



# Florida Veteran

Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida, Inc.

1226 Wing Road SW, Palm Bay FL 32953

www.vvof.org - 321-726-6752 – E-Mail [Drwassmer@Yahoo.com](mailto:Drwassmer@Yahoo.com)

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## Florida's 24th Annual Vietnam And All Veterans Reunion

The date for the upcoming Reunion is May 5-8, 2011 at Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida. The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall will be at the park for viewing May 1st-May 8th. As most of you are aware, *this is the Nations largest Veterans Reunion*. Make sure to visit the Reunion Website at [www.floridaveteransreunion.com](http://www.floridaveteransreunion.com) for up to date information regarding the schedule of events, including the Wall escort the preceding Sunday, hotel listings, camping information as well as vendor applications.

The Vietnam and all Veterans of Florida State Coalition would like to recognize the following members/organizations for awards that were presented at our Annual Banquet held this past January. Florida Dustoff Association – Organization of the year, Leo “Doc” Williams – Veteran of the Year, Denise Wassmer– Member of the Year and Blackcrow Broadcasting/WHOG Radio - Business of the year.

In addition, our 2010 executive board members are: Don Wassmer, President, Robert Neitzel 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Leo “Doc” Williams 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Denise Wassmer, Secretary and Jacque Earrusso, Treasurer.

**A few reminders to members of the coalition:**

Nominations are being accepted for First Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The floor will be opened at the October 16<sup>th</sup> general membership meeting at The Candlewood Suites in Melbourne and will continue through the January Meeting to be held in Daytona Beach when the elections will be held. Installation of the Officers will take place that evening at the Annual Banquet and Awards Dinner.

Nominations are also being accepted for Veteran of the Year, Member of the Year, Organization of the Year and Business of the Year. Nominations must be received no later than December 4th 2010 to be considered. The Veteran of the Year will be voted on by prior recipients of this award. The remaining three awards are determined by the Executive Board of the Coalition. The nominations for these prestigious awards must be submitted in a written biography and submitted to Donald Wassmer, President of the Coalition, to either the address listed on the front of the newsletter, or via e-mail to [Drwassmer@Yahoo.com](mailto:Drwassmer@Yahoo.com).

The January General Membership meeting is scheduled for January 14-16<sup>th</sup> 2011 at the La Playa Hotel and resort in Daytona Beach. The evening of the 15<sup>th</sup> is the Banquet and Awards Dinner. Please mark your calendar for this event and additional information will be forth coming on our website VVOF.ORG after the October meeting.

**The Florida Veteran community was recently saddened by the passing of our friend, comrade in arms, and comrade in fighting for Veterans rights and benefits, Ken Baker on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Ken was surrounded by his family and closest friends when he passed. A beautiful and fitting Memorial was held on August 29<sup>th</sup> at The Veterans Memorial Center in Merritt Island. As we wish to pay homage to this great man and advocate for veterans, we will be dedicating the next issue of The Florida Veteran to Ken's memory and will include a tribute to Ken. Our next issue is the Reunion Issue. I cannot think of a more of a fitting tribute for Ken. Ken's family has requested in Lieu of flowers, etc., that donations be made to the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard.**

Respectfully submitted  
Roberta A. Voisey-Neitzel  
Newsletter Editor



## VVB NEWS

### President's Message

As I said in my last president's message we are well, and I mean really well, into the summer. I would like to report to you that our weather is about to get cooler but we all know that that is wishful thinking. Regardless of the temperature we do have a lot going on for the next few months. Hopefully this publication will get to you before August 15, but if not, you missed our Reunion Thank You luncheon at the New Century Buffet on Merritt Island. This event will begin at 1:00 pm and go on until 4:00 PM. We don't have many ways to thank those who work so hard to make our annual Reunion a success so come out and enjoy lunch with us.

We have very good news from our County Commission. There had been a cost-cutting measure on the last Commission agenda to cut a Service Officer position from the staff of our County Veterans Service Office in Viera. As we all know, government at all levels is searching for ways to reduce their budgets to accommodate the reduced income they are receiving as a result of lowered real estate values. Evidently our commissioners feel that veteran's services are not something that should be reduced since they voted to fund the Service Officer position that was being considered. Let your County Commissioner know that you appreciate their support and that it is right and correct to continue to support any veteran's service especially in light of the number of soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. WE OWE IT TO THEM!

On August 26th a group of members will be going again to the Space Coast stadium to —show the flag!. They will be passing out literature about the organization and recruiting new members. Contact John Schaefer at 795-3173 if you are interested in participating.

On the 28th of August the Veterans Transitional Facility will celebrate its 20th year as a program to assist veterans and their families. We will have a short event with some guest speakers and our color guard to raise the colors. This event will begin at 9:00 AM and will be followed by an open house so that you will be able to have a look at the facility.

