



In Service to America

# THE OUTPOST

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787, Tampa Fl.



**NATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2001, FLORIDA STATE COUNCIL,  
CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, CHAPTER STATE NEWSLETTER  
OF THE YEAR 2007, FOR INFORMATION CALL BOB SILMSER (813) 220-7246 OR (813) 685-3483.  
WEB SITE: [WWW.VVA787.COM](http://WWW.VVA787.COM)**



Pictures Submitted By: Tom Hall, Bob Silmsers & Kevin Ruhl

## Fisher & Haley House Picnic a Big Success

On July 6th, Chapter 787 hosted an old fashioned picnic for those service men and women along with any family members present, that are under medical care of the local VA hospital. Everyone had a great time and we saw first hand what sacrifices the families of our wounded warriors go through.

### **Chapter Officers**

President: Jim LaGarde  
Vice President: Carl Harris  
Secretary: Bob Silmsers  
Treasurer: Bob Silmsers

### **Board of Directors:**

Tom Hall  
Kevin Ruhl  
Steve Williams  
Jon Mueller

### **State Council Delegate:**

Kevin Ruhl

**Newsletter** Editor: Jon Mueller, E-mail: ParaSF68@aol.com

### **Meetings**

Chapter Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month.

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Veterans Memorial Park & Museum  
3602 Hwy. 301 N.  
Tampa Fl. 33619. See Map on last page. **Mail-  
ing address: P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl.  
33689-0404.**



Pictured above, L-R, back row, Gerard Abbett, Bob Silmsers, Dave Braun, Kevin Ruhl, Micky Taylor, Carl Harris. Front row: Tony Towers, unknown, Beverly Thomas, Margaret Silmsers, Elaine Harris, unknown, and Tom Hall. **More pictures from this event continued on the next page.....**

**More pictures from the July 6th Fisher House and Haley House Picnic**



More July 6th Picnic pictures.....



Chapter Members New Web Site

Linda Pugsley, who was a Nurse in Vietnam, one of the many Angels who took great care of us, has a new web site. Please stop by and take a look.

[www.lindashomemakeover.com](http://www.lindashomemakeover.com)

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Quote

**"Over there, it always felt like we're stuck in hell and the country is at the mall."**

A US Army Colonel, after returning home from Afghanistan and Iraq, as quoted in the NY Times.

**More July 6th Picnic Pictures.....**



To Chapter 787 Member,

## Chapter 787 Sponsors 4th of July Picnic for Fisher House and Haley House residents and their Veterans.

I would like to say “Thank You” to all the members and their wives who participated in the Fisher House 4<sup>th</sup> of July Picnic. Despite the heat and sun, our members jumped right in and made sure this picnic was well organized and ready for the families of our injured Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who are being treated for their wounds.

The families of these veterans are an integral part of their healing process. Without the Fisher House and Haley House being available to them for housing during their long stays it would become a devastating financial burden and add undue stress on top of a tremendous amount of stress they are undergoing.

This picnic was a chance for the veterans and families to be together in a relaxing and festive atmosphere and a chance for us to interact and let them know we are there to help them within our means and to get them the assistance they require whenever they are faced with the obstacles that the VA is throwing at them.

I would like to thank Jim LaGarde and Bob Silmsner for their hard work in planning this event and coordinating with the Fisher House, Haley House and the VA. The next time you see Jim and Bob; thank them personally for their work. Naturally Jim was in his element by manning the grill. Of course he had to sample his cooking on my occasions. Richard Nye also took time to cook on the grill to relieve Jim from the constant heat.

Personally, I think this event was a great success and keeps us focused on helping all veterans. There was some great interaction with these new veterans. It was amazing to hear and see the positive attitude they displayed. Their wives were in good spirits and stood strongly beside their spouse and in one case a brother supporting his brother.

Again, thanks to everyone who participated. It was a “Job Well Done” by all.

