

From the Moultrie News November 26, 2010

## 'Patriotic arm' to serve East Cooper

[Helen R. Hammond](#)

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Men of faith and action have bonded together to begin a new assembly at Stella Maris Catholic Church on Sullivan's Island. It is an extension of a well known fraternal Catholic Men's organization called The Knights of Columbus.

The group has long been known for its charitable giving in the community. The men have been unselfishly giving back to others since the organization was founded in the United States in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney, Assistant Pastor of St. Mary's Church in New Haven.



photo provided

Knights of Columbus 4th degree members Neil Whitman and Michael Swindle are shown at the first formal meeting of the Fourth Degree Assembly.



photo provided

Major General James Livingston spoke about the role of the military at the inaugural Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree meeting at Stella Maris Catholic Church on Sullivan's Island

The Knights of Columbus has grown from several members in one council to more than 14,000 councils and 1.8 million members throughout the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico, Poland, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Panama, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, Cuba, Guatemala, Guam and Saipan.

In the East Cooper area the Knights of Columbus has started a new assembly, the fourth degree. The "inaugural event" was held Nov. 17 at Stella Maris Catholic Church on Sullivan's Island.

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Michael Swindle, "Faithful Navigator" of The Knights of Columbus, fourth degree, explained that the first three degrees of Knighthood allow membership in a Council. "The Fourth Degree is the patriotic arm of the Knights and you must be a Third Degree Knight in good standing before being inducted into the Fourth Degree," he explained.

The Reverend John McLaughlin Council of the Knights of Columbus serves the Catholic parishes of Christ our King Catholic Church in Mount Pleasant, Saint Benedict's Catholic Church in Mount Pleasant and Stella Maris Catholic Church on Sullivan's Island.

According to Swindle, the Fourth Degree Assembly was named after Fr. Vincent Robert Capodanno, who was a Catholic priest medic with the Marines in Vietnam. He was killed while attending to the wounded and received the Medal of Honor posthumously. The new assembly was chartered at the end of June to serve the East Cooper community and there are 38 members. For initiation, members must go through a full day of training, which is very formal, and the Bishop comes to visit.

"Their goals include serving veterans' issues as well as supporting the community charitable issues addressed by the Council which includes a number of local charities like ECCO. They participate in patriotic activities with the Color Guard such as parades and church dedications. They recently collected comfort items to support homeless veterans in the Charleston area," said Swindle.

According to charter member and initial officer Neil Whitman, the Council also gives awards to students at schools for essays on "what it means to be an American."

In addition, the council serves the first responders, police department and firefighters.

"We are forming a committee and deciding what ways we want to serve the community. It is a work in progress," he said.

The "inaugural event" featured Maj. Gen. James E. Livingston, USMC (Ret.), a Medal of Honor Recipient, the country's highest military decoration.

Visit [www.kofc9475.org](http://www.kofc9475.org) to find out more about the Knights of Columbus.

Gallant hero

Mount Pleasant resident Maj. Gen. Livingston, one of 87 Medal of Honor recipients still alive, served our country on active duty in the Marine Corps for 33 years before retiring on Sept. 1, 1995.

Livingston completed three tours of duty in Vietnam.

On May 2, 1968, while serving as Commanding Officer on his second deployment, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, Livingston distinguished himself above and beyond the call of duty in action against enemy forces, and earned the Medal of Honor. For his heroic actions in 1968 during the Vietnam War, Livingston was presented the Medal of Honor on May 14, 1970 by President Richard Nixon. He also received three Purple Hearts.

His third and final tour was as Marine air/ground coordinator for the evacuation of Saigon in April 1975.

In the 1980s Livingston served as regimental commander for 6th Marine Regiment and as the senior Marine advisor to the Military Assistance Command in the Philippines. His final posting was as commander of the 4th Marine reserve in New Orleans, Louisiana. In New Orleans, Livingston also worked

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with the City manager's office, assisting with managerial decisions and coordinating state, city and federal government programs.

Besides the Medal of Honor and three Purple Hearts, his awards include the Navy Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Superior Service Medal, Bronze Star with Combat V, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (2 awards), Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, National Defense Medal, Combat Action Ribbon (2 awards), Navy Unit Commendation, Navy Unit Citation, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Basic Parachutist Insignia, Navy-Marine Parachutist Insignia, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

Livingston said that the Knights of Columbus is similar to the Marine Corps because both are 'serving our Almighty."

"We are a brotherhood and a service of the nation."

He said, "I am blessed and honored to be part of this inaugural event."

Livingston also commented that when the young Marines were dying on the battlefield, the last face that they would see was Father Capodanno's.

"There is a unique tie between people of faith and the military," he said.

"You gentlemen represent beacons of hope," he said.

Maj. Gen. Livingston

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as Commanding Officer, Company E, in action against enemy forces. Company E launched a determined assault on the heavily fortified village of Dai Do, which had been seized by the enemy on the preceding evening isolating a marine company from the remainder of the battalion. Capt. Livingston maneuvered his men to assault positions across 500 meters of dangerous open rice paddy while under intense enemy fire. Ignoring hostile rounds impacting near him, he fearlessly led his men in a savage assault against enemy emplacements within the village. Capt. Livingston moved to the points of heaviest resistance, shouting words of encouragement to his marines, directing their fire, and spurring the dwindling momentum of the attack on repeated occasions. Although twice painfully wounded by grenade fragments, he refused medical treatment and courageously led his men in the destruction of over 100 mutually supporting bunkers, driving the remaining enemy from their positions, and relieving the pressure on the stranded marine company. As the 2 companies consolidated positions and evacuated casualties, a third company passed through the friendly lines launching an assault on the adjacent village of Dinh To, only to be halted by a furious counterattack of an enemy battalion. Swiftly assessing the situation and disregarding the heavy volume of enemy fire, Capt. Livingston boldly maneuvered the remaining effective men of his company forward, joined forces with the heavily engaged marines, and halted the enemy's counterattack. Wounded a third time and unable to walk, he steadfastly remained in the dangerously exposed area, deploying his men to more tenable positions and supervising the evacuation of casualties. Only when assured of the safety of his men did he allow himself to be evacuated. Capt. Livingston's gallant actions uphold the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service.

-Pres. Richard Nixon, May 14, 1970

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