



FLORIDA DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION



Rotor and Scalpel

WINTER/SPRING NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2010

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

First, I hope all had a wonderful holiday and I appreciate all the good wishes received. I would like to take a moment to welcome all new members to Dustoff and hope they will join us at the reunion this year. We appreciate all their input and everything they may have to offer to our organization. Reunion time is rapidly approaching and will be here before we know it. We are hoping for a good turn out and look forward to seeing all there. Once again, we will be located in Campsite "B" our favorite spot. As always, we will have water splits and extra electrical receptacles.

Per arrangements made last year, Doc O and his friend will be obtaining our sites again for this year. They will need to be at Wickham Park at least a day or two before the sites go on sale in order to obtain them. I hope all will take the time to thank them for volunteering for this task. Doc and I had done it for the past several years and last year, if Doc O hadn't been there and had we not received a call from Tom Burton from the VVSF telling us people were already lining up for we would not have obtained sites. According to the VVB, the park is determining a new way to reserve the sites, so in future years, I am hoping NO ONE has to be in line for up to 48 hours to get our reunion sites. They may even revert back to reserving for the next year when you arrive at the park.

Even though it has been an exceptionally hard year for me and my family due to Bert and I being still recouping from our treatments, Doc Williams (and wife Linn), Bert and I have been representing Dustoff faithfully with the Vietnam and All Veterans Coalition. Brett and Elizabeth have also attended the last two meetings as well. Dustoff co-hosted the October 2009 General Membership meeting in Ormond Beach with the USA River Rats and there was a nice turnout, Bert and I also hosted an executive board meeting at our home as well as Doc and Linn hosted one at their home. Dustoff will be hosting the annual Meeting and Banquet next January hopefully back at LaPlaya in Ormond Beach. To remind you the Coalition meets once a quarter for general meetings (all are welcomed to attend) in addition to 4 executive board meetings. We then forward the information that we receive from these meetings (and e-mail updates) to you, our general membership. *From time to time we ask for your input and would appreciate your responding to our requests. We cannot speak on your behalf without your response.*

Bert and I will be attending the National Dustoff Reunion this month in Panama City and it is our understanding that Hoss will be there as well. We look forward to seeing him there.

Roberta and I also had attended the Annual Muster at the UDT seal Museum in Vero Beach around Veterans Day and I must tell all of you, if you ever have the opportunity to attend, please do so. The demonstration by the Seals was fantastic (even though due to weather conditions, they could not do their halo jump.). Doc Williams was there for several days with Patches and Bob Gallagher prior to the Muster and was at the party after the demonstration at the Chiefs annual beer bash at the Little Jimmy Bridge. Also in attendance at the UDT seal museum were Don and Denise Wassmer and Kim and Tom Burton.

I would like to Congratulate to all recipients of awards last year: Member of the Year – Roberta Neitzel, Certificate of Appreciation for Service to Dustoff – Bob Gallagher, Tom Bubb and Tony Cartlidge, Feeding the Troops – Elizabeth Brookins and Patches.

On the subject of awards – it is with great pride and pleasure that to tell all that **Florida Dustoff is the Coalition's Organization of the Year and Doc Williams is their Veteran of the Year.** On behalf of Dustoff, Brett, Elizabeth, Roberta and I accepted the award at the Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet held in Altamonte Springs January 29-30th and Roberta and I also accepted a plaque for Florida Dustoff for hosting a general membership meeting.

To remind all everyone should contribute and bring two 12 packs (beer, soda, water, etc.) to donate to the coolers at reunion. It has worked out great for the past few years and I for one did not hear any complaints.

Now for the part of our newsletter nobody likes to read. It takes money to run an organization and I know things are rather tough for a lot of people these days. However, if you are an annual member, **PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES.** *As you must be a member in good standing to vote, please make sure that the dues are paid prior to the start of our annual meeting.* If you would like to pay them now, please forward your payment in the amount of \$20.00 payable to Florida Dustoff Association to 2304 Woodland Drive, Edgewater, FL 32141. **Please note – there are only two types of memberships:** Annual and Lifetime – that is it. If you join us for the meeting and are not one of these

membership types or have not paid your dues, you are not eligible to vote.

