VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1

January 2008

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

Photo By: **Bob Silmser**

Jim (Rambo) LaGarde Honored with Chapter 787 Member of the Year Award

At this years annual Christmas Party, chapter 787 members gave our chapter President **Jim LaGarde**, a very well deserved Member of the Year Award. Veterans do not come much better then the likes of Rambo, and we are all very lucky to have him. Under Jim's leadership, chapter 787 has won the Florida State Chapter of the Year Award along with many accolades from the local Veterans organizations both public and private. The days when Jim was a huey door gunner with the US Army's 9th Infantry Division and a Firefighter, taught him to keep moving forward until the mission was completed, and that is what Rambo has done with chapter 787 and the local veterans he has helped and supported. **Congratulations Rambo!** Good friend of the chapter, Mr. **Dave Thomas**, is seated behind Jim.

Chapter Officers

President: Jim LaGarde

Vice President: Carl Harris

Secretary: Bob Silmser

Treasurer: Bob Silmser

Board of Directors:

Ron Schott

Tom Hall

Kevin Ruhl

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. **Mailing address: P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404.**

Veterans Meet to Plan out War Memorials

Pictured above L-R, **Luc Pieterbours**, a helicopter pilot and restorer, **Jim Basta** VP of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assoc and a long time supporter of the Veterans Park and specifically this project, **Jim LaGarde**, President of V.V.A. chapter 787, and **Dave Braun**, chapter 787 member and Hillsborough County Veterans Council President.

They all got together on December 6th to go over proposed plans to develop War Memorials for all the major conflicts the U.S. has been involved in since WW I. Hillsborough County has provided over $2.2 million in funds to begin construction. The Vietnam Memorial will have a prominent place by the river. The initial plan is to have a Vietnam era helicopter on top of a column at the relocated park entrance.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Quote

'Great empires are not maintained by timidity'

Cornelius Tacitus 56 AD

Chapter 787's Christmas Holiday Meal Program

Pictured above L-R, chapter 787 Vice President **Carl Harris**, Veterans Health Administration Case Manager **Dorann J. Lucas RN** (who we had misidentified in last months OUTPOST), chapter member **Steve Williams**, Veterans Health Administration Program Support Assistant **Kathy Palmer**, chapter Secretary & Treasurer **Bob Silmser** and chapter member **Tony Towers** who was deep in thought over which of his many girlfriends he had a date with that evening.

Chapter 787 members once again arrived at 0430 hours on Dec. 15 to pick up the food which they separated into complete multi course Christmas meals for those women veterans with children who are in financial need this holiday.

"SWEETHEART DINNER DANCE" BENEFIT BUFFETT"

****

BYOB $25.00 PER TICKET

RESERVED SEATING IN ADVANCE WEDNESDAY, Wednesday FEBRUARY 20, 2008 6PM – 10PM

SUN CITY CENTER COMMUNITY HALL 1910 SOUTH PEBBLE BEACH BLVD., SUN CITY CENTER, FL

{I-75 SCC exit west to Pebble Brach Blvd. South}

BRASS BELL CATERING BUFFETT

CARVING STATION FEATURING HERB ENCRUSTED ROUND OF BEEF SERVED WITH HORSERADISH SAUCE, GARLIC MUSTARD AIOLI, HERB AU JUS

CILANTRO LIME GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST WITH TROPICAL FRUIT SALSA, FRESH CUT GREEN BEANS ROASTED RED BLISS POTATOES FRESH BAKED YEAST ROLLS & BUTTER

BYOB & YOUR SWEETHEART

{drink set-ups available, no drink sales}

*

Music, and Entertainment provided by: Jeanne Bush & Pixie Hicks Entertainment. Master of Ceremonies: Haywood Henson Honor Guard: Buffalo Soldiers Remarks: BOCC, Commissioner Jim Norman Presentation: H.C. Parks Director, Mark Thornton H.C. Veterans Affairs Director Tom Fletcher

This benefit is to raise awareness and money for the design and furbishing of America's eleven major **'theaters of war'** at the newly redesigned Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park, 3602 Hwy 301 North, Tampa, Florida 33619. The home of the "Veterans Freedom Memorial."

R.S.V.P.

