



MARCH 2017

UPDATES FROM THE EDITOR

Our spring edition of the newsletter brings you highlights of our visitors, tours and events that have happened over the last few months, as well as upcoming events and tours. School and group tours are increasing and we encourage you to spend some time visiting Sarasota National Cemetery to experience Patriot Plaza with its unique architecture, artwork and testimonies.

Have you been searching for a special venue to hold an event that would honor veterans in our community or perhaps looking for a tour or something amazing to show your visiting friends or family members? Consider Patriot Plaza and contact either the [Director of Sarasota National Cemetery](#) for a events or the [Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County](#) to schedule a free guided tour.

Feel free to share this newsletter with your friends, family and co-workers. If anyone would like to be added to the distribution, just let me know. Linda Gould, LLGould@snccm.com. Follow and "like" our [Legacy of Valor \(LoV\) Facebook page](#) for inspirational and informative posts covering national and local topics concerning veterans.

EXPERIENCE PATRIOT PLAZA

VISITORS



A guided tour of Patriot Plaza became a surprise reunion of three Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODDS) system teachers that served together at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany years ago. Darrell Casco, a Patriot Plaza Guide, was one of those teachers. When she found out that Larry Pennington, another DODDS teacher, and his family were coming to Florida for a visit, she arranged for them to come to Patriot Plaza for a tour. She invited another DODDS teacher who lives locally, Lee Plyler, to come experience Patriot Plaza the very same day. Susie Shugg, also a Patriot Plaza Guide, and Darrell both led the tour. Susie is married to a retired US Air Force Brigadier General. With as much in common and so many military life events to discuss and share, the visitors and guides enjoyed a wonderful opportunity to bond and reminisce, as well as pause and reflect.

TOUR HIGHLIGHT: MINOR LEAGUE OF SARASOTA



Members of the Sarasota Minor League and Sarasota Junior League Sustainers toured Patriot Plaza in March. Many members were veterans themselves and wore hats or other insignia to identify which branch of the Armed Forces they served. With over 50 members touring, five different Patriot Plaza Guides ensured that everyone was able to experience the details and vision of the architecture and the artists' mission of honoring our military through artwork. Each small group had their own personal Guide: special thanks to Jimmy Ellison, Harry Moses, Jim Robinson, Susie Shugg and Ed Gates.

Jim Shirley, the Executive Director of the [Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County](#) also came out once he had given a presentation recently at one of the organization's meetings about Patriot Plaza. The Minor League found Patriot Plaza incredibly moving and appreciated the generosity of the volunteer Guides who not only pointed out meaningful points of interest but also shared their own military stories and why they enjoy being a Patriot Plaza Guide.

If your organization is looking for speakers about Patriot Plaza, please contact kovind@snccm.com or the [Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County](#) to make arrangements.

Additional Patriot Plaza Guides are always welcome. Your first step is to become a volunteer at the Sarasota National Cemetery and then ask to receive the additional training to become a Guide for this wonderful architectural and artistic tribute to our veterans and their families.

COMMITTAL SERVICE AT PATRIOT PLAZA



The first ever committal service was held at Patriot Plaza on January 26, 2017 to give a well deserved salute to the 1st of Engineers General Frank Laudano, Commandant of [Sarasota Military Academy](#) (SMA), Sarasota National Cemetery (SNC) has two committal shelters that accommodate several hundred attendees for veterans and eligible family members being laid to rest at SNC. Patriot Plaza is an option for a committal service only if an organization is able to sponsor and fund the logistics required to host an event in Patriot Plaza and there is an anticipated attendance of more than 500, as in the case of BG Laudano. [The US Army Florida National Guard](#) stepped forward and asked to organize and fund this moving tribute. At least 600 members of our community, different military organizations, SMA High School and Prep School students, faculty and family attended the service and then moved to nearby Bayside Community Church for fellowship with the Laudano family.

Upcoming Events at Patriot Plaza

Saturday, May 27: Flags for Fallen Veterans will be placing small American flags at all gravesites beginning at 8:00am. Volunteers wishing to participate must be signed up ahead of time. For more information please click on the link above or contact Meshia Richardson, the Event Director, at gallo@snccm.com or call/text [941-644-9028](tel:941-644-9028)

The Sarasota National Cemetery Advisory Committee will host the Memorial Day Program commencing at 9:00am.

PATRIOT PLAZA IS A GIFT TO THE NATION FROM [The Patterson Foundation](#)

SHARE YOUR STORY

We welcome stories from people who have visited Patriot Plaza. Please tell us about your visit and the impact Patriot Plaza has made on you, your family and friends. Share your stories with us by sending them to: LJGould@snccm.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Patriot Plaza in Sarasota National Cemetery is available free of cost for you and the community to use for events honoring veterans.

Events at Patriot Plaza need to:

- 1) Be free and open to the public;
- 2) Honor veterans;
- 3) Maintain the dignity of a national cemetery.

Download the [Event Hosting Guidelines](#) and contact Sarasota National Cemetery Director John Rosentrater via john.rosentrater@snccm.com or (813) 922-7200 to request holding an event at Patriot Plaza.

Click [here](#) in order to learn more about Sarasota National Cemetery.

GUIDED TOURS & EXPLORATIONS

Public tours of [Patriot Plaza](#) are currently conducted every Tuesday at 10am – except on federal holidays. Private group and school tours can be scheduled Monday through Friday as well.

Through a partnership with [The Patterson Foundation](#) and [The Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County](#), Guides were recruited from the Sarasota National Cemetery (SNC) volunteers and trained on the history and meaning of the art elements of Patriot Plaza to provide visitors with a deeper understanding of Service and Sacrifice.

Tours are free and open to everyone who is interested. To schedule a group or school tour, contact Cindy Babinette, Arts Education Manager for the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County, (813) 965-5118, x301 or cbabinette@sarasotaarts.org

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