Semper Fi,

**Tom Hall**, Board of Director

Chapter 787 Tampa, FL

---

## Ex-mayor gets probation for embellishing Vietnam war record

By Wayne Parry - The Associated Press Posted : Friday Jul 25, 2008 17:10:26 EDT

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

CAMDEN, N.J. — Former Atlantic City mayor Robert Levy will have to serve three years probation and pay a \$5,000 fine for lying about his Vietnam War service to pad his benefits check.

During a sentencing hearing on Friday, U.S. District Court Judge Jerome Simandle also ordered Levy to repay the \$25,000 in extra benefits he received as a result of the lies.

Known as the “missing mayor” because he dropped out of sight for two weeks last fall, Levy later admitted to lying about what he did in the war in order to obtain the extra veteran’s benefits.

He stepped down as mayor last October, after admitting his two-week absence was to attend a clinic for treatment of substance abuse and mental health issues.



# Medal of Honor Winners of the War in Vietnam

## The Bravest of the Brave



**KERREY, JOSEPH R.**



Rank and organization: Lieutenant, Junior Grade, U.S. Naval Reserve, Sea, Air, and Land Team (SEAL). place and date: Near Nha Trang Bay, Republic of Vietnam, 14 March 1969. Entered service at: Omaha, Nebr. Born: 27 August 1943, Lincoln, Nebr. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a SEAL team leader during action against enemy aggressor (Viet Cong) forces. Acting in response to reliable intelligence, Lt. (J.G.) Kerrey led his SEAL team on a mission to capture important members of the enemy's area political cadre known to be located on an island in the bay of Nha Trang. In order to surprise the enemy, he and his team scaled a 350-foot sheer cliff to place themselves above the ledge on which the enemy was located. Splitting his team in 2 elements and coordinating both, Lt. (J.G.) Kerrey led his men in the treacherous downward descent to the enemy's camp. Just as they neared the end of their descent, intense enemy fire was directed at them, and Lt. (J.G.) Kerrey received massive injuries from a grenade which exploded at his feet and threw him backward onto the jagged rocks. Although bleeding profusely and suffering great pain, he displayed outstanding courage and presence of mind in immediately directing his element's fire into the heart of the enemy camp. Utilizing his radioman, Lt. (J.G.) Kerrey called in the second element's fire support which caught the confused Viet Cong in a devastating crossfire. After successfully suppressing the enemy's fire, and although immobilized by his multiple wounds, he continued to maintain calm, superlative control as he ordered his team to secure and defend an extraction site. Lt. (J.G.) Kerrey resolutely directed his men, despite his near unconscious state, until he was eventually evacuated by helicopter. The havoc brought to the enemy by this very successful mission cannot be over-estimated. The enemy soldiers who were captured provided critical intelligence to the allied effort. Lt. (J.G.) Kerrey's courageous and inspiring leadership, valiant fighting spirit, and tenacious devotion to duty in the face of almost overwhelming opposition sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

## Remains of 2 soldiers downed in 1968 ID'd.

### They were supporting Khe Sanh

The Associated Press Posted : Friday Jul 18, 2008



TOPEKA, Kan. — The Pentagon has identified the remains of two soldiers who were killed when their helicopter was shot down in 1968 over Vietnam.



Officials said Thursday that the remains of Chief Warrant Officer Bobby L. McKain of Garden City, Kan., and Warrant Officer Arthur F. Chaney of Vienna, Va., had been returned to their families.

McKain will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery on Aug. 11. Chaney will be buried there Sept. 16.

The two were shot down May 3, 1968, while flying an AH-1G Cobra gunship on an armed escort mission to support a reconnaissance team operating near Khe Sanh in South Vietnam. The helicopter was hit by anti-aircraft fire, exploded in the air and crashed near the Laos-Vietnam border.

The remains were recovered in 1985, but took years to identify.



