



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



Car Show a Big Success!

On May 31st, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787 held it's annual Car Show and for the first time the event was at the Hillsborough County Veterans Park & Museum. Chapter member Tom Hall and his gang of volunteers produced one of the best events on record. The following pictures were taken and submitted by: **Tom Hall, Bob Silmsers** and **Art Jorgensen**, all chapter 787 members.



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, Tom Hall helps out on registrations. Next, Chapter 787 President, Jim (Rambo) La- Garde (R), presents an award.



Pictured above, L-R, Chapter 787 Scy/Tres, **Bob Silmsers** gets a POW/MIA tattoo, (next stop is a biker gang). One of the most popular car entries also had the POW/MIA theme.

From an E-mail.....

I personally want to thank all who worked the Chapter Car Show yesterday for their dedication and hard work. Everyone hung in there despite the afternoon heat to make the show a great success. Each year it get bigger and better. I guess we are like a fine wine and get better with age.

Even though we had 3 vendors cancel at the last minute, all of the vendors were pleased with the show. The Silent Auction was a success and the 50/50 drawing was great. I want to thank **Richard Nye** and he student follows who worked the crowd all day to buy tickets.

We had a few donations other than what was expected.

The best news that happened all day was the Blood Drive. When I talked with the people they said they were expecting to get maybe 8 pints of blood for the day. I'm happy to report that a total of 22 pints of blood were donated. In talking with their manager he said that they rarely have any success at car shows. Thanks to **Beverly Thomas** for setting this up. The Bloodmobile definitely wants to come back next year.

We had the POW/MIA car at the show and I'm please to report that the owner has joined the chapter as a Life Member. We are very fortunate that he join and he is willing to be active as much as possible since he lives in Largo.

We also plugged the renovation to the park to the public yesterday to win their support in contacting their County Commissioners to support the release of the \$2.5 million promised for the renovation of the park and not use the funds for anything else. Let's hope they will help our cause.

I was very impressed by the public traffic flow we had all day. It seemed like the public parking area was always full and a steady stream of traffic was coming and going. I want to thank **Tony Tower** and **Steve Williams** to taking control of the traffic along with their student assistants.

The food booth seemed to busy most of the day. I want to thank **Beverly** for taking the lead on this important area of the car show. She had **Dianne Magee**, from Chapter 522; **Joyce Koprowski**, from Chapter 195; and **Suzanne Weber** from Chapter 916 helping throughout the day, plus her husband **David**.

Other members who helped were **Mickey Taylor**, **Art Jorgensen**, **Carl & Eliane Harris**, **Kit Carson**, **Bob Silmser**, **Jim LaGarde**, **Dave Braun** and anyone else that my memory doesn't recall. I want to especially thank the Park Rangers for their invaluable help and volunteering to work overtime without pay.

Our trophy vendor was really impressed with how many cars turned. He told me he had taken some beautiful pictures of the car and the setting of the park. He was going to use them for our 2009 trophies. I mentioned the POW/MIA car and he took photos of it and it will be the main photo and other cars in the background on our 2009 trophies. He also told me that for our 2009 car show that he would donate all the trophies and dash plaques to the chapter. That will save us \$300.00. He said he was going to go ahead and make up the trophies within the next couple of weeks and we could store them. We definitely want to thank **Ken Taylor of Taylor Designs**.

I don't have a breakdown of the dollar figures yet. I will be doing that today or tomorrow and will follow up with the totals.

Again, thank you to everyone for your support leading up to this event. I consider it a huge success and a team effort. Working together we can always achieve great things.



Semper Fi,

Tom Hall

Armwood High School, History of the Vietnam War Class

Chapter member Bruce Burnham, Teacher



Pictured, top, L-R: Chapter member Bruce Burnham's Vietnam History Class, next, chapter member and Vietnam Flight Nurse, Linda Pugsley.

Bottom, L-R, Linda shows students how to carry a stretcher.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Quote

**"I do not fear an Army of lions if they are lead by a lamb.
I do fear an Army of sheep if they are lead by a lion."**

Alexander the Great

Chapter 787 awards to local JROTC



Pictured above, L-R, Chapter 787 President **Jim LaGarde** presents awards to Plant City High School Army cadet **Brandi Jones**. Her Mom is at center. Next, Jim presents our award to Freedom High School Naval Cadet, **Reginald Hare**. His Mom and Dad are also shown.

Each year chapter 787 contacts the local High School JROTC program commanders to ask which of their fine young cadets can meet our criteria of good grades, leadership and physical training. That cadet is then awarded our very impressive plaque with their name and our logo. Many Veterans groups make awards during these ceremonies, but chapter 787 seems to have the best looking and most impressive of all the awards.

Here is a list of the 2008 winners from Hillsborough County. Thanks to **Bob Silmsner** for this information, and thanks to all the chapter members who volunteered to attend each of the High Schools JROTC program events to make our presentations.

