



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**



A Message from the President of Chapter 787

Here we are rapidly closing on the end of the year. Once again we have been successful in all of our endeavors all because of the dedication of about 10 members. With their devotion and commitment we continue to fulfill our mission in helping all veterans and the community.

As I look back on the Chapter's accomplishment this year, it still amazes me that we have reached a higher level of commitment. I firmly believe that without those who show up at our monthly meetings, fundraisers and involvement year round, we can continue to meet our commitments by working together as a team.

One area that we have suffered this year is the amounts of revenue we've been generating. With the economy in a huge downturn like we've never seen before except for the Great Depression, people are not donating what they normally would donate. Thus, are revenues are down by about 30 to 40 percent. With this in mind, we as a Chapter will have to look at fresh and worthy fundraisers that will produce good results. As a matter of information, our Chapter only spends about 10 to 15 percent on operation expense. The rest goes to worthy veterans programs like helping veterans and their families.

You're probably saying "where is he going with this article?" To tell you the truth we need our members help. With the holidays almost upon us we have received a large number of appeals for Holiday Meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas. With that in mind, I'm personally appealing to our member to consider sponsoring one meal at the cost of \$30.00 (Thanksgiving) and \$25.00 (Christmas). I know we are all hurting too with this economy. However, there are many brother and sister veterans who are in dire straits who have nothing. Now is the time to step up to the plate and help.

You may not have been able to attend meetings, help in fundraisers or work in the various projects; this might be a way for you to compensate for it. I hate that I must appeal to our members, but at this time I don't see any alternative. If you wish to make a donation, no matter the amount, please make it payable to VVA, Chapter 787, memo: Holiday Meals and send it to the Chapter address:

VVA, Chapter 787
P.O. Box 89247
Tampa, FL 33689-6404

I sincerely appreciate everyone's concern in this matter. Also, in advance, I'd like to thank those who donate and look forward to seeing all at the Chapter meetings. I'd like to also take this opportunity to wish all the members and your families a Happy Holidays.

Semper Fi,
Tom Hall

Chapter Officers

President: Tom Hall
Vice President: Carl
Harris
Secretary: Bob Silmsers
Treasurer: Bob Silmsers

Board of Directors:

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 Me-
morial 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.**

Thank You to our Fund Raiser Volunteers!



Pictured above, L-R, chapter members **Gerrard Abbett** and **Herman Rainey** at the Publix store (Winthrop Center) fund raiser Oct. 4th. More pictures on shown on the next page.

The funds collected were divided up as follows:

Total for the weekend was \$692.79 dollars with the following splits:

20% \$138.56 to Holiday Meals

20% \$138.56 to AVVA

Additional pictures from the Oct. 4th fund raiser.



Pictured above, L-R, chapter members **Art Jorgenson**, & **Mickey Taylor**, next **Jack Whitson** & **Steve Williams**. Pictured left, is chapter 787 State Council delegate, **Kevin Ruhl** and **Tony Towers**.

Our Fund Raiser volunteers are the life blood of our chapter!

Chapter 787 Thanks Dunkin Donuts

Submitted By: **Bob Silmsr**

On Friday October 31st, Chapter 787 Secretary and Treasurer, **Bob Silmsr**, made a trip out to the Dunkin Donuts store located on Hwy 60 in Brandon, (just east of Valrico Rd.) to show our thanks to Manager **Christine Keijers** (shown at right with **Bob**), and her staff, for all their support. **Christine** was surprised by the unannounced visit but was a good sport in posing with **Bob** in her Halloween costume. **Bob** had a very fine plaque made up for the occasion.

All our membership should remember this location when in need of a great donut or two.



To All Chapter 787 Members,

I'd like to personally invite all of our members and their families to join up the Annual Veteran's Day Parade in Town N Country. The Chapter will have a float for our members and their families to ride and for those who can't walk with aid.

The Chapter members are meeting at 7:30 a.m. on November 8th to carpool to the parade location. We are usually staged in the area along a canal prior to the parade.

