



Pelican Yacht Club

WAVE



It was a perfect day at the Pelican Yacht Club for the first WAVE event held on the East Coast of Florida.

Veterans began arriving around 0715 for a 0730 check-in. Veteran attendees moved into the Anchor Dining Room where a hot buffet breakfast was being prepared as well as coffee and orange juice. Welcoming comments were made by Pelican Yacht Club Commodore Don Buchheim, WAVE Co-Chairman Dick Janiszewski, and FCA Commodore Ray Dewrell, who drove down with his wife Ann from Fort Walton Yacht Club. Congressman and Purple Heart veteran Brian Mast soon arrived and addressed the veterans, guests, and volunteers with a rousing off-the-cuff speech, where he listed all the actions around the world in which our military forces had participated from the War of Independence to the present. Mr. Mast is a very dynamic speaker, and we all appreciated his presence to be with us in honoring these veterans.

The St Lucie County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard stood before the veterans while everyone sang the Star-Spangled Banner. This was followed by an invocation by local Pastor Ron Evans. Pelican Chapter FCA members in attendance included P/C FCA Rear Commodore Peter Tyson and Jeanne Tyson, P/C David Wilbur, P/C Dick Janiszewski and Pat Janiszewski, P/C and Co-Chairman June Ann DeGraw and Bruce DeGraw, and P/C Gail Flesche. Ft Pierce Mayor Linda Hudson was on hand as was former Vero Beach Mayor (and now current Indian River County Commissioner) Laura Moss, who volunteered to help.

The breakfast buffet opened, and members enjoyed scrambled eggs, bacon and sausage, biscuits with gravy and more. After breakfast, veterans moved out to one of the Club docks where four pontoon boats, donated by the owner of the local Freedom Boat Rental company with skippers, awaited to provide a two-hour cruise on the Indian River Lagoon. Pelican Yacht Club members Pam Wolters and John Koch also furnished two additional pontoon boats. We hosted 25 veterans with spouses, buddies, sons, and daughters.

The cruisers returned at lunch time to find a big barrel of iced bottled water waiting on the dock. Everyone had had a great time on the water. Then all headed inside for lunch. Several presentations were made during lunch including one by Lloyd Lasenby,

President of the Purple Heart Caen Project. The next Caen Ceremony will be held at the National SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce on 2/18/2023. A local law firm which represents veterans with liability and medical claims was on hand as were the VFW and Counselors for Vets. We hope to expand our next WAVE happening to include more organizations that help veterans.

Everyone was pleased with the success of this year's event, and we look forward to repeating next year which will take place on June 3rd, to remember June 6th - D-Day. Historically, Fort Pierce and the beach were where the Navy demolition teams trained and 50% of them were killed in the first wave at Normandy. When these demolition men became "frogmen" and the division became the Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT), they lost just two men in all the Pacific Islands' invasions. The Pelican Yacht Club clubhouse was the officers' quarters during the war. Holding a WAVE happening next year at this time will be an appropriate way to honor our veterans.

Peter Tyson
P/C Pelican Yacht Club
FCA Rear Commodore

