VOLUME 10, ISSUE 11 NOVEMBER 2007

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
FOR INFORMATION CALL BOB SILMSER (813) 220-7246 OR (813) 685-3483.
WEB SITE: WWW.VVA787.COM

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 3602 Hwy. 301 N. Tampa Fl. 33619. See Map on last page. **Mailing address: P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404.**

Pictures By: **Bob Silmser**

Chapter 787's 10th Anniversary Picnic, Hillsborough County's Veterans Memorial Park & Museum, Tampa Fl.

Continued from previous page……..

Starting from page 2, pictured L-R, Chapter member, State Council Treasurer and RECON Editor **Tom Hall**, chapter 787 President **Jim LaGarde** with wife **Cathy**, wife and sister of chapter member **John Kieffer**, **Keturah** (wife) and chapter member and state council delegate, **Kevin Ruhl**. 2nd row, chapter VP **Carl Harris** and wife **Elaine,** chapter member and Hillsborough County Veterans council President **Dave Braun**. 3rd row, **Tom Hall** standing, State Council member **John Koprowski** and **Tom Hall**. Page 3, L-R, **Joyce Kaprowski** with her mother, **Kevin Ruhl,** and chapter 787 Secretary/Treasurer, and Florida State Council member of the Year, **Bob Silmser**. 2nd row, chapter member, **Tony Towers** with his grandchildren, Chapter President **Jim LaGarde** and wife **Cathy,** 3rd row, **Margaret** and **Bob Silmser,** and last but not least, chapter 767 member **John Kieffer.** This was our chapters 10th year in operation and everyone enjoyed the food and fellowship.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

This Month During the Vietnam War

November 1964: HMM-365, pilots and aircrew were just starting to get on with serious Birthday Ball business when emergency flood relief flights caused by monsoon rains in the Da Nang area were launched. Shortly after launch, YM15 was hovering over a house floating down a swollen river. The crew chief, Cpl. G.C. Mayne, went down the hoist to check it out for survivors. He quickly cut a hole in the thatched roof and looked in. Inside were many armed and equally surprised VC. The VC bailed out into the water and Mayne went back up the hoist, end of mission. Later that same day, Capt John Eilertson, 1/LT Ron Pettis, Sgt Nathanial Tucker, and LCpl Francis Mayher evacuated 40 Vietnamese refugees in one flight, setting a payload record for H-34s that may still stand.

November 1965: This was the fight that today's Country Singers Big & Rich created a song about. On November 8th, in the first major engagement between American and North Vietnamese, Company's B & C, 1st Bn, 173d Airborne, were encircled and then attacked by the NVA's Q-761 Regiment, in War Zone D. The paratroopers soon became locked in hand-to hand combat. Men fired their rifles, grenade launchers and machine guns until they overheated. They threw grenades at close range, and hacked at the enemy with machetes and entrenching tools. The NVA, screaming and yelling like the paratroopers, stood and fought the same way. The enemy clung desperately to the rifle company's, hoping to prevent the soldiers from calling in gunships and air strikes. The next day, 408 NVA bodies were recovered. 52 Airborne Infantry soldiers lost their lives.

November 1965: Marines of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, deploy to the RVN. They are assigned to the 3rd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. Participated in the War in Vietnam, November 1965-May 1971, Hue/Phu Bai, Da Nang, Quang Tri, Thua Thien and Quang Nam. Detached during April 1971 from the 1st Marine Division, and reassigned to the 3rd Marine Amphibious Brigade, Fleet Marine Force. Relocated during June 1971 to Camp Pendleton, CA, and reassigned to the 1st Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force.

November 1970: The Raid on the Son Tay prison camp in North Vietnam from the perspective of the US Air Force and US Navy Air groups. At 23:25 of November 20, the helicopters launched from their Thai base. Shortly after midnight the A-1 Sandies and Combat Talons lifted off from Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base. As the force approached from the west, Navy aircraft launched at 01:23 from the carriers USS Oriskany, Ranger and Hancock and approached the North Vietnamese coast from the east, setting off a frantic air defense reaction at 0217 and providing a highly effective diversion for the raiders.