We will have our annual National POW/MIA Day observance ceremony at the Memorial Center on Merritt Island on September 17 at 7:00 PM. It is appropriate and necessary for us to come together to honor and remember those who have been POWs and those who are unaccounted for in the service of their country.

Don't forget that the Reunion Committee begins their monthly meetings September 19th at 7:00 PM at the American Legion in Cocoa (Call ahead if you plan to attend. The American Legion, Post 22 is being renovated and the meeting place may be moved).

From September 16th through the 27th our Memorial Wall will be at the Andersonville National Historic Site in Andersonville, GA. This is, to our knowledge, the first time a Memorial Wall has ever been invited to a National Park site. It will be there in conjunction with a —Rolling Thunder! event to honor POWs and MIAs. Andersonville is the site of the National POW/MIA Museum commemorating the sacrifice of Americans who have lost their lives as POWs. Several of our members plan to accompany our Memorial Wall on that weekend. To Greg Welsh and his wife Maureen we thank you for representing this organization in the way that you do. It is indeed an honor for our Wall to be selected for this event.

Finally another reminder---if you have not renewed your membership, please do so. There are a significant number of members who we know want to remain as members but have momentarily forgotten to renew their memberships. EVERYONE COUNTS!!!!!!

To those who may have forgotten, one of the most dangerous things in the military is an NCO saying —Trust me sir.....

**Floyd Merckle**  
**President**  
**Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard**

### VVB Change of Address

Please note the VVB has a new mailing address:  
**Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc.**  
PO Box 237225  
Cocoa, FL 32922

THEVVBBUNKER@AOL.COM

### The Wall Report

This has been a great year for the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall, at the events we have had large crowds and we were greatly received. We had a good 4th of July as we were in Grand Island NE and had over 15,000 people come and see the Wall, it also set us up to go back next year to Kearney NE. This will be the fourth year in a row we have been to the Cornhusker State. We also made our first trip to Wisconsin that was nice as I'm originally from there. The big thing about this year is the heat - it has been a very hot summer, but people still keep coming out only early in the morning and later in the night.

The best event just took place a little more than 400 miles north of here. Rolling Thunder put on "The Ride Home" and we were part of it.

The Ride Home takes place at Andersonville, GA and they bring in ex- POW's and honor them. What makes this event so special is where it is held. Andersonville is a National Park, a National Cemetery, the National POW Museum, and during the Civil War it held Union POW's. The 7 hour drive is well worth the trip. They have two movies to watch, a driving tour and the POW Museum - a full day of living history.

After the Rolling Thunder event we stayed 6 more days with the Wall, during that time we had over 900 school children come to see the Wall and the other things that are there. Also during this time we had over 12,000 visitors to the park and this set the largest single event ever in the 40 year history of the park.

If you want to have a weekend getaway check out Andersonville you won't be disappointed. Oh and within 50 miles are Ft. Benning and the Infantry Museum and the Warner Robins AFB Air Museum.

We have 3 more events and we will end a great year, and were getting ready for next year. We finish the year out in Pickerington Oh for Veterans Day, hope I don't get snowed in.

I have started working on the 2011 schedule so if you know a group that is thinking about bring in the Wall have them get in touch with me and we can make it happen.

Hope to see you all at the Reunion in April, and remember check our schedule on our web site [www.TravelingWall.us](http://www.TravelingWall.us)

See you on the road.

**Greg Welsh**

## **More About The VVB Wall**

The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall is owned and trademarked by the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard. It is the centerpiece of our annual reunion. Our first reunion in 1988 featured a Wall listing 83 Florida veterans still missing from the Vietnam War. It was constructed by inmates at the Brevard Correctional Institution, who at that time formed a veterans group. Unfortunately the group dispersed not long after it formed when inmates were scattered throughout other institutions to make way for a juvenile detention center.

For subsequent reunions the VVB used Walls from other organizations.

Frequent scheduling problems mandated our own Wall and that came about in 2005 with the establishment of a Wall Committee. This had been anticipated as early as 2002 when our first donation toward the construction of a Wall was made. Greg Welsh enlisted help from his boss at Kennedy Space Center to estimate the extent of the project and the race was on. A Wall had to be ready by the 2006 Reunion because the VVB could not book one.

Finding a builder was next and several companies were considered. Material samples were made and transported back and forth by VVB members for testing and quality. Greg, Ralph Earrusso and Ray Johnson cut costs by sanding and taping the panels in a requisitioned garage. That's when Greg lost his job at the Space Center and became the Wall Manager.

Met-Con, Inc. of Cocoa constructed the Wall in 2005 donating a considerable portion of their labor. Precision Powder Coating of Melbourne did the finish work with McCotter Ford of Titusville installing the highlighting of the names. Those three businesses stretched the entire length of Brevard making this labor of remembrance truly a countywide project. It wasn't planned; it just worked out that way. A Truck and Trailer acquired by the VVB served as storage and transport.

