



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.

CVSOA / FDVA Fall Training Conference

Lt. Col. Steve Murray, U.S. Air Force (Ret)
Communications & External Affairs Director

Communications Office

Think DoD “Public Affairs”



- Advice & Counsel
- Media Relations
 - Traditional & Social Media
- Community Relations
 - Website
 - Outreach opportunities
- Employee Communications
- Legislative Affairs Support
- Proclamations, Resolutions & Letters

Atlantic Hurricane Season

Hurricane Dorian – September 2019



Veterans' Liaison to State Emergency Response Team

- **Your Daily Status!**
- **Utility Restoration Efforts**
 - State Veterans' Homes
 - VA Medical Centers & Clinics
- **Disaster Recovery Centers**
 - FDVA Veterans' Claims Examiners
 - **County Veteran Service Officers**



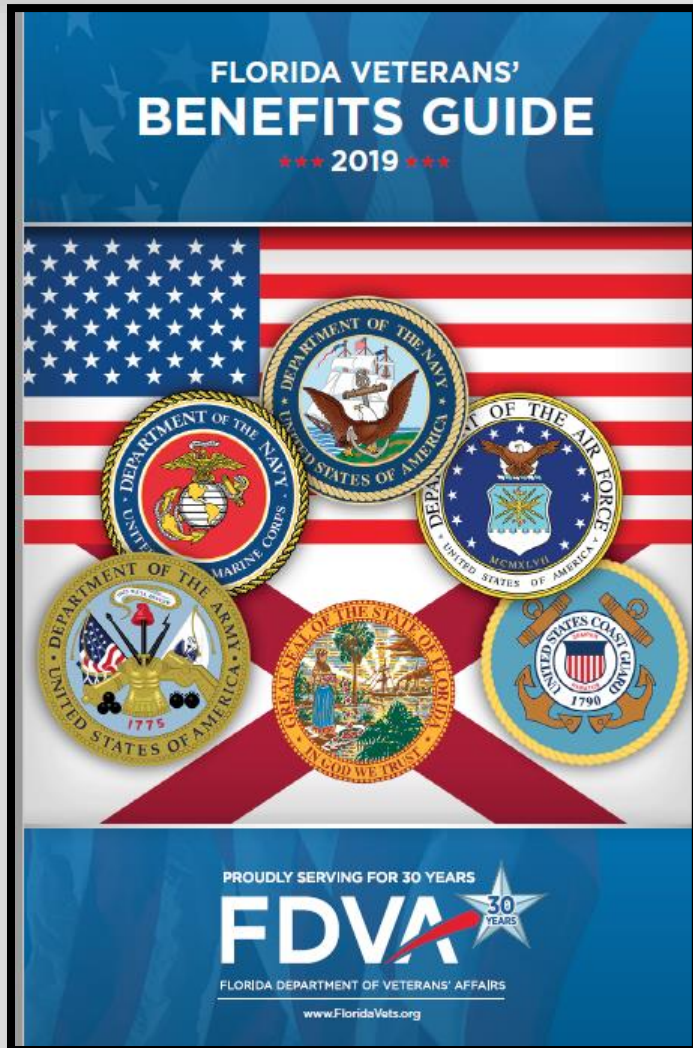


Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

- Legislature established to honor veterans, both living and deceased, for their post-military service to Florida
- Class of 2019 approved by Governor & Cabinet, Sept. 24

John A. Brinkley USMC/USAF Veteran (Ormond Beach)	Kathryn Gates-Skipper USMC Veteran (Lake Wales)	Dr. Edward Copeland III USA Veteran (Gainesville)	Col. Dale M. Leslie USMC Retired (Madison)	CW4 Donald Courtney USA Retired (Palmetto)	CAPT Norman Olson USN Retired (The Villages)
Raymond "Ray" Cralle USMC Veteran (Boynton Beach)	Lt. Col. Robert (Pat) Phillips USAF Retired (Winter Park)	Col. Michael Flynt USAF Retired (Miramar Beach)	SFC Juan Santiago-Seda USA Retired (Viera)	Matt Franz USA Veteran (Oviedo)	Michael T. Waldrop USA Veteran (Orlando)
Irving Friedman USN Veteran (Port St. Lucie)	Brig. Gen. William Webb USAF Retired (Tallahassee)	Lt. Col. Ali Frohlich USAF Retired (Panama City Beach)	Dr. Albert Zant USA Veteran (Shalimar)		

Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide



- 200,000 copies courtesy of the *Florida Veterans Foundation*
- Single copies available through e-mail request on FDVA website
- We bulk ship from publisher's warehouse at no charge
- Interactive versions available online at www.FloridaVets.org
- Available at Tax Collector's Offices & Driver License Offices

Forward March

- Determine best practices & ensure Florida sets national standard for veteran services & support
- FDVA completed regional assessment phase of veterans' advocacy campaign
- Regional meetings in Tampa, Pensacola, Jacksonville, West Palm Beach, Ocala, Miami, Port Canaveral and Sarasota
- Report due Nov. 5; new newsletter to be launched





Suicide Prevention

Editorial: Finding Solutions to Veteran Suicides Require All-Hands-On-Deck

A disturbing number of Veterans take their own lives in the U.S. On average, approximately 7,300 Veterans die from suicide each year. Despite significant efforts and billions of dollars invested by the state and federal governments across the nation, suicide rates among Veterans rose 26 percent from 2005 to 2016. In Florida alone, nearly 600 Veterans die from suicide each year at a rate slightly higher than the national average.