In addition, **for the last time**, I need to clarify the fees regarding the campsites. It has come to my attention that years ago, a former member of the executive board made some promises/deals that the rest of the board and general membership was not aware of pertaining to staying at Dustoff's campsites and honorary memberships – this is not how we as an organization operate – everything is on the up and up. Everyone will pay their fair share, or will not be allowed to camp on our sites. The fees (which are located at the end of the newsletter) **are per camper, per motor home or per tent – per night**. These fees are not per campsite!!! If you bring a tent, then you pay for each night. If you bring a motor home, you pay per night. If you share a site with another motor home and or tent, then both pay per night. Dustoff must pay for the sites for almost the entire week a year in advance and we cannot afford to keep doing this without recouping these funds. If you have an issue with this, please contact me directly prior to reunion at 386-424-1989.

Please remember, our general membership meeting will be held 1 hour after the close of opening ceremonies at the campsite on the 24th and we will have our auction at that time. The auction is extremely important to our bottom line as the reunion is really our only source of fundraising and in order to keep this organization afloat, we need to have as many members present for this event and bidding on the items.

I look forward to seeing you all at the reunion.

DUSTOFF FOREVER
Bob (Doc) Neitzel

A NOTE TO ALL FROM THE EDITOR

Another year has passed and once again, really nothing has been forwarded to me to include in the newsletter (except from VVB and VVOF members which has been forwarded from myself and Bob throughout the year). A lot of you are retired, whereas I am not. *I really would like someone to step up to the plate – e-mail some info.* I am e-mailing as many newsletters as possible to keep our printing and postage costs down, so if you received this by snail mail and have an e-mail address, please e-mail it to me at Hdwizrd8@aol.com and PLEASE indicate Dustoff in the subject line.

I think that our last reunion was a great success even though I was not feeling too well. As I was substituting for our secretary at the meeting, the minutes will be rather short this time. We would like to encourage all members to attend the reunion in April 2010. We will have a general membership meeting on Saturday. **If you plan on attending the reunion this year, please contact me at (386) 424-1989 or by e-mail. I will need to know if you need a campsite (wet or dry) and how many people will be attending with you.** At this point in time, the only motor homes I am aware of is Patches, Brett and Elizabeth Brookins and possibly Doc Custers brother. There are no other sites reserved. It is quite difficult to plan a dinner (as usual, Saturday night) without having an idea of a head count. The reunion dates are April 22-25th at Wickham Park. The VVB already has most of the reunion info posted at www.vietnamandallveteransofbrevard.com.

If you can also attend the week prior, you may also wish participate in the Vietnam And All Veterans Reunion Memorial Walls Motorcycle Escort on Sunday April 18, 2010 at Brevard Community College 1519 Clearlake Road, Cocoa, FL. If staying overnight they normally arrange for discounted room rates, which at this time have not been announced/posted yet.

Line-up is at 9:00 am and they will leave 10:00 am. Arrive at Wickham Park, Melbourne, About 11:00 am. The Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard will host a COVERED DISH PICNIC, for those who want to help set up the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall Other Memorials and Displays. It is well worth the experience if you are able to do so.

Please take a look at the reunion website page at VVOF.ORG and there is a link to the reunion home page, or go right to the source at the VVB website.

Bob and I will be attending a stand-up to welcome troops home at the Orlando VA Medical Center on February 27th with the VVOF and VVB also being represented. This time we are more prepared as we now know what info needs to be handed out. We are ready with the membership apps and the tri-fold on Dustoff 90. The Coalition has just completed and approved has a tri-fold and Ralph Earrusso had a banner made for the coalition. Hopefully, Dustoff will be able to recruit new members at this event.