## Ex-medic gets medal for 1969 Marine rescue



Nearly four decades have passed since Army Specialist. Richard Lynch led a dramatic helicopter rescue of three grievously wounded Marines in Vietnam, but the memories of that night are permanently stamped in his brain. Not a day goes by when Lynch, a Penfield resident, doesn't think of Sept. 19, 1969. In the midst of a heavy monsoon season and during a nighttime fire-fight, the Army combat medic's low-flying helicopter encountered enemy fire over Quang Nam Province. Despite being barraged by mortar fire, Lynch managed to rescue and provide first aid for the Marines. On Monday, Lynch was honored for his bravery, receiving the Navy Commendation Medal with "V" device for valor.

"The medal is nice, and the recognition is more than I ever expected," said Lynch, 60. "They were human beings, and if the shoe (was on the other foot), there wasn't one person who wouldn't do it to help. I felt I was obligated to do what I was trained to do. Was I scared? Sure." Of the 27 medals Lynch earned during his military career, none took longer to arrive than this one, which Lynch received at the Rochester Vet Center before family members, friends and several military members. "Saving their lives while under mortar fire ... is incredible," said Col. Doug Shipman of the Army's 98th Division, who pinned the medal on the upper-left lapel of Lynch's suit. The medal consists of a green ribbon with white striping down each side leading to a six-sided gold medal with an eagle in the center, its wings spread. Ken Moore, president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 20, was largely responsible for the recognition of Lynch's bravery.

Moore spent eight years working to ensure that Lynch's actions were properly celebrated. "We have a brotherhood. We all look out for these guys, and my mission in life is to help my brothers. That's what I do. ... It's a labor of love," said Moore, a Hilton resident. "Through true persistence, we got him this award, and it's what he deserves. Dick went way above and beyond the call of duty." Lynch actually received the medal by mail three weeks ago, but Moore wasn't satisfied. He thought Lynch deserved more recognition, so the fellow Vietnam veteran organized Monday's ceremony. "I had even given up, but Kenny didn't. He just kept going," said Lynch, who was 21 when he rescued the injured Marines. "I don't know how he did it; I don't want to know how he did it. I'm just thankful that there are people like Kenny who are there for all the vets." After he had received the award, with wife Jackie by his side, tears welled up in Lynch's eyes. Lynch and Moore shared an emotional hug and those in attendance gave Lynch a round of applause. "We consider Dick to be a true hero. It was an outstanding thing he did that day," Moore said.

"A lot of people today think heroes are basketball players or football players, but Dick is a true hero."



**Calendar of Events**

Date	Event	Time
<b><u>August 2008</u></b>		
14th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
28th Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Hillsborough Veterans Park & Museum, Special Election of Officers	7:00 PM
<b><u>September 2008</u></b>		
5th Saturday & Sunday	Fund Raiser, Publix, Causeway Blvd. Brandon	
11th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
25th Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Hillsborough Veterans Park & Museum	7:00 PM

**Check out our EVENTS page on the chapter web site. Go to [www.vva787.com](http://www.vva787.com), click EVENTS then Calendar of Events.**

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

**Marine Vietnam Vet, just retired from the US Coast Guard**

Article from the Military Times, July 21 2008, Amy McCullough



Donald Swanger may have made a name for himself as the last active-duty regular enlisted Vietnam veteran to retire from the USCG, but the former Marine would much rather stay in uniform.

After more than 30 years in service, the senior chief petty officer, 58, will retire from active duty August 1st.

“I probably will have that military attitude forever,” he said.

Swanger served two tours in Vietnam, first as an anti-tank assaultman with 1st Anti-Tank Battalion and then as an infantryman with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines. After that he served with 2nd Battalion, 14th Marines.

After Vietnam, Swanger moved to Oregon to work in logging, but it didn't take long for him to miss being in uniform. He joined the Coast Guard in 1973 and stayed in until 1978, then re-enlisted in 1985.

