



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**



Special Election for Chapter Officers August 28th.

Current President Jim LaGarde and Secretary Treasurer Bob Silmsler, will resign their posts on that day. For Chapter 787 to continue as a Veterans Organization, new officers must be installed.

Tom Hall, who is currently on the Board of Directors, and has served as past President of Chapter 787, has volunteered to take over as President again. This is a big sacrifice for Tom since he also serves on the V.V.A. Florida State Council as Treasurer and Editor of the newsletter.

We still need individuals to step up to take control of the Secretary and Treasurer positions.

If we cannot fill these positions, the chapter will fold!

Chapter Officers

President: Jim LaGarde

Vice President: Carl

Harris

Secretary: Bob Silmsler

Treasurer: Bob Silmsler

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.**



News

U.S. Rep. Adam Putnam (Fla.-12)

Central Florida: Hillsborough, Osceola and Polk counties

**May 15, 2008
IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Keith Rupp
Communications Director
(863) 534-3530

Brandon VA clinic poised to win federal support

WASHINGTON – Congressman Adam Putnam (R-Fla.) today announced that a new outpatient clinic in Brandon to serve about 10,000 military veterans is closer to reality. The facility won support from the Veterans' Affairs Committee and is expected to pass on the Floor of the House of Representatives later this month.

"Sometimes, just getting to the care they need can be a real ordeal for our veterans," said Putnam. "With congested roads, a growing population and few alternatives, this clinic is going to make a big difference, giving veterans – especially those in southeastern Hillsborough County – better access to the medical care they deserve."

The Medical Facility Authorization and Lease Act of 2008 (HR 5856), which includes a \$4.326 million authorization for the facility, could be voted on before Memorial Day. The measure would establish a 50,000 square foot multi-specialty clinic in Brandon that would be an extension of the James A. Haley VA Medical Center in Tampa.

Under the proposal, a lease for the facility could be awarded in September 2009 and be ready to serve patients by June 2011.

Since 2001, Putnam has represented Florida's 12th Congressional District, which includes most of Polk County and portions of Hillsborough and Osceola counties. As chairman of the Republican Conference, he is the third ranking member of his party's leadership in the House of Representatives.

Additional Pictures from the May 30th Chapter 787 Car Show

President Jim (Rambo) LaGarde wanted these pictures shown. Jim felt they were very meaningful.



Submitted By: Jon Mueller

A Welcome Home for every Warrior

As an Army wife Sharon Hyland Keyser watched a Fourth of July parade last year, she noticed that the Vietnam veterans seemed glum, with eyes cast downward while World War II vets held their heads high.

“I thought, ‘Shame on us for treating the Vietnam vets the way we did when they came home,’ Keyser said. “We should be welcoming troops home with limos, balloons and flags.” A month later, with her then-fiancé deployed to Afghanistan, she quit her six-figure job and spent her life savings to start the nonprofit group “A Hero’s Welcome,” which seeks to engineer welcome-home celebrations around the country for troops returning from war.

The goal is for as many people as possible to meet troops at the airport. Later, based on what the service member missed most while away, the group arranges another celebration—a trip to a favorite pub or a baseball game, for example.

Families or friends or service members can contact Keyser through her Web site: <http://www.aheros-welcome.org>. Chapters are starting in 19 states.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Quote

Artillerymen believe the world consists of two types of people, other Artilleryman and targets.

(Redleg Journal 1942)

USAF in Laos

Please scan down to the second picture which is a painting of two EB-66s refueling behind a KC-135 tanker over Laos in early 1969. It has special significance to me as I furnished the black and white photo the artist selected to paint. I was flying the third EB-66 (not shown in the photo or painting, obviously) and had a combat photographer with me. He took several pictures and gave me prints. When the artist asked for photos of EB-66 activity, I submitted three. Note the "probe and drogue" refueling apparatus. The probe on the nose of the EB-66 is evident. The drogue with the "basket" trailing behind the lowered boom of the KC-135 is visible if you look hard. The EB-66 is approaching the basket to start taking on fuel.

The narrative from the artist explains the Air Force Art Program

I told you that I would let you know if I were going to do prints of the paintings recently completed and which you are an integral part. I have found a place here in Asheville NC that will produce the Giclee prints for me at a very affordable price of both the B66 Maintenance painting and the in-flight refueling of two EB/RB-66's. You all indicated that you might want one.

In my discussions with Jim Milam and Joe Montana via e-mail, they are going to mention in the next news letter that prints of the paintings will be available. If you would like one I would be most happy to send you one. You all have been the key for me being able to do these two paintings. If it hadn't been for your inputs they wouldn't have happened.