I have been working on troop support for the coalition. It would be appreciated if our membership attending the reunion could bring items to support this effort. We are looking for personal toiletry items such as brushes, combs, soap, flip-flops, trial sizes of shampoo, toothpaste, etc., to send over seas. Items or monetary donations (personal or from organizations) would be greatly appreciated. We do have a 501(c) 3 being used if an organization is donating money.

Dustoff voted at last reunion to set aside funds for our own troop support. This past Christmas, we sent some packages overseas and the recipients were thrilled and thankful to receive them. Included with each package was some information about Florida Dustoff. We included personal toiletry items (razors, body wash, shaving cream, wet wipes), Holiday cookies and candy, several holiday decorations, a Christmas card for each and a wrapped Christmas present for each (a bottle of cologne.) Hopefully, before reunion, we will be able to send several more out. We will be adding two medics embedded with the Special Forces to receive our packages – hopefully, this may be a good recruiting tool as well.

In addition, Elizabeth came up with a fundraising idea that was outside of the box. She arranged for military pot holders to be made for each branch of the service for Dustoff. We have already sold all of the Navy, Marine and Air Force pot holders we originally ordered and have reordered to have at least two dozen of each type in time for the reunion, *so be ready to purchase some at the reunion (cost \$6.00 per set)!!!* The proceeds of the pot holders have been earmarked for packages for the troops. In addition, if you know of any active duty personnel overseas and would like a package sent to them, please e-mail me or call me with their APO or FPO and we will send a package to them.

I have little by little been working on the website – Tony Cartlidge just added some sound when you go on the home page (QuickTime needed to hear it) and we will be adding some photos. I need each of you (that has not done so already) to complete the release form (either attached or enclosed depending on your delivery method for the newsletter) and return it to me. I look forwarding to seeing all at the Reunion!!!

Roberta Neitzel

FROM THE VP

For those of you who have not met me, my name is Brett Brookins, and I have been serving as the Vice-President of Florida Dustoff since last April. I am medically retired from the Florida Army National Guard after 13 years of service, including two tours in Afghanistan as a medic and other duties. I have been married for ten years to Elizabeth, who is currently the secretary of Dustoff. We consider ourselves a military family as two of our five sons are currently active duty in the Navy.

During my second tour I sustained non-combat related injuries which ultimately caused my medical retirement this past year. A little over two years ago my wife and I met Bob, Bert and Doc Williams at a Stand-Up, welcoming troops home and offering them all types of services, held at the Orlando VA Hospital. That is where I first became aware of Florida Dustoff and I became a member on the spot. My wife Elizabeth and I went to the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard reunion in 2008 and stayed in the Dustoff camp ground where I became a Lifetime member. Since then I have become Vice President of Dustoff and consider Dustoff my family.

Elizabeth and I have been working with Bob and Bert and have represented Dustoff at several Vietnam and All Veterans State Coalition meetings. I would like to tell you that I was proud to accept

awards on behalf of Florida Dustoff at these meetings and am proud to be a member of this organization.

In accordance with Florida Dustoff by-laws, Bob's term limit as President will be up and I will become President this April, with Bob as my Vice President, and with your help we will have a prosperous year. I am looking forward to working with each and every one of you. I would like to see our membership grow, and to continue to support and help our Military brothers and sisters and our fellow vets. I am honored to be a part of this Brother and Sisterhood.

DUSTOFF FOREVER
SGT. Brett D. Brookins
U.S. Army, Retired

NEW MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD

We are now accepting nominations for Member of the year. It is up to you, the general membership (in good standing) to nominate someone for the award (they also must be in good standing.) Nominations must be in writing – either e-mail to Hdwizrd7@aol.com (Bob) or bbrookinsretired@gmail.com (Brett Brookins) and indicate DUSTOFF NOMINATION in the subject line or send a snail mail to the Dustoff mailing address. **Just simply indicate the nominees' name, a few words why you feel they deserve it and you must include your name on the form.** Once the nominations are received, the Executive board will select the recipient.
NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN MARCH 25, 2010 !!