King	March 20, 2008	9:00	Cadet Ensign Justin Brown
Newsome	April 1, 2008	9:15	Cadet Alexander Fontana
Hillsborough	April 22, 2008	9:00	Cadet Nathan P. Miller
Alonso	May 1, 2008	18:00	Cadet Homero Gonzalez
Brandon	May 1, 2008	9:30	Cadet James Linville
Plant City	May 1, 2008	18:30	Cadet Brandi Jones
Wharton	May 1, 2008	18:00	Cadet Alonso Jones
Robinson	May 7, 2008	18:30	Cadet Joshua Cumba
Tampa Bay Tech	May 8, 2008	18:00	Cadet Timothy Hatcher
Armwood	May 14, 2008	8:00	Cadet Brian Havinga
Riverview	May 14, 2008	18:30	Cadet Thomas Roudermilk
Bloomingtondale	May 15, 2008	15:30	Cadet John Kleinman
Durant	May 16, 2008	19:00	Cadet Amanda Makrides
East Bay	May 16, 2008	9:00	Cadet Tye Warner
Freedom	May 16, 2008	18:00	Cadet Reginald Hare

Memorial Day Event, Veterans Park & Museum

Each year, the President of Hillsborough County's Veterans Council, **Dave Braun**, coordinates a presentation to honor our men and women who have sacrificed their all, in the service of their country.



Pictured from top, L-R, chapter 787 member **Richard Nye** who we thank for always be there when we need a color guard. Next, Richard is also always available when a good looking women needs a hug. The Piper is **Erla Richardson**

Next Hillsborough County Veterans Council President **Dave Braun** prepares to open the Memorial Day ceremony.

Last is the MacDill AFB, color guard. They looked very sharp.



Medal of Honor Winners of the War in Vietnam

The Bravest of the Brave



Karl Gorman Taylor, Sr.



Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps, Company 1, 3d Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, 3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF. Place and date: Republic of Vietnam, 8 December 1968. Entered service at: Baltimore, Md. Born: 14 July 1939, Laurel, Md. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving at night as a company gunnery sergeant during Operation MEADE RIVER. Informed that the commander of the lead platoon had been mortally wounded when his unit was pinned down by a heavy volume of enemy fire, S/Sgt. Taylor along with another marine, crawled forward to the beleaguered unit through a hail of hostile fire, shouted encouragement and instructions to the men, and deployed them to covered positions. With his companion, he then repeatedly maneuvered across an open area to rescue those marines who were too seriously wounded to move by themselves. Upon learning that there were still other seriously wounded men lying in another open area, in proximity to an enemy machinegun position, S/Sgt. Taylor, accompanied by 4 comrades, led his men forward across the fire-swept terrain in an attempt to rescue the marines. When his group was halted by devastating fire, he directed his companions to return to the company command post; whereupon he took his grenade launcher and in full view of the enemy, charged across the open rice paddy toward the machinegun position, firing his weapon as he ran. Although wounded several times, he succeeded in reaching the machinegun bunker and silencing the fire from that sector, moments before he was mortally wounded. Directly instrumental in saving the lives of several of his fellow marines, S/Sgt. Taylor, by his indomitable courage, inspiring leadership, and selfless dedication, upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the U.S. Naval Service.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Tom Hall will be going back to “The Nam”

Chapter member, **Tom Hall**, featured in this month's OUTPOST because of his coordination of our Car Show, has a long list of V.V.A. involvement and accomplishments. He was the past President of chapter 787 when we won the National Chapter of the Year award, He currently serves on the Board of Directors, he is the state councils Treasurer and is the editor of the award winning state newsletter RECON. Tom will be going back to Vietnam in July. The Tampa Tribune did the following article on him .

Veteran Is Ready To Forget Vietnam

By D'ANN LAWRENCE WHITE
The Tampa Tribune
Published: May 24, 2008
Updated:

VALRICO - Tom Hall's life has taken many turns in the past 40 years. Among other things, the Valrico resident married his wife, Peggy. He raised two sons, one a teacher, the other a sheriff's deputy in Columbia, Mo. And the native Midwesterner and his wife moved to Valrico in 1999, where Hall has been active in the Tampa Bay and national chapters of Vietnam Veterans of America.

One thing has remained unchanged since the day Hall boarded a plane in September 1969 and left South Vietnam and its struggles behind: the recurring nightmares and the gruesome memories that materialize anywhere, at any time, for no reason.

Continued on the next page.....

Like many Vietnam veterans, Hall said he has been living with demons that followed him home from the Vietnam War four decades ago, and he's ready to put them to rest.

"In the past two years, with the 40th anniversary of the war approaching, I started thinking more and more about my experiences in Vietnam and about going back there to find closure," Hall said.