Sixteen hours before the 2006 reunion the Wall was still being carefully arranged in the trailer. It met its send off time with only hours to spare, but it got there and the reunion went off without a hitch. The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall is still being improved as it sets to make its 4<sup>th</sup> appearance at our reunion.

Each year there are more requests for the Wall from organizations throughout the country to display at their events.

"Everywhere we go," says Greg Welsh, "The VVB is thanked for building it and making it available for people to see."

## **FLORIDA DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION**



**Dedicated Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting  
Forces**

***"So Others May Live"***

On behalf of The Florida Dustoff Association I would like to take a moment to say "Welcome Home." The Florida Dustoff Association is comprised of Dustoff Medics, Pilots, Corpsmen, Donut Dollies, Med-Evacs and many whom themselves have been "dusted-off" from The Vietnam, The Gulf War and OIF/OEF. **ALL ARE WELCOMED AT DUSTOFF!!**

This year's elected officers are: Brett Brookins, President, Robert Neitzel, Vice President, Elizabeth Brookins, Secretary, Roberta Neitzel, Treasurer and Doc Combs, Chaplin.

Florida Dustoff continues to send packages overseas to support our troops and also continues to sell military pot holders. All proceeds from the sale of these pot holders go directly to our efforts of supporting the troops.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate this past year's recipients of awards in our organization: Member of the Year, Jerry "Doc" Anderson, and Certificate of Appreciation for Service to Dustoff – Al Snow, Steve Doane, Ron "Doc" Custer and Linn Vercheski, Doctor Dustoff Award to Carolyn Zsoldos. Plaques were also presented to Orange County Service Officer Mike Dixon and State Representative Dorothy Hukill.

On a more somber note, Florida Dustoff Association, as well as many other Veterans Organizations throughout Florida, is saddened by the passing one of our lifetime members, and great friend, Ken Baker. Kenny, you are loved and will be missed by all.

We are currently in the process of completing our website – [www.DUSTOFFFL.ORG](http://www.DUSTOFFFL.ORG), so please feel free to take a peek, but please remember, it is currently under construction.

**Robert Neitzel –Vice President Florida Dustoff Association  
1st Vice President VVOF**

***“WHEN I HAVE YOUR WOUNDED”***

## VVOF needs your Assistance

The State Coalition has been putting forth an effort to support our troops by contacting corporations and placing public service announcements in local papers requesting donations for our fighting forces. It would be appreciated if our membership would join our effort in helping by collecting items our soldiers can use. We are looking for personal toiletry items such as brushes, combs, soap, flip-flops, trial sizes of shampoo, toothpaste, etc., to send over seas. Items or monetary donations (personal or from organizations) would be greatly appreciated. We do have a 501(c) 3 being used if an organization is donating money. If you and your local organizations are interested, please contact Roberta Neitzel, Treasurer of Florida Dustoff Association at 386-424-1989. ***All your efforts would be greatly appreciated!!***



**USA RIVER RATS**

After a successful and fun filled Reunion week, we plunged ourselves into a busy summer schedule. The USA Riverrats are pleased to announce that the "Jackie Beads" handed out at the Reunion raised almost \$1,500.00 in

donations which, as always, is donated directly to support the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard's' Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall.

Highlights of our summer activities included teaming with NVHS for their Poker Run in May, participation in several Memorial Day events, our annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July cookout for the Vista Manor Assisted Living Facility residents and staff, cooking for the Policemen and Firefighters dinner sponsored by DAV109 in Titusville, a two day fundraiser for AMVETS Post 34 in Palm Bay.

We are also proud to announce that 42 members of the Riverrats participated in the September 18<sup>th</sup> Standdown held at DAV109 in Titusville. Our members performed various functions from security, parking, escorts, cooking breakfast and lunch for the veterans and their families, as well as the volunteers, and serving the meals. The Riverrats jumped in where ever help was needed. I believe we served over 300 breakfasts and close to 300 lunches.

The remainder of the year promises to be just as busy and enjoyable with the highlight being the Christmas Eve dinner for the homeless veterans put on by NVHS.

On a sad note we have lost 4 of our members this year, two of them being charter members and we all lost a truly great friend when our friend, Ken Baker, passed away.

If you have questions or comments you can contact any of our officers. Our 2010 Officers are:

President	Al "Big Al" Diaz	321-863-0575
1 <sup>st</sup> . Vice	Rose Fantaccione	321-403-5875
2 <sup>nd</sup> . Vice	Eric Ackler	321-863-7415
Treasurer	Norm Pamplin	321-228-6576
Secretary	Michelle Ollice	321-323-4382
Chaplain	Francesca Aberns	321-501-2847
Sr Sgt @ Arms	Skip Aberns	321-431-3352
Asst Sgt @ Arms	George Golden	321-693-4281
Advisor	Arthur Dudley	321-258-3098
Advisor	Steven Worrell	321-698-0009
Historian	Francesca Aberns	321-501-2847
Quarter Master	Ken Wakefield	321-693-4762
Service Office	Chuck Weston	321-258-2744



**Combat Veterans  
Motorcycle Association**

The Florida Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA) is dedicated to the mission and needs of veterans and their families. Since November 2008, we have ridden over 202,194 miles in support of veteran's causes.