Here again are attachments of the two paintings. I am still struggling with whether I should adjust the maintenance painting for the picture of the aircraft on the ramp at night. I am thinking about adding a starter unit and maybe a couple of crew walking to the aircraft on the far side. I am not sure whether I should do that. My gut feel is leave it as it is.

They are almost the same size even though my Photoshop reproduction in the attachments doesn't make it look that way. The prints of the maintenance painting are 10" x 15" and 20 x 30. The in-flight painting prints are 11 x 15 and approximately 22 x 30. Each print has a two inch white border around it. Each print will have a reproduction of my signature where I signed the actual painting on it, and I will sign each print in pencil in the white area of the border, as is the custom, for each print. The 10 x 15 print will frame to about 17 x 22 and the larger will frame to about 30 x 40. I mention this so that you might have some idea of wall space needed.

The cost of the smaller print is \$35. That includes mailing. The larger print will be \$65 and that price also includes mailing. I will send them in a mailing tube for protection.

The originals will go on display at the Pritzker Military Library in Chicago on 5 September and be there until early October. This show will feature recent works of our group of artists from the Mid West Artists group of the Air Force Art Program. After that, the paintings will be "handed over" to the USAF in Washington DC on October 24. Paintings by the Air Force Artists are given to the USAF every other year without compensation. We must provide at least one painting every other year to remain in the program. This year I will be providing three. In addition to the two B 66 paintings I will be providing a painting of the USAF F35.

I now have the capability to accept Visa and Mastercards. If you would like a print[s] you can send me a check or credit card info and I will get the print[s] on the way. For credit cards, I need name on the card, address, credit card number, expiration date and the three code numbers on the back. If you have any questions you can contact me at my home at 792 Fairgate Dr. Hendersonville, NC 28739, tel 828 697 8465, cel 828 329 1193, gr8artis@mchsi.com or www.morrisonart.com.

Pictures submitted by: **Harold Carson**

See narrative on previous page.....





Medal of Honor Winners of the War in Vietnam

The Bravest of the Brave

Major Merlyn Hans Dethlefsen USAF



Rank and organization: Major (then Capt.), U.S. Air Force. Place and date: In the air over North Vietnam, 10 March 1967. Entered service at: Royal, Iowa. Born: 29 June 1934, Greenville, Iowa. Citation: Maj. Dethlefsen was 1 of a flight of F-105 aircraft engaged in a fire suppression mission designed to destroy a key antiaircraft defensive complex containing surface-to-air missiles (SAM), an exceptionally heavy concentration of antiaircraft artillery, and other automatic weapons. The defensive network was situated to dominate the approach and provide protection to an important North Vietnam industrial center that was scheduled to be attacked by fighter bombers immediately after the strike by Maj.

Dethlefsen's flight. In the initial attack on the defensive complex the lead aircraft was crippled, and Maj. Dethlefsen's aircraft was extensively damaged by the intense enemy fire. Realizing that the success of the impending fighter bomber attack on the center now depended on his ability to effectively suppress the defensive fire, Maj. Dethlefsen ignored the enemy's overwhelming firepower and the damage to his aircraft and pressed his attack. Despite a continuing hail of antiaircraft fire, deadly surface-to-air missiles, and counterattacks by MIG interceptors, Maj. Dethlefsen flew repeated close range strikes to silence the enemy defensive positions with bombs and cannon fire. His action in rendering ineffective the defensive SAM and antiaircraft artillery sites enabled the ensuing fighter bombers to strike successfully the important industrial target without loss or damage to their aircraft, thereby appreciably reducing the enemy's ability to provide essential war material. Maj. Dethlefsen's consummate skill and selfless dedication to this significant mission were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Air Force and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.



Lt. Col. Dethlefsen flying the Republic F-105F

From "Tip of The Spear" SFA

US Army Commemorative Coin Bill Introduced in House

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO) and Ranking Member Duncan Hunter (RCA) on Monday introduced HR 5714, the "United States Army Commemorative Coin Act of 2008." The bill would create a series of commemorative coins to recognize and celebrate the establishment of the United States Army in 1775, and to honor the service and sacrifice of Americans Soldiers of both past and present, in wartime and in peace.

This legislation is a companion to S 2579, introduced in the Senate in January by US Senators Dan Inouye (D-HI) and Jim Inhofe (R-OK). In introducing the bill, Chairman Skelton stated that "The US Army has played a decisive role in protecting and defending freedom throughout the history of our country and has consistently answered the call to serve the American people at home and abroad.

The sacrifice of the American soldier since the earliest days of the Republic has been immense." These would be the first US coins ever issued to celebrate and honor the US Army and its heritage since 1775. According to this legislation, the coins would be minted and sold in 2011. These commemorative coins will do more than just honor the Army and Army veterans. The proposed legislation would reserve a share of sales revenues to help fund the National Museum of the United States Army to be built at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Continued on next page.....