**Financial Status of Chapter 787 as of July 2008**

Total.....\$12,311.13 (Moving Wall Fund..\$6,683.82, General checking \$3,501.58.... Holiday Meals Fund \$2,125.73)

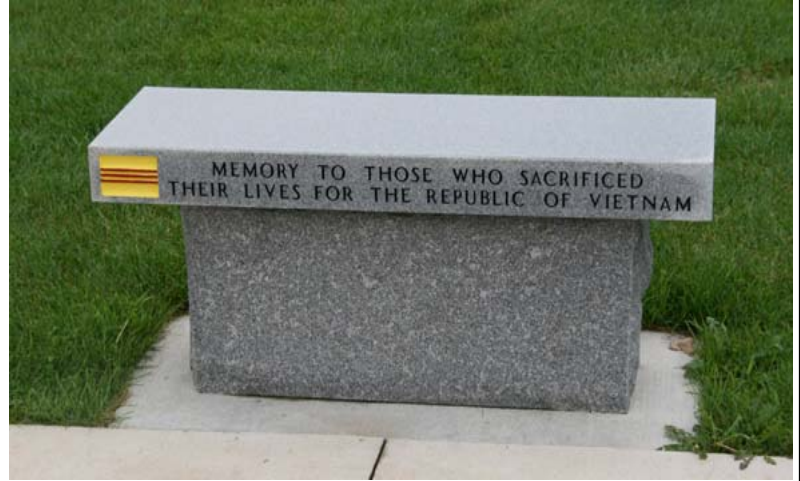
Total.....\$2,483.58 ( Household Goods.....\$1,122.28 Convention Fund.....\$1,359.88)

**All Accounts Total: \$14,794.71**      **Thanks to our Treasurer Bob Silmsr**

## War Memorials in Rochester Minnesota

During the week of July 13th, Chapter 787 Scy/Tres, **Bob Silmsner** and his lovely wife, **Margaret**, spent some time in the beautiful city of Rochester Mn. The reason for the trip was so that **Margaret** could get some medical tests performed at the Mayo Clinic.

During their visit they spent some time and the newly completed War Memorials, which displays most of our nations conflicts since the Civil War. The city did this will all private funding and what a professional job they did. We could all take some lessons from this city.



## Beating The Electron

In Vietnam, many of us could only contact loved ones back at home, by phone, once a year. We did that by using a MARS (Military Affiliate Radio Station). The MARS station would use their high powered long range radio to contact the AT&T phone service in the states. You had to have an appointment to use the MARS station and they were usually located many miles from most areas of conflict. After waiting weeks or months, for your appointment to come up, you had to find transportation to the nearest MARS site, and that could be a hundred miles or more from your A.O. Some men died on the way to their MARS appointment.

Once you got to the MARS station and you were shown into a small booth or room, you provided the station operator with the name and phone number of the person you wanted to call in the U.S. It took the station operator a few minutes to get a local operator in the states on the line and then they called your family member or loved one. You had about 10 minutes to speak with them. Hopefully they were home when the call finally went through.

How times have changed. Today in Iraq and Afghanistan, many of our military, have personal cell phones and all have access to e-mail. If they have the time, son's and daughter's can contact their husbands, wives, mothers and fathers or anybody else anytime they want to. This has led to some problems.



As an example, on July 13th, a small platoon from, 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, (ABCT) were helping an Afghanistan Army unit set up a remote outpost in the mountains just off the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. There were 37 U.S. paratroopers and about 40 Afghan Army soldiers. At 0430 hours the outpost was attacked by over 200 Taliban who had machine guns, mortars and RPG's. The camp perimeter was breached. The fighting was hand to hand in some areas, and the battle lasted most of the day. The U.S. Airborne Infantry and the Afghan soldiers were finally



able to beat back the enemy killing over 100 and retain control of the outpost. Nine Americans were killed and 25 wounded, just about the entire U.S. platoon. The men of the 173d were on their way home after 15 months in ground combat when this post was hit. This platoon was due to leave in just 3 days, for home.

