continued every year since. As of today’s Meeting, there are 39 Teams playing in the Tournament this year. There is still room for more teams. The Club is close to $15,000 in Tournament Sponsors. He reminded the Club there will be a raffle on the day of the Tournament. Tickets are $10 for one ticket and $20 for three tickets. First prize will be a $250 Gift Certificate to the Pro Shop at Panther Run. Other prizes include rounds of golf, 24” LED TV, golf bag, golf balls and many other prizes. You do not need to be present to win. Donations for the Raffle Tickets can be purchased at the Meeting today and will be available the day of the Tournament. The Tournament will be a two-person team. Bill reminded the Membership that the first winner of the Tournament was Claudette Sang and John Shaffer. Bill anticipates a successful Tournament this year. Bill anticipates that with this year’s Tournament, the Club will have raised over $50,000 for our mission to help Veterans in need. The Tournament will be on Saturday, April 10, 2021 starting at 8:30 AM (shotgun). A luncheon will follow at the Grand Hall serving hamburgers, chicken sandwiches and salad. There will be a cash bar. If you are not able to play and would like to donate to the Veteran’s Club, it would be greatly appreciated.**

**“Donation to Win Veteran’s Cruise” tickets will be available at the Golf Tournament.**

**Joe Tillman anticipates, with the COVID easing up, the Club will be able to resume other activities. He is hoping to have our Annual Dinner in the fall using the new Grand Hall.**

**Ann Hashagen gave an update on the Veteran’s shirts. The shirt problems have been resolved. The Club will be going with “Custom Tee”, the same company who made the Tee Shirts. They guaranteed that they can make the same shirts that the other company made with the exact logo, etc. Ann needs a minimum of six shirts to place an order. The cost of a shirt is $25. There is an additional cost of $2.50 if a member would like their name on the shirt. If a member would like a larger shirt such as a 3x, there is an additional charge. The shirts come in white, red, or blue. Ann also has Tee Shirts available for $10. Woman’s Tee Shirts are purple, and the men’s shirts are beige. They come with a logo on the back. Joe thanked Ann.**

**Claudette Sang gave an update on the “Veteran’s Fundraiser Cruise” scheduled for February 26, 2022. There are 98 passengers signed up at present. The special package that was offered will end on the 5th of April, 2021. You are still able to book this cruise, however, the special package will not be available after then. There will be a couple of buses to pick all passengers up here in Ave Maria and will bring them back after the cruise. Tickets are available for the “Donation to Win Veteran’s Cruise”. Claudette explained to the Members, if you have already put a deposit for the Fundraiser Cruise or paid for the Cruise and you win the “Donation to Win Veteran’s Cruise, all monies will be refunded. The “Donation to Win Veteran’s Cruise” is a cruise for two with balcony and the specialty package is included. To date, $2,400 has been donated for the “Win a Cruise”. (Needed is $2,598) Please contact, Claudette Sang, with any questions at 772-633-6340.**

**Joe Tillman told the Membership that for the first “Donation to Win Cruise”, the Club made over $4,000. This enabled the Club to give away 2 cabins. He encouraged all to donate money for a ticket for the Cruise. Claudette, John S, Joe, and Ed, have tickets available.**

**Joe Tillman introduced, Dale Mullins, President of Wounded Warriors, Naples, our guest speaker. Dale is the leading force behind the creation of the Alpha House in Naples. He started the count for the homeless Veterans, and he helped with getting 38 Veterans and spouses vaccinated from our Veteran’s Club.**

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**Dale started by asking if there were any WWII Veterans present, Korea Veterans, Viet Nam, or Golf War Veterans present. He said that the Viet Nam Veteran is now becoming the largest Veteran population in the United States. Dale served in Viet Nam from 1967 to 1968. He started his involvement with Veteran’s activities approximately 10 years ago in Collier County. He started his involvement with the Veterans with a golf event to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Project and explained, because of circumstances involving the National Chapter of Wounded Warriors, his group went off on their own and started the “Wounded Warriors of Naples”. They started their own 501C3 six years ago here in Collier County to raise money. Dale started investigating the needs of Veterans in Collier County. He was told, at first, there were no homeless Veterans in Collier County. This was what was on the records in Collier County. The Sheriff’s Office and the Courts knew differently. Dale met with Judge Martin who was running three Mental Health Courts in Collier County. (she is still running these courts) Judge Martin told Dale that she needed help. There is no place for homeless Veterans in Collier County. They need housing and they must send the Veterans to other counties. Dale went on to say how that made an impact on him. “How can a county that has so much money, ship our homeless Veterans off to other counties”? Dale then found out that going back to the “Point in Time Count” there was no one identifying Veterans and putting them on the reports. The “Point in Time Count” is run by HUD throughout the entire United States. Since that count reflected zero, no one was aware of the problem here in Collier County. Washington, D.C., state, and local government was not aware that there were homeless Veterans in Collier County. The first year that Bob Wheeler was involved with the Count, (two years ago) 40 plus Veterans were identified as homeless. Unfortunately, some Veterans are missed at the time of the Count.**