We are hosting a fund raising Poker Run on 23 October. All proceeds will go to The Space Coast Sentinels of Freedom. Cash prizes will be awarded for best hand & worst hands with the top prize being \$500! We will have live entertainment, food and other fun activities on hand to ensure your enjoyment. Please check our website for more details. [WWW.CVMAFlorida.org](http://WWW.CVMAFlorida.org). We invite all to participate to help raise funds for such a great cause. You don't need a motorcycle and you won't find a more worthy organization than the Sentinels!

Recently, we attended the Vietnam & All Vets of Brevard County-Vets Transition Facility's Open House. The Transition Facility is a fantastic organization and it is run by a top notch volunteer staff who helps the homeless transition to permanent housing. We are looking forward to working with them on a consistent basis in the future. For info on the Transition Facility contact Bridgette (321) 544-9491. You'll be glad you did!

As we move toward year's end, our thoughts are turning toward the many opportunities to support veterans and their families with holiday and cool weather related needs.

Finally, we would like to remind everyone of their civic duty to vote in the November election. If you are not yet registered, its not too late!

If you are a Combat Veteran and ride a motorcycle, please check us out. You don't have to join our organization to come ride with us. We live at [www.cvmaflorida.org](http://www.cvmaflorida.org) and invite you stop by for a visit.

## Call To Action!

**Help us Pass H.Res 111**

**Co Sponsors are still needed**  
**for this Legislation**

To Establish in the House of  
Representatives a  
Select Committee on POW and  
MIA Affairs

This legislation needs your  
support!  
We need answers!

"There are too many live sighting reports; specifically observations of several Caucasians in a collective farm by Romanians and the North Korean defectors' eyewitness of Americans in DPRK to dismiss that

there are no American POW's in North Korea."Background Paper prepared, in 1996, by I.O. Lee, analyst Defense POW/MIA Office.

"As of now, I can come to no other conclusion." Former Secretary of Defense and CIA Director James Schlesinger before the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, when asked directly if the United States left men behind in Southeast Asia. The Defense POW/MIA Office has failed, miserably, in their responsibility. The comments in our "Reliable Sources" section confirm this.

It's time for Congress to take another look at the POW/MIA issue.

**HELP US PASS H. RES 111**

**285 Cosponsors and**  
**Counting.... Is Your**  
**Congressman a Co-Sponsor**  
**for H.Res 111?**

**Why We Need H. Res 111? For**  
**additional information and documents**  
**supporting the case see**  
[www.nationalalliance.org/legis.documents.pdf](http://www.nationalalliance.org/legis.documents.pdf)

**Pentagon's POW/MIA Corridor**  
**Dedicated**

Michele Flournoy, undersecretary of defense for policy, dedicated a new Pentagon display today honoring POWs and MIAs from all conflicts.

The corridor, located on the 3rd floor, has been added to the Pentagon's public tour route where thousands of visitors and more than 23,000 Pentagon employees may view it.

In her dedication remarks, Flournoy noted that the displays in the corridor send many messages, and urged visitors and employees to pause and learn more about POW/MIA history, and of those Americans who are still missing from all conflicts.

"America is among a handful of nations committed to finding and bringing home those lost on former battlefields or isolated burial sites," she said. "There is no question that the lessons of past conflicts have helped us improve our ability to recover personnel who become isolated or missing in today's conflicts - and I hope this provides some small comfort to those of you who lost family members in past wars."

The ceremony was attended by invited guests including veterans, families of the missing, and former POWs. In addition to panels depicting many aspects of the American POW/MIA experience,

display cases include artifacts obtained during excavations for wartime remains, as well as POW memorabilia, and examples of grass roots efforts by MIA families to draw national attention to the issue.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO Web site at [www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo) or call 703-699-1420

## **VA Extends Agent Orange Benefits to More Veterans**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will add two new conditions to the list of "presumptive illnesses" related to Agent Orange exposure. These are Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease. In addition, VA will expand the presumption for chronic lymphocytic leukemia to include all chronic B-cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia. These conditions will now be presumed to be service-connected to herbicide exposure in Vietnam.

Vietnam Veterans with these illnesses will be able to claim VA disability benefits and health care services without having to prove that their conditions are connected to Agent Orange exposure. The new policy, expected to take effect in late 2010, will apply to Veterans who served in Vietnam anytime during the period beginning January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975. It will not apply to Veterans who only served on "Blue Water" Navy ships in the region.

