



Florida Veteran

Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida, Inc.

2304 Woodland Drive, Edgewater, FL 32141
www.vvof.org – 386-424-1989 – E-Mail HDWIZRD7@aol.com

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Florida's 28th Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion

The date for the next Reunion is Apr 23rd-26th at Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida. The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall will be at the park for viewing April 19th-April 26th. As most of you are aware, *this is the Nations largest Veterans Reunion*. Make sure to visit the Reunion Website at 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. The Vietnam Brotherhood Delta Company - Organization of the Year, Van Carter - Veteran of the Year, Michelle Wakefield - Member of the Year, and Grunt Gear - Business of the Year.

In addition, our 2014 executive board members are: Robert "Doc" Neitzel, President, "Big" Al Diaz 1st Vice President, Ralph Earrusso 2nd Vice President, Roberta Neitzel, Secretary, Jacque Earrusso, Treasurer and Ken Wakefield, Sgt at Arms.

A few reminders to members of the coalition:

Nominations are being accepted for 1st Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The floor will be opened at the October 18^h general membership meeting at The Clarion Inn in Stuart, Florida 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 November 28th, 2014 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 Robert Neitzel, President of the Coalition, to either the address listed on the front of the newsletter, or via e-mail to hdwizrd7@aol.com or to Al Diaz, Vice President at bigalchico@aol.com with a copy to Roberta at hdwizrd8@aol.com**

The January General Membership meeting is scheduled for January 17-19, 2015 at the La Playa Hotel and Resort in Daytona Beach. The evening of the 18th is the Banquet and Awards Dinner. Please mark your calendar for this event. The cost of the room will be \$64.00 per night (excluding tax) and reservations must be made by December 20th 2014 in order to receive the discounted rate. Additional information will be forthcoming on our website VVOF.ORG immediately after the October meeting.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I will begin with saying that the veterans community has been saddened once again by the passing of one of its own Ken Wakefield, lovingly known as Radioman. Ken was a US Army Veteran who served with the 1st Cav and served a multitude of positions in numerous veterans' organizations. He was Vietnam Veteran of the Year 2011/2012 of the Vietnam and All Veterans State Coalition, Past President of the USA River Rats as well as serving as their Treasurer, 1st Vice, Quartermaster and Past Captain of the Honor Guard, Sgt of Arms for the VVB and The Vietnam and all Veterans State Coalition, Past Commander American Legion Post 22, American Legion District 12th Commander as well as Adjutant for Post 22 and a Trustee and Adjutant for VFW Post 4228. He was extremely involved in various veterans events including, but not limited to the USA River Rats Medal of Honor Park, VVB Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion and Reunion Committee, NVHS Warm Full Safe Christmas, NVHS Stand downs, Cocoa Stand downs, Cooking and serving meals at Vista Manor for Easter, 4th of July and Thanksgiving.

I would like to take a moment once again to stress the importance of disseminating the information to all members of your organizations that is provided by the Vietnam and All Veterans State Coalition at the General membership meetings or via e-mails. A good amount of this information contains pending Federal legislation that affects **all veterans**.

Why, you may ask it is important to share this information? Possibly, the information may help a fellow veteran with their disability claim with the VA, or let them know of a program or assistance that may be available to them and their family. In addition, if there is pending legislation that you or your organization feels warrants your support, or non-support, contact your Senator or Congressperson by e-mail, fax, letter or phone and let them know what your concerns are about the bill. Without your voice, your representative will not know how their constituents' feel and sometimes, not always, will sway their vote on the issue. **Remember a voice of many is heard above a voice of one.**

We are heading into the cold weather months, and I would like to ask everyone to please keep our homeless veterans and their families in mind. Warm clothing of all sizes (for men, women and children), blankets, comforters, hats and gloves will be needed, as well as canned soup, stews (with pop top lids). If you are able to provide any of these items, there are several transitional facilities throughout the State that could use your support, as well as organizations geared solely on assisting our homeless brothers and sisters.

In addition, as we head into the holiday season, I am pleased to announce that the Coalition has made a donation to Wreaths Across America for the placement of several wreaths at the Edgewater/New Smyrna Beach Cemetery where my wife and I will be attending the ceremony and I ask that you please keep our troops that are serving overseas in mind. There are numerous organizations that send care packages to the troops, but more so during the holiday season. I know that this is a busy time for all, but it only takes a moment or two of your time, while shopping for friends and family, to purchase a few extra items to send overseas. Let our Servicemen and Servicewomen be reminded that we support their efforts and sacrifices. Also please do not forget our children.. whether it be a child of a homeless veteran or a child whose family has hit hard times..it does not take much to pick up an extra gift to give someone happiness. Please donate to our transitional facilities or Toys for Tots throughout the State.

Please keep all active duty servicemen and servicewomen in your prayers for their safe return. Roberta and I are anxiously awaiting our sons return from Afghanistan at the end of October, beginning of November and hopefully, he will be home with us for the Holidays. With Veterans Day approaching, I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for your service and would also like to wish you and yours and happy and safe holiday season. I would also like to thank you for the honor of having been the President for the past several years and hope you feel that I have served you well.

Robert Neitzel
President
Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida State
Coalition



VVB NEWS

President's Message

Well it's time of year for The Fall Newsletter for the Coalition. The Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard has been busy but the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall has really been busy. This time I am going to just write one letter and cover the VVB and The Wall. We had our awards and reunion thank you luncheon and hope all enjoyed it. The biggest thing is we're trying to make the City of Cocoa code enforcement happy, and thanks to the guys at the facility were doing that. Great job !!

Well as for the Wall we have been busy, we have done 8 events so far and we have 8 more to do and we leave Aug 19 for 2 places in WV and GA. By the way if you are on I75 about mile marker 82 look for the bill board with our logo on it, we'll be in Ashburn GA Sept 4 to the 7. Then to Effingham IL when we get back from there we get a 3 week break which will be nice, but no rest for the weary. The end of Oct we go to Lake Kelly TX, then on to Houston for the Wings over Houston Air Show. This year they are featuring the aircraft of Vietnam and of course the Wall that should be a very big event. Next we go to Chanault Air Museum in Monroe, La for Veterans Day and who knows Uncle Si might cross the river from West Monroe and come see us, we'll have more on that. Our last appearance of the year will be DeSoto County Veterans Appreciation Days at the Turner Agri-Civic Center, Arcadia, FL
Also were launching a new Wall web site so it will have a few new things on it along with our 2015 schedule.