**The “Hunger and Homeless Coalition”, through HUD, will tell you that they will only identity approximately 30% of the actual number of homeless Veterans. Now it is on record that there are homeless Veterans in Collier County. The Government, through the VA, will help subsidize (a voucher) Veteran Housing. If a Veteran cannot afford housing, does not have the money, possibly short $200 or $300, the VA will give the Veteran that extra money a month so they can afford permanent housing. Two years ago, there were no programs for these Veterans in Collier County, two years later, there is an abundance of programs for Collier County Veterans being funded by the VA through two charitable organizations, St. Vincent DePaul and the Jewish and Family Services. They have Case Workers who will give reports of the homeless Veterans and start working with the Veteran providing emergency shelter and ultimately into permanent housing. The last count in January, 2021, there were 80 documented homeless Veterans in Collier County. Remembering the count will only identify 30%, this count needs to be upped 70%. So, well over 150 Veterans in Collier County are homeless. 45 of the homeless Veterans were provided with emergency housing, 25 were unsheltered (living in the woods), another 4 were in transitional housing (Alpha House) and 6 were in institutions. Now with this “Point In Time Count”, getting the Veterans documented and counted and agencies looking at the official documents they can now start funding programs for “Wounded Warriors of Collier County”.**

**Dale was on the Committee of Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Addiction for Collier County and he was part of the Committee that delt with the 1% sales tax that was put into effect a couple of years ago. From that tax, mental health and drug and alcohol addiction programs receive benefits from that 1%. There was a Committee put together to determine how to spend that 1%. Andy Solis, Attorney, and one of the Commissioners in Collier County called Dale and asked him to be on the Committee to represent the Veteran population in Collier County. Andy Solis was also responsible in helping Dale obtain the COVID vaccination for so many Veterans and their spouses in Collier County.**

**The Collier Commissioners run Collier County and the funding throughout Collier County. Dale told the Membership that our Club should make our local Commissioner, Bill McDaniel, aware and hold him accountable for the needs of our local Veterans. Dale told the Membership that Andy Solis is a County Commissioner and is incredibly supportive of the Veterans and Rick Locastro, retired Air Force, who just got appointed County Commissioner in Marco Island is also supportive of Veterans. “Veterans come home to Communities, not Government” and when it comes down to helping our Veterans, it is at the community level that Veterans will get the most help.**

**There is tremendous amounts of community involvement in Collier County. Dale said people are really willing to help the Veterans and his experience has been that if people become aware of the needs of the Veterans, more people are willing to set up and help.**

**Dale has been excited for the opening of Alpha House in Collier County. It has been in operation a little over one year. They had 10 Veterans in the house since it opened. Alpha House is a transitional house. Veteran should not be in the house more than a year. Programs are provided for the Veteran to help get the Veteran back on their feet and transition back into society.**

**This month, Dale told the Membership that a second house will open called Bravo House. Bravo is a three-bedroom home. This will provide long term housing and a Veteran cannot make more than $20,000 a year to live in Bravo House. The first Veteran will be moving in soon. He is 62 years old, single, and only receives social security of $1,200 a month. This Veteran contacted Dale and asked for help. He said he is homeless. So, this gentleman will be moving into Bravo House and will only need to pay 30% of his income for housing. This will include all his utilities, cable, etc. He will only need to pay for food. Dale explained that this type of housing is in real need in Collier County and the Wounded Warriors of Collier County will be looking into opening more homes like Bravo in the future.**

**Ed DeMaio told Dale Mullins that our primary fund raiser is our Annual Golf Tournament. The money raised from this Tournament generally funds three agencies. The Hunger and Homeless Agency, we work with Veterans Affairs in Bay Pines and we make donations to the Jacobson Nursing Home in Port Charlotte. Our Club being a 501C3, there is a lot more we could do if we had more money. Ed asked Dale if he had any thoughts how our Club could reach out to individuals who would like to donate to groups like our Veterans Club, to help homeless and disadvantaged Veterans? Dale said the most important information he can give is when people donate to our organization, they want to see their donation stay where they live. They do not like to see their donations leave the area. Dale also spoke of the Gold Tournament and the most money raised is from sponsorships not the golfers. He emphasized the importance of going out to obtain sponsors. He knows they are not easy to find in Naples because there are not a lot of corporations. The largest employer in Collier County is the Collier County School System followed by Arthrex. Arthrex will only give money to an organization who will provide a service. Dale is hoping to obtain a donation from Arthrex because Wounded Warriors of Collier now provide a service which is housing. Dale explained that our backpack program is directly helping a Veteran and that is providing a service.**

