



THE OUTPOST



In Service to America

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
FOR INFORMATION CALL (813) 597-1326, FAX: (813) 737-4929.
WEB SITE: MEMBERS.AOL.COM/VVA787/INDEX.HTML**



Chapter 787 & Florida State Council Hurricane Katrina Relief, September 2005. Two trips made with many thousands of dollars in supplies donated.

Chapter Officers

President: Jim LaGarde
Vice President: Dale Wagner
Secretary: Bob Silmser
Treasurer: Kevin Ruhl

Board of Directors:

Ron Schott
Carl Harris
Tom Hall
Jon Mueller

State Council Delegate:

Kevin Ruhl

OUTPOST Publisher & Editor: Jon Mueller, E-mail: JonMue@aol.com

Meetings

Chapter Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month.

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Brandon Veterans Hall, 115 W. Clay Brandon Fl. 33510. See Map on last page.

E-mail addresses are on the last page.



Photo's provided by Bob Silmser and Luther Lassiter. Some of the members who made one or more of the trips are: Chapter President Jim LaGarde, VP Dale Wagner Board of Director member Carl Harris, AVVA member Eddy Ortelt, Secretary Bob Silmser, Don Wallick and Luther Lassiter. Additionally Craig Tonjes and Joyce Korprowski from the State Council made trips. Over 50 Tons of supplies & 9,000 volunteer man hours were required.

One VVA Chapter helping Another

New Chapter Logo (below)
designed by Bob Silmser



Below: Chapter 787 President, Jim LaGarde (L) presents a V.V.A. Flag to David Hellen, President of Chapter 943.



On Monday, October 10, 2005 Jim LaGarde and Bud Ortelt, from Chapter 787 in Tampa Florida, attended the monthly chapter meeting of Chapter 943 in St. Petersburg Florida. Since Chapter 943 is a fairly new chapter, Jim LaGarde, President of Chapter 787, presented a Vietnam Veterans of America flag to David Hellen, President of Chapter 943. We were brothers in arms and are brothers still.

Chapter 787 Fundraiser, Bloomingdale Wal-Mart

Submitted By: Bob Silmser

The Chapter thanks the following members for devoting their personal time and energy to help our veterans, families, and hurricane victims.

Saturday: Chapter President Jim (Rambo) LaGarde, Board member Carl Harris, AVVA member Joyce Koproski, Herman Rainey, and Don Wallick.

Sunday: Chapter President Jim (Rambo) LaGarde, Board member Bob Silmser, Joyce Koproski, Eddy Ortelt, Luther Lassiter, Tony Towers



Pictures from left to right:

Luther Lassiter, AVVA member of the year, Joyce Koproski advising Chapter President Jim LaGarde on the event, and Joyce showing the items we received. Joyce says next time the supplies will all be colored coded for easy distribution.

Do you have a family member currently serving in the US Military. We want to hear about them. Please send their name, rank, branch of service, duty station, etc., to Jon Mueller. E-mail: JonMue@aol.com. Please include pictures.

More regarding our efforts to help Hurricane Katrina Victims.



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September 22, 2005

ATTN: DALE WAGNER
Vietnam Veterans of America
P.O. Box 154
Lithia, FL 33547

RE: HURRICANE KATRINA

Dear Mr. Wagner:

It is with a humbled heart that I come to you in gratefulness for all the assistance you gave Washington Parish, and its residents in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. I don't know what we would have done without you.

As you know, after the storm we were virtually on our own for a day or two. After the storm, downed trees closed every parish road. Once the deputies and citizens of the parish cleared the debris from the roadways, we focused on the necessities like food, water, and ice. I was able to make contact with other parish Sheriff's and got ice and water delivered two days after the storm. Suddenly we were inundated with truck loads of miscellaneous items that began to arrive from Florida, Illinois, Texas and other points across the United States. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina would have been much worse without the dedication and the compassion of people like you.