This is my last year as Wall manager as I will be retiring and I must say it has been an honor. The Duties of the Wall manager beginning in 2015 is Doc Russo. I have to say Doc has been busy learning all the things he has to keep track of along with the new web site, but he is doing well. Speaking of well our 2015 schedule is booked unless someone drops out, and that means we are getting ready to pre-book 2016, it seems a lot of towns want the Wall in their community and he is the guy to bring it.

Anyway if you know someone wanting a Wall send them our way we can always help out someone from the coalition.. that's why we are all here. Stay safe and we'll see from the road.

Greg Welsh
President
Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard

VVB MAILING ADDRESS
Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc.
PO Box 237225
Cocoa, FL 32922

THEVVBUNKER@AOL.COM

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 officers are: Robert “Doc” Neitzel, President, Ron “Doc” Custer, Vice President, and Roberta Neitzel Treasurer/Secretary 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. Once again, we will be participating in Wreaths Across America December 13th at the Edgewater/New Smyrna Beach Cemetery in Edgewater and have made donations this year to both Honor-Release-Return for The Ride Home honoring POWs and MIAs in Andersonville and Wreaths Across America.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate this past year’s recipients of awards in our organization: Member of the Year was myself and I was truly humbled by this honor, Certificate of Appreciation for Service to Dustoff –American MedCare Supply, Chris Hamrick, Ruari Voisey, Bill and Hjordis Sauerwine, Ralph and Jacque Earrusso, Steve Doan, Larry Dutro, Art Smith, Ken and Michelle Wakefield, Bobbi Jo Dino, Rose Fantaccione Big Al Diaz and Bobbi Jo Dino. A plaque was presented to Florida Senator Dorothy Hukill. We also presented a plaque to the USA River Rats for Presentation of Colors at the January coalition meeting, as well as several members for their assistance during the meeting.

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

**Robert Neitzel – President Florida Dustoff
Association**

“WHEN I HAVE YOUR WOUNDED”



USARIVER RATS

Not too much has been going on since the Reunion. We did our annual 4th of July lunch at Vista Manor Nursing home in Titusville along with a Fun Day playing Bingo with the residents. They have so much fun and enjoy the company. Our next visit will be for Thanksgiving dinner on November 23, 2014. We participated in the National Veterans Homeless Support Stand Down on September 20, 2014.

The Medal of Honor project has been on hold. We sent letters out to the American Legions, AMVETS and Veterans of Foreign Wars in the State of Florida asking for donations. The responses have been slow coming in. We will try to have another update in the next newsletter.

Of course we will be planning our annual Christmas Party at the VFW Post 4228 in Titusville date TBD. All are welcome to attend we would love to see you there. There is always plenty of good food and entertainment.

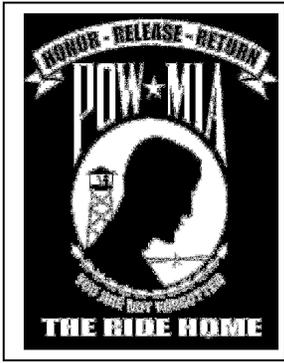
We lost two other Rat members this year Jerry “Boomer” Agerstrand and Ken “Radioman” Wakefield, both were wonderful individuals and will truly be missed by all.

We will be having our nominations for the new officers in October and November with elections in December. I will have our new slate of officers in the next issue. As always visit our website “USARIVERRATS.COM” for information and updates. If you would like more information, or would like to join our organization please feel free to contact any of the officers listed below.

USA RIVER RAT OFFICERS 2014

President	Steve “Scarecrow” Worrell	321-698-0009
1 st Vice President	Ron “Ronbo” Saxby	321-914-9046
2 nd Vice President	Robert “Salmander” Lessard	321-302-9163
Treasurer	Ken “Radioman” Wakefield	321-693-4762
Secretary	Janis “Bubette” Worrell	321-698-0659
Chaplain	Tracy “Woody” Rac	321-684-1805
Quarter Master	Rose “Rosebud” Fantaccione	321-403-5875
Service Officer	Ron “Ronbo” Saxby	321-914-9046
Historian		
Sr Sgt @ Arms	Skip “GreaseMonkey” Aberns	321-431-3352
Sgt @ Arms	Rich “Woodchuck” Gilliland	321-636-5538
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Jerry “Wolverine” Celona	321-222-8255
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Andrea “LilBit” Howard	321-544-1230
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Nicole “Luvbug” Morin	407-234-5907
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Linda “Radar” Patricks	321-4275756
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Bill “Chapy” Chapman	321-403-4518
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Bobbie Jo “BAD” Dino	321-302-4781
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Greg “Clueless” Boyle	321-327-4575
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Gordon “Flash” Benson	717-571-3199
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Mike “Cowboy” Angelo	321-243-0369
Sr Advisor	Al “Big Al” Diaz	321-863-0575
Advisor	Al “Gunner” Dudley	321-258-3098
Advisor	Robert “Dustoff” Neitzel	386-527-5445
Advisor	Wayne “Wayneo” Smith	321-698-6989

**USA RIVER RATS
Janice Worrell
Secretary**



HONOR-RELEASE -RETURN, Inc.

3818 Litchfield Loop Lake Wales, Florida 33859

www.honorreleasereturn.com

The Mission

Working for the repatriation of live American Prisoners of War in any form of captivity world-wide. To devote all available manpower and resources of the organization to build political support through education and attain mission favorable outcomes. To craft and pass effective legislation, gain government action and success in repatriating Prisoners of War and those still Missing in Action. To act as a catalyst for the POW/MIA community through communication, organization and coordination of efforts to foster common success of all and nurture a universal will to account for all the missing.

The Name

Why the name Honor Release Return? We have come together to take action and restore **honor** to our government by stopping the dishonor and hold them accountable. Our government has abandoned young patriots in captivity and we have come together to gain the **release** of their person alive or their remains and to **return** them to their country, their home and their family. This is our mission and this is our strategy. Truth and honor are our sabers. We will wield them unrelentingly and expertly, no matter how long the fight, until they all come home.

The Reason

Unaccounted for American Military Personal

WWI WWII Korea Cold War Vietnam War on Terror

3,344 73,677 7,926 126 1,654 6

Our Demands

1. U.S.G. formally request the return of all live Americans who are unaccounted for, in captivity or being detained in any foreign country
2. U.S.G. under take all measures necessary to repatriate all Americans who are unaccounted for, in captivity or being detained in any foreign country.
3. U.S.G. under take all measures necessary to obtain all information held and/or known by foreign governments, groups and individuals concerning all Americans who are now or who have been unaccounted for at any time.
4. All information, in any form regardless of when or how obtained, pertaining to Americans unaccounted for prior to 1991 be declassified and made available for public inspection.
5. Funding of all actions to account for Americans who are unaccounted for be fully funded by the U.S.G.
6. All remains recovered in association with unaccounted for Americans, past, present and future, be identified and/or confirmed using the latest scientific means and that all remains be tested and analyzed for age at death using minimal remains to allow for a 2nd, independent DNA analysis if family members so desire.