When the Army learned of the KIA's, they immediately shut down the e-mail and cell phone net for this unit. This prevented anyone from contacting the outside world, using private cell phones or the military's computer systems for e-mails. The reason the Army did this was to avoid having a soldier contact someone back home to notify them of the battle, or the death or wounding of a specific paratrooper. The Army like all services, wants that to come through military channels. The prevention of all cell phone and computer contacts is called "Beating the Electron" since it means that the military wants to be the first to contact the next of kin, using a human being, instead of them receiving a phone call or e-mail from an unauthorized source, who also may give inaccurate information.

On the home front, when the wives, mothers, fathers, family and friends heard on the news programs that an element of this unit was in a fierce fight and lost 9 soldiers, everyone immediately tried to send e-mails to their loved ones hoping to get a response immediately that they were okay. All friends and families keep in touch with each other and they compared notes, so when no one was getting e-mail replies, this meant bad news. In this case the "No Reply" e-mails created the worst case scenarios in the minds of their family, and since the news reports never disclosed which element of the 173d was involved, everyone who had a son serving with this unit, thought it was him that died. The 173d ABCT has about 3500 men so imagine the size of the family and friends who are waiting to get word.

Obviously, the "Beating The Electron" issue is not unique to the 173d or the U.S. Army. All branches face this dilemma and whether its one death or a hundred, reported by the news and wire services, friends and family will be in the proverbial dark, until at best, they get a reply to their e-mails or at worst, that knock on the door, in the early morning hours, by men in uniform.

# Membership Application

Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28th 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

## Vietnam Veterans of America

Send to: VVA Chapter 787, P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter #787 Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership Type:

Individual: 1 year \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 3 years \_\_\_\_\_ \$50. Associate: 1 year \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 3 years \_\_\_\_\_ \$50

Life Member Options: \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member Ages 49 and Under: \$250, \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member Ages 50-55: \$225, \_\_\_\_\_ Life

Member Ages 56-60: \$200, \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member Ages 61-65: \$175, \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member Ages 66 +: \$150

\_\_\_\_\_ I am already a V.V.A. member and want to become a life member. My V.V.A. Member number is \_\_\_\_\_.

Optional Time Payment plan: \$50 down, and \$25 per month until paid in full.

Payment Method: Check \_\_\_\_\_

Money Order \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ If using a credit card: Card

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

This newsletter is not the official publication of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida. All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of Chapter 787, the VVA State Council, the VVA National or the Chapter members.

You can receive a copy of the OUTPOST each month at no cost. Contact Jon Mueller via e-mail at ParaSF68@aol.com and provide your e-mail address. You will need to have an Adobe Acrobat Reader on your PC to open the newsletter. You can also receive it by US mail. The cost is \$12 per year. Make your check payable to V.V.A. Chapter 787 and mail it to P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404. Make sure you identify the payment for the OUTPOST.

## THE OUTPOST

### Help Your Chapter Grow

Bring a New Member to the Next Chapter Meeting.

Come and Join Us. Give us your Ideas.

Chapter meetings are held at the Veterans Memorial Park & Museum, 3602 Hwy. 301 N. Tampa Fl. 33619.

