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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS



www.FloridaVets.org

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## Veterans' Nursing Home Becomes Good as Gold

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. – The Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home, which was built using nationally accepted benchmarks for the design, construction and operation of new buildings, has become certified as LEED Gold by the U.S. Green Building Council.

LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an internationally recognized green building certification system aimed at energy savings, water efficiency, improved indoor environmental quality and stewardship of resources.

The 95,500 square foot veterans' home, which opened in September 2010, incorporates extensive landscaping, recycled materials in its construction and uses less water and energy than conventionally designed facilities.

It is also a tobacco free campus for residents, staff and visitors.

"We're very proud that our new facility is believed to be the first nursing home in Florida to be LEED certified, which has become the national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings," said Bob Milligan, interim executive



The Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home in St. Augustine has been certified as LEED Gold by the U.S. Green Building Council. The 120-bed skilled nursing facility is the first Florida veterans' home to be named after a U.S. Navy veteran. *Photo courtesy of Skanska.*

director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. "The gold rating is testament to the hard work that the architects, builders and department staff placed in the design and construction of the home over the past several years."

The 120-bed veterans' home is named after the late Navy Cmdr. Clyde E. Lassen, a helicopter pilot and Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War.

"By incorporating LEED certification in our planning process, we've been able to use fixtures which reduce water consumption, reduce energy consumption with the use of glass and skylights, and improve

indoor air quality through the use of low odor paints," said Darcielle Gray, FDVA's project manager for the home. "The project was fun and our residents and staff benefit from a better living environment."

"LEED Gold is a result of the enthusiasm of the FDVA staff, the design and engineering team, and from our dedicated construction team with the common goal to construct a beautiful, environmentally friendly building that is now a safe and comfortable residence for many of Florida's distinguished veterans," said Doug Mitchell, senior project manager from Skanska, the home's builder.

### News of the Month

- Veterans' Home is Gold
- 2010 Veteran Census
- Vietnam Veterans Day
- Counting Women Vets
- DOD Disability Board
- Returning Veteran Study
- Vet Suicide Prevention
- Stop Loss Deadline

### Conferences and Events

### References for Veterans

## Census Reveals Veteran Population

TALLAHASSEE -- The completion of the 2010 U.S. Census and reports from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provide a detailed look at Florida's veteran population.

The VA's National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics reports 1,650,900 veterans in Florida as of Sept. 30, 2010.

Florida is third in veteran population behind California and Texas. About 12 percent of Florida's population 18 years of age and older are veterans.

Vietnam-era veterans make up the largest segment of the state's veteran population, with nearly 454,000 in the Sunshine State.

While Florida has the largest number of World War II veterans in the nation with 164,375, there are also more than 206,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who call Florida home.

## Florida Proclaims Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

*Courtesy of the Governor's External Affairs Office*

TALLAHASSEE -- Gov. Rick Scott has proclaimed March 30 as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in Florida.

This is the third consecutive year the Sunshine State has observed this day to honor the state's nearly 454,000 Vietnam veterans.

The proclamation notes that "since their return from service, Vietnam veterans have greatly contributed to our state and nation by offering skills, education, leadership, maturity, and dedication learned in military service."

In addition, the proclamation recognizes the more than 58,000 American service members who made the ultimate sacrifice while remembering the 1,698 service members missing in action.

A complete copy of the 2011 proclamation can be found online at <http://www.floridavets.org/news/news.asp>



## Counting Women Veterans

*Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

WASHINGTON -- Women veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the veteran population.

Of the 22.7 million living veterans, more than 1.8 million are women. They comprise nearly 8 percent of the total veteran population and 6 percent of all veterans who use VA health care services. VA estimates women veterans will constitute 10 percent of the veteran population by 2020 and 9.5 percent of VA patients.

There are more than 140,000 women veterans in Florida.



Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, Sen. Alan Hays and Rep. Greg Steube introduce legislation March 15 at Florida's Vietnam Veterans' Memorial to honor wounded veterans with access to special hunt areas in certain state parks. *Photo by Sarah Criser.*

*Back to Table of Contents*

## VA Advocates for Disability Board

*Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

WASHINGTON -- Service members who have been medically separated between Sept. 11, 2001 and Dec. 31, 2009 have the opportunity to have their disability ratings reviewed to ensure fairness and accuracy.