The possessions that we have are generally a tangible result of what we have invested in time and energy and talent. But who we are, our character, is always a direct result of what we have invested of ourselves with God and others. And one of the great and unique promises of the Bible is that the more we give, the more we receive, not necessarily in material possessions, but in spiritual and eternal rewards.

The seeds of compassion are buried in the human heart, and when a need appears or tragedy strikes, those seeds grow to fruition quickly. Anyone with a sense of humanity is ready and willing to help another in dire need, share with him or her, comfort them, and just be with them.

Kindness is never lost; it keeps on giving from person to person until it returns to you.

I pray that God will bless each and every one of you that responded to our needs (Matthew 10:42).

Sincerely,

Aubrey Jones, Sheriff
Washington Parish

This Month During the War in Vietnam

Son Tay, The War's Greatest Raid!



Shortly before midnight on November 20, 1970, at Udorn Royal Thailand Air Base in Northern Thailand, 56 U.S. Army Raiders, (Special Forces soldiers) boarded two USAF HH-53's and one HH-3 for a mission deep into North Vietnam, to rescue 75 or more Americans held by the North Vietnamese authorities. They were escorted by C-130Es (Combat Talons). The American POWs, mostly aviators of all services, were being held under conditions that can be best described as horrible in all respects—torture, diet, lack of medical care and devoid of hope for return to freedom in a timely manner.



The mood of the country demanded that something be done to help these suffering POWs.

In May of 1970, reconnaissance photographs revealed the existence of two prison camps west of Hanoi. At Son Tay, 23 miles from Hanoi, one photograph identified a large “K” - code for “come get us” — drawn in the dirt. At the other camp Ap Lo, about 30 miles west of North Vietnam’s capital, another photo showed the letters SAR (Search and Rescue), apparently spelled out by the prisoner’s laundry, and an arrow with a number 8, indicating the distance the men had to travel to the fields they worked in.

More photo’s taken by SR-71 “Blackbirds” revealed that Son Tay “was active” but the 12th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment was close by. In addition, there was an artillery school, a supply depot, a air defense installation, and Phue Yen Air Base was just 20 miles away.

Brigadier General Donald Blackburn, a Special Operations adviser to Joint Chief of Staff Chairman Admiral Thomas Moore, had trained Filipino guerrillas in WWII, and suggested a small group of Green Berets rescue the POWs. He chose Colonel Arthur D. “Bull” Simons to lead the group.

Col Simons went to Ft. Bragg, home of the Army Special Forces and asked for 100 volunteers. Over 500 responded, just about all the Green Berets that were stationed at Ft. Bragg at the time. Although a force of 100 was selected, Simon’s believed that the number was excessive, however as some degree of redundancy and a reservoir of spares were deemed necessary, it was decided that they would train the 100 men.

The plan was not unduly complicated. Using in-flight refueling, the six helicopters would fly from Thailand, across Laos and into North Vietnam. While various diversions were taking place locally and across North Vietnam, the task force would close on the camp under cover of darkness. The single HH-3H “Banana 1” with a small assault force, would be crashed-landed inside the prison compound, while two HH-53s “Apple 1 and Apple2” would disgorge the bulk of the assault force outside. The wall would be breached and the prison buildings stormed. Any North Vietnamese troops found inside would be killed and the POWs would be taken outside and flown home in the HH-55s.

The diversionary attacks were conducted by the U.S. Navy and Air Force. The Navy began a huge carrier strike against North Vietnam’s port city of Haiphong. A-1 Skyraiders with call signs of “Peach One to Five”, arrived on station to suppress ground fire around the camp. The Air Force sent 10 F-4 Phantoms to fly MIG patrol and help screen the Raiders from enemy fighters, while F-105 Wild Weasel decoy force launched a raid on enemy SAMs.

