



FLORIDA DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION



Rotor and Scalpel

WINTER/SPRING NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2011

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Members of Dustoff, for those of you that did not go to the State Coalition Meeting, it was very productive. We had a great time and I would like to congratulate Bob and Bert on a job well done. They set up the hotel, meeting room and hospitality suite. The banquet was awesome, and the food was great, with the exception of the roast beef. All in all the conference was a wonderful success.

The mid-winter reunion in Fort Pierce/Vero Beach went well. The Navy Seal Muster was a success. The Navy Seal Museum was really cool. All the festivities were wonderful. There was a Navy Seal reenactment exercise of what they do to the bad guys. It was amazing how the executed the mission. The rest of the festivities were at Little Jim's Bridge a Navy Seal Hangout. Dustoff was recognized for all the hard work we do throughout the year. It was very nice to see familiar faces, such as Bob Gallagher, little Doc our Donut Dolly and a few other members of Dustoff.

Well, in closing, I would like to wish everybody a wonderful and blessed New Year, and see you at the reunion in May.

**Respectfully Yours,
Brett D. Brookins
President of Dust Off 2011**

A NOTE TO ALL FROM THE EDITOR

As most of you know already, the Florida Veteran Community lost a true brother this past August, when Ken Baker passed away. He was a life member of several veteran organizations, including Dustoff. Doc and Linn Williams as well as Bob and I attended the Memorial Service held at the Veterans Memorial Center in Merritt Island and we proudly flew our colors in honoring our fallen brother. The VVB is dedicating the Reunion this year to Kenny and besides the coalition newsletter being available at the Reunion, a separate memorial booklet honoring Ken will be available.

Ken always had a special place in his heart for Dustoff, being dusted off himself. He always told me it wouldn't be a Reunion without Florida Dustoff in the camp ground...He is truly missed by all.....

Another year has passed and once again, really nothing has been forwarded to me to include in the newsletter, with the exception of Rick Moore and Chris Hamrick. 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.

We would like to encourage all members to attend the reunion in May 2011. 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 people requiring wet sites I am aware of are Patches, Art and Hoss, Doc Anderson. People requiring Dry sites are Doc Custer and Chris Hamrick. 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 May 5th-8th 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 MY 1ST, 2011 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.

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 look forward to seeing all at the Reunion!!!

Roberta Neitzel

FROM THE VP

I hope all have been well and I am looking forward to seeing all at the Reunion. Preparations are already in motion and I am hoping this will be a great year for Florida Dustoff Association. Bert and I were unable to attend the mid-year reunion held in Vero in conjunction with the Annual Muster at the UDT Seals Museum and Chief Patches' Annual Beer Bash, but I heard a great time was had by all that did attend and I am hopeful that this will become an annual event as we would like to take part this year.

I would like to Congratulate to all recipients of awards last year: Member of the Year – Jerry "Doc" Anderson, Certificate of Appreciation for Service to Dustoff –Ron "Doc" Custer, Linn Vercheski, Steve Doane and Judy Weist, Doctor Dustoff to Carolyn Zsoldos. We also presented Plaques to Mike Dixon, Orange County Service Officer and State Representative Dorothy Hukill for their hard work and dedication to our troops and veterans.

On behalf of Dustoff, several packages were sent to our troops for the Holidays. The packages were sent to the 16 MP Company in Afghanistan. The total weight of the three was almost 45 pounds and consisted of Holiday candies and treats, holiday decorations, personal hygiene items (body wash, shaving cream, razors, wet wipes, hand sanitizer), and Bert baked 36 dozen cookies (chocolate chip, oatmeal raisin, peanut butter, peanut butter blossoms and sugar cookies.) The dollar amount of the packages including shipping was kept within our budget as Bert and I donated the cookies. I would also like to mention that Francesca Aherns from the USA River Rats made a candy donation for the troops and gave us; I believe 6 bags of candy to include with the packages. The packages were received before Christmas and were enjoyed by all.