Finding a solution to this public health crisis requires an aspirational, innovative, all-hands-on-deck approach – not government as usual. The VA alone cannot achieve effective or lasting reductions in the Veteran suicide rate. To make a real impact, Federal, state, and local providers of resources must partner together, pool resources, and coordinate care and delivery of services efficiently.

In Florida, we recognize these challenges and are taking proactive steps to break down bureaucratic barriers; working together to form a wide-ranging coalition of government and non-profit organizations who offer resources to Veterans in need of our help the most – before they reach a crisis point.

We are proud to say that we are making progress on multiple fronts. This is best demonstrated through the development and growth of the **Florida Veterans Support Line, 1-844-MyFLVet (693-5838)**. Supported by the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8), Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, Florida Department of Children and Families, and operated by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, the line provides confidential emotional support and connection to community resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The line is available to all Veterans in Florida.

Our work does not stop there. As we continue to move forward together, we are meeting and learning from communities and local organizations about how best to partner with them and leverage the resources they can provide. Likewise, we are proactively working on expanded public health initiatives to align with Presidential Executive Order 13861 "National Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End Suicide" and opportunities that may become available from the national task force.

We continue to support and promote the abundance of VA resources available to Veterans to include the **Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255, press 1)**. Like the Florida Veterans Support Line, Veterans can call to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care.

So, what can you do to help? First, add the Veterans Crisis Line and Florida Veterans Support Line to your mobile phone contacts. Second, share the numbers with others and ask them to do the same. Third, visit www.visn8.va.gov/savealife.asp to download and share outreach materials. Be there for Veterans and active duty service members who may be in crisis. Listen to what they say, ask the hard questions, and assist them with connecting with VA and other important community resources. Be the difference and be there for a Veteran in crisis.

Sincerely,

Miguel H. LaPuz, MD, MBA
Network Director
VA Sunshine Healthcare
Network (VISN 8)

Danny Burgess
Executive Director
Florida Department of
Veterans' Affairs

Clara Reynolds, LCSW, MBA
President and CEO
Crisis Center of Tampa Bay



RON DeSANTIS
GOVERNOR

FLORIDA VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

WHEREAS, suicide is a national public health concern that causes grief, pain, and confusion in communities across Florida; and

WHEREAS, our veterans and their families make selfless sacrifices in defense of our Nation's great freedoms and deserve our continuous support in the midst of the stress and grief they may experience before, during, and after their service; and

WHEREAS, suicide prevention and crisis intervention efforts are bringing together federal, state and local governments, community groups and faith-based organizations to educate the public on available resources and directly intervene to combat veteran suicides; and

WHEREAS, to connect our state's veterans who may be facing an emotional or mental health crisis with lifesaving care, a new multi-year partnership is in place involving the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, Florida Department of Children and Families and Crisis Center of Tampa Bay;

WHEREAS, in 2019, Florida House Bill 501 expanding alternative treatment therapies for veterans with post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury was signed into law; and

WHEREAS, at the 2019 Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense National Suicide Prevention Conference participants and leaders shared their suicide prevention and crisis intervention efforts; and

WHEREAS, First Lady Casey DeSantis is championing suicide prevention efforts as part of her Hope for Healing campaign, which strives to combine the resources and efforts of the public and private sectors to better serve Floridians struggling with mental health and substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, Florida's Veterans Affairs Medical Centers plan to host a number of outreach events during the month of September designed to educate the public on local, state and federal suicide prevention resources available to veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, all Floridians are encouraged to support Florida's veterans who have ensured our country remains the land of the free.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ron DeSantis, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend gratitude to all observing September 8-14, 2019, as **Florida Veteran Suicide Prevention Week**.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this 8th day of September, in the year two thousand nineteen.

Governor

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Upcoming Events

- U.S. Navy Birthday (1775) is Oct. 13
- Columbus Day is Oct. 14. VA Outpatient Clinics will be closed due to the federal holiday.
- 2019 Congressional Medal of Honor Society National Convention will be held at the Tampa Marriott Water Street, Oct. 22-26
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of Florida is holding its Fall Conference on Oct. 25-26, in Orlando
- November is Hire a Veteran Month
- U.S. Marine Corps Birthday (1775) is Nov. 10
- Veterans Day is Nov. 11
- Florida Veterans Council meets in Tallahassee, Nov. 13

Ardie R. Copas

State Veterans' Nursing Home



- **120-bed Skilled Nursing Facility in Port St. Lucie**
- **Groundbreaking on March 20, 2018**
- **60% Completed**
- **Initial hiring - January**
- **Open Mid-2020**

Lake Baldwin (Orlando)

State Veterans' Nursing Home



- 112-bed former VA Community Living Center on VA Campus at Lake Baldwin (Orange County)
- Nine-month refurbishment started August 2019
- Open Mid-2020
- Will rename facility for Florida Medal of Honor recipient

Connecting with FDVA



www.FloridaVets.org





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#FLVets