It is time for Americans to STAND for those who CANNOT STAND for themselves.

CONTACT US Together we can make happen!

BOB "Bulldog" Ousley bousle19@comcast.com

Jim "Moe" Moyer moehog@verizon.net



The Vietnam Brotherhood has had a very busy Spring and Summer.

Alpha Company once again presented the Colors in the Melbourne Reunion and continues to do so locally in Sarasota and Surrounding Counties. They also are present for the funerals of Vietnam Brotherhood Funerals and Events. They also assist with the local Junior ROTC program as well as educational events in local schools.

Bravo Company was very busy this past Spring with working as volunteers at the Boston Red Sox Spring Training Facility. They also provide free coffee to all the veterans at the Veteran Administration Hospital in Ft. Meyers each Wednesday of the Month. Much of the money they raise goes towards the Coffee events as well as a Scholarship to local Veteran Students. Additionally they work with Wreaths Across American, as well as local parades and provide an honor guard with needed.

Charlie Company continues to work with the Veteran Administration in St. Petersburg as well as volunteering at Bay Pines. They also continue to provide assistance to all Veterans as needed.

Delta Company has been extremely busy with helping to raise money to purchase a Vietnam Replica Wall to be place in Punta Gorda, Charlotte County. This will cost with preparation, installation and other cost not including maintenance over \$150,000. They meet at the Veterans Administration Nursing home and assist with helping Veterans there as well as other Veterans Locally. They also host a very much fun Christmas Party for Members and Families as well as helping local kids. Delta is also the host company of the original founding members of the Vietnam Brotherhood, Inc.

Echo Company is preparing to host the Coalition Mobile Vietnam Replica Wall the first week in December. This will be Greg Walsh's last event before retiring. He will turn over that duty to Doc Russo. They continue to work in getting camping sites for those in The Vietnam Brotherhood who will be assisting in numerous areas such as security, education, maintenance, etc. All the companies from the Vietnam Brotherhood will be on hand to help with Security.

Hotel Company worked several major events already this year and more to come. It all started with the Sam Swope Charity Ride with the Shrines the First Sunday of Bike Week in March. As a result of their efforts they were able to donate \$5,000. to the event that raised \$352,000, all of which goes to the Shriners Children's Hospital in Tampa. They also helped the VVB at the Veterans Reunion by hosting a bar. Besides the rather damp weather which hindered the event Hotel Company was able to donate \$1,550. Toward the event hosted by VVB. They also host bingo at the Veterans Administration Center for assisted Living in Orlando on a monthly basis. Again this fall they assisted in providing a rest area for the McDonald Houses of Central Florida. As a result they estimated that over \$235,000 was raised from this event. Hotel is also co-hosting a Charity Golf Tournament that will raise money for the Toys for Tots Program locally. Again this year they will have a float in the Orlando

Veterans Parade which is the 2nd largest in the country. A feature hit of the parade is friends and members of Hotel company passes out candy to the crowd.

The Vietnam Brotherhood Inc. a Florida chartered Non Profit Corporation but with members Nationally, is committed to provide assistance to Vietnam Veterans and their families as well as work with all other Veterans and their families in the local communities as needed. Should you have any questions about The Vietnam Brotherhood or like additional information please contact the CEO, Chris "Dai Uy" Bischoff.



SEMPER FIDELIS AMERICA, INC

Semper Fidelis America Inc. was started by Founder and President James R. Martina (Papa Smurf) who did six tours in Vietnam and was one of the few U.S. Marines attached to help at Hamburger Hill. His vision was to help other veterans in need. Today Semper Fidelis America holds numerous yearly functions to help raise money for our military brothers and their families. Our group reaches out to many other organizations. Semper Fidelis America Inc. is a not for profit organization.

Our mission is to support the VA Convalescent home located in Baldwin Park at 5201 Raymond Street Orlando, Florida. We hold numerous yearly functions in order to raise money to help these veterans. Our organization is not for profit, so all the proceeds from our functions go to veterans in need and their families. We also work together with other organizations such as Vietnam Veterans of Central Florida caretakers of National Vietnam War Museum also located in Orlando. Youth organizations, such as Orlando Devil Dog Young Marines, which always help with our yearly dinners for disabled veterans.

JOHN MURPHY
PRESIDENT



VETERANS COUNCIL OF MARTIN COUNTY

The Veterans Council of Martin County Inc. is a federally tax-exempt charitable organization providing services to all military veterans in Martin County, Florida. Members of 13 local organizations, including Veterans of

Foreign Wars, American Legion and AMVETS posts, are members of the Veterans Council. All members serve on a voluntary basis so 100% of the proceeds received by the organization go to helping Martin County veterans.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 1041-MARTIN COUNTY

The Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1041, Martin County, is comprised of 100% active duty Veterans of the Vietnam era. Almost all are combat veterans and many have disabilities of one form or another from their combat duty. However, we consider ourselves "The Lucky ones". Our mission is to bring honor, respect, and aid to veterans of all eras. We have no payroll, we pay no rent, we give of ourselves to aid other veterans, and nearly 100% of the money we raise goes to fulfill this mission in the local community.

Below are some of the projects we are currently working on or have planned:

Veterans Homeless Prevention Rapid Response Fund:

A fund of money that can be tapped into in a matter of hours to prevent eviction of veterans and their families giving them time to work out a more long term solution and by working with the Martin County Office of Veterans Services.

Long Term Housing for Paralyzed Veterans:

Working with other agencies we hope to remodel single family homes so they are suited for the special needs of physically handicapped veterans.

Memorial Brick Markers:

Working with the City of Stuart to relocate existing Memorial Brick Markers and provide for new Memorial Brick Markers as part of the remodeled Veterans Memorial Park in The City of Stuart we are expanding the number of memorial brick pavers and providing a lasting tribute to those that have served and sacrificed for their country. If you wish to purchase a brick paver to honor and remember a veteran please visit our website to download an application at <http://www.vva1041.org>.

THE MEANING OF COINS LEFT ON TOMBSTONES

Have you ever been in a cemetery and saw coins laying upon a tombstone? There is actually a reason behind it. Read more, so you can know what each coin means, and maybe as you visit a fallen soldier you can leave a coin to honor them too. These meanings vary depending on the denomination of coin:

A coin left on a headstone lets the deceased soldier's family know that somebody stopped by to pay their respect. Leaving a penny means you visited.