I encourage you to come our and join your chapter and experience the Welcome Home by the public. If you have any questions, please call Bob Silmsler at 220-7246 or 685-3483.

Look forward to seeing a great turnout.

Semper Fi,
Tom Hall, President

Wedding Bells

Stacey and Trevor Silmsler, were married last month, Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass, in NYC. Trevor is the son of **Bob** and **Margaret Silmsler**, chapter Scy/Tres, and A.V.V.A. members.



Submitted By: Jon Mueller

New Hospital For Military Working Dogs

(CBS, 'The Early Show,' October 29, 2008)

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the Defense Dept. has tripled the number of military working dogs used to protect U.S. troops and citizens. Now, there is a military facility to treat these canine heroes, a brand-new, \$15 million veterinary hospital located at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Tex., specifically designed to treat military dogs.

Bob & Margaret go the extra mile!

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Pictured above are **Bob & Margaret Silmsler** with the following individuals shown between them: top row, L-R, **Irene Streeter**, **Marilyn Mussa**, 2nd row, L-R, **Virginia Browder**, and **Raymond Firestine**. Residents of Central Park Health & Rehabilitation Center in Brandon, enjoy their visits with **WeeTuck** and **Angus** two beautiful pure-bred Shih-Tzu's owned by **Margaret** and **Bob**. They have been visiting the Nursing Homes in the Brandon area since May 2007. Every Tuesday and Thursday they visit one of the following Nursing facilities in Brandon, Central Park Health & Rehab., Park Club Assisted Living, Superior Nursing Home and Consulate Nursing Home. They have provided over 100 visits since they started. The guests in these facilities look forward to their visits as the above pictures show. When they tell the dogs, "Let's go see the ladies" they run to their grooming station and wait to be groomed for their visit. They always put a smile on everyone's face when they see them and of course when they are done with their visit and have left the facility they sit and wait for their reward. **Bob** is the Chapter Secretary/Treasurer and his wife **Margaret** is a member of the Auxiliary.

Quote

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

"It was like at the Alamo. There was a long wall made of mud. We just lined up against it, our M-16's & M-14's, pointing through the many holes it had. It was getting dark and we knew the gooks would be coming . We were ready for them."

Cpl. Mike Foster, 9th Marines, Dong Ha Vietnam 1967



Medal of Honor Winners of the War in Vietnam



THORSNESS, LEO K.

Rank and organization: Lieutenant Colonel (then Maj.), U.S. Air Force, 357th Tactical Fighter Squadron. Place and date: Over North Vietnam, 19 April 1967. Entered service at: Walnut Grove, Minn. Born: 14 February 1932, Walnut Grove, Minn. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. As pilot of an F-105 aircraft, Lt. Col. Thorsness was on a surface-to-air missile suppression mission over North Vietnam. Lt. Col. Thorsness and his wingman attacked and silenced a surface-to-air missile site with air-to-ground missiles, and then destroyed a second surface-to-air missile site with bombs. In tile attack on the second missile site, Lt. Col. Thorsness' wingman was shot down by intensive antiaircraft fire, and the 2 crewmembers abandoned their aircraft. Lt. Col. Thorsness circled the descending parachutes to keep the crewmembers in sight and relay their position to the Search and Rescue Center.

During this maneuver, a MIG-17 was sighted in the area. Lt. Col. Thorsness immediately initiated an attack and destroyed the MIG. Because his aircraft was low on fuel, he was forced to depart the area in search of a tanker. Upon being advised that 2 helicopters were orbiting over the downed crew's position and that there were hostile MIGs in the area posing a serious threat to the helicopters, Lt. Col. Thorsness, despite his low fuel condition, decided to return alone through a hostile environment of surface-to-air missile and antiaircraft defenses to the downed crew's position. As he approached the area, he spotted 4 MIG-17 aircraft and immediately initiated an attack on the MIGs, damaging 1 and driving the others away from the rescue scene. When it became apparent that an aircraft in the area was critically low on fuel and the crew would have to abandon the aircraft unless they could reach a tanker, Lt. Col. Thorsness, although critically short on fuel himself, helped to avert further possible loss of life and a friendly aircraft by recovering at a forward operating base, thus allowing the aircraft in emergency fuel condition to refuel safely. Lt. Col. Thorsness' extraordinary heroism, self-sacrifice, and personal bravery involving conspicuous risk of life were in the highest traditions of the military service, and have reflected great credit upon himself and the U.S. Air Force.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Medals of honor? Phony

Chicago Tribune Oct. 26 2008

Washington—Scores of Americans, from clergymen to lawyers to CEOs, are claiming medals of valor they never earned.