The Department of Defense Physical Disability Board of Review is reviewing disability cases for veterans discharged with a 0, 10, or 20 percent combined disability, in order to determine if the individual should have been awarded a disability retirement.

Of the roughly 70,000 eligible veterans, just over 2,100 have applied to the PDBR. Of those who've applied, about 56 percent of cases have been recommended for re-characterization as permanent disability retirement.

The Defense Department is actively engaged in an outreach campaign to get the word out about the existence of the PDBR to those eligible for review.

For more information, visit the PDBR website at [http://www.health.mil/About\\_MHS/Organizations/MHS\\_Offices\\_and\\_Programs/PDBR](http://www.health.mil/About_MHS/Organizations/MHS_Offices_and_Programs/PDBR).

## Florida's Returning Veterans Focus of Ground-Breaking Study

TALLAHASSEE -- The findings of a ground-breaking study on the experiences of Florida's returning veterans and their families were released March 1 by The James Madison Institute and Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice.

The study identifies veteran needs and assesses existing government and private assistance. It also presents recommendations for improving government programs through greater efficiency and transparency and for increasing the role of private philanthropic programs and resources.

To view the study online, visit [http://www.jamesmadison.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/materials/Backgrounder\\_Veterans\\_MacManusSchulerFeb11.pdf](http://www.jamesmadison.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/materials/Backgrounder_Veterans_MacManusSchulerFeb11.pdf)

## VA Launches New PSA on Suicide Prevention for Veterans

*Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is reaching out to veterans in crisis and their families in a new public service announcement to raise awareness about suicide prevention resources, such as the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

The new television spot encourages veterans in crisis to call the hotline to reach a trained VA mental health professional 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The PSA can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/user/VeteransHealthAdmin#p/u/1/PPL7CAHixQE>.

## Veteran Organization Conventions, Events and Job Fairs

Sponsor	Event	Date	Location	Contact Information
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge	Luncheon Meeting	April 10 11:30 a.m.	Hilton Hotel, Palm Beach Airport	(561) 585-7086 www.VBOB62.com
Indian River State College	Veteran's Open House	April 14 5:30-7:30 p.m.	Kight Technology Center	(772) 462-7443 (772) 462-7799
Patrick Air Force Base	Retiree Appreciation Day	April 16 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.	Base Theater and other on-base locations	(321) 494-5463
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	4th Annual Job Fair & Career Expo	April 16 10 a.m.-3 p.m.	Orlando VA Medical Center, 5201 Raymond Street, Orlando	(321) 397-6272
Florida Navy Nurse Corps Association	NNCA Annual Meeting	April 30-May 1	Marriott Courtyard, Downtown Pensacola	(904) 298-3096
Naval Aviation Museum Foundation	2011 Symposium	May 4-6	National Museum of Naval Aviation, NAS Pensacola	(800) 327-5002 www.NavalAviationMuseum.org
Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida State Coalition	24th Annual Florida Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion	May 5-8	Wickham Park, Melbourne	(321) 453-7498 www.FloridaVeteransReunion.com
American Military Retirees Association, Department of Florida	Annual Convention	May 7 9 a.m.-4 p.m.	DAV Hall, 1150 SW California Blvd., Port St. Lucie	(772) 342-2653
WorkforceEscarosa	Veterans & Military Family Career & Benefits Fair	May 12 9 a.m.-1 p.m.	Hadji Temple 800 W. Nine Mile Rd. Pensacola	(850) 473-0939
City of Jacksonville	Veterans Job Fair	May 13 10 a.m.-3 p.m.	Agricultural Fair Grounds	(904) 630-3680 www.coj.net
City of Jacksonville	Homeless Veterans Social Services	May 14 9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Agricultural Fair Grounds	(904) 630-3680 www.coj.net
AMVETS, Department of Florida	State Convention	June 9-12	Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando	(813) 626-3406
Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Florida	State Convention	June 8-12	Best Western Waterfront Hotel, Punta Gorda	(321) 622-4330 www.floridapurpleheart.org
American Legion, Department of Florida	2011 Department Convention	June 23-26	Caribe Royale, Orlando	(407) 295-2631, Ext. 232

**Editor's Note:** All times local. Florida's Veterans Service Organizations and veteran-related agencies provided the information in the table above. To submit event information, contact the editor at [MurrayR@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:MurrayR@fdva.state.fl.us)

### Stop Loss Deadline Extended Again

WASHINGTON -- The deadline for eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for special retroactive pay as compensation for involuntary extensions of their military service contracts has been extended to April 8, Defense Department officials announced March 21.