#### Contact E-mail Addresses:

**President** Jim LaGarde:

cLaGarde@tampabay.rr.com

**VP** Carl Harris: c-e-harris@tampabay.rr.com

**Secretary & Treasurer** Bob Silmser:

Rafkirk64@tampabay.rr.com

**State Council Delegate** Kevin Ruhl:

MSgtMCRet@aol.com

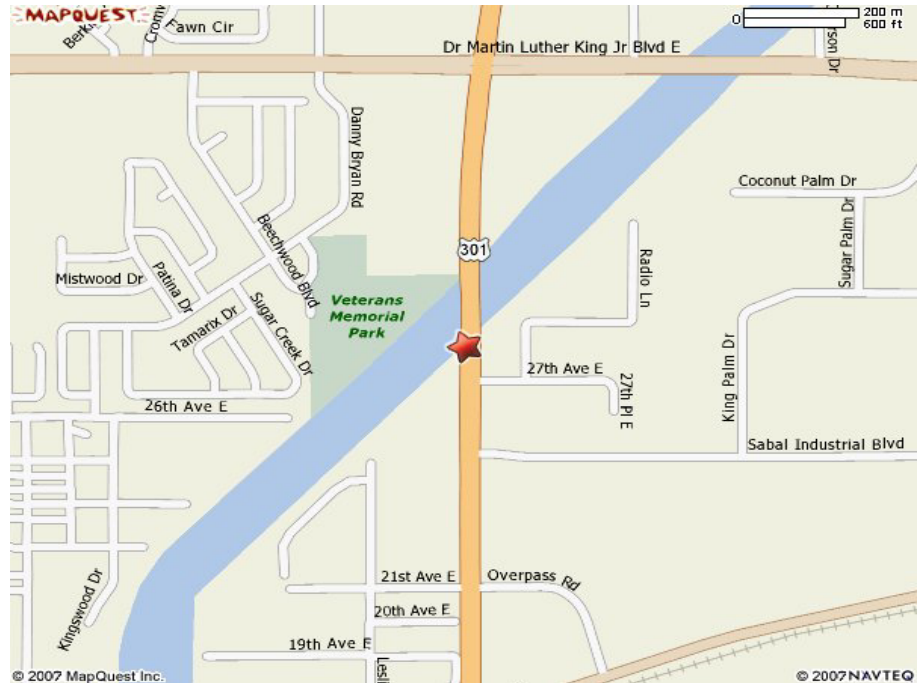
#### Board of Directors

**Steve Williams:** WilliamsPStv@aol.com

**Kevin Ruhl:** MSgtMCRet@aol.com

**Tom Hall:** MarineDI@aol.com

**Jon Mueller:** ParaSF68@aol.com



## Important Web Sites

Vietnam Veterans of American, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida.....	<a href="http://www.vva787.com">http://www.vva787.com</a>
Vietnam War Statistics.....	<a href="http://my.eiis.net/cmart/vietwarstats.html">http://my.eiis.net/cmart/vietwarstats.html</a>
Vietnam, Yesterday & Today.....	<a href="http://servercc.oakton.edu/~wittman/chronol.htm">http://servercc.oakton.edu/~wittman/chronol.htm</a>
Vietnam Veterans Legacy Foundation.....	<a href="http://www.vvlf.org">www.vvlf.org</a>
National League of Families of American POW's/MIA's.....	<a href="http://www.pow-miafamilies.org">www.pow-miafamilies.org</a>
V.V.A. National Office on the World Wide Web.....	<a href="http://www.vva.org">www.vva.org</a>
U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs.....	<a href="http://www.va.gov">www.va.gov</a>
OPM Veterans Hiring Preference.....	<a href="http://www.opm.gov/veterans">www.opm.gov/veterans</a>
Uniformed Services Family Health Plan (USFHP).....	<a href="http://www.usfhp.com">www.usfhp.com</a>
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.....	<a href="http://www.vetapp.uscourts.gov">www.vetapp.uscourts.gov</a>
Children of Vietnam Vets.....	<a href="http://www.geocities.com/pentagon/9125">www.geocities.com/pentagon/9125</a>
The Center for Women Veterans.....	<a href="http://www.va.gov/womenvet">www.va.gov/womenvet</a>
Vietnam Women Memorial Foundation, Inc (formerly "Project").....	<a href="http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org">www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org</a>
The Moving Wall—Vietnam Combat Veterans LTD.....	<a href="http://www.themovingwall.org">www.themovingwall.org</a>
The Virtual Wall.....	<a href="http://www.virtualwall.org">www.virtualwall.org</a>
Get a Copy of your DD-214 on-line.....	<a href="http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html">http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html</a>
Florida State Council web site.....	<a href="http://www.vvafsc.org">www.vvafsc.org</a>