CALL BOB SILMSER to reserve your tickets and seating,

(813)-220-7246, *CALL TODAY! SUPPORT OUR TROOPS*

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK & MUSEUM COMMITTEE

presents

"SWEETHEART DINNER & DANCE BENEFIT BUFFETT"

TICKETS $25.00 each

RESERVED TABLE OF 8
$200.00

SPONSORSHIP OF A TABLE

NAME ON TABLE + ON PROGRAM

$200

SPONSORSHIP OF A TABLE +ON PROGRAM +

ON A TRAVELING BANNER DISPLAYED AT FUTURE BENEFITS AND EVENTS AT VETERANS PARK

$250

CALL BOB SILMSER TO RESERVE TICKETS, SEATING AND SPONSORSHIPS. BOB'S MOBILE (813) 220-7246

TO REQUEST A SPEAKER FOR ORGANIZATIONS MEETINGS OR TO HOLD A SPECIAL EVENT BENEFIT TO SUPPORT

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK & MUSEUM

DESIGN & MEMORIALIZATION OF AMERICA'S WARS AND CONFLICTS, CONTACT:

DAVE BRAUN, CHAIRMAN (813) 310-8513

TICKETS & SEATING - BOB SILMSER 813-220-7246

ALL CHECKS MADE OUT TO: FRIENDS OF THE PARKS

MAIL TO: VETERANS FREEDOM MEMORIAL

PO BOX 151, BRANDON, FL 33509

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Medal of Honor Winners of the War in Vietnam

The Bravest of the Brave

GERTSCH, JOHN G.

Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant, U.S.. Army, Company E, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. Place and date: A Shau Valley, Republic of Vietnam, 15 to 19 July 1969. Entered service at: Buffalo, N.Y. Born: 29 September 1944, Jersey City, N.J.: Citation: S/Sgt. Gertsch distinguished himself while serving as a platoon sergeant and platoon leader during combat operations in the A Shau Valley. During the initial phase of an operation to seize a strongly defended enemy position, S/Sgt. Gertsch's platoon leader was seriously wounded and lay exposed to intense enemy fire. Forsaking his own safety, without hesitation S/Sgt. Gertsch rushed to aid his fallen leader and dragged him to a sheltered position. He then assumed command of the heavily engaged platoon and led his men in a fierce counterattack that forced the enemy to withdraw. Later, a small element of S/Sgt. Gertsch's unit was reconnoitering when attacked again by the enemy. S/Sgt. Gertsch moved forward to his besieged element and immediately charged, firing as he advanced. His determined assault forced the enemy troops to withdraw in confusion and made possible the recovery of 2 wounded men who had been exposed to heavy enemy fire. Sometime later his platoon came under attack by an enemy force employing automatic weapons, grenade, and rocket fire. S/Sgt. Gertsch was severely wounded during the onslaught but continued to command his platoon despite his painful wound. While moving under fire and encouraging his men he sighted an aidman treating a wounded officer from an adjacent unit. Realizing that both men were in imminent danger of being killed, he rushed forward and positioned himself between them and the enemy nearby. While the wounded officer was being moved to safety S/Sgt. Gertsch was mortally wounded by enemy fire. Without S/Sgt. Gertsch's courage, ability to inspire others, and profound concern for the welfare of his men, the loss of life among his fellow soldiers would have been significantly greater. His conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity at the cost of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit on him and the Armed Forces of his country.

Submitted By: **Bob Silmser**

Fisher House Christmas Meal

On December 24th a Christmas Meal was delivered to the Fisher House. Pictured at right, L-R, is an unidentified women, chapter member and State Council Delegate **Kevin Ruhl**, the women to his left is the wife of a wounded Afghanistan veteran who is still in a coma from his injury, next is chapter President **Jim LaGarde**, VP **Carl Harris** and chapter Secretary & Treasurer **Bob Silmser**, (photographer).

Submitted by: **Dave Braun & Bob Silmser**

Bob Silmser and Dave Braun meet Admiral Olson and Admiral Fallon on Saturday Dec 15, 2007 at MacDill AFB

Pictured above L-R, Chapter 787 member and Hillsborough County Veterans Council President **Dave Braun**, and chapter Secretary and Treasurer **Bob Silmser** (shaking hands) with Special Operations (SOCOM) Commander, **Admiral Olson**. We presume that **Admiral Olson** is standing next to his wife but the women is unidentified. **Admiral Fallon** who is the Central Command (CENCOM) Commander is standing, also presumably with his wife, in the background. The occasion was a Christmas Reception at the Davis Conference Center on MacDill AFB. CENCOM and SOCOM had a joint Open House Reception for invited guests. **Dave Braun** was invited on behalf of the Veterans Council and **Bob Silmser** was Dave's guest.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Chapter 787 Donates Money to a Family In Need.

