



Florida Veteran

Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida, Inc.

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Florida's 26th Annual Vietnam And All Veterans Reunion

The date for the next Reunion is April 25th-28th 2013 at Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida. The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall will be at the park for viewing April 21st-April 28th. 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.

Once again, 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. USA River Rats - Organization of the Year, Ken "Radioman" Wakefield – Veteran of The Year, Rose "Rosebud" Fantaccione – Member of the Year, and Beyel Brothers– Business of Year.

A few reminders to members of the coalition:

Nominations are being accepted for 2nd Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The floor will be opened at the October 20^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 December 1st 2012 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.

The January General Membership meeting is scheduled for January 25-27 2013 at the La Playa Hotel and Resort in Daytona Beach. The evening of the 26th is the Banquet and Awards Dinner. Please mark your calendar for this event and additional information will be forthcoming on our website VVOF.ORG after the October meeting.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Vietnam and All Veterans State Coalition, I would like to welcome Semper Fidelis, The Veterans Council of Martin County and VVA Chapter 1041 to the coalition. These three organizations support all veterans with their efforts and I believe that we will benefit having them as part of our organization.

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.*

In addition, please remember all are welcomed at the meetings, not just the representative for each organization. We have found in the past that sometimes new faces bring a wealth of knowledge and information to the table. The more the merrier !!

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 tops). 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.

Also as we head into the holiday season, 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.

With Veterans Day approaching, I would like to personally thank each and everyone of you for your service and would also like to wish you and yours and happy and safe holiday season.

Robert Neitzel
President

**Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida State
Coalition**



VVB NEWS

President's Message

This year we celebrated our 25th Florida Veterans Annual Reunion and all members are to be congratulated on the teamwork that was evident throughout the park. We had a great turnout and the weather was beautiful. I have received several compliments concerning the reunion from people who traveled from as far as Ohio.

Following the reunion we are now focused on designing and obtaining funds for a new VVB building. This will be the home of the organization for generations of veterans who will follow us. It will be located in a new park on Merritt Island and adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Center. Several VVB members have been

selected to serve on the committee that is working with the County to design the new park.

The rest of the organization is focused on earning the money required to construct the building. At this time we are engaged in the gun raffle and we need to complete this as soon as possible. We have also formed a fund raising committee and two of these members are soliciting for corporate donations. All funds will be placed in our building account.

If you have any ideas or special skills associated with fund raising, please bring them to our meetings and we will consider them.

Hope you all had a safe and happy Independence Day!

Don Wassmer
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

Well it has been a very hot summer as we traveled around, it seemed it was over 100 everywhere and in Texas we got flooded. We are moving into the fall and it is starting to cool, but the corn in Ohio and Illinois is bad - the farmers are having a bad year.

We just left Circleville OH and had a great event, now we are in Delelven, IL population 1700 and again a great event. Check our schedule cause we are in Florida five times yet this year.

As always people are glad we came to their town and thank the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard for building the Wall. See you all soon.

Greg Welsh

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: 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. Once again, we will be participating in Wreaths Across America December 15th at the Edgewater/New Smyrna Beach Cemetery in Edgewater.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate this past year’s recipients of awards in our organization: Member of the Year, Steve Doane, Certificate of Appreciation for Service to Dustoff – Harry Newman, Adele Chambers, Doc Custer, Jon Riggs, Jim “patches” Watson, Bob Gallagher, Skip and Francesca Abers, La Playa Resorts and Fineline Printing. We also presented several certificates 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.

Sadly, this August, Florida Dustoff lost their founding member, Don “Hoss” Caldwell. Hoss was larger than life to many of the Dustoff family and was instrumental in obtaining permission from National to form Florida Dustoff over 20 years ago. He will be missed by all and no one will ever be able to fill his shoes. As our organization is spread throughout the United States, we will be having a memorial service for Don this coming April at the Reunion in Wickham Park. All those who knew Hoss are invited to the Dustoff campsite to join us in this memorial service.