The Blueboy assault team, in the Jolly Green HH-3, crash-landed on time at 02:18 and as planned into the center of Son Tay prison, the only casualty a crew member with a broken ankle. Army Captain Richard J. Meadows led his force on a violent assault of the prison guards and began a cell by cell search. The Greenleaf command group, led by Colonel Simons, at 02:21 landed 400 meters off its objective outside a similar-looking structure previously labeled a "secondary school" but which was actually the administrative barracks for the North Vietnamese guards. The Greenleaf group immediately attacked the location, detonating charges on its walls and buildings, and set off a 5-minute firefight in which Colonel Simons estimated 100 to 200 NVA soldiers were killed. At 02:26 the command group re-boarded its helicopter and moved to the correct landing area. The Redwine support group, led by Lt. Colonel Eliott P. "Bud" Sydnor, had landed at 02:21 outside Son Tay prison and immediately executed the tasks assigned to Greenleaf, a contingency that had been previously planned for and rehearsed.

Submitted By: **Steve Williams**

Quote

"A Veteran is someone who, at one point in his life wrote a blank check made payable to The United States of America for an amount of up to and including his life. That is HONOR, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it" - Author Unknown.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Wannabe's

Mayor who claimed to be Green Beret, resigns

By Wayne Parry - The Associated Press
Posted : Wednesday Oct 10, 2007

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey — The mayor of the gambling resort of Atlantic City resigned Wednesday after a two-week absence from office during which he checked himself into a rehabilitation clinic. Robert Levy's disappearance came amid a federal investigation for embellishing his Army service in Vietnam.
"Mr. Levy has concluded that public confidence is so eroded by these circumstances that the only responsible action is to step down," said his attorney, Edwin Jacobs. "He does so with great regret and with apologies to his supporters, to the people of Atlantic City, and to his family and friends."

The president of the seaside city's council was sworn in as acting mayor. City officials last heard from Levy on Sept. 26, when he called in sick, climbed into his city-issued Dodge Durango and seemingly vanished. Aides to Levy, a Democrat who took office in January 2006, would say only that he was hospitalized somewhere, and they would not disclose his condition.

Levy checked himself into a clinic because he had been overmedicating himself with pain pills to treat severe back pain, as well as using different medication to treat post-traumatic stress disorder stemming from his war service, Jacobs said. "He needed to get off the medication he was taking. I wouldn't call it an addiction. It was a detox situation," Jacobs said.

Jacobs said he met with Levy on Sept. 23. Details about the mayor's whereabouts began emerging Tuesday, when Jacobs met with a judge considering a City Council request to declare Levy's office vacant. Afterward, Jacobs announced that Levy was at home after spending a week at the clinic, but he would not elaborate on why Levy went there. Last fall, The Press of Atlantic City reported that the Vietnam veteran's claims that he was a member of the Green Berets were untrue. He apologized, but federal authorities have been looking into whether Levy made that claim to increase his veteran benefit payments. On Wednesday, Jacobs said the mayor was in discussions with the U.S. attorney's office about resolving the investigation. Levy served two tours of duty in Vietnam and was awarded medals and citations. But Jacobs said Levy apparently received two military decorations he did not deserve, and that those awards led to his benefits being boosted by about $24,000 over a number of years. He would not clarify how the citations led to the increase. Levy's resignation cleared the way for City Council President William "Speedy" Marsh, a fellow Democrat, to take over. Levy's disappearance roiled this casino resort, where four of the eight mayors that preceded him were arrested on corruption charges. Sworn in as acting mayor in the City Council chambers, Marsh promised to renew residents' trust in city government.

Marine Corps League Official Charged

Marine Corps Times Oct. 15 2007.

The commandant of a Marine Corps League detachment based in Newtown Square, Pa., is facing three federal charges of lying about his military record, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's office in the stat's eastern district confirmed Sept. 27.

James Alleva, 54, (shown above in picture, 2nd from the right) of Upper Darby, Pa. was indicted Aug 28 by federal prosecutors and charged with altering his discharge paperwork, making false verbal and written claims to the Silver Star, Purple Heart and Bronze Star medals and physically wearing those decorations, according to a Justice Department release.

If convicted, Alleva faces a maximum sentence of two years' imprisonment, one year of supervised release and $110,000 fine, according to the release.

