

## MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is a sacred day to all war veterans. No need to be reminded of the reasons why Memorial Day must be commemorated. But, What about the general public, and more importantly, future generations? Do most non-veterans really recognize the importance of Memorial Day?

## WHY REMEMBER

Sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance. America's collective consciousness demands that all citizens be aware of and recall on special occasions the deaths of their fellow countrymen during wartime.

Far too often, the nation as a whole takes for granted the freedoms all Americans enjoy. These freedoms were paid for with the lives of others few of us actually knew. That's why they are collectively remembered on one special day.

This should be regarded as a civic obligation. For this is a national debt that can only be truly repaid by individual Americans. By honoring the nation's war dead, we preserve their memory and thus their service and sacrifice.

## PONCE INLET VETERANS MEMORIAL



## MEMORIAL DAY Davies Lighthouse Park, Ponce Inlet

MAY 27, 2019

9:00 A.M.

## **William Diehl Wester**

### **Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps (retired)**

Born and raised in Norfolk, Virginia he graduated from Randolph-Macon College with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics.

He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1964 and served with distinction for 23 years. He had two combat tours in Vietnam and tours of duty in the Canal Zone, Panama; Okinawa, Japan; the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. During his career he served in the operating forces of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Divisions as a platoon commander, company executive officer, company commander, battalion executive officer, MEU logistics officer and on the Division staffs. In addition, he served as a Plans Officer, J-3 Directorate, U.S. Southern Command; as Director, Enlisted Recruiting Operations, Headquarters, Marine Corps; as Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Recruiting Station Raleigh; on the staffs of The Basic School and the Landing Force Training Command. He retired in 1987 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

His second career was in association management where he initially worked with the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association as the Director of Marketing and Communications, then the National Burglar & Fire Alarm Association as the Director of Membership and Member Services, and finally the National Association of Development Companies as the Director of Program Policy and Regulatory Affairs.

His personal achievements and combat decorations include the Silver Star Medal, three Purple Hearts, the Meritorious Service Medal, three Navy Commendation Medals (one with combat "V" for heroic achievement), and the Combat Action Ribbon. He is a founding director and the past president of the Ponce Inlet Veterans Memorial Association and is a director of the Ponce Inlet Lions Club and a Melvin Jones Fellow. Also, he is a member the Military Officers Association of America, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Halifax River Yacht Club.

Bill and his wife Sandy live in Ponce Inlet, Florida.

## **CALL TO ARMS**

**Master of Ceremonies** – John LaBelle, Capt. USA

**National Anthem** – Althea Chavers, Boys/Girls Club - VC

**Opening Prayer** – Rev. Larry Chavers

**Pledge of Allegiance** –

**Introductions** – John LaBelle, Capt., USA

**Remarks** – Gary Smith, Mayor of Ponce Inlet – 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. USA

**Guest Speaker** – Bill Wester, Lt. Col., USMC (Ret)

**POW/MIA Speaker** – Rich Maltifano – Rolling Thunder

**Wreath Laying** – John LaBelle, Capt. USA

**Service Recognition** – John LaBelle, Capt. USA

**Firing Squad** – Marine Corps League Detachment 658

**TAPS** – Mitch Hare, Sgt. USMC – American Legion Post 270

**Closing Prayer** – Rev. Larry Chavers

**God Bless America** – Althea Chavers – Boys/Girls Club - VC

**Closing** – John LaBelle, Capt. USA