Col Simons last words to his 56 SF soldiers before the flight were: *“You are to let nothing, nothing interfere with the operation. Our mission is to rescue prisoners, not take prisoners. And if we walk into a trap, if it turns out that they know we’re coming, don’t dream about walking out of North Vietnam—unless you’ve got wings on your feet. We’ll be 100 miles from Laos; it’s the wrong part of the world for a big retrograde movement. If there’s been a leak, we’ll know it as soon as the second or third chopper sets down; that’s when they’ll cream us. If it happens, I want to keep this force together. We will back up to the Song Con River and, by Christ, let them come across that God damn open ground. We’ll make them pay for every foot across the sonofabitch.”*

The final result: Over 100 NVA soldiers were killed by the Army Raiders during this assault but no POWs were rescued. It would later be learned that the POWs had been relocated to Dong Hoi, on July 14. Their move was not due to North Vietnam learning of the planned rescue attempt but because an act of nature. The well in the Son Tay compound had dried up.

Quote

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

“Of the four wars in my lifetime, none came about because the US was too strong”.

Ronald Reagan



Submitted By: Bob Silmsr

Holiday Meals

Holiday Meals are now available to purchase thru the Chapter at \$18.00 per meal. We need to supply 80 meals for Thanksgiving and 80 meals for Christmas so please be generous this year.

Please make your check out to: **VVA Chapter 787 Holiday Meals 2005**

and forward your donation for Holiday Meals to the following address:



Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 787 Attn: Bob Silmsr

P.O. Box 89247

Tampa, FL 33689-0404



PLEASE SEND YOUR DONATIONS BY NOVEMBER

Membership

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 _____ ID _____

Membership Type:

Individual 1 year _____ \$20 3 years _____ \$50

Individual membership is open to all Vietnam Veterans who served on active duty for other than training purposes from 1/1/1959 to 5/7/1975. Individual members must submit a copy of their DD-214 with their application and payment.

Associate 1 year _____ \$20 3 years _____ \$50

Life Member \$250, payment plan, \$50 down, and 8 monthly installments of \$25.

Payment Method: Check _____ Money Order _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____

If using a credit card: Card # _____

Marine Recovers Dog Tags



After 37 years, a Vietnam veteran was reunited with the dog tags that a corpsman removed while treating the wounds he suffered after a bullet entered his arm and exited his chest, according to an October 18 report in the Enid (Okla.) News and Eagle newspaper.

Former Marine Staff Sgt. Gerald Belcher received a phone call in late September from a California firefighter who had brought a handful of American dog tags from a Ho Chi Minh City museum during a trip to Vietnam. He was attempting to return the tags to the veterans who once wore them.

“It kind of came as a shock.” Belcher said. “The must be the original dog tags they issued me when I went into the Marines. It’s just like a part of you. They still had mud on them from Vietnam.”

Belcher said he hadn’t seen the dog tags since April 20, 1968 when he served with 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, near Khe Sanh.



Submitted By: Kevin Ruhl

Ermeys Vietnam, History Channel

Craig Roberts and several of his Marine and Navy buddies appear on R. Lee Ermeys Vietnam special on November 11th on the History Channel. It at 8:00 PM ET, Friday night.



For the first time since leaving on a Freedom Bird back in 1969. R. Lee Ermeys travels back to Vietnam. In this two-hour special Lee visits his old stomping grounds, Da Nang, where he served 13 months as Staff Sergeant assigned to the Marine Air Support Group. Lee also pays tribute to our fighting men and women at such historic locations as Hue, Khe Sanh, Hanoi and the US Embassy in Saigon. Lee answers questions about what it was like to fight during the long, bloody conflict.

Feature interviews with veterans with veterans spanning the entire history of the war, from the Commanding Officer of the first combat troops to arrive in 1965 through the last Marine to step off the Embassy roof ten years later. Hear first hand what it was like to survive an ambush, engage in urban warfare, shoot down a MiG, and spend years as a POW.