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 –Vice President Florida Dustoff
Association**

“WHEN I HAVE YOUR WOUNDED”



USA RIVER RATS

Well the 25th Reunion is over and it’s time to get ready for next year. This year featured the one of a kind commemorative 25th Anniversary dog tags that was a huge success with all the proceeds being donated to the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard Traveling Memorial Wall. Everyone loved them and the donations exceeded our expectations. Thanks to Duston and Rosebud for the great idea and the Maureen Welsh for permitting us to use her copyrighted photo. We are already planning something different for next year and hope it will be as successful as this year.

We had another successful rib dinner at our campsite. Thanks to all our great cooks for a fantastic dinner. We will certainly do it again next year.

We have our **2nd Annual Ken Baker Wall Run** on November 3rd at Wickham Park. This year all the proceeds will be going to the building fund for the new VVB building. We are already planning the event and hope to see everyone there. There will be music, 50/50, an auction, food and prizes for best hand, worst hand and a door prize of the second annual wall run commemorative plaque.

In addition to the Ken Baker Wall Run will also have our Meet and Greet and Thanksgiving at Vista Manor Nursing Home, NVHS Stand down and, Christmas with NVHS and the homeless Veterans. It is always such a good time and our very own Big Al does Karaoke. The guys and gals have a great time doing some singing. It is such a great feeling to see them so happy and thankful.

If you have questions or comments you can contact any of our officers.

USA RIVER RAT OFFICERS 2011

President	Ken “Radioman” Wakefield	321-693-4762
1 st . Vice	Rose “Rosebud” Fantaccione	321-403-5875
2 nd . Vice	Al “Big Al” Diaz	321-863-0575
Treasurer	Norm “Hound Dog” Pamplin	321-228-6576
Secretary	Michelle “Screamer” Wakefield	321-323-4382
Chaplain	Francesca “Lilo” Abers	321-501-2847
Sr Sgt @ Arms	Mike “Cowboy” Angelo	321-243-0369
Asst Sgt @ Arms	Bobbie Jo “BAG” Dino	321-302-4781
Advisor	Robert “Dustoff” Neitzel	386-424-1989
Advisor	Wayne “Wayneo” Smith	321-698-6989

Quarter Master Janis "Bubette" Worrell 321-698-0659
Service Office Eric "Crime Scene" Ackler 321-863-7415

We are looking forward to another great year helping our veterans
Michelle "Screamer" Wakefield
Secretary



KWA Mid-Florida Chapter 173 News

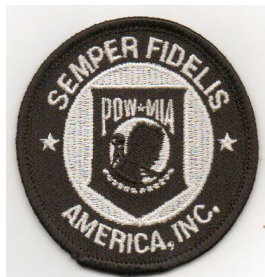
Commander's Message

Well, we are back to having our General Membership meetings. First one went very well and was attended with about 25 members. I want to "Thank" all that came out and hope you continue coming and hope that more of you show up. The meetings are a way for putting out information that needs to be and can socialize with your fellow buddies.

We have opened up nominations for the following positions: Commander, 1st Vice, 2nd Vice, and Treasurer. Your board has been nominated to stay on in those positions. Nominations will be taken every month through November and will close at the November Meeting so please step up to the plate and run or nominate someone to take over the reins. As a member it is your right and duty to help out any way that you can so please help out and have a voice. At our December Christmas Party we will have a vote to elect our incoming board and then our Christmas festivities.

Upcoming dates to keep in mind are: November 6th (voting day for your President), November 10th (Veterans Day Services in Sanford), and November 11th (Veterans Day Services at Altamonte Mall starting at 2 PM. Our own Bill Russell will be guest speaker), and November 11th (Our last fundraiser of the year at Publix). As you can see we have a lot going on and can use all the help to carry it all off without a hitch. Pitch in and show up. I know all the excuses there are like I'm too old, I don't drive, I'm handicapped, and I have other plans. Well, if you all take a look at your boards' members, we are all in the same boat and have other plans that we would rather go to but we put it aside to help keep "YOUR" Chapter together. And not fall to the wayside like other Chapters are doing. But, it is getting harder for your board to keep doing all the work for the same reasons that you are giving us for not helping. So, PLEASE step up and give us a break.

YOURS IN COMRADESHIP
CHUCK TRAVERS



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.

One of our upcoming events is our Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Will be holding our Thanksgiving Dinner at the VA Convalescent Home. Members need to be there prior to 9am to help with set up and to finish with prep etc.....will serve at 12 noon

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>.

Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall:

In conjunction with the Veterans Council of Martin County, October 25-28 2012 we will be hosting "Reflections on Vietnam" at Halpatiokee Park in Stuart, FL. The park is located off of Kanner Hwy near the I-95 on-ramp in Stuart Florida. We will be featuring The Vietnam Traveling Wall. The wall is a 3/5 scale of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. and is almost 300 feet from end to end. The Wall will arrive Wednesday October 24th at the Treasure Coast Mall at 10:00 am and we are inviting all bikers for the escort. For escort info, please contact Bruce or Debra Hudson at Brchdsn@aol.com. For more information on this event, visit reflectionsenvietnam.com.

Wreaths Across America Launches 2012 Campaign

*"THE CHRISTMAS THEY NEVER HAD",
"IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO HAVE HAD TO
SPEND A HOLIDAY AWAY FROM LOVED
ONES", "IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO
NEVER MADE IT HOME" – IS THE
THEME FOR THIS YEARS CEREMONY
WHICH IS TAKING PLACE DECEMBER
15th 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.15, 2012. 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.

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>

Wreaths Across America and Truckload Carriers Association Join Forces to Honor the Nation's Fallen Heroes

Posted on August 31st, 2012 in 2012 Newsletter Stories, Press Release

TCA to provide fund-raising support for remembrance wreaths and recruit member companies to deliver wreaths nationwide



Alexandria, Virginia, and Columbia Falls, Maine: Each year, trucking companies and professional truck drivers donate their tractor-trailers and time to deliver thousands of remembrance wreaths to our nation's military cemeteries on behalf of Wreaths Across America (WAA). Today, WAA and the Truckload Carriers Association (TCA) announced a new partnership that will further the success of this important mission to honor our fallen heroes.

WAA is a nonprofit organization whose mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out each year with annual wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery and nearly 800 veteran locations across the country and overseas. Last year, the organization marked its 20th year making the trip to Arlington with the placement of nearly 90,000 remembrance wreaths. In 2012, one of its goals is to place a wreath on each of the 225,000 headstones at the cemetery.

This fall, TCA will work with WAA to dispatch drivers and coordinate the logistics of wreath delivery across the country. The organization has also launched a Web site, www.TruckloadofRespect.com, where donations can be made to underwrite the cost of placing a wreath on every headstone at Arlington. Individuals and companies can quickly and easily add their own pages to the main site, each with specific fund-raising goals and unique URLs that can be sent to friends, family, and coworkers via e-mail and social media channels. Page owners can further personalize their pages with photos, custom messages, and even a link to a video they have recorded and posted on YouTube. These efforts demonstrate their support for this endeavor, fostering a sense of community and rallying people to give to the cause.

"Without the support of trucking companies, the countless lives that we've already honored through our work would not have been possible," said Karen Worcester, executive director, Wreaths Across America. "This collaboration further solidifies the tremendously positive relationship we've had with the trucking community for years now, and is indicative of their belief in the value of our cause. With partners like TCA, we are that much closer to the day when we can pay personal tribute to every fallen veteran."

"Truckload carriers and their drivers are proud of their role in keeping the nation up and running, but delivering these wreaths is special to us," said **Chris Burruss**, TCA president and United States Marine Corps veteran. "This program has given us the chance to express our gratitude to the men and women who defend this nation, and we want to do everything we can to ensure its continued success."

Burruss went on to say: "A special thanks is due to Randall-Reilly Business Media & Information and Pilot Flying J for kick-starting the fund-raising with pledges to raise \$50,000 and \$100,000, respectively. We encourage every carrier, supplier, driver, and individual employee to do his or her part as well. Log into www.TruckloadofRespect.com and support our nation's heroes."

Follow Wreaths Across America on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/WAAHQ> and on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/WreathsAcross>.

VA CLAIMS BACKLOG

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced 20 SEP that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), which oversees the delivery of disability compensation and other benefits to the nation's Veterans, processed over one million disability claims during fiscal year 2012, marking the third year in row VBA claims processors have exceeded the one million mark. "We have made great strides, but we realize much work remains to be done to better serve Veterans," said Undersecretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. "Too many Veterans still wait too long. That's unacceptable, and that is why VA has begun implementing a paperless, digital disability claims system- a lasting solution that will transform how we operate and eliminate the claims backlog." In August, VA had its most productive claims processing period in its history, completing a record 107,462 claims and surpassing the previous monthly record of 103,296 set in 2010. This high level of production is accompanied by an increase in the overall accuracy of rating decisions, which has risen from 83 to 86 percent since September 2011, as determined by VA's national quality assurance program.