Bert and I, on behalf of Dustoff, the Vietnam and All Veterans State Coalition and KVWA Chapters 173 and 210, participated in Wreaths Across America at the local cemetery in Edgewater. The ceremony was a fitting tribute and took place at the same time that other similar events took place all over the country. Wreaths at the main ceremony represented every branch of the service, including Coast Guard and Merchant Marines and I was asked to present the wreath for the Army, which I do proudly did. After the main ceremony, everyone in attendance walked the cemetery and laid a fresh cut wreath on a soldier's grave. At our ceremony a total of 160 wreaths were placed and it was our understanding that this was not the total amount needed to place a wreath at each grave. A thought would be if possible, Florida Dustoff Association make a small donation, possible \$50.00 to this program this year. For more information, the web address is <http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org> – this year's ceremony takes place December 10, 2011. Also, if you would like to attend one of these ceremonies that take place throughout the country, you can access the list of cemeteries' that participate.

Dustoff will be hosting the Vietnam and All Veterans State Coalition Meeting an Annual Banquet again this coming January. When the location and dates are scheduled, we will let you know. This years, held at LaPlaya Resort and Hotel in Daytona Beach was a wonderful weekend. A lot of information was received and reviewed in the meeting and the Banquet was received well by all. The officers were sworn in by State Rep Dorothy Hukill. I suggest if given the opportunity to attend the meetings, especially the Annual, one should do so.

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.

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

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 Hdwizr7@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 APRIL 15, 2011 !!**

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 hdwizr7@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 BDU's, 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 campsite.

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!**

Important Information to Pass On

We try to forward as much information as possible throughout the year that we received which we deem important. Some though, do not have a computer, therefore are not receiving a lot of information. I would like to note here several items that I felt were worth sharing again: They are:

New and Enhanced VA Benefits Provided to Caregivers of Veterans

Unprecedented Law Augments Commitment to Nation's Most Vulnerable Veterans

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is launching the first of a series of new and enhanced services supporting family caregivers of seriously ill and injured Veterans. In May 2010, President Obama signed the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 legislation authorizing VA to establish a wide range of new services to support certain caregivers of eligible Post 9/11 Veterans.

“Caregivers make tremendous sacrifices every day to help Veterans of all eras who served this nation,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “They are critical partners with VA in the recovery and comfort of ill and injured Veterans, and they deserve our continued training, support and gratitude.”

“DAV is happy to hear that caregivers of Veterans are getting additional support and services to care for our Nation's heroes and unprecedented new services for our most recent severely ill and injured,” said David W. Gorman, executive director of the Washington Headquarters of the Disabled American Veterans. “We understand there are challenges to implementing the new law; including ensuring that critically ill and injured Veterans of all eras are similarly supported.”

In addition to the new benefits and services for eligible Veterans who were disabled in the line of duty since Sept. 11, 2001 (Post 9/11 Veterans), VA will also begin providing enhanced benefits and services to caregivers of Veterans of all eras who are already enrolled in VA care, including:

- Access to VA's toll-free Caregiver Support Line: 1-855-260-3274,
- Expanded education and training on caring for Veterans at home,
- Other support services such as counseling and support groups and referral services; and
- An enhanced website for caregivers.

Some of the new benefits of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act are restricted by law to the caregivers of the most seriously ill and injured Post 9/11 Veterans. Those additional benefits include:

- A monthly stipend,
- Health care coverage,
- Travel expenses, including lodging and per diem while accompanying Veterans undergoing care,
- Respite care; and
- Mental health services and counseling.

VA will take the opportunity to report to Congress in the future on the feasibility of expanding the enhanced services to family caregivers of Veterans of all eras.

While some of these enhanced benefits are available now, many of the other significant newly-enacted benefits will require the issuance of regulations. These additional benefits include monthly stipends, pay for travel costs, medical coverage, training, counseling and respite care designed to prevent institutionalization of Veterans whenever possible. The law requires detailed regulations for determining eligibility, designating and approving caregivers, and providing stipends and health care coverage to primary family caregivers. The complex process required to implement these regulations will provide Veterans, caregivers and the general public the opportunity to provide comments before those regulations are finalized.

“VA has supported caregivers of Veterans of all eras for almost eight decades,” said Deborah Amdur of VA's Care Management and Social Work Service, “and we know from our experience and research that Veterans are best served when they can live their lives as independently as possible surrounded by caring family and friends.”

Each VA medical center has designated caregiver support coordinators who will assist eligible Veterans and caregivers in understanding and applying for the new benefits. VA also has a Caregiver Support Web page, www.caregiver.va.gov, which will provide general information once final regulations are published.