Medal of Honor Winners of the War in Vietnam

The Bravest of the Brave

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

John L. Levitow USAF

On February 24, 1969, Airman First Class John L. Levitow was assigned duty as a loadmaster aboard an AC-47 "Spooky" gunship flying a night mission in support of Long Binh Army Post in South Vietnam when his aircraft was struck by a hostile mortar round. The resulting explosion ripped a hole two feet in diameter through the wing along with more than 3,500 holes in the fuselage. All occupants in the cargo compartment were wounded and slammed against the floor and fuselage. The explosion ripped an activated flare from the grasp of a crewmember who had been launching flares to provide illumination for Army ground troops engaged in combat. Airman Levitow, though stunned by the concussion of the blast and suffering over 40 fragment wounds in his back and legs, staggered to his feet and turned to assist the man nearest to him who had been knocked down and bleeding heavily.

As he was moving his wounded comrade forward and away from the opened cargo compartment door, he saw the smoking flare ahead of him in the aisle. Realizing the danger involved and completely disregarding his own wounds, Airman Levitow started toward the burning flare. The aircraft was partially out of control and the flare was rolling wildly from side to side. Airmen Levitow struggled forward despite the loss of blood from his many wounds and the partial loss of feeling in his right leg. Unable to grasp the rolling flare with his hands, he threw himself bodily upon the burning flare. Hugging the deadly device to his body, he dragged himself back to the rear of the aircraft and hurled the flare through the open cargo door. At that instant the flare separated and ignited in the air but clear of the aircraft.

Airman Levitow, by his selfless actions, saved the aircraft and its entire crew from certain death. For his heroism he received the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Richard M. Nixon on May 14, 1970. He is the lowest ranking Air Force member ever to receive the honor.

Submitted By: **Bob Silmser**

Chapter Vets, Donate Their Time to replace US Flags at the Field of Honor.

Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park & Museum Oct. 27th.

Pictured at left, L-R, Tom Sheehy VFW Post 6287Ruskin, Gerald Abbett, Bob Silmser, Al MacDonald Scottish American Assoc, Dave Braun and seated is Mickey Taylor.

Our Veterans helped to clean up the Field of Honor area by removing old flags, adding new ones and pulling weeds. These flags represent our military men and women who have sacrificed their lives since 9/11 in Afghanistan & Iraq.

Submitted By: **Bob Silmser**

Chapter 787 donates funds to the Fisher House Project

On October 12th, chapter 787 donated $270 to the Fisher House Project for the purchase of one room. The second installment of $270 will be presented on March 2008. The Fisher House provides living quarters for family members of our veterans who are undergoing medical treatment. Pictured above, L-R, chapter member and Hillsborough County Veterans Council President **Dave Braun**, Manager of the Fisher House Paula Welenc, the number 1 housekeeper Ken, chapter Secretary /Treasure and Florida State Council Member of the Year, **Bob Silmser**, and chapter Vice President **Carl Harris**. Pictured at right is **Dave Braun** and **Bob Silmser** with our donation check. Chapter 787 also donated a new toolbox filled with basic tools and a step stool for their use.

Submitted By: **Kevin Ruhl**

From: Edwards, Lloyd, LCol, USMC (Ret), CTR, OSD-ATL
I suspect General Pace would be embarrassed by any attention paid to this act of loyalty.

History will debate his effectiveness as CJCS, but their is no debating his decency as a leader.

I wanted to share with you what we saw in Washington DC last week.

After the mid-term brief, we toured the Mall and made the usual stops at the WWII Memorial,

the Wall, Lincoln Memorial, etc. At the Vietnam Wall we saw something unbelievable. We noticed three small index cards at the base of the Wall.

I knelt down for a closer look and noticed that a 4-star general's rank was pinned to each card.

The cards were personally addressed and said something like:

These are Yours - not mine! With Love and Respect, Your Platoon Leader, Pete Pace 1 Oct.

Calendar of Events

Date		Event	Time
		November 2007	
8th	Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
29th	Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Hillsborough County Veterans Park & Museum	7:00 PM
		December 2007	
12th	Wednesday	Chapter Christmas Party, Golden Corral, Lakewood Dr. Brandon Fl. RSVP to Bob Silmser	6:00 PM
		No Chapter Meeting In December	

Submitted By: **Kevin Ruhl** **To Contact Us:** CVAD, Inc 727-733-2822 info@cvad.org

Clearwater Veterans Appreciation Day

Clearwater High School, Sunday November 4th, 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Many Events planned especially for children

CVAD is proud to have the United States Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon from Washington, D.C. performing this year.
CVAD is proud to have the United States Special Ops Command Parachute Team performing this year. .