Menus for the dinners are currently being decided on – hope they are as good as last year!!! Friday and Saturday night's dinners will be at a cost of \$5.00 and \$6.00 respectively.

We will be presenting colors at the opening ceremonies again and if anyone is interested in participating, please contact Bob Neitzel at hdwizrd7@aol.com or by phone to let him know in advance. As the flight suits we have are rather "slim" in nature, we would like at least one or two to present in the flight suits and all others to be in BDUs, and would like all to be in boots.

We will be having our raffle and auction as well as a 50/50 and if anyone would like to donate any items please see Doc Neitzel, Bert, Elizabeth or Brett at the campsites.

FYI

Important info to pass on for those that are currently receiving social security or planning on applying in the future... The amount of your Social Security check depends on the level of income you had while working. If you are not in a top bracket of income, and therefore have your SS check amount maxed out already, then the benefit we are about to tell you about can boost the size of the check you get every month. This is not an automatic benefit, you must ask for it !!

Please share this with anyone who's had **active duty service prior to January 2002** and is planning for retirement. In a nutshell it boils down to this: You qualify for a higher social security payment because of your Military service, for active duty any time from 1940 through 2001 (the program was done away with in January 2002).

Up to \$1200 per year of earnings credit are credited at time of application - which can make a substantial difference in social security monthly payments upon your retirement.

You must bring your DD-214 to the Social Security Office - and you must ask for this benefit to receive it!

Soc Sec website: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>

This is something to put in your files for when you apply for Social Security down the road. It is NOT just for retirees, BUT anyone who has served on active duty prior to January 2002.

If you are already receiving social security and not receiving this additional benefit, please make an appointment with your local social security office and bring your DD-214 with you to apply for this benefit. ***ONE MORE TIME - this benefit is not automatic, you must ask for it!***

Costly Agent Orange-Heart Disease Link Looms

Tom Philpott | December 31, 2009

The cost of war -- on veterans' health and taxpayer wallets -- will loom a little larger in the new year when the Department of Veterans Affairs issues a final rule to claim adjudicators to presume three more diseases of Vietnam veterans, including heart disease, were caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

The rule, expected to be published soon, will make almost any veteran who set foot in Vietnam, and is diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, B cell leukemia or ischemic heart disease (known also as coronary artery disease), eligible for disability compensation and VA medical care. The exception would be if credible evidence surfaces of a non-service cause for the ailment.

Katie Roberts, VA press secretary, said no estimates will be available on numbers of veterans impacted or the potential cost to VA until after the rule change takes effect sometime in 2010. But the National Association for Uniformed Services was told by a VA official that up to 185,000 veterans could become eligible for benefits and the projected cost to VA might reach \$50 billion, said Win Reither, a retired colonel on NAUS' executive board.

NAUS also advised members that VA, to avoid aggravating its claims backlog, intends to "accept letters from family physicians supporting claims for Agent Orange-related conditions." It said thousands of widows whose husbands died of Agent Orange disabilities also will be eligible for retroactive benefits and VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

"This is huge," said Ronald Abrams, co-director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program. NVLSP has represented veterans in Agent Orange lawsuits for the last 25 years. The non-profit law group publishes the "Veterans Benefits Manual," a 1900-page guide for veterans' advocates to navigate the maze for VA claims, appeals and key court decisions.

Abrams said he can't guess at how many more thousands of veterans previously denied disability claims, or how many thousands more who haven't filed claims yet, will be eligible for benefits. But numbers, particularly of those with heart disease, will be very large, he suggested.

All of the veterans "who have been trying to link their heart condition to a service-connected condition won't have to do it now if they're Vietnam vets," Abrams said. For VA, it will mean "a significant amount of money -- and many, many, many people helped."