Vietnam Veterans Needed

Submitted By: Tom Hall

With the new school year starting, the “History of the Vietnam War” classes will again be producing Volume VII, Oral Histories of Vietnam Veterans.

We are in need of Vietnam Veterans who are willing to share their experience in Vietnam with the students. The students will ask the questions. You will need to bring a photo of yourself in Vietnam so they may scan it for use in the book.

All those interested, please contact Tom Hall as soon as possible at (813) 655-7129.

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 each month. 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.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Money

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Military retirees, SBP annuitants, Social Security and veterans disability compensation recipients will see a 4.1% Cost of Living Adjustment for 2006. This COLA, the largest since 1991, will go into effect on December 1, 2005 and will be seen in the January 15, 2006 paycheck. Recent retirees may see a smaller COLA according to their effective

Submitted By: Tom Hall

5 members of Chapter 787 Inducted into the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Society at Cape May, NJ

September 18, 2005, Chapter President Jim LaGarde, past Secretary Bud Ortelt, Treasurer Kevin Ruhl, and AVVA member Eddy Ortelt received the "Legion of Honor" award from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, for their devotion and dedication during the hurricane relief operations in 2004.

Past Chapter President, and now Hurricane Relief Coordinator, Tom Hall, already a recipient of the "Legion of Honor" award, received the "Humanitarian Award" for his efforts as the state hurricane relief coordinator during 2004.

Tom Hall was on hand to accept the awards for all the members along with accepting the "Legion of Honor" award for the Florida State Council and the Humanitarian Award" for AVVA member Joyce Koprowski of Chapter 195.

The awards were presented to the members at the Chapter's general membership meeting on September 22, 2005.



Left: Past President, and now Hurricane Relief Coordinator, Tom Hall congratulates AVVA member Eddy Ortelt on his award.



Right: (L to R) Chapter President Jim (Rambo) LaGarde, past Secretary Bud Ortelt, and his son, AVVA member Eddy Ortelt.

Medical

Submitted By: Al Doyle & Kevin Ruhl

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information.

The latest scam, currently centered in the Midwest, comes from callers who identify themselves as working for the "Patient Care Group." They say VA recently changed procedures for dispensing prescriptions and asked for the veterans credit card number.

"VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines." Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call, 877-222-8387 or go on-line to <http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13319,78982,00.html>.

Donations

Thanks to the following individuals for their financial support: **Bud Ortelt donated \$50, Richard Nye donated \$54 and Andrew Lopresti donated \$20,** to the Chapters Holiday Meals Program.



Hey! We Need Your Help.



The Chapter would like to start sending the monthly Regular Chapter meeting minutes to all members via E-mail. You may submit your e-mail address to the Chapter Secretary Bob Silmsner at Rafkirk64@verizon.net.

All e-mail addresses will used for Chapter use only and will not be given out to anyone. This will keep you better informed on what is going on with-in your Chapter when you are not able to make the regular meetings. We hope by doing this that more of you will become involved in our activities on a regular basis.

This is our Chapter and we need for all of us to become more involved to relieve some of the pressure on the few who are always there to help when needed. We hold Poppy drives and other fund-raisers as needed and could use your support. **If you would indicate in your e-mail to Bob that you are available to help he will put you on our to call list for the next fund-raiser.**

The Board of County Commissioners, Parks, Rec & Conservation Dept., Veterans Museum and the Veterans Council of Hillsborough County Presents Veterans Day Concert /Festival.

Friday November 11 2005, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Veterans Memorial Park Museum, 3602 Hwy 301 North, Tampa.

Guest Speaker, Patriot Steve Otto, Tampa Tribune.....Music by the "All Women's Blues Review Band." Special presentation "The Lost Patrol" Suncoast Vietnam Veterans.