**Dale spoke of the Court Systems stating that several of the Courts recognize that Veterans are returning home with PTSD, brain injuries, alcohol and or drug addiction. A lot of disruptive behavior of some Veterans is now being associated with these diagnoses. When a Veteran comes before the Judge charged with a crime (not a serious felony) such as a DUI, fighting, petty theft, drugs and the Veteran qualifies for a “Diversion Program”, the Veteran will have to attend meetings, get a sponsor, and get treatment and be tested almost every day for drugs and alcohol for one year. If the Veteran gets this help for one year, at the end of the year, the Veteran will graduate from this program, the case is reviewed by the Courts and in most cases, the charges will be dropped completely. Many times, the Alpha House will then take in the Veteran because they must have an address to be released to, otherwise, they would not be let out of jail. The Wounded Warriors now can provide an address for the Veteran. There is no charge to the Veteran. Everything is funded by donations. However, if the Veteran is receiving any monies from disability, etc., then the Veteran would be charged a minimal rent. They are helped with paying back their fines, getting their driver’s license, and help the Veteran return to a productive citizen.**

**Dale told to the Membership about a Marine who is suffering from PTSD severely. He is 33 years old and served one tour of duty in Afghanistan and from Collier County. This Marine had been arrested in Collier County (nothing too serious) and Wounded Warriors of Collier County was able to help by providing housing for him in the Alpha House. Without being able to live in Alpha House, this Marine would still be in jail. He is receiving the help he needs.**

**Dale also told the Membership of the alarming rate of suicides of Veterans and the horrible impact with families of Veterans who commit suicide. Dale feels suicide is truly the invisible wounds of war and is happy more recognition is being paid to this serious problem.**

 **Dale told the Membership that there are still ongoing needs for the Veterans in Collier County, and he appreciates all our Club does to support Veterans in Collier and Lee Counties.**

**Ralph asked if Veterans, through the Wounded Warrior’s, Alpha House, and their programs can further their education? Dale was happy to inform the Membership of successful cases where Veterans are receiving help with their continuing education.**

**Bob Wheeler thanked Dale for all his efforts and helping our Club Members get their COVID vaccine and for his highly informative talk today.**

**Joe also thanked Dale and the Club is looking forward to supporting his endeavors in the future.**

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**Ed DeMaio spoke about getting a DD214 and explained to all that a DD214 is a summary of a Veteran’s military experiences. An especially important document. Getting this document can help a Veteran get several discounts such as loans, car purchases and can help with obtaining medical care. There is a burial benefit and an opportunity to be buried in the Veteran’s Cemetery. Ed encouraged that this DD214 be kept in a safe place and family members are informed of the location and what this important is all about. Helen sent out the web site location to the Membership on how to obtain a DD214. Copies of this document are available today at the Meeting. A Veteran can also go the Veteran Service Office, third floor, Building H in Naples and a representative can help you file the paperwork for getting your DD214. They are funded by Collier County. A veteran can call to make an appointment asking for Oscar or Alex.**

**Tracy touched on supplemental coverage for Medicare. Tracy said he does not carry additional supplemental coverage. He went on to explain if a Veteran is 100% disabled, there is a series of benefits the Veteran can receive. You can receive all your benefits from the VA and Tracy does keep his Medicare, but he keeps his Medicare as a supplemental insurance. He has Medicare Advantage. Tracy is 100% and total disabled and his wife is also eligible for medical coverage under Champus. (Champ VA is a supplement for Medicare). His wife has no co-pay, no deductibles, and she can go anywhere she wants for medical care. Tracy stated that his wife has a better plan than he does with Champ VA. Tracy must get approval through the VA to see a specialist. Other benefits when you are 100% disabled are home health care, dental care, vision care, medical equipment, nursing home care placement, medical related travel benefits (reimbursement is 41 and 1/2cents per mile) There is a deductible with the travel benefit. It is $3 each way for a total of $18 per month. Tracy explained if you are 100% disabled, when the Veteran dies, and you pass away from your service-related disability within the first 10 years, your spouse is entitled to part of your pension. If a Veteran has been disabled for at least 8 years, and at 100%, the spouse will receive an extra $200 per month. During the two years after a Veterans death, the spouse will get extra payments for a transitional benefit. There are other benefits Veterans are entitled to and Tracy will touch on those benefits at his next Tracy’s Corner.**

**Ken Rice spoke briefly to remind everyone that if you did not get your COVID vaccination, Ken was able to obtain 100 set aside appointments for the vaccination. He asked that you contact him at the Oasis Club for an appointment. He is expecting to obtain another 200 appointments.**

**Joe told the Membership about a new program the Veteran’s Club is starting. “Veteran Members Support” is being started by Helen and Rick. Our goal is helping our Ave Maria Veteran Community and their family with help when needed such as a ride to an appointment, a home visit, shopping for food, a meal, sending a card, a phone call, etc. If a member of our community has medical equipment or anything they think could be used by a Veteran of our Veteran’s Club, or, if someone needs help with something at home, we are asking you to contact Helen at** **helenscorsone@hotmail.com** **and she will put a shout out to our Club with the information and she is hoping to get responses to the request. More information at future Meetings.**

**Helen was encouraging our Members to ask their spouses to join the Veteran’s Club.**

**Ed DeMaio told the Membership that a mobile chair was donated and if anyone is interested, contact Helen.**

**Joe, again, thanked everyone for coming to the Meeting.**

**Our next Meeting will be on Friday, May 7, 2021 at 4 PM in the Grand Hall.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:02 AM.**