We were provided with a website that lists discounts provided to active military personnel and veterans: It is <http://www.militaryconnection.com/deals.asp>. These are businesses that offer discounts on products and services and these discounts vary from 10% to 40%.

Two important caveats. First, some stores offer discounts only at the owner's discretion and other discounts vary by state. Second, many stores that give a military discount don't advertise it. It is always worth asking a store whether they have one or not and to have your military ID on you. I suggest you take a look at this website and take advantage of the discounts offered.

Speaking of discounts, The State of Florida is offering discounted State Park annual passes. Passed and signed into law in 2010, House Bill 1145 provides a 25 percent discount on annual passes to Florida State Parks for all honorably discharged veterans, active-duty service and reserve members. The discount provides a savings of \$15 on an individual annual pass and \$30 on a family annual pass, which allows up to eight people in a group to access most of Florida's 160 state parks. In addition, honorably discharged veterans who have

service connected disabilities, and surviving spouses of military veterans who have fallen in combat, will receive a lifetime family annual entrance pass at no charge.

The discounted Florida State Parks Annual Entrance Pass is available for purchase and renewal at any Florida State Park staffed ranger station or via mail order. For information on required documentation and purchasing procedures, please visit this link to the [Military Discounts](#) information on the Florida Online Park Guide.

CONTINUED SUPPORT NEEDED TO H. RES 111

In representing the POW/MIA issue by wearing the POW/MIA patch brings a responsibility to do something about it. We want them returned from captivity; we want the government authorized to seriously negotiate and get them back.

House Resolution 111 (H. Res. 111) is the way to do that. This investigative committee will open POW/MIA documents previously hidden and make the recommendations to congress for a law to do what is necessary for their return.

You and I have to get congressmen/women to cosponsor H. Res. 111 now so that we can meet the objective of getting this Congressional Resolution to the House Floor for a vote to get the committee formed, functioning to accomplish. We have to start by getting the cosponsors. Let's get started on this right away.

If you haven't called call this next week, if they haven't signed on as a cosponsor call next week. That is what it takes to get them to take you seriously. You are the leaders in the POW/MIA issue in having the unreturned represented when others passively wait or expect government to do its job; we have to authorize them to get it done. The Defense POW/MIA Office and others only have to do what they have been doing because there is no law requiring them to seek out and bring back our POW/MIAs.

If you congressman/woman hasn't signed on yet call their office and tell them to do so. Here it the current list of cosponsors:

Florida – Rivera (R), Illinois – Manzulo(R), Kentucky – Guthrie (R), Kansas – Jenkins(D), Massachusetts - Keating, Neal (D), Maryland (D), Minnesota – Bachman (R), Cravaak (R), Paulsen (R), Peterson (D), North Carolina – Foxx(R), New Jersey – Holt(D), Rothman (D), Payne (D), Lance (R), New York – Towns (D), Pennsylvania – Altmire (D), Tennessee Roe, Black (R)

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: Rick Moore and Doc Williams. Also, for those who may not be aware, Michael J

Martin has been very ill and we hoping for a speedy recovery for him and our thoughts and prayers go to the Hamrick Family on the recent loss of their granddaughter.

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 2011-prices remain the same

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

THE DUSTOFF PRAYER

Penned by Chaplin Connie Walker

Kind and Merciful Heavenly Father, thank You for "calling" and "sending" DUSTOFF Teams on missions of mercy, under the most hostile conditions, in a deeply Dedicated and Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces of all ages and ranks. Lord, history has us standing on the shoulders of the faithful and courageous DUSTOFF Teams who have gone before.

Bless them forever. We follow their stalwart leadership steps. Lord, may each of us hear afresh Your Summons, "Follow Me." Heroic cries like "When

I have your wounded..." captivate and ring in our ears, hearts and prayers, even today as we fly on missions of mercy to Life for Life and Hope.

Heavenly Father, we trust in Your saving and sustaining Grace, now and forever. In the Name of our Great God, Redeemer and Holy Spirit. Amen!

ELECTED OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Brett Brookins	President	Bbrookinsretired@gmail.com
Robert (Doc) Neitzel	Vice-President	Hdwizrd7@aol.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

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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 _____