Tampa Bay Annual Veterans' Day Parade & Community Fair
Saturday, November 12, 2005 at 10:00AM

Veterans.....Carnival.....Bands.....Floats.....Live Entertainment.....Free Family Fun



Sponsored By: Town & Country Hospital, USAA Insurance, Publix, Bill Currie Ford, Honeywell, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Tampa Bay Federal Credit Union, Image Depot, Morgan, Colling & Gilbert, All for Fun Amusement, Hillsborough Co. Parks, Recreation & Conservation Dept. and Dow Sherwood's Village Inn.

The Parade will go West on Barry Rd. to Hanley Rd. South on Hanley to Paula Dr. (Tampa). The parade staging area will be at Morgan Woods Elementary & Schimberg Park and end at the public library on Paula Dr.

Hosted By: Veterans' Day Parade Group Inc. VeteransParade@Yahoo.com

Calendar of Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Event and Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
<u>November 2005</u>			
8th	Tuesday,	Operation Field of Honor, Soldiers Lost, Serenity Meadows Memorial Park, Riverview	10:30 AM
10th	Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
11th	Friday,	Veterans Day, Veterans Council Event, Veterans Memorial Park & Museum	11:00 AM to 3:30 PM
12th	Saturday,	Tampa Bay Annual Veterans' Day Parade & Community Fair, Tampa Fl.	10:00 AM
28th	Monday	Chapter Meeting, (new date due to Thanksgiving holiday) Veterans Hall	7:00 PM
<u>December 2005</u>			
8th	Thursday	Chapter Christmas Party, Veterans Hall, Brandon	7:00 PM
<u>January 2006</u>			
12th	Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's house	6:30 PM
26th	Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Veterans Hall, Brandon	7:00 PM

Submitted By: Tom Hall

Speakers Needed

On June 8-9, 2005, ten high school teachers from the Hillsborough County School District went through a workshop training session conducted by Ron Dyches, Ross Webster, Bruce Burnham and Tom Hall on teaching the high school elective course "History of the Vietnam War."



Many of the teachers will be teaching the History of the Vietnam War course next year at their high school for the first time and adding to the growth of the number of high schools that will need speakers each week for their course.

With the increase in the number of high schools offering the course and the growth of class at existing schools **our Chapter's Speaker's Bureau is going to need additional speakers to meet the demand.**

Any member who is interested in becoming part of the Chapter's Speaker's Bureau should contact **Tom Hall as soon as possible at 655-7129**. This is a community service project that the Chapter has undertaken for over seven years and grows each year. If you are willing to share your personal experiences in Vietnam and how Vietnam affected your life, this is the opportunity to keep the legacy of Vietnam veterans alive through informing the students about the Vietnam

Deal of the Week

Advance Auto Parts would like to give you an exclusive discount for your continued support of Military. COM and Advance Auto Parts. You can now received 10% off any online purchase. Find this great discount and more at the Military. COM Discount Center, http://benefits.military.com/misc/DC/DealCoupon.jsp?deal_id=28.

Chapter 787 welcomes our new Secretary: Robert (Bob) Silmser

Bob provided the following information regarding his military and business background.

"I was in the USAF in the USAF Security Service attached to the 6986th Radio Squadron Mobile in Wakkanai, Japan 1961-1962 which was 26 miles south of the Russian held island of Saukland and than stationed at the 6952nd RSM in RAF Kirknewton, Scotland I was attached to the Personnel Section on both sites. I met and married my wife Margaret in Scotland in 1964 and we have been together ever since. I was medically discharged from the Air Force in 1965 with malignant Bone Cancer. I'm a Past member of the American Legion and a Life Member of the DAV. I didn't feel that I belonged in the VVA as I had never been to "Nam" so I never joined until it was explained to me that we are all brothers even if I wasn't in "Nam". I believe I have found a great bunch of brothers to be around and I enjoy the work that we do for others. I thank the VVA for giving me the opportunity to serve with so many wonderful brothers that I can call my friends. I'm retired and live in the Copper Ridge sub-division in Valrico".