A nickel means that you and the deceased soldier trained at boot camp together. If you served with the soldier, you leave a dime. A quarter is very significant because it means that you were there when that soldier was killed.

So what happens to the coins after Memorial Day? It is collected and the money is used for cemetery maintenance, the cost of burial for soldiers, or the care for indigent soldiers.

Supposedly the tradition became popular here in the United States during the Vietnam War. It is believed it was a way to show respect without getting into an uncomfortable political discussion about a war that was very controversial.

In general, however, this tradition can be traced to as far back as the Roman Empire. It was a way to give a buddy some spending money for the hereafter.

Two VA Scientists Honored with Awards for Groundbreaking Work on Spinal Cord Injuries

William A. Bauman, M.D., and Ann M. Spungen, Ph.D Awarded 'Sammies'

WASHINGTON – In the past, spinal cord injuries often meant a death sentence for patients – not because of the injury itself, but because of the complications caused as a result of the injury. But thanks to the work of two Veterans Affairs scientists and researchers at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), many paralyzed Veterans now have a reason for hope. And a way to live.

Last night, William A. Bauman, M.D., and Ann M. Spungen, Ph.D., Director and Associate Director of VA's Rehabilitation Research & Development National Center of Excellence for the Medical Consequences of Spinal Cord Injury were awarded the prestigious Samuel J. Heyman Science and Environment Medal, also known as the "Sammies."

The Science and Environment Medal is awarded to federal employees who have made a significant contribution to the nation. The pair of VA researchers, who have been working together for a quarter of a century, were recognized in a ceremony in the Andrew Mellon Auditorium in Washington, D.C. VA Secretary Robert McDonald presented Bauman and Spungen their awards.

"Many of our facilities perform groundbreaking work, which serves as a model for healthcare research across the nation," said Secretary McDonald. "I am proud of William and Ann. Any research institution would be proud to have these leading scientists, but they have chosen to dedicate their careers to serving Veterans at VA, and we are proud to call them our own."

In 2001, Bauman and Spungen established the VA's Rehabilitation Research & Development National Center of Excellence for the Medical Consequences of Spinal Cord Injury in Bronx, NY, where Spungen most recently tested a new bionic walking assistance system that enables individuals with paralysis to stand, walk, and climb stairs.

As part of their collaboration, Bauman and Spungen have made great progress in understanding the effects of spinal cord injury on the body. Their work led to the conclusion that persons with spinal cord injury are at a markedly increased risk for heart disease. They were also the first to describe, and then treat, an asthma-like lung condition common in those with higher levels of paralysis. They have developed approaches to make it easier for paralyzed patients to undergo successful colonoscopies. With other researchers in their unit, Bauman and Spungen formulated novel drug combinations to raise low blood pressure, and they have overseen the development of treatments to reduce bone loss shortly after spinal cord injury. Their work has advanced our understanding and treatment of chronic, non-healing pressure

ulcers. Researchers under their direction also are making strides toward improving understanding of body temperature regulation and the effect of swings in body temperature on one's ability to think.

Bauman has worked at the Bronx VA hospital for 35 years, starting in the laboratory of the late Rosalyn Sussman Yalow, VA physicist and Nobel Prize winner. Bauman said he made up his mind from the start to devote himself to patients with spinal cord injury who, at the time, were largely marginalized and overlooked by physicians with training in general medicine.

"I would say our center's greatest accomplishment has been to identify problems in persons with spinal cord injury that no one had appreciated prior to our work, and then to develop successful approaches to solve them," Bauman said. "Prior to our work, many of these problems were not realized to be important, or were ignored because it seemed that nothing could be done to improve them."

Spungen said she can recall being captivated by the sense of civic duty pervading Bauman's energetic sphere of medical research activity at the hospital.

"I got to the VA and met these incredible scientists and investigators who were here working for the Veterans and who were so intelligent, so open, and so kind. I just became enamored with the entire atmosphere and dug in, and I have been here ever since," Spungen said.

Robert Ruff, national director for neurology at the Department of Veterans Affairs, said the work of Bauman and Spungen has had a wide-ranging impact. "The research is relevant not only to people with spinal cord injury, but to a larger population who are immobilized, from those with ALS to cancers, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, dementia or Parkinson's disease," Ruff added.

The Service to America Medals are presented by the [Partnership for Public Service](#). This year, eight award winners were chosen from 33 finalists and almost 400 nominees. The 2014 selection committee included CEO Alberto Ibarguen of the Knight Foundation, Maryland Senator Benjamin Cardin, and Georgetown University President John DeGioia

VA Updates Disability Claims Application New Process Will Reduce Processing Times and Improve Quality

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it is introducing a uniformed disability claims form to better serve Veterans, families and survivors. Standardizing the process by which Veterans file claims and initiate appeals will make it easier for Veterans and their survivors to clearly state what benefits they are seeking from VA and provide information that is necessary to process their claims and appeals. The new forms eliminate applicant guesswork, which often leads to delays in decisions and ultimately delays in receiving benefits. The new regulations go into effect in late March 2015.

"We must do everything that we can to make it as fast and easy as possible for Veterans and their survivors to file for and receive an accurate decision on their claim," said VA Secretary Robert McDonald. "Our Veterans and survivors will know, at the outset of the claims process, what is needed, which removes subjective interpretation from the process. We want to eliminate any barriers that make it difficult for our Veterans or survivors to receive benefits to which they are entitled." In the past, a Veteran or survivor did not have to use a certain

form to seek compensation or other benefits from VA. Claims or appeals (Notice of Disagreement) could be submitted on any piece of paper which caused delays due to missing information.

By using standard forms for all disability claims, VA can more quickly and accurately identify what the Veteran is claiming or appealing. This will allow VA to immediately move on to next steps in the evidence-gathering and decision-making process, which saves administrative processing time and speeds the delivery of earned benefits. The existing process is also inconsistent with most, if not all, other government and non-government application processes, such as applying for social security, applying for a driver's license, applying for a job or filing for an income tax refund. "These days, government agencies and private businesses rely on standard forms to deliver faster and more accurate customer service," said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. "VA's ability to deliver better customer service requires the use of standard forms as well. That is why we worked extensively with our partners in the Veterans community to streamline the way we process claims while preserving the effective date rules concerning informal claims through the creation of a new *intent to file a claim* process." The updated process also includes standardizing the traditional informal claims process by employing a new "Intent to File a Claim" process which affords the Veteran or survivor one year to compile the necessary documentation or evidence to support the claim while preserving an effective date of claim. More information about VA Forms [21-526EZ](#), [21-527EZ](#), [21-534EZ](#) or VA Form [21-0958](#), *Notice of Disagreement*, may be found at www.ebenefits.va.gov or www.va.gov/vaforms/.