TAPS

He grew up in Tampa and fought on many fronts including Vietnam

By MARK ZALOUDEK Sarasota Herald-Tribune The Tampa Tribune, Published: June 6, 2008



SARASOTA - Stationed in the Philippines before World War II, Army **Lt. Don Blackburn** eluded capture during the fall of Bataan in 1942. For the next 3 1/2 years, the young man who grew up in Tampa helped rally Philippine troops and jungle tribesmen to fend off the Japanese until **Gen. Douglas MacArthur's** forces liberated the island of Luzon in 1945. The tales of combat and survival recorded in the soldier's diary became the subject of a book, "Blackburn's Headhunters," and the 1959 film "Surrender — Hell!" **Blackburn**, who died May 24 at 91, went on to become a Brigadier General who helped establish the Army's elite Special Operations Forces, better known as the Green Berets.

He also served as an adviser to the Joint Chiefs of Staff during his ecorated, 31-year military career before he retired in 1971. Despite **Blackburn's** brush with fame, much of what he did as a senior Army official and strategist remains top secret. He was in command of covert unconventional warfare to undermine the spread of communism in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, and later spent several years at the Pentagon and in other military roles in the Washington, D.C., area. He was known for emphasizing strategic planning to minimize bloodshed.

A counterinsurgency specialist, he relied on assessing the strengths and weaknesses of enemy forces to neutralize their strongholds rather than send troops into battle, said his son, **Don Blackburn Jr.** of Los Gatos, Calif. "He's never been a warrior-type," he said. "The whole mark of my father's career was saving lives." The elder **Blackburn** was instrumental in establishing Special Forces operations in Southeast Asia in the late 1950s. He returned to Vietnam in the mid-1960s to command their operations. He later served as assistant division commander of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division strike force at Fort Bragg, N.C., special assistant to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and director of plans and programs for the Army's Office of the Chief of Research and Development.

Among the service medals he was awarded are the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. Born Sept. 14, 1916, in West Palm Beach, **Blackburn** grew up in Tampa and graduated from Plant High School and the University of Florida. He was attending law school at Columbia University and was a member of the ROTC when he enlisted in 1940.

He felt honored when his writings from the Philippines became the basis of a book, but was less impressed when Hollywood filmmakers embellished his story with fictional romantic subplots, said his daughter, **Susan Douglas** of Sarasota. After retiring from the military, **Blackburn** worked for several years as a vice president for defense contractor and military think tank Braddock, Dunn and McDonald in Virginia. He moved to Sarasota nearly 20 years ago to be closer to family. His hobbies included gardening and reading history books. He is also survived by five grandchildren.



Blackburn will be buried with full military honors at 9 a.m. Aug. 6 at Arlington National Cemetery.

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US Army Commemorative Coin Bill Introduced in House

The Army Historical Foundation (AHF), which was designated in 2000 as the Army's primary partner in building the Museum, is spearheading the drive to establish the Army Commemorative Coins. "The Army is the oldest and largest military service, and has played a decisive role in maintaining and strengthening freedom and democracy," said AHF Executive Director and retired US Army Brigadier General Creighton Abrams, Jr. "The US Army Commemorative Coin is an appropriate way to honor the Army's rich heritage, and to help make the National Museum of the United States Army a reality." "We thank the 50 Members, in both houses of Congress, who have signed as co-sponsors of the Army Commemorative Coin Act," Abrams said. Abrams also pointed out that since passage requires two-thirds of all members be listed as co-sponsors, supporters of the Army are urged to contact their US Senators and Representatives and let them know that they support this bill. Sample letters to Congress can be found at The Army Historical Foundation's web site, www.armyhistory.org.

Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time
<u>July 2008</u>		
2nd Wednesday	Veterans Park & Museum, Memorial Projects Committee Meeting, Veterans Park	6:00 AM
4th Friday	4th of July Parade w/Chapter 787's Float, meet at Clayton Plaza, Hwy 60 & Kings Ave	8:00 AM
6th Sunday	Chapter 787 hosts a "4th of July" cookout for residents & their families, at the Fisher House	10:00 AM
10th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
24th Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Hillsborough Veterans Park & Museum	7:00 PM

August 2008

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

Check out our EVENTS page on the chapter web site. Go to www.vva787.com, click EVENTS then Calendar of Events.

SALUTING IN CIVILIAN CLOTHING

Public Law 110-181, Section 594: signed by the President 28 January 2008.

SEC. 594. CONDUCT BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS OUT OF UNIFORM DURING HOISTING, LOWERING, OR PASSING OF UNITED STATES FLAG.