On Friday December 28th, President **Jim LaGarde** presented a $250 check to **Lillian Silva** to help fly her son to Tampa so that he could visit his brother **Christopher Silva** who is a patient at The Fisher House. Christopher is a 22 year old Navy Veteran who had a reaction to the Military's anthrax shot. He had many serious medical problems as a side affects including heart damage and short term memory loss. His Father, Mother and Brother all live in Texas so visiting him is very expensive. **All chapter members are encouraged to visit Christopher, especially Navy Veterans.**

Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time
	January 2008	
10th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
12th Saturday	Field of Honor Flag placement ceremony, Hillsborough County Veterans Park & Museum	10:00 AM
24th Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Hillsborough County Veterans Park & Museum	7:00 PM
	February 2008	
14th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting Jon's House	6:30 PM
28th Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Hillsborough County Veterans Park & Museum	7:00 PM

MacDill AFB Military Family Resource Center

All active duty, and retired military personnel from all branches including family members have access to the MacDill AFB Family Resource Center, located at 710 Oakfield Dr. Suite #153. Help is available regarding temporary shelter, day car for children, health care and much more. Their phone number is 813-655-9281. Another resource facility is the Brandon Family Support and Resource Center, located at 1277 Kingsway Rd. Brandon Fl. Their number is 813-740-4634

Another contact would be John Navarro 813- 827-9172 on the base.

For Sale

32 inch Sony TV, in Oak Cabinet-excellent picture

Asking $100 or best offer

Call Tom Hall 655-7129

Chapter 787 Donates $500 to Radio Show

On December 5th, Chapter Secretary and Treasurer, **Bob Silmser**, called the Mason Dixon Radio Show and while live on the air donated $500 from our chapter to his Christmas wish charity drive. **Mason Dixon** got very emotional after Bob made the bequest which is a testament to Mason's long time support of the Military and charitable events. Not only was this a very worthwhile cause but it was a plus for our chapter to get much needed recognition in the Tampa Bay area.

More Pictures from the Chapter 787 Christmas Party

Pictured above L-R **Penny Williams** and chapter member **Steve Williams**. Chapter State Council Delegate & Board member, **Kevin Ruhl** and wife **Keturah**.

Pictured above L-R, chapter member **Richard Nye** and wife **Nancy**. Chapter member and Hillsborough County Veterans Council President **Dave Braun** and chapter member **Tony Towers**.

Our Christmas party was held at the Golden Corral in Brandon and 18 people were in attendance. **Beverly Thomas** and her husband **Dave** made all the table center-pieces and had many gifts to present to winners of the tickets which were handed out to all present. **A huge Thank You to Beverly and her husband Dave, for the great job they did.**

Pictured at left L-R, **Margaret Silmser, Elaine Harris**, **Richard Nye**, chapter VP **Carl Harris**, **Steve Williams**, **Kathy LaGarde** and chapter President **Jim LaGarde**.

Chapter 787 Wins the Florida State Council Newsletter of the Year for 2007!

Chapter Board Member and State Council Treasurer, **Tom Hall** recommended and Chapter President **Jim LaGarde** approved the submission for your OUTPOST as the V.V.A. State Newsletter of the year, and we won. Thanks to all of you who have submitted articles and especially those of you who have taken photos of our many events and shared them with the OUTPOST. It is not possible to thank everyone who contributed over the last few years but we wish to recognize the following individuals who have been regular supporters to this publication. In alphabetical order: **Harold Carson**, **Dan Cullen**, **Tom Hall**, **Ron Murray**, **Kevin Ruhl**, **Bob Silmser**, and **Ron Schott.**

Shooters Wanted!

In last months OUTPOST, we covered the annual Hillsborough County Charity Sporting Clays shoot by Sheriff Gee. We mentioned that the shoot collected over $55,000 for the Fisher/Haley House, Operation Helping Hand and the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, all benefiting our men and women in uniform who have been wounded or benefiting their children, if they have been killed in action. There were over 25 four man teams participating. Chapter 787 would like to establish a four man team to enter next years event. Anyone who has experience with clay or skeet shooting or for that matter just shotguns is welcome to apply. We want to get together on a regular basis to practice our skills before the next event.