To apply for Stop Loss pay or for more information, including submission requirements and service-specific links, go to <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>.

*Back to Table of Contents*



Nearly 500 guests chant "Raise That Beam," as a signed beam is raised to the highest point of the new Orlando VA Medical Center, Feb. 27. The new facility is slated to open in late 2012. Photo by Anita Webb.

## References for Veterans

### 2011 Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide

[www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org) -- then click on "Benefits Guide"

### Federal Benefits for Veterans & Dependents Guide

[http://www1.va.gov/OPA/publications/benefits\\_book.asp](http://www1.va.gov/OPA/publications/benefits_book.asp)

### Florida Veterans Foundation

[www.FloridaVeteransFoundation.org](http://www.FloridaVeteransFoundation.org)

### Employ Florida Vets - veteran employment resources

<http://veterans.employflorida.com/portals/veteran/>

### Florida's Veteran Service Organizations

[www.floridavets.org/organization/commanders.asp](http://www.floridavets.org/organization/commanders.asp)

### Florida Department of Military Affairs

<http://dma.myflorida.com/>

### U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

### Burial, Headstone and Marker Information (VA)

[www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)

### Returning OEF/OIF/OND Veterans (VA)

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>

### National Resource Directory - for wounded warriors

<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>

### Post-9/11 G.I. Bill and Veteran Education Benefits

[www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)

### National VA Homeless Hotline - 24 Hour

Toll Free at 1-877-424-3838

### National Veteran Suicide Prevention - 24 Hour

[www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

Toll Free at 1-800-273-8255, Press 1

### Social Security Administration

[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

### Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

[www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil)

### Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

[www.osd.dms.state.fl.us](http://www.osd.dms.state.fl.us)

### Center for Women Veterans

<http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/>

## New Surgeon General is Former Florida National Guard Member

TALLAHASSEE -- Gov. Rick Scott has named Dr. Frank Farmer as Florida's Surgeon General. As Surgeon General, Dr. Farmer will serve as both Florida's chief medical officer and as Secretary of the Department of Health.

A Florida native, Dr. Farmer has extensive experience in special operations during the Vietnam War and in the medical corps of the U.S. Army, Air Force and Florida National Guard. He retired as a Colonel in 2004.

Dr. Farmer also served as President of the Florida Medical Association from 2001-2002 and has served on the Board of Governors for the American College of Physicians, Florida Chapter. From 2006-2007, he served as the Chairman of the Florida Board of Medicine and is a current board member.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## Florida's Veterans' Homes

### Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Veterans' Domiciliary Home

(Columbia County) *Lake City* (386) 758-0600

### Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Volusia County) *Daytona Beach* (386) 274-3460

### Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Pasco County) *Land O' Lakes* (813) 558-5000

### Alexander Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Broward County) *Pembroke Pines* (954) 985-4824

### Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Bay County) *Springfield* (850) 747-5401

### Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home

(Charlotte County) *Port Charlotte* (941) 613-0919

### Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home

(St. Johns County) *St. Augustine* (904) 940-2193

## Supporting Veterans' Homes

Your purchase of the *Florida Salutes Veterans* or one of the approved Army, Navy, Air Force or Coast Guard license plates directly helps veterans.



The \$15 surcharge goes into a trust fund for the operation and maintenance of Florida's veterans' homes.

A portion of the Marine Corps and *Support Our Troops* license plates also supports the State Veterans' Homes Program.

Anyone can purchase these plates. You may also support the State Homes for Veterans Trust Fund by making a \$1 contribution when renewing your Florida Driver License.



### FDVA on Facebook

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is on *Facebook*, the social network service and website. FDVA seeks to connect veterans and their families with unclaimed benefits.

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