"I remember watching the World War II veterans talk about going back to Normandy Beach and Iwo Jima, and the peace they found in that experience. I do believe that returning to Vietnam is going to finally bring some closure to some issues I've been carrying around."

Born in St. Louis and raised in Granite City, Ill., outside St. Louis, Hall said he knew his grades weren't good enough to earn him a college scholarship, and his parents couldn't afford to send him to college. A military career seemed to be his best option.

Hall was 17 when he joined the Marine Corps, following in the footsteps of an aunt and uncle who were serving in Vietnam.

He turned 18 in December 1967 and was on a plane headed to Da Nang, South Vietnam, in January 1968.

"I'd been through advanced infantry training, and I was a big fan of all the old John Wayne movies," Hall said. "I was young, naïve and looking for an escape from Granite City. I never really gave a thought to the fact that I was going into combat. You're so absorbed in training; it doesn't hit you until you get there. Then you look around and say, 'Wow, this is for real.'"

Since 1999, when formal talks between the U.S. and Vietnamese governments on the whereabouts of military personnel missing in action began, Hall has had several opportunities to return to Vietnam as a representative of Vietnam Veterans of America.

The talks bring former Vietnamese and American military personnel together to share soldiers' journals, identification cards and dog tags. They also exchange information about possible burial sites or mass graves in hopes of finding the bodies of missing soldiers.

However, health problems have prevented Hall from making the trip. Although he did not suffer serious wounds in battle like thousands of other American military personnel in the Vietnam War, Hall was exposed to the defoliant Agent Orange. He was exposed for two straight weeks as U.S. military planes blanketed the countryside with the chemical to kill vegetation used to cloak the enemy.

Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange have reported health problems, including cancer. Hall said his exposure left him with lower peripheral neuropathy, or damage to the nervous system. At times, the condition has caused paralysis from the waist down, forcing Hall to use a wheelchair.

Hall can walk now, although he has numbness in both legs. But he and his doctors at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa agree it's the right time for him to attempt a return to Vietnam to help banish some of the ghosts responsible for his 40-year battle with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Hall isn't expecting anything like the furloughs he used to enjoy with his fellow Marine buddies. The itinerary for his trip July 24 to Aug. 8 includes an intensive tour of some places he fought in fierce battles.

The tour, arranged by Alexandria, Va.-based Military Historical Tours, was organized by a group of former Marines. The nine other travelers in the group also fought as Marines in Vietnam.

"It's nice to know that I'll have some guys there who know what I've been through," Hall said.

For several months, he has been reading books by veterans and combing the Internet for information about the changes in Vietnam since he was there January 1968 to September 1969.

"I'm eager to find out if my memories are a reality or if it was all just a figment of my imagination," Hall said. "Maybe I'll just be opening up a can of worms, bringing back memories best forgotten. But in 40 years, surely the country has had to make some progress."

His first impression of Vietnam remains one of his most vivid memories, and he wonders whether he will have the same sensation this time.

Continued on page 9.....

Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time
<u>June 2008</u>		
12th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
13th & 14th Friday & Saturday	Chapter Fund Raiser, Publix at Providence & Bloomingdale, Winthrop Center	
18th Wednesday	Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners Meeting, Vet Park Memorials Funding	TBD
23rd Monday	Hillsborough County Veterans Council Meeting, Veterans Park & Museum	6:00 PM
26th Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Hillsborough Veterans Park & Museum	7:00 PM
<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

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

More Pictures from the Chapter 787, Car Show



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

"I'll always remember the heat and the smell when we landed," he said. "I know it will be hot. It's always hot in July in Vietnam. But I'm curious to see if it smells the same."

A fellow veteran who returned to Vietnam warned him that he would see war memorials and monuments depicting America as the aggressor.

An amateur photographer, Hall plans to bring home images from the same locations where he took photographs during the war for a side-by-side comparison. He'll also keep a journal during his travels.

Among the sites he is especially eager to visit is Hue, the site of the Citadel, the old imperial palace Marines took back from the North Vietnamese in a bloody siege.

"An Hoa will be tough, too," he said. "I might have to relive some pretty bad memories there."

Seventy-seven fellow Marines died in An Hoa during a sapper attack in which Vietnamese suicide bombers infiltrated the American camp and set off explosives, killing as many enemy military personnel as possible.

Although thousands of veterans have returned to Vietnam since the war, Hall said the journey is bound to be personal for every traveler.

"It's one of the tragedies of war that the men and women who fight are left to deal with the ghosts afterward," he said. "I expect 40 years from now, you'll see a lot of men and women making similar trips to Iraq and Afghanistan seeking closure."

USSOCOM Commander speaks on Memorial Day

Admiral Erik Thor Olson, commander of the Special Operations Command at MacDill AFB, spoke at the Bushnell National Cemetery, during its annual Memorial Day event. Picture submitted by Bill Bennett SFA.