The department is administering pensions for World War II veterans while handling new claims from Vietnam veterans struggling with the multiplying ailments of age. Indeed, nearly a third of all pending new claims are from Vietnam-era veterans, roughly equal to the number from Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans. Thanks to superior battlefield medicine and armor, those Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have survived combat at a higher rate. As they return home with more wounds, and perhaps more savvy, the ones who file for disability compensation are claiming on average nearly 10 disorders or injuries each, compared with 6 for Vietnam veterans and fewer than 4 for World War II veterans. Their complex claims are often more time-consuming to process, adding to the backlog. At the same time, a higher percentage - nearly half - of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are filing for disability compensation, partly because of the weak economy. That is double the rate for previous wars.

While claims production is at historic highs, incoming disability claims have increased nearly 50 percent since 2008, outpacing VA's current claims processing capacity. "Our employees are working very hard to sustain this level of production," said Hickey. "This is a testament to their dedication to meeting the increasing needs of our Veterans." VA's goal is to process all disability claims within 125 days, at a 98 percent accuracy level, and eliminate the claims backlog in 2015. On 17 SEP the department reported it had 895,248 compensation and pension entitlement claims pending, with 592,792, or 66 percent, pending for more than 125 days. This year, VBA is beginning a nationwide organizational transformation to increase its claims decision output by retooling procedures and deploying paperless data systems that will speed claims processing and improve quality. All 56 VBA regional offices will be operating under the new organizational model by the end of 2013.

Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)

The Department of Veterans Affairs has approved applications for all 45,000 slots available in fiscal year (FY) 2012 under the successful Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) and is in the process of approving applications for a total of 54,000 slots available in FY 2013. "At VA, we know first-hand that Veterans make exceptional employees, which is why this Administration has deployed a full-court press to connect Veterans with good jobs," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "The surge of Veterans applying for VRAP demonstrates this program's importance to provide unemployed Veterans the opportunity to find employment in high-demand fields." VRAP is a new training and education program for unemployed Veterans who want to upgrade their skills for high-demand jobs. The goal of VRAP is to train a total of 99,000 Veterans over the next two years in more than 200 job skills that the Department of Labor (DOL) has determined are the most sought-after by employers.

The joint VA/DOL program is a provision of the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, which Congress passed and President Obama signed into law in November 2011. The program allows qualifying Veterans to receive up to 12 months of education assistance equal to the current full-time Montgomery GI 18 Bill - Active Duty rate of \$1,473 per month. Starting October 1, 2012 the rate will increase to \$1546 per month. To be eligible for VRAP, a

Veteran must:

- Be 35-60 years old, unemployed on the day of application, and not dishonorably discharged;
- Not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, or Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment;
- Not be enrolled in a federal or state job-training program within the last 180 days; and
- Not receive VA compensation at the 100 percent rate due to individual unemployability (IU).

"We're gratified that 45,000 unemployed Veterans can begin the retraining they need to compete for in-demand jobs," said VA Undersecretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. "We're going to maintain the momentum of our outreach to make sure we get the maximum of 54,000 Veterans retrained in fiscal year 2013." Veterans approved for VRAP are encouraged to enroll as soon as possible and begin training full-time in a VA-approved program of study at their local community college or technical school. The program of study must lead to an associate degree, a non-college degree, or a certificate for a high-demand occupation as defined by DOL. Some of the high-demand job training programs Veterans pursued in FY 2012 include- computer support specialist, general and operations manager, business operations specialist, and heating, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanic and installer. VRAP applications were received from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The Top 10 states for Veterans approved for training in the FY 2012 phase of VRAP are: California, Florida, Georgia, Texas, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Virginia. VRAP also attracted Veterans internationally, with applications coming from Veterans living in the Philippines, Canada, Japan, the Northern Mariana Islands, and areas of Europe and the Pacific where American military units are based.