Like golf, many worthwhile organizations put together charity clay shooting events. In most cases, well known “movers and shakers” of the community come and either watch or participate. This will allow us to make contacts with individuals in the area that could help chapter 787 with our own funding or other projects.

For additional information or to apply, please contact Jon Mueller at (813) 261-5119 or e-mail me at ParaSF68@aol.com.

Pictured above from the November 15th Sheriff Gee Charity Clay Shoot, L-R, Chapter member Jon Mueller, Lee Vannes, Ray Calafell, and retired Army General Doug Brown

Membership Application

Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other then 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 JonMue@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.

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.

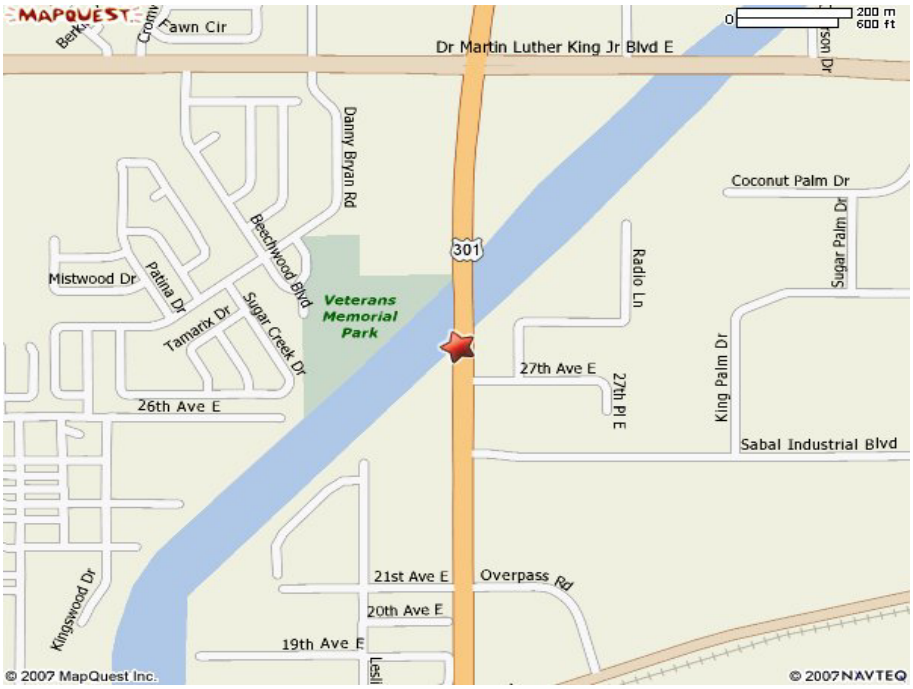
Contact E-mail Addresses:

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

Ron Schott: RonD1120@aol.com

Kevin Ruhl: MSgtMCRet@aol.com

Jon Mueller: ParaSF68@aol.com

Important Web Sites

Vietnam Veterans of American, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida…… http://www.vva787.com

Vietnam War Statistics…… ……..http://my.eiis.net/cmart/vietwarstats.html

Vietnam, Yesterday & Today……..http://servercc.oakton.edu/~wittman/chronol.htm

Vietnam Veterans Legacy Foundation……..www.vvlf.org

National League of Families of American POW's/MIA's……www.pow-miafamilies.org

V.V.A. National Office on the World Wide Web……...www.vva.org

U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs……...www.va.gov

OPM Veterans Hiring Preference……..www.opm.gov/veterans

Uniformed Services Family Health Plan (USFHP)……..www.usfhp.com

U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims……..www.vetapp.uscourts.gov

Children of Vietnam Vets……www.geocities.com/pentagon/9125

The Center for Women Veterans……www.va.gov/womenvet

Vietnam Women Memorial Foundation, Inc (formerly "Project")……..www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org

The Moving Wall—Vietnam Combat Veterans LTD……www.themovingwall.org

The Virtual Wall……..www.virtualwall.org

Get a Copy of your DD-214 on-line……..http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html

Florida State Council web site……...www.vvafsc.org