The excitement over expansion of benefits for Vietnam veterans, and worry by some within the Obama administration over cost, flows from an announcement last October by VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. He said three categories would be added to the list of diseases the VA presumes were caused by Agent Orange. Veterans with the presumptive Agent Orange ailments can get disability compensation if they can show they made even a brief visit to Vietnam from 1962 to 1975. With a presumptive illness, claim applicants don't have to prove, as other claimants do, a direct association between their medical condition and military service.

Shinseki said he based his decision on work of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies. VA contracts with IOM to gather veterans' health data and investigate links between diseases and toxic herbicide used in Vietnam to destroy vegetation and expose enemy positions.

In a speech last July, Shinseki, former Army chief of staff and a wounded veteran of Vietnam, expressed frustration that "40 years

after Agent Orange was last used in Vietnam, this secretary is still adjudicating claims for presumption of service-connected disabilities tied to its toxic effects." VA and the Defense Department should had conducted conclusive studies earlier on presumptive disabilities from Agent Orange, he suggested.

"The scientific method and the failure to advocate for the veteran got in the way of our processes," Shinseki bluntly concluded.

In last October's announcement he said VA "must do better reviews of illnesses that may be connected to service, and we will. Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence."

When a disease is added to VA's list of ailments tied to Agent Orange, veterans with the disease can become eligible for retroactive disability payments, back to the date original claims were rejected, if after 1985.

Joe Violante, legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, praised Shinseki's decision. But he said VA faces a "logistical nightmare" in trying to find veterans turned down on earlier on claims. A VA official told Violante, he said, that cost of the search could be part of that nightmare.

Chairman of government affairs for Vietnam Veterans of America until last October was John Miterko. He said he wasn't surprised that Shinseki added ailments to the Agent Orange presumptive list including heart disease.

"If you look at the Vietnam veteran population, the diseases we've contracted and the mortality rate, the only group dying faster rate are the World War II veterans," Miterko said. "We're picking up diseases by our '60s that we shouldn't be getting until our late '70s, early '80s. So his adding other diseases, heart disease in particular, isn't a surprise."

Both Shinseki and his predecessor, James Peake, former Army surgeon general, had long military careers and served in Vietnam. "That's a hell of a bonus for us," Miterko said. Both of them have shown "much more empathy, much more understanding. They would have seen many of their own peer group suffering from the effects of exposure to Agent Orange."

Miterko doesn't believe anyone can estimate how many veterans will benefit from the new presumptive diseases. VA will continue to process claims individually, he said, and likely won't be accepting Agent Orange as the cause of heart disease for someone "who has smoked for 40 years and is morbidly obese. Common sense is going to have to prevail as well."

To comment, send e-mail to milupdate@aol.com or write to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111

Important Upcoming Legislation:

These bills were just recently introduced in the Florida House/Senate – I think we all need to keep an eye on these and contact your representatives **if you support them**, please remember, this is not an endorsement, but for informational purposes only:

H.B. 313 introduced by Holder, Ambler, Hooper, Horner, Sachs, Snyder. Joint Resolution Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Discount: Proposes amendment to s. 6, Art. VII & creation of s. 31, Art. XII of State Constitution to expand availability of property tax discount on homesteads of veterans who became disabled as result of combat injury to include those who were not Florida residents when they entered military & schedule amendment to take effect January 1, 2011. Effective Date: Not Specified As of 2/18/10 in Economic Development & Community Affairs Policy Council.

S.B. 348 introduced by Dean. General Solicitation of Funds/Veterans' Organizations [GPSC]; Exempts certain veterans' organizations from requirements to file registration statements with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/01/2010. As of 12/9/09 Referred to Military Affairs and Domestic Security; Commerce; General Government Appropriations.

S.B. 644 introduced by Governmental Oversight and Accountability, Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations, Justice. General Direct-support Org./Department of Military Affairs [WPSC]; Authorizes the direct-support organization to support the processing of requests from the Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Program or similar programs. Requires the direct-support organization to submit its annual budget and financial reports to the DMA. Requires the financial committee of the board of directors of the direct-support organization for the DMA to review the financial transactions of the program quarterly, etc. EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/01/2010. As of 2/19/10 Committee Substitute Text (C2) Filed.