"We must do better reviews of illnesses that may be connected to service, and we will," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence."

Secretary Shinseki, a Vietnam Veteran, made the decision to add these conditions to the list of presumptive service-connected illnesses based on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). The report, titled Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2008 ([www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=12662](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12662)), found some evidence linking exposure to Agent Orange with increased risk for Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease, and a stronger link between the herbicide and chronic B-cell leukemias. VA's decision to include these conditions brings the total number of categories of presumed illnesses linked to Agent Orange to 14. The decision regarding chronic B-cell leukemias actually expands the presumptive determination of chronic lymphocytic leukemia to include all chronic B-cell leukemias.

John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America, praised the Secretary's decision and said in a statement that Secretary Shinseki, "has taken significant strides toward 'doing the right thing' by the Veterans with whom he fought some 40 years ago." For more information VA's services and programs for Veterans exposed to Agent Orange, go to [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorangeor](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorangeor) call VA at 1-800-749-8387

## **"Blue Water" Update — Supreme Court Decision and New IOM Review**

A Supreme Court decision, in response to a case filed in fall of 2008, has been announced regarding Blue Water Veterans. Blue Water Veterans are those that served during the Vietnam War on open sea ships, generally in the Navy or Coast Guard. In January 2009, the Supreme Court effectively let stand an earlier court ruling that requires a Service member to have served on land or on the inland waterways of Vietnam in order to be presumed exposed to Agent Orange.

Blue Water Veterans continue to have the same access to health care as any Veteran.

VA has asked the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to review the medical and scientific evidence regarding Blue Water Veteran's possible exposure to Agent Orange. A report of the IOM findings is expected by Summer 2011.

VA has notified Veterans with disability claims on file that are affected by the Supreme court ruling. For questions regarding claim status, Veterans may contact their VA Regional Office (VARO.) A list of VARO contacts is available at [www.va.gov/directory](http://www.va.gov/directory).

To learn more about the Agent Orange Registry exam, visit [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposure/agentorange/registry.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposure/agentorange/registry.asp) or call 1-800-749-8387, then press 3.

## **VA Establishes ALS as a Presumptive Service-Connected Illness; Cites Association Between Military Service and Development of ALS**

Veterans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) may receive urgently needed support for themselves and their families after VA announced that ALS is now presumed service-connected for all Veterans with 90 days or more of continuous active service in the military.

VA based the decision primarily on a November 2006 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on the association between military service and ALS.

"We are extremely grateful to VA, Congressman Henry Brown and Senator Lindsey Graham for standing on the side of Veterans with ALS across the country," said Gary Leo, president and CEO of The ALS Association from 2004-2009.

"Thanks to their leadership, Veterans with ALS will receive the benefits and care they need, when they need them. Thanks to their efforts, no Veteran with ALS will ever be left behind.

"The IOM report, titled Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis in Veterans: Review of the Scientific Literature, analyzed

scientific and medical studies on the issue and concluded "there is limited and suggestive evidence of an association between military service and later development of ALS.

"ALS is a disease that progresses rapidly. VA's decision makes those claims much easier to process, and for Veterans and their families to receive the compensation they have earned through their service to the Nation.

ALS, also called Lou Gehrig's disease—a neuromuscular disease that affects about 20,000 to 30,000 people of all races and ethnicities in the United States—is generally relentlessly progressive and is almost always fatal.

ALS causes degeneration of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that leads to muscle weakness, muscle atrophy, and spontaneous muscle activity. Currently, the cause of ALS is unknown, and there is no effective treatment.

In August 2009, VA contacted Veterans who may have been denied service-connection for ALS. Veterans may also contact VA's disability compensation program, available online at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or by phone at 1-800-827-1000.

## **Vietnam Veterans of America Disputes California Court Finding That Stolen Valor Act is Unconstitutional**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – "The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit has struck down a federal law making it a crime to falsely claim a military honor or decoration, and this is a most regrettable decision," said John Rowan, national president of Vietnam Veterans of America. "We trust that this case will be reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court. We hope that the court will agree with those legal experts who hold that the Constitution of the United States does not protect egregious false statements of fact."

In a 2-1 ruling on August 17, the appeals court found the Stolen Valor Act—a 2006 federal law that prohibits falsely claiming to have won a military decoration, making it a crime to lie about receiving the Medal of Honor and other military decoration--unconstitutional, throwing out the conviction of Xavier Alvarez, an elected member of a California water district board, who, on several occasions, falsely claimed to be a recipient of the Medal of Honor.

"The right to speak and write whatever one chooses--including, to some degree, worthless, offensive and demonstrable untruths--without cowering in fear of a powerful government is, in our view, an essential component of the protection afforded by the First Amendment," Judge Milan Smith said in the majority opinion.