Undersecretary Hickey explained that continued outreach on VRAP is particularly important because the program applies to a segment of the Veteran population that may not have regular interaction with VA or stay informed about the benefits and opportunities for which they may qualify. VRAP is one of many efforts that VA and the Administration are undertaking to connect Veterans with employment. VA has held major live and virtual hiring fairs, as well as connected Veterans with career coaching and other career tools through the VA for Vets initiative. VA has also set a goal to increase Veteran employment within the Department and has partnered with Joining Forces and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on Veteran hiring. Potential applicants can learn more about VRAP and apply online at www.benefits.va.gov/VOW, or call VA toll-free at 1-800-827-1000. Information about the Department of Labor's programs for Veterans is available at <http://www.dol.gov/vets>. Veterans can also visit the nearly 3,000 One-Stop Career Centers across the nation, listed at www.servicelocator.org, for in-person employment assistance.

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS
CLARIFIES REGULATIONS
FOR HANDICAPPED PARKING
FOR DV LICENSE PLATES**

DEPT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION TO VETERANS: APPLY FOR LICENSURE FEE WAIVER

~ New law waiving fees goes into effect July 1,
2012 ~

There has been some confusion regarding the Disabled Veteran Tag and the entitlement to park in handicapped parking. As we know, there are two types of tags – DV and DV with a wheelchair. There had been recent amendments to our State Law which now only permits the holder of a DV Tag with a wheelchair to park in handicapped parking. This holds true unless the holder of the regular DV Tag also has a handicapped placard for their vehicle. The laws pertaining to the change in the DV tag are below:

Amendments to clarify that a “DV” plate without the wheelchair emblem does not entitle the veteran to disabled parking privileges pursuant to s. 320.0848.

320.0848 (2)(b):

(b) License plates issued under ss. ~~320.084~~, 320.0842, 320.0843, and 320.0845 are valid for the same parking privilege and other privileges provided under ss. 316.1955, 316.1964, and 526.141(5)(a).

320.0848(2)(f):

(f) A person who qualifies for a disabled parking permit under this section may be issued an international wheelchair user symbol license plate under s. 320.0843 in lieu of the disabled parking permit; ~~or, if the person qualifies for a “DV” license plate under s. 320.084, such a license plate may be issued to him or her in lieu of a disabled parking permit.~~

316.1955(1):

(1) It is unlawful for any person to stop, stand, or park a vehicle within, or to obstruct, any such specially designated and marked parking space provided in accordance with s. 553.5041, unless the vehicle displays a disabled parking permit issued under s. 316.1958 or s. 320.0848 or a license plate issued under ~~s. 320.084~~, s. 320.0842, s. 320.0843, or s. 320.0845, and the vehicle is transporting the person to whom the displayed permit is issued. The violation may not be dismissed for failure of the marking on the parking space to comply with s. 553.5041 if the space is in general compliance and is clearly distinguishable as a designated accessible parking space for people who have disabilities. Only a warning may be issued for unlawfully parking in a space designated for persons with disabilities if there is no above-grade sign as provided in s. 553.5041.

553.5041(3):

(3) Designated accessible spaces shall be designed and marked for the exclusive use of individuals who have a severe physical disability and have permanent or temporary mobility problems that substantially impair their ability to ambulate and who have been issued a disabled parking permit under s. 316.1958 or s. 320.0848 or a license plate under ~~s. 320.084~~, s. 320.0842, s. 320.0843, or s. 320.0845.

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (June 29, 2012) – The Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) today encouraged military veterans who have been honorably discharged within the past 24 months to apply for a new licensure fee waiver available through the Department. As of July 1, 2012, the Department will have the ability to waive initial licensure fees for military veterans under a new law that passed during the 2012 Legislative Session. The waivers could save veterans anywhere from a few hundred dollars to more than a thousand dollars, depending on the license type.

“We want to encourage veterans who may be thinking about starting a business or getting a professional license in Florida to apply for this waiver,” said Secretary Ken Lawson. “This is our way of saying ‘thank you’ to the veterans who have already sacrificed so much to protect and defend our nation.”