St. Lucie County Chosen as Site of Seventh State Veterans' Nursing Home

TALLAHASSEE (Sept. 23) -- St. Lucie County will host the site of the next state veterans' nursing home, following a unanimous vote in today's Cabinet Meeting at the Capitol.

The decision was made following a presentation on the site selection process by Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Executive Director Mike Prendergast.

The site in St. Lucie County was one of nine locations in six counties visited in June 2014 by a site selection committee composed of representatives from Florida's veteran community, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and Florida Department of Management Services, which will oversee construction of the new 120-bed skilled nursing facility. The visits were publicly noticed and attended by local officials and members of the community.

Following public deliberation, the committee selected St. Lucie County as its top recommendation during a July 1 vote and forwarded the recommendation to the FDVA executive director for consideration.

Today's recommendation followed a months-long deliberative process, following Prendergast's Feb. 7, 2014 Cabinet Meeting presentation, which discussed the need for and formal process necessary to build additional veterans' nursing homes in Florida.

His presentation was based on an independent study authorized by the 2013 Florida Legislative Session and signed into law by the governor, which identified ten counties having the greatest need of a state veterans' nursing home. Six of the counties submitted formal proposals in May 2014 to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs for consideration.

"I greatly appreciate the time and due diligence each member of the site selection committee made in reviewing the individual proposals and inspecting the nine sites," said Prendergast. "Their recommendation reflected a thoughtful and deliberative process which reflected a host of issues surrounding the suitability of the land offered by the six counties."

The overall planning and construction of new veterans' homes is a multi-year process dependent upon both federal and state matching funds.

"There are more than 700,000 veterans in the Sunshine State who are 65 years of age or older," said Prendergast. "The need to build additional skilled nursing facilities has already been established and we look forward to building additional facilities in the coming years."

The state's network of existing veterans' nursing homes has an occupancy rate averaging 99 percent. Florida currently has state veterans' nursing homes in Daytona Beach, Land O' Lakes, Panama City, Pembroke Pines, Port Charlotte and St. Augustine. The department also operates a veterans' assisted living facility in Lake City.

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, serving the nation's third largest veterans' population, celebrates its 25th Anniversary in 2014.

Payment or Reimbursement for Certain Medical Expenses for Camp Lejeune Family Members

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to providing the best care for Veterans and families related to Camp Lejeune historical drinking water contamination as required by law. VA is announcing the publication of two regulations: one providing health care for Camp Lejeune Veterans and the other reimbursing for health care expenses of their family members potentially affected by contaminated drinking water at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The regulations implement provisions of the "Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012."

The first regulation, entitled *Hospital Care and Medical Services for Camp Lejeune Veterans (AO78)*, will take effect immediately. The second -- *Payment or Reimbursement for Certain Medical Expenses for Camp Lejeune Family Members (AO79)* -- will take effect 30 days after publication.

The published regulations now allow VA to reimburse eligible Camp Lejeune family members for out-of-pocket health care costs related to any of the 15 covered medical conditions listed in the 2012 Act. Under that law, VA can reimburse costs from March 26, 2013, onwards. Family members can start applying 30 days after the regulation publication date. For more information about VA's Camp Lejeune program, including eligibility and how to apply, visit <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/> or call **1-877-222-8387**.

Since the passage of "Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012", VA has enrolled and provided health care to those Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987.

Background:

President Obama signed the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 into law on Monday, August 6, 2012. In compliance with the law, VA provides

health care to Veterans stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina between 1957 and 1987 and meeting certain criteria. In late 2014, VA will begin reimbursement of health care expenses to their affected family members.

From 1957 to 1987, people living or working at Camp Lejeune were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with chemicals known as volatile compounds, including industrial solvents and benzene from fuels. The law provides that Veterans stationed at Camp Lejeune between 1957 and 1987 will be eligible to receive health care through VA, and exposed family members will be reimbursed for health care costs, for the following medical conditions

1. Esophageal cancer;
2. Lung cancer;
3. Breast cancer;
4. Bladder cancer;
5. Kidney cancer;
6. Leukemia;
7. Multiple myeloma;
8. Myelodysplastic syndromes,
9. Renal toxicity;
10. Hepatitis steatosis;
11. Female infertility;
12. Miscarriage;
13. Scleroderma;
14. Neurobehavioral effects; and
15. Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

For family members, VA will be the last payer and will provide reimbursement after all other health insurance coverage and reimbursement is received, as required by law.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Who is eligible for the Camp Lejeune program?

A: Veterans may be eligible for Camp Lejeune coverage if they meet the following criteria:

- Served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for no less than 30 days between January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987
- Meet all the qualifications for VA benefits, including meeting the VA definition of "Veteran," and receiving a discharge other than dishonorable

Additional qualifications can be determined by completing the 10-10EZ form and enrolling in VA benefits.

Family members may be eligible for the program if they resided on Camp Lejeune as a dependent of an Active Duty Servicemember, or were in utero, for no less than 30 days between January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987 and have one of the illnesses or conditions listed in the law. VA may reimburse costs associated with hospital care and medical services, as the last payer, for the eligible family members for the 15 illnesses or conditions. Once those family members have submitted claims to their insurance

companies, they can apply to VA for reimbursement of the remaining balance of charges and fees connected to the qualifying illnesses

Q: How do Veterans and family members apply for the Camp Lejeune program?

A: For Veterans: Veterans seeking to enroll in VA health benefits can enroll online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply or at their local VA Health facility (www.va.gov/directory). Veterans seeking more information about VA's Camp Lejeune Program or to apply via phone can call **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**.

Veterans should locate relevant documentation to show proof of Camp Lejeune residency of not less than 30 days (e.g., copies of orders, base housing records, medical or school records, etc.). This information will be utilized by the Veteran Health Administration to validate eligibility for care under this authority.

For family members: Once the family member regulation is effective (30 days after it is published), interested family members will be able to apply online. Submitted applications and supporting documentation will be reviewed to determine family member eligibility for the program.

Once deemed eligible for the program, family members who have received care for one of the 15 Camp Lejeune conditions since March 26, 2013, can submit a claim for reimbursement. Family members should keep receipts for medical expenses related to the covered illnesses/conditions. Because the Camp Lejeune law only reimburses expenses, as the payer of last resort, related to the 15 conditions, family members should not change their existing health insurance.

Family members who have questions regarding applying for Camp Lejeune Family Member Program benefits, claims payment, appeals, or other related matters should call toll-free at **1-866-372-1144** between the hours of 7 to 4:30pm CST.

Q: Is the reimbursement for care retroactive?