H.B. 781 introduced by Burgin. Memorial Veteran Benefit Offset for Military Widows and Widowers: Urges Congress to amend federal law to eliminate offset for Dependency & Indemnity Compensation administered by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs imposed on benefits received by military widows & widowers through Survivor Benefit Plan administered by U.S. Department of Defense. Effective Date: Not Specified As of 2/5/10 in Economic Development & Community Affairs Policy Council

S.B. 1824 introduced by Gelber. General Misrepresentation of Military Status [CPSC]; Prohibits a person from falsely representing himself or herself as a member of or representing the U.S. Armed Forces or organized militia for the purpose of solicitation of charitable contributions or participation in a charitable or sponsor sales promotion. Provides criminal penalties, etc. EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/01/2010. As of 2/17/10 Referred to Commerce; Criminal Justice; Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations

S.B. 1972 introduced by Aronberg. General Veterans [GPSC]; Redefines the term "service-disabled veteran" for purposes of the Florida Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Opportunity Act. Revises the eligibility requirements for a veteran's residency in the Veterans' Domiciliary Home of Florida. Revises the eligibility requirements for a veteran's admittance into a licensed health care facility that is operated by the FDVA. EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/01/2010. As of 2/25/10 On Committee agenda - Military Affairs and Domestic Security, 03/02/10, 10:15 am, 37 S

BITS AND PIECES

We wish the best to and keep in our prayers the following members of Dustoff who have been ill and are still recovering: Ken Baker and Rick Moore. Also, for those who may not be aware, John John, son of the Reverend John Steer, was in a horrific auto accident last year and is still recovering. The Reverend John Steer himself is not well, so please keep him in your prayers as well.

Please take a look at the Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida State Coalition Website (VVOF.ORG). There is a tremendous amount of information and links to other sites.

If you need to express yourself, or have something worth sharing, please e-mail Roberta at Hdwizr8@aol.com, or call me at 386-424-1989.

CAMPSITE FEES FOR 2010-prices remain the same as 2009

WET SITES: \$40.00 per night per motor home, camper or tent

DRY SITES: \$30.00 per night per motor home, camper or tent

Friday Dinner \$5.00 per person

Saturday Dinner \$6.00 per person

ELECTED OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Robert (Doc) Neitzel	President	Hdwizrd7@aol.com
Brett Brookins	Vice-President	Bbrookinsretired@gmail.com
Roberta Voisey-Neitzel	Treasurer	Hdwizrd8@aol.com
Elizabeth Brookins	Secretary	Ebrookins@gmail.com
Roberta Voisey-Neitzel	Newsletter Editor	Hdwizrd8@aol.com
Rick Moore	Membership	Teufelhunden69@aol.com
John Combs	Chaplin	Jodoco@xecu.net
Ron (Doc) Custer	Chairman of the Board	Custer_ron@yahoo.com
Ron (Doc) Smith	Board Member	Bigdocs@aol.com
Ed (Gunny) Ryan	Board Member	GunnyRyan@aol.com

MAILING ADDRESS

Florida Dustoff Association, Inc.
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Edgewater, FL 32141

All inquiries, questions or comments may be directed to the President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer. All articles printed in our newsletters are strictly the opinion of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Dustoff Organization. Updated September 17, 2006

FLORIDA DUSTOFF

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New _____ Renewal _____ Lifetime _____ Yearly _____ (check one)

Name: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____

Spouse: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ E-mail: _____

Cell: () _____

In what capacity did you serve? Pilot ___ Crew Chief ___ Medic ___ Maintenance ___ Supply ___ Door

Gunner ___ Flight Ops ___ Clerk ___ Commo ___ Cook ___ (check one or more) Rank _____

Branch of Service _____

Dates of Assignment (Mo/Yr-Mo/Yr) _____

Attachments _____