A Chicago Tribune investigation has found that the fabrication of heroic war records is far more extensive than one might think.

Take the online edition of Who's Who, long the nation's premier biographical reference. Of the 333 people whose profiles state they earned one of the nation's most esteemed military medals, fully a third cannot be supported by military records.

Even in death, these stories live on. A look at 273 obituaries published in the past decade alone found that in more than four of five cases, official records didn't support decorations for bravery attributed to the deceased.

The investigation also found bogus decorations, including at least two Medals of Honor, engraved on headstones in military cemeteries across the country.

In all, more than half of the medals for bravery examined, including the exalted Medal of Honor, are unsupported by official military records obtained by the Tribune from federal archives.

"The problem is rampant," said Mike Sanborn, a former Marine who is the FBI agent in charge of investigating violations of the Stolen Valor Act. The 2007 law makes it a federal crime to falsely claim, verbally or in writing, that one has earned a medal for valor. Penalties range from six months to a year in prison and up to a \$100,000 fine.

There have been an estimated 40 prosecutions under the Stolen Valor Act, nearly all ending with pleas of guilty and some in prison sentences. Enforcement of the act is hampered by the absence of a national database where employers, biographers, obituary writers VA officials and others who need to know can verify such claims.

Although a bill is pending in Congress that would create such a database, at the moment the only official compilation is from recipients of the Medal of Honor, maintained online by the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

Medals for the Vietnam War will soon be unavailable

Of the 78 Vietnamese medals authorizable to US, Australian and other Allied troops in Vietnam only five are still manufactured today. However, within a short time these five (listed below) will no longer be manufactured because the number of men and women who served in Vietnam is shrinking fast. AMERICANS: Of the 2,709,918 Americans who served in Vietnam, less than 850,000 are estimated to be alive today, with the youngest American Vietnam vet's age is approximated to be 54 years old. AUSTRALIANS: Of the 46,756 Australians who served in Vietnam, an estimated

The five Vietnamese medals still being manufactured today are the 1) Cross of Gallantry, 2) Campaign, 3) Civil Action, 4) Technical Service, and 5) Wound. These five are still being manufactured today only because: a) three of the five are authorized to wear on the uniform and appear on the DD-214/215, but as Vietnam vets pass away at the same rate as their WW2 fathers there will be no need to manufacture Vietnamese war medals for wear on Honor

If you are in possession of a Vietnamese medal, treasure and preserve it. It is becoming a collector's item. Do not loan it. Do not display it in an unprotected environment. As time passes these rare and soon to be absent medals that represent one of the most challenging eras in world history... the hottest region of The Cold War... will rise in historical and monetary value. And as many Vietnam veterans are choosing to restore the time-honored ritual of having a set of their medals buried with them, even fewer Vietnamese medals will exist. The Vietnam War remains America's longest war. The Vietnam War's emblems of service and sacrifice, its medals, will one day fall in the disappearing well of ancient war history...

References:

1/4. Vietnamese Medals/Badges Awarded to All/Groups of Allied Personnel per MACV GO #8, 1974:

<http://home.pacbell.net/veterans/vmedal.htm>

2/4 Vietnam War Master Resource Guide: <http://www.amervets.com/warlib6/warlib6v.htm>

3/4 Names of the men and women who served in Vietnam: <http://www.amervets.com/library.htm>

4/4 This posting is also available at this website: <http://home.pacbell.net/veterans/vmedal2.htm>

Contact Person for this posting: Roger Simpson, PIO

Public Information Office <http://www.13105320634.com>

The American War Library: <http://www.amervets.com>

Submitted By: **Kevin Ruhl**

VA Announces On-Line Claims Applications

The Dept. of Veteran Affairs (VA) will accept on-line filings for disability compensation, pension, education and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without the requirement to submit a paper copy. Go to www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm.

Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Time
<u>November 2008</u>		
7th Friday	Veterans Day Ceremony at Chillura Park, Downtown Tampa	12:00 PM
8th Saturday	Chapter will participate in the Brandon Veterans Day Parade. (Meet at Clayton Plaza 7:30 AM)	10:00 AM
10th Monday	Chapter members will attend the "Mulrennan (School) Salutes"(meet at school)	9:00 AM to 11:30 AM
11th Tuesday	Veterans Day Ceremony at Veterans Park & Museum with JROTC	10:00 AM
13th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
20th Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Hillsborough Veterans Park & Museum	7:00 PM
21st Friday	MacDill AFB OIF & OEF Coalition Partners Flag Waving Ceremony Bayshore Blvd. Tampa	

December 2008

18th Thursday	Chapter 787's Annual Christmas Party, Golden Corral Restaurant, Brandon	7:00 PM
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Check out our EVENTS page on the chapter web site: www.vva787.com, click EVENTS then click Calendar of EVENTS

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Medical

**Post-Traumatic Stress Is A War Within The Body
But Military Combat Is Not The Top Cause Of Biological Condition**
(USA Today, October 27, 2008, Pg. 7D)

Possibly the most widespread myth about post-traumatic stress disorder is that its top cause is military combat. Research says it's auto accidents. About 20 percent of those in car accidents that caused injuries have PTSD a year after the crash, suggests a long-term study in Albany, N.Y. There were 2.5 million people injured in car crashes last year, so many are at risk. Another myth is that the disorder is psychological, says Farris Tuma, chief of the traumatic stress program at the National Institute of Mental Health.. It is a biologically based condition, says Tuma, with the body's stress-response system stuck in overdrive.

Financial Status of Chapter 787 as of October 2008

Total.....\$13,183.59 (Moving Wall Fund..\$6,663.82, General checking \$3,567.27.... Holiday Meals Fund \$2,813.94)

Total.....\$2,128.95 (Household Goods.....\$546.30 Convention Fund.....\$1,582.65)

All Accounts Total: \$15,312.54 Thanks to our Treasurer Bob Silmser

TAPS



Ralph Wilson a new member within the last year passed away Saturday Oct 18, 2008. We were informed by his wife Lisa via phone today. Ralph is the gentlemen who showed up in his wheelchair at the meetings.



Ralph, was a Navy Veteran he served from July 72 thru September 76 part of that time was two tours in Vietnam. He re-enlisted in November 82 until November 84 and left as an E-5. His body will be cremated.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Medal of Honor Winner, a soldier of three Wars, dies at 86.



COLUMBUS, Ga. (AP) — Col. Robert B. Nett, who received the Medal of Honor for heroism in combat in the Philippines during World War II and later served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, died Sunday. He was 86.

His death followed a brief illness, said Elsie Jackson, a spokeswoman for Fort Benning, in Georgia.

Colonel Nett, a New Haven native who enlisted in the Connecticut National Guard in 1940, was sent into combat on Christmas Island shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was soon sent to Fort Benning and graduated from Officer Candidate School in 1942. Then-Lieutenant Nett was a company commander in

December 1944 when he led an assault on a Japanese stronghold. He was seriously wounded three times during the attack but killed seven enemy soldiers with his rifle and bayonet. He later rejoined his unit and fought on Okinawa.

Colonel Nett helped train South Korean soldiers during the Korean War and was an adviser to Vietnamese troops during the Vietnam War.

After 33 years of military service, Colonel Nett retired and spent 17 years as a teacher in the Columbus school system. He was inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame in 2007, and the leadership hall at Camp Rell, in Connecticut, built in 2004, bears his name.

Colonel Nett is survived by his wife, Frances, and a son, Dr. Robert Nett Jr.