"The picture I have attached is with my two dogs Angus the black one and WeeTuck the other both are purebred Shih-Tzu's".

Chapter 787 Christmas Dinner



All members, family and friends are invited to share in our annual Christmas diner to be held on Saturday December 8th at 7:00 PM at the Brandon Veterans Hall. Food and drinks are free so please make an effort to attend this very enjoyable event.

Show that you Care!

When traveling, if you happen to spot a young man or women in a US military uniform, please take a moment to walk up, introduce yourself, shake their hand and thank them for their service. It only takes a few seconds and it will mean a lot to them! In return, you will get the biggest smile that you every saw.

Important Phone Numbers

Submitted by Tom Hall

Tampa VA Hospital: (813) 972-2000
 Eye Clinic (813) 972-7574
 Dental Clinic (813) 972-7511
 PTSD Clinic (813) 978-5866

Women's Clinic (813) 979-3678
 Spinal Cord Center (813) 972-6770
 Pharmacy (813) 903-4885
 Scheduling 1-866-737-6843
 Tampa Vet Center (813) 228-2621



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If you can read
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 teacher.

If you are
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 English, thank a
 U.S. Veteran!

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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 Brandon Veterans Hall. 115 W. Clay Ave, Brandon Fl. See map below.

Contact E-mail Addresses:

President Jim LaGarde:

cLaGarde@tampabay.rr.com

VP Dale Wagner: g.gator2@verizon.net

Secretary Bob Silmser: ratfink64@verizon.net

Treasurer Kevin Ruhl: MSgtMCRet@aol.com

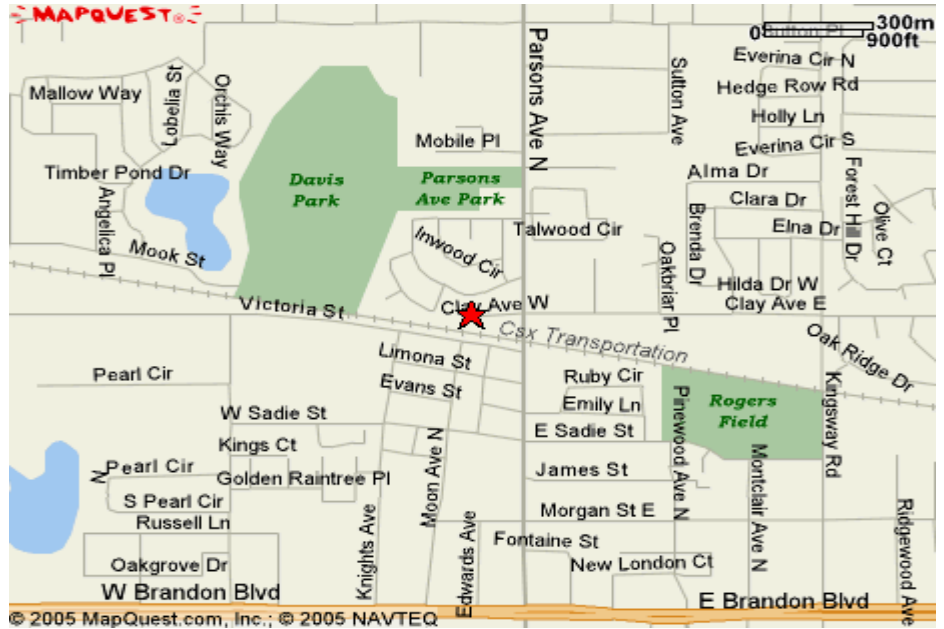
Board of Directors

Ron Schott: RonD1120@aol.com

Tom Hall: MarineDI@aol.com

Carl Harris: c_e_harris@ij.net

Jon Mueller: JonMue@aol.com



Important Web Sites

Vietnam Veterans of American, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida.....	http://members.aol.com/vva787/
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