Said Rowan, "While we embrace the right of any American citizen to express opinions freely, lying about one's alleged military accomplishments in order to gain future prospects for advancement is simply wrong. This ruling degrades the honor that has been earned by our military personnel for their sacrifices in combat. Further, this is more than an issue of the violation of one's constitutional rights. In essence, it approves lying and could have significant implications in efforts to police

false statements in political ads and campaigns."

## **Medal of Honor Goes to Living Soldier First Since Vietnam**

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military decoration, to an Army sergeant who will be the first living soldier to receive the honor since the Vietnam War.

The president personally called Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, an Army specialist in Afghanistan at the time the events took place, to let him know of the decision, the White House said in a statement. He was awarded the medal for placing his life in danger when he and fellow paratroopers were ambushed by the Taliban in 2007.

According to the White House statement about the award "When an insurgent force ambush split Specialist Giunta's squad into two groups, he exposed himself to enemy fire to pull a comrade back to cover," "Later, while engaging the enemy and attempting to link up with the rest of his squad, Specialist Giunta noticed two insurgents carrying away a fellow soldier. He immediately engaged the enemy, killing one and wounding the other, and provided medical aid to his wounded comrade while the rest of his squad caught up and provided security."

Awarding the Medal of Honor to Giunta, 25, carries symbolic weight beyond the individual decision to award it to a living service member. Only a handful of the medals have been awarded, even posthumously, to service members who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A more detailed description of Giunta's heroic actions has been pieced together through interviews with him and other soldiers present that day in 2007, when they were ambushed by Taliban fighters in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley.

Giunta "was knocked flat by the gunfire; luckily, a well-aimed round failed to penetrate his armored chest plate," The Washington Post reports. "As the paratroopers tried to gather their senses and scramble for a shred of cover, Giunta reacted instinctively, running straight into the teeth of the ambush to aid three wounded soldiers, one by one, who had been separated from the others."

A New York Times Magazine article, which provided a blow-by-blow description of the ambush and ensuing battle, described Giunta as a "quiet lowan lofted into a heroism he didn't want."

Fewer than 3,500 Medals of Honor have been awarded since 1863

## **One of original Navajo Code Talkers dies in Arizona**

Allen Dale June, one of the 29 original Navajo Code Talkers who cofounded the Japanese during World War II by transmitting messages in their native language, has died. He was 91. His passing was September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

June died of natural causes Wednesday night at a veterans hospital in Prescott, his wife, Virginia, told The Associated Press.

His health had been failing since earlier this year when he was hospitalized for a urinary tract infection and kidney failure because he wasn't drinking enough water, his wife said. He was hospitalized again two months ago after visiting family on the Navajo Nation and was transferred from a Flagstaff hospital to Prescott, where he was under round-the-clock care.

The Code Talkers took part in every assault the Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945. They sent thousands of messages without error on Japanese troop movements, battlefield tactics and other communications critical to the war's ultimate outcome.

Several hundred Navajos served as Code Talkers during the war, but a group of 29 that included June developed the code based on their native language. Their role in the war wasn't declassified until 1968.

June, who attained the rank of sergeant, received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2001 along with other members of the original Code Talkers.

With his death, only two of the 29 are still living.

"The Navajo Nation lost a great warrior," Tribal Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan said in a statement. "His unique service to his country brought positive attention to the Navajo Nation. He will be missed."

June first tried to sign up for the Marines in his hometown of Kaibeto on the Navajo Nation, but a recruiter told him he was too young. He then traveled to the reservation town of Chinle to enlist — because he figured people there wouldn't recognize him — and he could lie about his age and forge his father's signature, Virginia June said.

Even after the code was declassified in 1968, June said little about his role as a Code Talker because he viewed it as bragging, his wife said. Anyone who saw him in the past several years might have been able to guess he was a Code Talker, as he wore a red Navajo Code Talker cap with his name on it wherever he went and a black leather jacket with "Marines" written across the back. He completed his look with a bolo tie that had a large turquoise stone.

Virginia June routinely handed out cards bearing Allen June's picture and rank in the Marines that he had autographed.

Besides his wife, Allen June is survived by 10 children.

## Military Addressing Tips

### *Make sure your mail reaches our troops*

Our troops look forward to receiving your letters and packages. That's why it's important to make sure your mail gets there, to the right person, in the right place.