Financial Status of Chapter 787 as of October 11 2007

Checking Account……$10,984.63 (Moving Wall Fund..$4,692.80, Available Funds $3,745.99,

Holiday Meals Fund…$2,545.81*) Household Goods…….$1,063.38 Convention Fund……..$1,749.12

All Accounts Total: $13,797.73 **Thanks to our Treasurer Bob Silmser**

***It is estimated that we will need $3,540 to cover this years Veteran Holiday Meal Program.**

Disabled Veterans may face skirmishes for some VA benefits

By Jan Warner & Jan Collins, Special to the St. Petersburg Times 9/25/07

Question. My father, a World War II veteran, is 86 years old, and my mother is 83. As my parents aged and talked of the unshakable opinion that Veterans Affairs would take care of them.

Dad had a stroke this year and required six weeks of hospitalization and rehab. He is nearly blind, his memory comes and goes, and he can't be left alone. Mom and I realized that she could not care for him at home given her own health problems.

My parents' total monthly income is less than $1200. They have the modest home where they have lived for 50 years, a 15 year old car, and a little more than $10,000 in the bank.

Figuring that Dad must be right about VA benefits, I began researching. I have never received more misinformation and disinformation:

Each representative I talked to gave me different information about the program's resource and income limits. To me, the application was a maze.

I went to a lawyer for help but was told that it is a federal crime for a lawyer to help clients complete the VA application or to charge a fee to assist clients in getting such benefits.

I finally figured it out for my parents and got them qualified. But why does the VA keep its programs for disabled seniors so confusing?

Answer. Your question about the special Veterans Affairs pension program known as "Aid and Attendance" echoes similar requests we have received from readers throughout the nation.

While our limited space does not allow us to attempt to explain the qualification criteria of "A and A," we can lead you to resources that may help.

Generally, if the veteran and spouse require regular help with eating, bathing, dressing, undressing or using the toilet, and if the assets and income levels are met monetary benefits may be available through the VA.

Depending on the circumstances, patients in nursing homes and even assisted-living facilities may qualify.

Unfortunately, many families with veterans or surviving spouses who need money to help care for ailing loved ones don't apply for this program because they don't know about it.

Qualification for this benefit **does not depend on service-connected injuries**, and most veterans who need this help will qualify. Aid and Attendance can help pay for care in a nursing home or assisted-living facility.

Depending on income and other factors, a veteran is eligible for up to $1519 per month, a couple for up to $1801, and a surviving spouse, up to $976.

The current asset limit is $80,000, excluding the home and vehicles.

Taking the Next Step: The best resource we have found is Veteran Aid, which can be found at www.veteranaid.org.

Jan Warner is a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys: Jan Collins is editor of the Business and Economic Review, published by the University of South Carolina. Their web site is www.nextsteps.net.

V.V.A. Chapter 787 Annual Christmas Party

Come Join your fellow members, and their families to celebrate the Christmas season. There will not be a chapter meeting in November and December, so let's all get together one last time this year!

Wednesday December 12th at 6:00 PM, Golden Corral, Lakewood Rd. in Brandon.

Contact chapter Scy/Tres, Bob Silmser to RSVP by December 5th. Phone: (813) 685-3483, (813) 220-7246 or e-mail: Rafkirk64@tampabay.rr.com.

Hillsborough County Veterans Service Officer, Tom Meattey, phone # (813) 975-2181

Did you know?

The Dept of VA has the **Improved Disability and Death Pension** benefit for wartime veterans and surviving dependents.

Veterans with low income who are permanently and totally disabled, or are age 65 and older, may be eligible for monetary support if they have 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war. The veterans discharge must have been under conditions other than dishonorable and the disability must be for reasons other than the veterans own willful misconduct. (Note: Veterans who entered service active duty on or after September 8, 1980, or officers who entered after October 16, 1981, may have to meet longer minimum period of active duty. 24 months.)