Through HB 517, the initial license fee, initial application fee and initial unlicensed activity fee will be waived for veterans returning from service, provided the veteran applies for licensure within 24 months of being honorably discharged. The law will apply to new licenses granted after July 1, 2012 for more than 20 professions under DBPR’s jurisdiction, including construction, real estate, certified public accountants and cosmetologists. The waiver can be downloaded from the Department’s military services webpage at <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/dbprmilitary.html> and should be included in applications for professional licensure.

The new law becomes one of Florida’s military-friendly licensure laws that serve as a model for other states. This year, Florida was acknowledged as one of only a handful of states that have a state license program specifically for spouses of military veterans.

The Department of Business and Professional Regulation’s mission is to license efficiently and regulate fairly. The Department licenses and regulates more than one million businesses and professionals ranging from hotels and restaurants, real estate agents and certified public accountants to veterinarians, contractors and cosmetologists. For more information, please visit www.MyFloridaLicense.com.

NEW LAW PERMITS VETERANS DESIGNATION ON FLORIDA DRIVER LICENSE

State of Florida recognizes those who defended the Red, White and Blue. Gov. Rick Scott signed House Bill 1165 to recognize and honor Florida veterans who honorably served their nation. Veterans who live in the Sunshine State now can add a veteran designation to their driver license or identification card.

At a news conference, hosted by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles at its headquarters in Tallahassee, Lt. Gov. Jennifer Carroll said the new feature on the driver license is just one way that the state can show appreciation to military veterans. The Lt. Governor and Gov. Rick Scott are both U.S. Navy veterans. Carroll also previously served as executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.

"The new feature gives veterans an easy way to show proof of their veteran status, which is not always an easy task," said Carroll. "We hope that retailers and restaurants that offer discounts to military veterans will accept the license with the 'V' on it as proof that someone is a veteran." The blue "V" on the driver license indicates the license holder is a military veteran.

DHSMV Executive Director Julie Jones demonstrated what the veteran designation will look like on the driver license or identification card, which is simply a blue "V" on the bottom portion of the card.

"The Department is honored to provide this service to our military veterans as a way to show our gratitude for their service to our nation," Jones added.

Jones explained what veterans should bring with them when they visit a driver license office to replace or renew their credential. To add the "V" to a license or ID card, veterans can visit any Florida driver license office, to include those operated by county tax collectors. They should plan to:

- Present their DD-214, which shows their honorable discharge from active duty.
- Pay a one-time \$1 fee, in addition to the replacement or renewal fee.
- Visit www.GatherGoGet.com to ensure they have all the other documents required.

Veterans who need to obtain a copy of their DD-214, may request it through the National Archives, which provides information on how to make the request online at www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/.

"This is a wonderful way to honor Florida's more than 1.6 million veterans, who have served our nation honorably," said Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, retired Army Col. Mike Prendergast.

FLORIDA STATE VETERAN BENEFITS

Here are some benefits available in the State of Florida:

Hunting and Fishing License

In order to receive a no-cost Resident Disabled Person's Hunting and Fishing Certificate from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, applicants must attach a copy of one of the following certifying him or her as totally and permanently disabled:

- Certification by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces
- A Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs 100% Service-connected Disabled Veteran Identification Card (must have a statement of "total and permanent disabled")
- Documentation of current (dated within the last 12 months) eligibility for Disability Benefits from Social Security Administration.

Applicants must also attach proof of Florida residency as outlined on the application.

No license shall be required for military service personnel who are Florida residents while they are home on leave for periods of 30 days or less.

Active-duty and retired military Florida residents can get a low cost Military Gold Sportsman's License. The license covers hunting, freshwater and saltwater fishing and a variety of associated permits at a greatly reduced cost. The Military Gold Sportsman's License is available at tax collectors' offices only. Applicants must present a current military ID card plus a Florida driver's license or orders showing they are stationed in Florida as proof of eligibility.

Permits/Fees (parking, tolls, building improvements)

No totally and permanently disabled veteran who is a resident of Florida shall be required to pay license or permit fees to any county or municipality in order to make certain improvements to assist with his or her disability on any mobile home owned by the veteran and used as his/her residence. Improvements are limited to ramps, widening of doors, and similar improvements for the purpose of making the mobile home habitable for veterans confined to wheelchairs.