The Department of Defense has issued the following guidelines for addressing your mail to military and civilian personnel deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

1. **Use the service member's full name.** The Department of Defense cancelled the [Any Service Member program](#) so mail must be addressed to someone specific.
2. **Include the unit and APO/FPO** (Air/Army Post Office or Fleet Post Office) address with the nine-digit ZIP Code™ (if one is assigned). [Click-N-Ship®](#) customers should be advised that the Postal Service and the Military will continue to add and update valid APO/FPO addresses for your online labels.
3. **Include a return address.**
4. **For packages, print on one side only** with the recipient's address in the lower right portion or print a postage-paid label online with [Click-N-Ship®](#). (Please note that ZIP Codes 093XX and 964XX are currently unavailable for electronic labels)

### What special precautions should I use when packaging overseas military mail?

Following these precautions will safeguard your package on the way to its final destination:

- 1 Place the mailing address inside the parcel on a separate piece of paper.
- 2 Use a box that is constructed to conform to the contents you are sending.
- 3 Ensure the weight of the items in the box is evenly distributed.
- 4 Add packing material on the inside if any portion of the box sags or is easily depressed.
- 5 Use packaging tape for wrapping the outside of the box. Do not wrap with string.
- 6 Cross out or cover excess markings or printing to prevent your box from being misssent.
- 7 Enclose all personal hygiene items, such as deodorant, lotion, or shampoo, in a sealable bag.
- 8 Place all perishable items, such as cookies, chips, etc., in a plastic container.
- 9 Do not mail liquids of any kind, especially carbonated drinks, which can explode during transit.

### Military Care Package Mailing Kit

Since Priority Mail service supplies are the packaging of choice for families preparing care packages for service members overseas, the USPS has created a "Mili-kit" based on the items most frequently requested by the **military**.

The kit contains:

- Three (3) each of flat rate boxes O-FRB1 and O-FRB2
- Two (2) each of Cube boxes OBOX7
- Address labels - Label # 228: 8 each
- Address labels - Label # 106-A: 1 each
- Customs FORM 2976-A: 8 EA.
- Customs FORM Envelope 2976-E: 8 EA.

The kit may be requested by calling **1-800-610-8734** (Packing Supply) and:

1. Choose your language ("1" is English, "2" is Spanish).
2. Choose option 1 (it states it is for Express Mail service, Priority Mail or Global Express Guaranteed).
3. When you reach a live agent, request "**CAREKIT04**."
4. Please allow 7-10 days for delivery.

**Note:** These are free supplies, postage must be affixed.

Additionally, you can find guidelines for packing, addressing, and shipping items to U.S. troops at [www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/](http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/).

### **MAIL BY DATES\*\***

Dec. 3 Military mail destined for Iraq or Afghanistan

Dec. 10 Military mail to other international destinations

\*\*Although this is the suggested cut off dates, if shipping to an FPO, I suggest you leave at least 6 weeks shipping/transit time, so I would suggest you ship the package no later than November 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **INTERESTED IN JOINING THE COALITION?**

There are many benefits to join the Vietnam and All Veterans State Coalition. A voice of many is heard above a voice of one. The coalition meets quarterly at various locations in the State of Florida and we discuss and disseminate information pertaining to veterans and their benefits. **We also are represented on the of the board Florida Veteran Council which helps determine policies in the State**

To obtain information regarding joining the coalition either as an Organization, or an individual, please visit our website at [VVOF.ORG](http://VVOF.ORG).

If you or your organization is already a member of the coalition, and there has been a change in officers, please immediately advise the coalition of these changes, including mailing addresses, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers so we may keep you up-to-date with all pertinent information.

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All inquiries, questions or comments may be directed to the President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer. All articles printed in our newsletters are strictly the opinion of the submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida State Coalition or its member organizations. Updated September 17, 2006

# THE VIETNAM TRAVELING MEMORIAL WALL



## About Our Wall

Our Wall is a 3/5 scale of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC, it stands six feet tall at the apex and covers almost 300 feet from end to end. The Memorial Wall is sponsored by The Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard (VVB). Work to build our Wall was started in April of 2005. The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall was completed and first shown to the public April 24, 2006.

This Traveling Memorial stands as a reminder of the great sacrifices made during the Vietnam War. It was made for the purpose of helping heal and rekindle friendships. The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall also allows people the opportunity to visit loved ones in their home town, who otherwise may not be able to make the trip to Washington.

The names on The Wall were painstakingly researched from five different data bases and cross-referenced with the Department of Informational and Organizational Reports (DIOR) in Washington, DC, and is one of the most correct and up-to-date traveling walls in the country.

Feel free to take a look at our website [www.travelingwall.us](http://www.travelingwall.us), read about what we have to offer. Please contact us with any questions you might have in regards to The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall coming to your town.