A: No, reimbursement is only from the point in time the Veteran enrolls in VA, if after 8/6/12 or reimbursement of VA copayments back to 8/6/12, if already enrolled and identified as a Camp Lejeune member within 2 years of publication of the rule. VA began providing Veteran care for Camp Lejeune on 8/6/12, following the passage of "Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012".

Q: Does this law provide Veterans with disability compensation?

A: No. This law allows Camp Lejeune Veterans to enroll in VA health care. It does not provide service connection and compensation.

Veterans who believe they have an injury/illness related to their military service may file a claim for disability (adjudication) for their condition at their Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office. A list of those offices by state can be found here: <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=3&isFlash=0>.

VA's online website for electronic claim submission: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal?_nfpb=true&_nfxr=false&_pageLabel=Apply.

Vietnam PTSD Discharges DoD Has Agreed to Reconsider

The Defense Department has agreed to reconsider the bad-paper discharges for thousands of Vietnam-era veterans who may have suffered from combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder but were kicked out of the military in the era before that became a diagnosable condition. In a new rule announced 3 SEP, the Pentagon said veterans from the Vietnam era and other past wars with other-than-honorable discharges will be given "liberal consideration" if they seek to correct their military records and provide some evidence of a PTSD diagnosis that existed at the time of their service. Upgraded discharges could result in the restoration of some benefits, such as disability pay, separation pay or GI Bill benefits from the Veterans Affairs Department, which are typically denied to vets who receive other-than-honorable discharges. Health care in the VA system is typically provided to veterans regardless of their discharge.

In today's military, PTSD is considered a mitigating factor for misconduct and behavioral problems. The military services are required to grant a medical evaluation to any service member who claims PTSD before finalizing a bad discharge. The Pentagon's new rule comes in response to a federal lawsuit filed on behalf of several veterans in March that claimed the Defense

Department was wrongfully denying discharge upgrade applications from veterans with claims and evidence of PTSD. The new policy was applauded by the Yale Law School Veterans' Legal Service Clinic, which is spearheading the federal McTiernan, a student intern involved with the lawsuit. However, she said, it's too early to tell how the new rule will be.

VA Accountability

Legislation to Punish VA Employees

When Congress last month passed a massive overhaul and funding initiative to fix the broken Veterans Affairs Department, the law's architects said their work was just getting started. On 10 SEP, members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee followed through on that promise. Lawmakers approved yet another measure that would make it easier to fire the agency's senior executives and take away their bonuses both proactively and retroactively. The Comprehensive Department of Veterans Affairs Performance Management and Accountability Reform Act, sponsored by committee Ranking Member Mike Michaud (D-ME) aims to set clearer goals against which senior VA executives' job performance could be measured. The legislation would:

- Establish up-front organizational goals for the agency's senior executives, and use them in reviewing performance.
- Require that any Senior Executive Service employee who receives a rating of less than "fully successful" in consecutive years be removed from the SES.
- Requires doctors or dentists who do not receive a successful review would not be eligible to receive performance pay. VA medical staff receive a base salary, and typically also receive a percentage of that salary as a bonus, based on their performance rating.

Another bill sent to the House floor was a measure -- introduced by the committee's Chairman Jeff Miller (R-FL) -- to recoup bonuses already paid to employees later found guilty of misconduct. The legislation does not spell out specific criteria that would qualify an employee for the retroactive penalty, leaving that to the VA secretary's discretion. The employee would have to be given notice and the opportunity for a hearing. A similar measure (<http://www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/2014/07/senators-want-va-wait-list-manipulators-give-back-their-bonuses/88165/>) which specifically targets bonuses given to employees found guilty of manipulating patient wait list data, was introduced in the Senate with bipartisan support.

Former VA Secretary Eric Shinseki in May rescinded an \$8,500 performance award given in 2013 to Sharon Helman, who served as director of the Phoenix VA hospital at the epicenter of the recent scandal. VA said that bonus, however, was originally awarded due to "administrative error." Federal employee advocates and the VA itself have since questioned the agency's authority to rescind a bonus for malfeasance, hence the push for legislation. The compromise bill President Obama signed into law in August expedited the process for firing or demoting senior executives at VA. It did not address employee bonuses, though before resigning Shinseki prohibited any performance awards for

Veterans Health Administration's SES employees in 2014. The Merit Systems Protection Board, which saw its ability to reverse a negative personnel action diminished by the August VA reform law, has said the firing provision [raises due process concerns](http://www.govexec.com/management/2014/08/federal-appeals-board-has-major-concerns-firing-provisions-new-va-law/90887/) (<http://www.govexec.com/management/2014/08/federal-appeals-board-has-major-concerns-firing-provisions-new-va-law/90887/>) and has written to the White House to air its grievances. [Source: GovExec.com | Eric Katz | Sept. 11, 2014 ++]

American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial Dedicated October 5, 2014

Throughout our nation's history, service men and women have gone bravely into battle, risking their lives and livelihoods, sacrificing their safety to defend America. When their duty is done, many return home to life as it was. Sadly, for over 4 million veterans seriously injured in the line of duty, leaving the battlefield does not mark the end of conflict. These permanently disabled heroes often carry home life-altering disabilities -- stern reminders of the price of freedom.

America's disabled veterans have honored us with their service and selfless duty. It is now our turn to honor them.

For the first time, America will pay tribute to some of our most courageous heroes -- our disabled veterans. The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will celebrate those men and women who may be broken in body -- but never in spirit.

Our nation's wounded warriors need time to heal; and the rest of us need a place in which to reflect upon their sacrifice. Here's David Martin: It's a thing of beauty designed to honor an ugly fact: the wounds of war. The name of Washington's newest memorial - American Veterans Disabled for Life -- makes the point.

Project director Barry Owenby gave Martin an advance look at the memorial, which opens next Sunday. It's for disabled veterans of all wars, of whom an estimated three million are alive today.

"It doesn't end with the war; they live with it forever," Owenby said.

"They have a trauma of injury, a healing process, and then their rediscovery of purpose. So that's the story that we're trying to tell here."

It's the story of soldiers like Bob Dole, who came back from his World War II wounds to become a United States Senator and run for President: "It's faith that gives you the strength to endure," Dole wrote, "faith that won't allow you to give up, faith that manifests itself in a ferocious determination to take the next step -- the one that everyone else says is impossible."

They are also stories of disabled veterans you've never heard of.

Joe Bacani was shot through the pelvis by a sniper in Iraq in 2007. His story is on the monument's wall next to Bob Dole's.

Martin said to Bacani, "It doesn't matter if you're famous. It's what you've been through. So you probably earned it as much as Bob Dole did."