Section 9 of title 4, United States Code, is amended by striking "all persons present" and all that follows through the end of the section and inserting the following: "all persons present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces

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and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes."

Financial Status of Chapter 787 as of May 2008

Total.....\$10,935.43 (Moving Wall Fund..\$4,692.80, General checking \$4,241.60.... Holiday Meals Fund \$2,001.03)

Total.....\$2,427.02 (Household Goods.....\$1,507.53 Convention Fund.....\$919.49)

All Accounts Total: \$13,362.45

Thanks to our Treasurer Bob Silmsen

More Pictures from the Car Show taken by
Bob Silmsr



Haven For Homeless Female Vets

By SHERRI ACKERMAN The Tampa Tribune Published: June 29, 2008

TAMPA - A half century ago, this two-story red brick building housed men returning from World War II.

This fall, 16 homeless female veterans - including some who served in Iraq - will move into the 100-year-old former boarding house as they work to become self-sufficient again.

"So there'll be soldiers here again," said Sara Romeo, executive director of Tampa Crossroads, the agency that will oversee the federal transitional housing program.

Women make up more than a quarter of the military and are becoming a growing demographic among the nation's homeless population.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are more than 194,000 homeless veterans on any given night nationwide; about 6,000 of them are women, said Peter Dougherty, the department's director of homeless veterans programs.

Traditionally, veterans programs have catered to men. As more women enlisted in the military, coed treatment facilities opened. It's only been in the past six to seven years, though, that programs began looking at women separately, Dougherty said.

Women's issues are different from men's, he said, which makes it more difficult to counsel women in a group setting. A high percentage of them have been sexually abused either before enlisting, while on active duty or after leaving the military.

The need for gender-specific programs - especially for women - has become "a high priority," he said. "They're still fairly rare."

Women To Get Housing, Counseling

Veterans Affairs is providing the bulk of funding for Tampa Crossroad's Athena Program, which will be the only one of its kind in the state, Romeo said. The name comes from the Greek Goddess of war, wisdom and art.

Homeless female veterans who were honorably discharged can enroll in the program for up to two years. They'll receive housing and board, counseling, and job assistance while they reacquaint themselves with living in a community.

"Usually we only get about six months to work with them," Romeo said.

The former state legislator estimates there are about 400 homeless veterans in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties.

Many come home with post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues, Romeo said. They've lived for months, maybe years on alert for trigger bombs.

"They just can't go out and get a job and act like nothing happened," she said.

Female vets tend to have issues similar to other women involved in Tampa Crossroads programs. Some abuse alcohol or drugs. They have low self-esteem and usually have some kind of domestic violence or sexual abuse in their past, Romeo said.

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

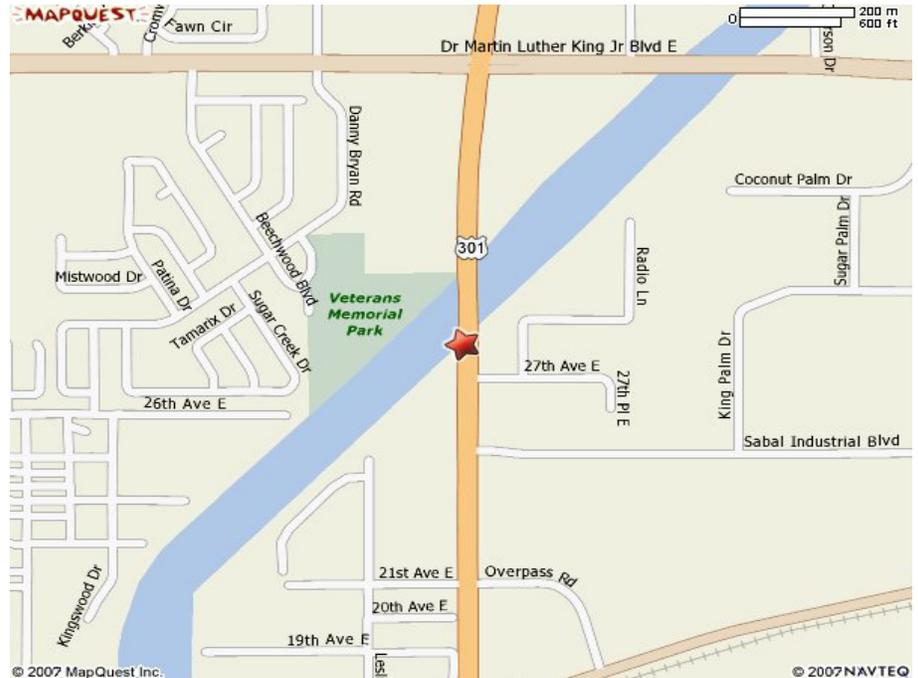
Board of Directors

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.....	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