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## Officers 2010

Don Wassmer - President (VVB)  
Denise Wassmer - Secretary  
1226 Wing Rd SW  
Palm Bay FL, 32908  
321-726-6752 - Home  
[drwassmer@yahoo.com](mailto:drwassmer@yahoo.com)

Bob Neitzel 1<sup>st</sup> VP & Bert (VVB and DustOff)  
2304 Woodland Drive  
Edgewater, FL 32141-4320  
386-424-1989 Home 386-527-5445 (cell)  
[Hdwizrd7@aol.com](mailto:Hdwizrd7@aol.com)

Doc Williams 2<sup>nd</sup> VP & Linn (Dustoff)  
3098 Golden View Lane  
Orlando, FL 32812  
407-227-5763  
[Dragin52@hotmail.com](mailto:Dragin52@hotmail.com)

Ralph Earrusso, Past President (VVB)  
Jacque Earrusso, Treasurer  
4905 Secluded Way  
Merritt Island, FL 32953-7967  
321-453-7498  
[Daydrmr333@aol.com](mailto:Daydrmr333@aol.com)

## Organizations

**1st Cavalry Division Assn, FL Chapter**  
2465 Bronco Drive  
St Cloud, FL 34771-7955  
[johnngailfoil@hotmail.com](mailto:johnngailfoil@hotmail.com)

**Florida Dustoff Association**  
2304 Woodland Drive  
Edgewater, FL 32141  
[Hdwizrd7@aol.com](mailto:Hdwizrd7@aol.com)

**Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association**  
1693 Laramie Cir  
Melbourne FL 32940  
[Surfdog21@cfl.rr.com](mailto:Surfdog21@cfl.rr.com)

**Mid Florida Korean War Veterans Ch #173**  
333 Los Altos Way, Apt 104  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714  
[Gunship442@aol.com](mailto:Gunship442@aol.com)

**Military Order of the Purple Heart**  
Department of Florida  
P.O. Box 1576  
Auburndale, FL 33823-1576  
[john.douglas2@va.gov](mailto:john.douglas2@va.gov)

**National Veterans Homeless Support Corp**  
725 S DeLeon Room 118  
Titusville FL 32780  
[info@nvhs.us](mailto:info@nvhs.us)

**National Vietnam War Museum**  
3400 N. Tanner Road  
Orlando, FL 32826-3433  
[mbornemann@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mbornemann@cfl.rr.com)

**Native American Veterans Information**  
5170 Patricia Street  
Pt St John, FL 32927  
[rrbold@bellsouth.net](mailto:rrbold@bellsouth.net)

**USA River Rats**  
4411 Capron Rd  
Titusville, FL 32780  
[bigalchico@yahoo.com](mailto:bigalchico@yahoo.com)

**Rolling Thunder Florida**  
17616 Veterans Way  
Micanopy, FL 32667  
[moegin@bellsouth.net](mailto:moegin@bellsouth.net)

**Some Gave All, Inc**  
3810 Murrell Road #168  
Rockledge FL 32922  
[kewico48@aol.com](mailto:kewico48@aol.com)

**Space Coast War Dog Association**  
PO Box 254315  
Patrick AFB, FL 32925  
[lp32120@aol.com](mailto:lp32120@aol.com)

**Suncoast Vietnam Veterans of Pinellas County**  
PO Box 28141  
Kenneth City, FL 33709

**United Veterans All Armed Forces USA**  
5555 Barton Drive  
Orlando, FL 32807  
[WLS332@aol.com](mailto:WLS332@aol.com)

**Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard**  
P.O. Box 929  
Cocoa, FL 32923-0929  
[vets2gether@cfl.rr.com](mailto:vets2gether@cfl.rr.com)

**Vietnam and All Veterans of Central FL**  
3400 N. Tanner Road  
Orlando, FL 32826  
[Hoiyuan1@aol.com](mailto:Hoiyuan1@aol.com)

**Vietnam Brotherhood**  
PO Box 1073  
Venice, FL 34284  
[vcarter@hughes.net](mailto:vcarter@hughes.net)

**Vietnam Veterans of America State Council**  
PO Box 212348  
Royal Palm Beach, FL 33421-2348  
[Jimrufino@yahoo.com](mailto:Jimrufino@yahoo.com)

**Vietnam Veterans of America #96**  
241 Lake Ella Drive 850-224-8838  
Tallahassee, FL 32303

**Vietnam Veterans of America #594**  
2651 SE 19<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Cape Coral, FL 33904

**VVA #755**  
PO Box 451904  
Kissimmee, FL 34745-1904  
[ForthGunner@aol.com](mailto:ForthGunner@aol.com)

**Vietnam Veterans of Florida Association**  
2304 Woodland Drive  
Edgewater, FL 32141-4320  
[Hdwizrd8@aol.com](mailto:Hdwizrd8@aol.com)

**Vietnam Veterans of South Florida**  
1740 NE Media Ave  
Jensen Beach, FL 34957  
[navypatriot@aol.com](mailto:navypatriot@aol.com)

**Vietnam Veterans of Wakulla**  
21 Shoreline Drive  
Ochlockonee, FL 32346  
[USMC-VIETNAM-GRUNT@att.net](mailto:USMC-VIETNAM-GRUNT@att.net)

**Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida, Inc.**  
1 226 Wing Rd SW  
Palm Bay FL, 32908

NEWS PLEASE EXPEDITE