U.S., Vietnam Join On Jobs Programs

(Philadelphia Inquirer, October 30, 2008)

The United States and Vietnam launched three programs to help provide job training and health care to disabled people in Da Nang, where U.S. troops stored and mixed the Agent Orange defoliant during the Vietnam War. The United States has provided \$1 million to support a network of local health centers, provide surgery and physical therapy to children, and help disabled people find work.

Field of Honor Ceremony, Veterans

Every three months, your Veterans Council has hosted the “Reading of the Names” ceremony at the Veterans Park. The names that are read come from the latest casualty figures for those military men and women who have sacrificed their all, in Iraq and Afghanistan. The list is updated from the last reading and many of our Veterans Council member groups have chosen to handle this very emotional ceremony every three months. One American Flag represents each

KIA. Shown below are pictures from the October 11th ceremonies hosted by the **American Legion Post 278**. The honor guard and honor platoon were from **Armwood High School JROTC**. In addition, 28 names from the US Special Operations Command were read. They represented the unclassified KIA’s from operations around the world since 9/11, other than Iraq and Afghanistan.



Pictured above, 1st row, L-R, American Legion representatives, **Walt Raysick** and **Sam Creasman** read the names of those who have died in the last 90 days from our ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Next is the **Armwood High School Color Guard**.

Pictured above, 2nd row, L-R, an **Armwood Army JROTC** cadet places the American flag on a post after one of the names has been read. Next, Chapter 787 member, Jon Mueller reads a list of 28 names from the unclassified list of Special Operations men who have died since 9/11 fighting in the War on Terror, in places like the Philippines, Africa, Albania, Columbia & Yemen.

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.

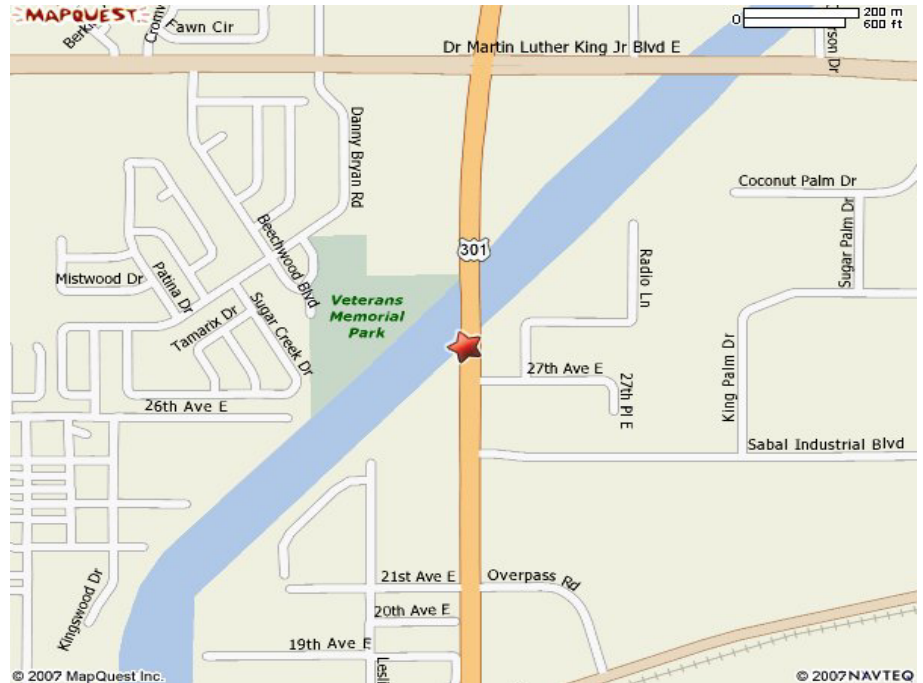
Chapter meetings are held at the Veterans Memorial Park & Museum, 3602 Hwy. 301 N. Tampa Fl. 33619.

Contact E-mail Addresses:

President Tom Hall: MarineDI@aol.com
VP Carl Harris: c-e-harris@tampabay.rr.com
Secretary & Treasurer Bob Silmsler:
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
Jim LaGarde: clagarde@tampabay.rr.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