Surviving spouses and unmarried children with low income of deceased veterans with wartime service may be eligible for Improved Death pension. Eligibility for spouses must not have remarried and children must be under age 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA approved school, or have become permanently incapable of self-supporting because of disability before age 18. The veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and must have had 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war, or a service-connected disability justifying discharge.

The VA payments are made to beneficiaries to bring the total income, including other retirement or Social Security income, to a level set by Congress. Un-reimbursed medical expenses may reduce countable income for VA purposes.

Submitted By: **Tom Hall**

POW/MIA Update: October 19, 2007

AMERICANS ANNOUNCED AS ACCOUNTED FOR: There are now **1,767** US personnel listed by the Department of Defense as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War. Within the last few days, DPMO has released the names of six US personnel as now being accounted for, including:

Major Perry H. Jefferson, USAF, MIA 4-3-69, SVN, CO Airman 1st Class George W. Long, USAF, KIA/ NR 5-12-68, SNV, KS CAPT Warren R. Orr, USAR, MIA 5-12-58, SVN, IL LTjg Norman L. Roggow, USNR, KIA/ BNR 10-8-67, SVN, IA LTjg Donald f. Wolfe, USNR, KIA/BNR 10-8-67, SVN, MT LTjg Andrew G. Zissu, USNR, KIA/BNR 10-8-67, SVN, NY

This brings to 816 the number of US personnel returned since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. 90+% of 1,767 still missing and unaccounted-for were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Laos and Cambodia under Vietnam's wartime control.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ON RECOGNITION DAY: Secretary of Defense Bob Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace, USMC, hosted the Pentagon's National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremony last Friday. In his remarks, Secretary Gates stated, *"I would also like to thank the families and friends of those still missing. Missing-in-action status is marked by ambiguity and uncertainty - a severe test of spirit and resolve for anyone seeking closure. Your attendance today proves once again that the bond of love transcends the passage of time - that while our nation's heroes may remain missing in body, they are always present in spirit. We will neither forget our duty to bring home all POWs and MIAs, nor relent in our efforts to do so."*

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.

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

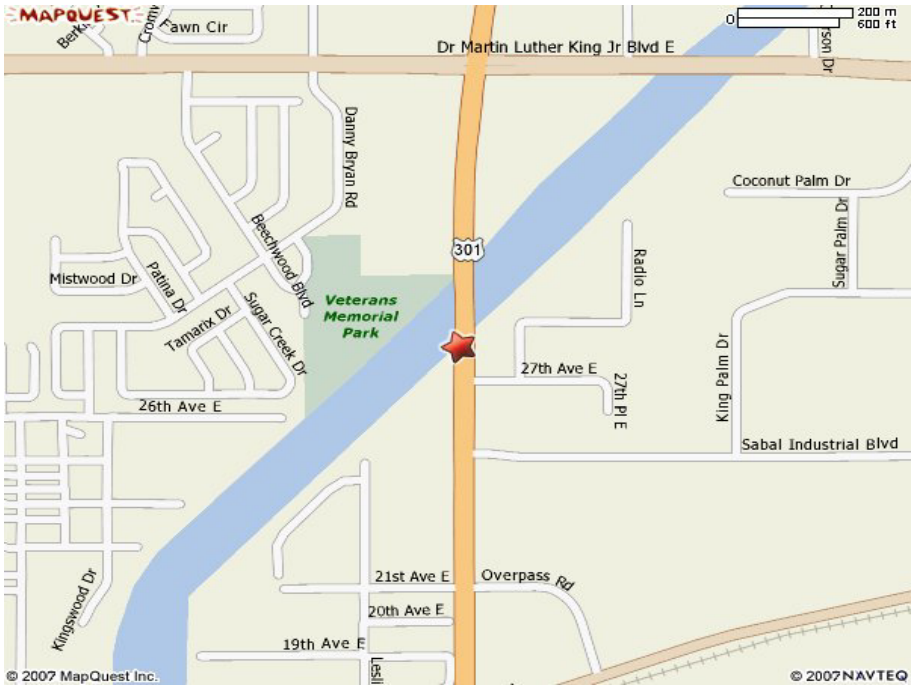
VP Carl Harris: c-e-harris@tampabay.rr.com

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