City gives Vietnam vets overdue welcome home

The Associated Press

Posted : Tuesday May 20, 2008 6:10:25 EDT

INDIANAPOLIS — Hundreds of Vietnam War veterans and their family members filled the Indiana War Memorial auditorium Saturday for a long-overdue homecoming celebration.

A banner stating “The city of Indianapolis Welcomes Home Vietnam Veterans” was displayed outside the memorial, as the city held its first welcome-home celebration for the veterans. Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, a Marine veteran of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, greeted guests before and after the ceremony.

“I thought it was important for the city to do it, so at least one municipality is saying, ‘Thanks for what you did,’” said Ballard, who spoke at the ceremony along with Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, adjutant general of the Indiana National Guard.

Vietnam veteran Charles Hahn, 61, said he remembers a woman who was protesting the war spitting on him after he got off a plane in Chicago.

“When soldiers came back from the first Gulf War, they told us to go out and welcome the soldiers back,” Hahn said. “I said, ‘I’m not doing it.’ I didn’t feel right doing it, and I didn’t do it.”

He said he struggled to deal with how he was treated on his return from Vietnam, but Saturday’s ceremony helped.

“It really has, but it shouldn’t have taken them so long to do it,” he said.

Another Vietnam veteran, Olgen Williams, said it took years before he stopped feeling ashamed of his military service.

“For a long time we just didn’t talk about it,” said Williams, Indianapolis’ deputy mayor for neighborhoods. “I don’t think people understand how important saying ‘welcome home’ is. And maybe they will never understand, but it means everything to us.”

Veteran Cliff Graham, 57, said his experiences after the war left him bitter for years. He said he “couldn’t stop choking up” during Saturday’s ceremony.

“We needed this,” said Graham, who served 22 years in the Army. “I’m glad I came.”

Vietnam vet, grandson graduate together

The Associated Press Posted : Friday May 30, 2008 10:35:45 EDT

MARYLAND HEIGHTS, Mo. — A high school student and his 60-year-old grandfather graduated high school together in St. Louis County. Darrell Vaughn left Pattonville High School more than 40 years ago, after being drafted to fight in the Army in Vietnam. But when his grandson, Joseph Pollack, received his diploma Thursday night, the grandfather was among a group of veterans honored, too. Vaughn received an American flag, a medal and his diploma.

Chapter 787 Fund Raisers

It’s that time of year again, and Chapter 787 needs volunteers to man or women, the fund raiser tables we set up at the local Publix stores. Please contact **Jim (Rambo) LaGarde** at H-(813) 689-6921 or C-(813) 758-4547 to help out.

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:

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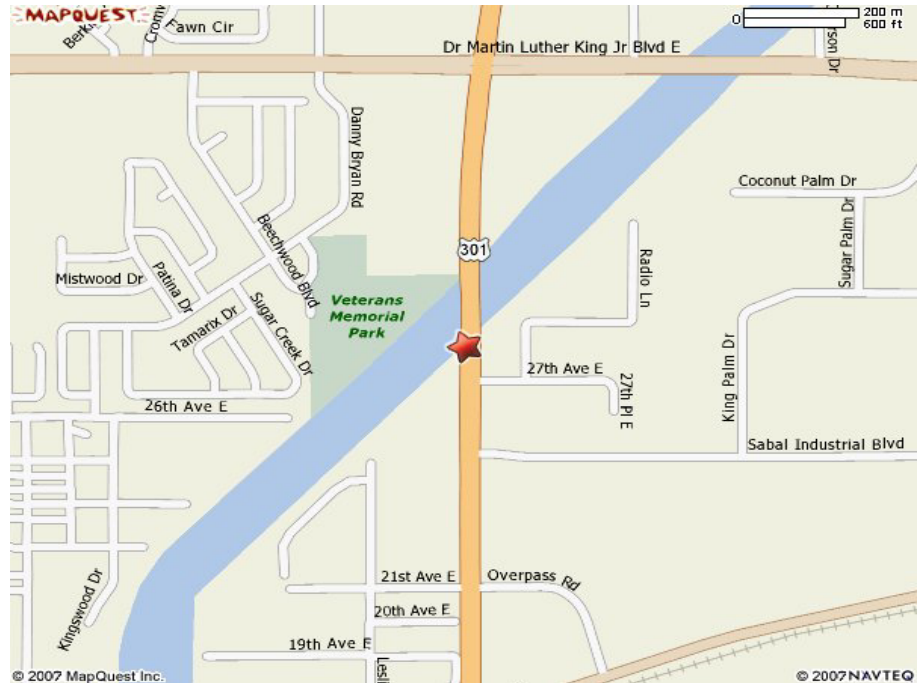
Board of Directors

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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