"Oh. That's humbling," he replied. "Because I, I've always seen myself as just, like, a normal average Joe."

A picture on the wall shows Bacani in a wheelchair, taken at his Purple Heart ceremony at Walter Reed. "Average Joe" Bacani is now a junior at Columbia University.

"I was never really ambitious," he said.

"Here you are getting an education at one of the top colleges in America!" said Martin.

"Yeah," he laughed. "So after I was wounded, I saw that as, like, a second chance, and I wanted to make the most out of it, especially for my friends' sacrifices. Like, I want to be the best I can be until I die."

The Memorial is located at the foot of Capitol Hill.

Dr. Benishek Authors Legislation To Research Toxic Exposure for Military Families Dr. Dan Benishek announces the Toxic Exposure Research Act, H.R. 5484

WASHINGTON, DC: Dr. Dan Benishek (MI-01) today announced he has introduced the Toxic Exposure Research Act, H.R. 5484, with Congressman Mike Honda (CA-17) to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) a national center for research into the health conditions experienced by the descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances.

"Having had the opportunity to treat our veterans as a doctor at a VA hospital for nearly 20 years, I understand that not all the injuries our returning service members suffer from are immediately evident. Wounds from exposure to toxic chemicals can have lifelong and generational effects, the impacts of which we are still determining today," said Dr. Benishek. "This bipartisan bill will help address the need to better understand the toxins that many of our heroes have been exposed to, and ensure we focus on understanding the effect exposure may have on their descendants." The Toxic Exposure Research Act will allow the VA to research the effect of exposure to toxic substances on the descendants of our veterans. Veterans seeking care for symptoms of toxic exposure are frequently misdiagnosed due to a lack of scientific understanding, and the research the VA has conducted on suspected birth defects related to toxic exposure is severely limited. The bill would also create a national outreach campaign on potential long-term health effects of exposure to toxic substances by members of the Armed Forces and their descendants. "The Toxic Exposure Research Act is an important piece of bi-partisan legislation that will help us keep our promise to our veterans. While we know that our servicemen and women have been exposed to toxic substances while fighting for our country, we also know that many of their children have consequently suffered with various forms of birth defects," said Congressman Honda. "We need to know the full effects of such toxic exposures. Through the bill's establishment of a national research center, the VA can determine what effect toxins like Agent Orange have had on the children and grandchildren of our veterans who were exposed. The Toxic Exposure Research act is the House companion to S.2738, identical legislation

introduced by Senator Richard Blumenthal (CT) and Senator Jerry Moran (KS). The legislation is supported by the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and AMVETS. Dr. Benishek has been a leader in advocating for reform at the VA since coming to Washington in 2011. Dr. Benishek spent 20 years working as a surgeon at the Iron Mountain VA Hospital. He is the only member from Michigan on the Veterans Committee and is Chairman of the Health Subcommittee. His "Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act" passed

Wreaths Across America Launches 2014 Campaign

*"IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO HAVE HAD TO
SPEND A HOLIDAY AWAY FROM LOVED
ONES", "IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO
NEVER MADE IT HOME*

*THIS YEARS CEREMONY WHICH IS
TAKING PLACE DECEMBER 13th
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY*

Volunteers Will Place 225,000 Holiday Wreaths at Each Veteran's Head Stone in Arlington National Cemetery; Wreaths to Travel from Maine to Virginia via Convoy of 50 Long-Haul Tractor-Trailers

Wreaths Across America goal is to honor every veteran buried at Arlington National Cemetery. This year the organization's National Remembrance Ceremony at Arlington will take place on Saturday, Dec.13.2014. During the day, thousands of volunteers will place a holiday wreath and hold a brief moment of silence at each veteran's head stone — 225,000 in total. To fulfill its mission, Wreaths Across America seeks to significantly expand sponsorships and wreath donations by mid-November.



Wreaths Across America is a non-profit organization founded in 2007 by the Worcester family, owners of the Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, Maine. The wreath-laying effort began with a simple act of patriotism when co-owner of the Worcester Wreath Company, Morrill Worcester, donated 5,000 evergreen wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery in 1992. Today, the annual pilgrimage from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery is known as the world's largest veteran's parade with 50 long-haul tractor trailers from major sponsors making the week-long journey. "It is our great honor to place a holiday wreath on every head stone at Arlington to ensure that all of those buried on this hallowed

ground are uniquely acknowledged and remembered for sacrificing their lives to protect our freedoms," said Karen Worcester, executive director, Wreaths Across America. "For this reason, we are committed to coordinating this parade, creating and distributing the wreaths and securing the logistical support necessary to successfully execute an event of this scale. Our hope is that veterans across the country will view this event as a symbol of the American people's profound appreciation."

The parade will stop at schools, monuments, veterans' homes and communities along the way to remind people how important it is to remember, honor and teach — in keeping with the organization's mission to teach younger generations about the value of their freedom and the importance of honoring those who sacrificed so much to protect those freedoms.

This year, including the effort at Arlington, Wreaths Across America will distribute 400,000 wreaths nationwide, providing support for memorials in all 50 states, including special services at Valley Forge Military Academy, Pearl Harbor, Bunker Hill, Charleston Naval Shipyard, and a wreath for every victim of 9-11 in New York City, the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pa.

Currently, there are 33 cemeteries throughout the State of Florida that partake in this event.

If by chance you are in Virginia/Washington at this time of year and wish to partake in the ceremonies at Arlington, etc., here is the info and tentative schedule:

To volunteer your time to place wreaths at Arlington, please join us **at the Memorial Amphitheater on the Second Saturday in December (Dec. 13) at 9:30 a.m.** for the **Opening Ceremony**. The ceremony will provide some introductory remarks and a short briefing to provide basic information to volunteers. After the ceremony, volunteers will move to the designated areas of the cemetery where they will participate in the laying of wreaths on headstones. We want to remind you that when you place the wreath, you may be the first person to visit that particular grave in years, so we hope you will take time to read the stone and honor the memory of that hero.

At 11:00 a.m. there will be a wreath laying at President Kennedy's grave followed by an 11:30 a.m. wreath laying at the USS Maine Mast Memorial. The final ceremony will take place at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers at noon.

We highly encourage Metro use. While the Arlington Cemetery stop on the Blue Line stops at the cemetery entrance, you can access various parts of the Cemetery from the Rosslyn, Pentagon, and Pentagon City stops via only a short walk. To support our Metro traveling volunteers, we will have multiple gates open to provide pedestrian access to the ceremony. In addition, we will have parking spaces at the Pentagon, Navy Annex, Fort Myer, as well as the parking garage at the main cemetery entrance. Look to our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ArlingtonWreaths and website www.wreathscrossamerica.org for more details, driving directions, etc. There will be free parking is available in the visitors parking lot at Arlington from 8:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Clean up volunteers are always needed too. Clean up at Arlington National Cemetery will take place on **January 24, 2015**. For more information contact Mr. Wayne Hanson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at driftabit@aol.com.