Handicapped Toll Permit - Any handicapped person who has a valid driver's license, who operates a vehicle specially equipped for use by the handicapped, and who is certified by a licensed physician or by the VA Adjudication Officer as being physically disabled and having permanent impairments which impair the person's ability to deposit coins in toll baskets shall be allowed to pass free through all tollgates. A vehicle window sticker will be issued.

Exemption Parking Permit: Persons With Permanent Mobility Problems - A disabled veteran who is a resident of this state and honorably discharged, and has been determined by the VA or the Federal Government to have a service-connected disability rating for compensation of 50% or greater and has a signed physician's statement of qualification is eligible for the permit. The fees are \$1.50 for the initial parking permit, and \$1.50 for renewal parking permit and for each additional

renewal parking permit. The fee must be paid to the tax collector of the county in which the fee was generated. The department shall not issue to any one eligible applicant more than two exemption parking permits upon request of the applicant.

Commission as a Notary Public

The usual fee shall not be required for the issuance of a Commission as a Notary Public to a veteran who served during a period of wartime service, and who has been rated 50% or more for service-connected disability. Other fees may apply.

Homestead Exemption (Permanent & Totally Disabled)

Any real estate used and owned as a homestead by a veteran who was honorably discharged with a service-connected permanent and total disability and for whom a letter from the United States Government or VA or its predecessor has been issued certifying that the veteran is totally and permanently disabled is exempt from taxation, provided the veteran is a permanent resident of the state on January 1 of the tax year for which exemption is being claimed or on January 1 of the year the veteran died.

The production by a veteran or the spouse or surviving spouse of a letter of total and permanent disability from the United States Government or VA or its predecessor before the property appraiser of the county in which property of the veteran lies shall be prima facie evidence of the fact that the veteran or the surviving spouse is entitled to such exemption. In the event the totally and permanently disabled veteran predeceases his or her spouse and upon the death of the veteran, the spouse holds the legal or beneficial title to the homestead and permanently resides thereon as specified in FS 196.031, the exemption from taxation shall carry over to the benefit of the veteran's spouse until such time as he or she remarries or sells or otherwise disposes of the property. If the spouse sells the property, an exemption not to exceed the amount granted from the most recent ad valorem tax roll may be transferred to his or her new residence as long as it is used as his or her primary residence and he or she does not remarry.

Veterans who are paraplegic, hemiplegic, are permanently and totally disabled, must use a wheelchair for mobility, or are legally blind are exempt from real estate taxation if gross annual household income does not exceed the adjusted maximum allowed. The veteran must be a resident of the State of Florida to qualify. Certificate of such disability from two licensed doctors of this state or from the VA or an award letter from the Social Security Administration to the property appraiser is prima facie evidence of entitlement to such exemption.

Homestead Exemption (10% to 100% BUT not Permanent in nature)

Eligible veterans with service-connected disabilities of 10% or more shall be entitled to a \$5000 property tax exemption. To qualify for homestead exemption a veteran must be a bonafide resident of the state.

Every person who is entitled to homestead exemption in this state and who is serving in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States may file a claim for homestead exemption. Servicemen unable to file in person may file through next of kin or duly authorized representatives.

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 missent.
- 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/supportingouttroops/.

MAIL BY DATES**

Shore APO/FPO/DPO AE zips 090-098 (except 093); AA zips 340; AP zips 962-966

- * Express Mail: Dec. 17
- * First-Class Mail (letters/cards and priority mail): Dec. 10
- * Parcel Airlift Mail: Dec. 3
- * Space Available Mail: Nov 26
- * Parcel Post: Nov. 13

Shore APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIP 093

- * Express mail Military Service: N/A
- * First-Class Letters/Cards/Priority Mail: Dec. 3
- * Parcel Airlift Mail: Dec. 1
- * Space Available Mail: Nov. 26
- * Parcel Post: Nov. 13

For mail addressed from all shore FPOs (except 093)

- * Express Mail Military Service: Dec. 17
- * First-Class Mail (Letters/cards, priority mail): Dec. 10
- * Parcel Airlift Mail: Dec. 3
- * Space Available Mail: Nov. 26

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.

FAIR USE NOTICE: This newsletter contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. The Vietnam and ALL Veterans of Florida, Inc. are making such material available in our efforts to advance understanding of: POW/MIA, Military, Veterans, Health, democracy, and scientific issues, etc.

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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, 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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