7:00 am Metro rail opens system-wide

8:00 am Arlington National Cemetery Gates open to public
8:30 am Ceremonial Wreaths Across America Truck Parade arrives Arlington Main entrance (time approx)
9:30 am Opening Ceremony (Memorial Amphitheater)
10:00 am Wreath laying begins at sites throughout cemetery
11:00 am Wreath laying ceremony at President Kennedy grave
11:30 am Wreath laying ceremony at USS Maine Mast
1200 Noon Wreath laying ceremony at Tomb of Unknown Soldier

1:30 pm Pentagon Memorial

3:00 pm Vietnam War Memorial

WWII Memorial and Korean War Memorial {Time TBD}

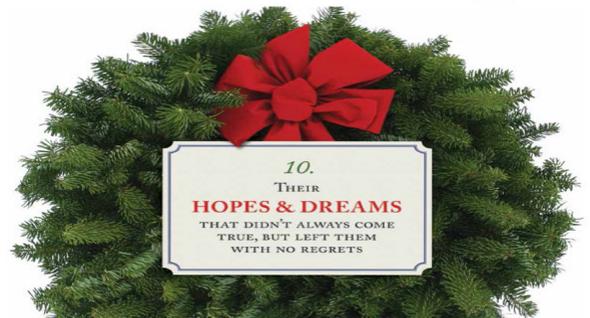
- See more at: <http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/events/escort-to-arlington/#sthash.f2HB6GJP.dpuf>

To make a donation to this program, for more information, or to locate a local ceremony to participate in, their web address is: <http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org>



A veterans' wreath is a symbol of
HONOR, RESPECT and VICTORY.

10 BALSAM BOUQUETS = 10 SPECIAL QUALITIES
comprising each veterans' wreath that our veterans embody



“ THIS YEAR, WHEN YOU PLACE A WREATH ON A VETERAN'S GRAVE, you will know it is not just a wreath. It's your personal gift to an American hero, and you'll swell with pride and have a tear in your eye knowing you've done something very, very special. God bless our veterans and God bless America. ” —MORIELA WORCESTER, FOUNDER OF WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA



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 overseas

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/DPO** (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.

To order the kit, call 800-610-8734. Guidelines for packing, addressing, and shipping items to U.S. troops can be found at usps.com/ship/apo-fpo-guidelines.htm. [Click here](#) to order flat-rate boxes featuring the "America Supports You" logo.

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/.

USPS recommended military mailing dates holiday 2014

Military Mail Addressed To and From	Priority Mail Express Military Service (PMEMS) ¹	First-Class Mail Letters and Cards	Priority Mail	Parcel Airlift Mail (PAL) ²	Space Available Mail (SAM) ³	Standard Post
APO/FPO AE ZIPs 090-092	Dec-16	Dec-9	Dec-9	Dec-2	Nov-25	Nov-11
APO/FPO AE ZIP 093	N/A	Dec-2	Dec-2	Dec-2	Nov-25	Nov-11
APO/FPO AE ZIPs 094-098	Dec-16	Dec-9	Dec-9	Dec-2	Nov-25	Nov-11
APO/FPO AA ZIP 340	Dec-16	Dec-9	Dec-9	Dec-2	Nov-25	Nov-11
APO/FPO AP ZIPs 962-966	Dec-16	Dec-9	Dec-9	Dec-2	Nov-25	Nov-11

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.

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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to:

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>

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

Officers 2014

Bob Neitzel President (VVB, Dustoff
Roberta Neitzel Secretary & River
Rats)
2304 Woodland Drive
Edgewater, FL 32141-4320
386-424-1989 Home 386-527-5445 (cell)
Hdwizr7@aol.com

Al Diaz 1st VP (USA River Rats)
& Rose Fantaccione
3737 N Highway US 1
Cocoa, FL 32926
321-863-0575
Bigalchico@yahoo.com

Ralph Earrusso, 2nd VP (VVB)
Jacque Earrusso, Treasurer
4905 Secluded Way
Merritt Island, FL 32953-7967
321-453-7498
Daydrmr333@aol.com

[Ken Wakefield – Sgt of Arms](#) (USA
River Rats)
[Michelle Wakefield](#)
[328 Robyn Street](#)
[Cocoa, FL 32927](#)
[321-693-4762](#)
radioman@cfl.rr.com

Organizations

Florida Dustoff Association
2304 Woodland Drive
Edgewater, FL 32141
Hdwizr7@aol.com

**Combat Veterans Motorcycle
Association**
1693 Laramie Cir
Melbourne FL 32940
colesd@cfl.rr.com

**Mid Florida Korean War Veterans Ch.
#173**
250 Mira Way Apt 208
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701
Gunship442@aol.com

**National Veterans Homeless Support
Corp**
725 S DeLeon Room 118
Titusville FL 32780
info@nvhs.us

Native American Veterans Information
5170 Patricia Street
Pt. St John, FL 32927
rrbold@bellsouth.net

USA River Rats
4411 Capron Rd
Titusville, FL 32780
voyagers@juno.com
ralessard@aol.com

Some Gave All, Inc.
3810 Murrell Road #168
Rockledge FL 32922
kewico48@aol.com

Semper Fidelis America, Inc.
4416 Usher Avenue
Orlando, FL 32822
jmurphy@semperfidelisamerica.org

Veterans Council of Martin County
PO Box 1994
Stuart, FL 34995
Veterans Council of MartinCountyInc.

Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard
PO Box 237225
Cocoa, FL 32922
vets2gether@cfl.rr.com

Vietnam Brotherhood
PO Box 1073
Venice, FL 34284
spooky@ac-47.com

**Vietnam Veterans of America State
Council**
PO Box 212348
Royal Palm Beach, FL 33421-2348
Jimrufino@yahoo.com

VVA # 1041
1 Sewalls Point
Sewall Point, FL 34996
jerrdsmith01@comcast.net

**Vietnam Veterans of Florida
Association**
2304 Woodland Drive
Edgewater, FL 32141-4320
Hdwizr8@aol.com

Vietnam Veterans of Wakulla
21 Shoreline Drive
Ochlockonee, FL 32346
USMC-VIETNAM-GRUNT@att.net

**Vietnam and All Veterans
of Florida, Inc.**

2304 Woodland Drive
Edgewater, FL 32141-4320

NEWS PLEASE EXPEDITE