

# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2013-14



*"Honoring Those Who Served U.S."*



**The premier point of entry for Florida veterans to access earned services,  
benefits and support.**

Mike Prendergast, Colonel, U.S. Army, Retired, Executive Director



**3** Executive Director's Message

**4** Who We Are

◇ Department Organization

◇ Department Map

**6** Who We Serve

**7** Performance Measures

**8** Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

**10** State Veterans' Homes Program

**12** Fiscal Impact

**13** Department Recognitions

## Appendices

**14** ◇ Actions Taken Relevant to Florida Statutes

**16** ◇ County Populations and Federal Benefit Distributions

**18** ◇ Florida Veterans Foundation

**19** ◇ Associated Veteran Service Organizations

**20** ◇ County Veteran Service Officers

**21** ◇ Annual Summaries of State Veterans' Homes

# Executive Director's Message

November 11, 2014

To: The Governor of the State of Florida, Members of the Cabinet, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives

I am deeply honored to submit the 2014, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of the annual report for the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. This report showcases the dedication, commitment, and hard work of our stellar team of steadfast FDVA professionals and the unparalleled support we received from our partners at the federal level for Fiscal Year 2013 – 2014. As we celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> year as an Agency, we remain steadfast and ever mindful of our goal of ensuring Florida upholds its reputation as "the most veteran-friendly state in the nation and that FDVA is the 'go-to' resource for veteran benefits, services, and advocacy."



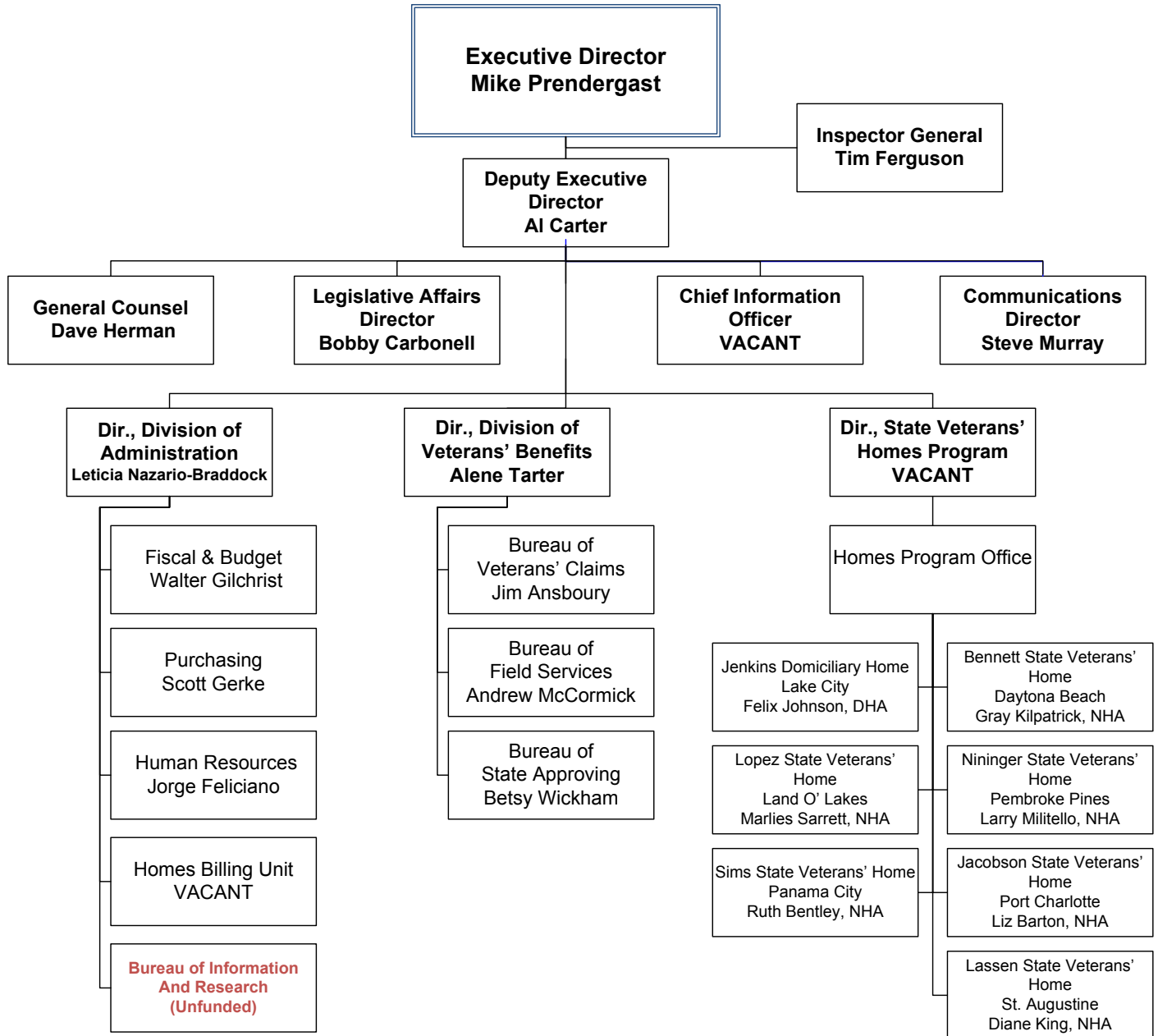
The primary mission of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is to advocate with purpose and passion for Florida veterans and link them to superior services, benefits and support. Our team is at the forefront of the most demanding challenges confronting our state's veterans, whether they are veterans from the World War II generation or veterans who most recently served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn.

Our noteworthy accomplishments highlighted in this year's report are many, but I must underscore the Return on Investment for Veterans' Benefits and Assistance this past year, which averaged \$128 to \$1. Put more succinctly, a Veterans' Benefit staff of 85 personnel has played a significant role in the direct infusion of roughly \$15.7 billion annually into Florida's economy. This is accomplished through advocating for and securing federal compensation, education and pension benefits, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical services, and military retired pay for our veterans. The investment made by the State of Florida into this department directly results in federal dollars in veterans' pockets; dollars that then re-enter and circulate through Florida's economy. I am confident that as we garner more benefits staff to focus on this vital function, our efforts will reap even greater financial benefits to our veterans and the great State of Florida!

In closing, our award-winning people truly make a difference. For the team at the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, it is a privilege and an honor to serve our veterans and their family members. Our pledge to you today and tomorrow is to work tirelessly to close the gap in meeting the needs of our veterans who are not taking advantage of the many federal, state and local benefits and services available to them as a result of their military service as they deserve no less than our best.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Prendergast". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Prendergast  
Colonel, United States Army, Retired  
Executive Director



**Our Mission:** To advocate with purpose and passion for Florida veterans and link them to superior services, benefits and support.

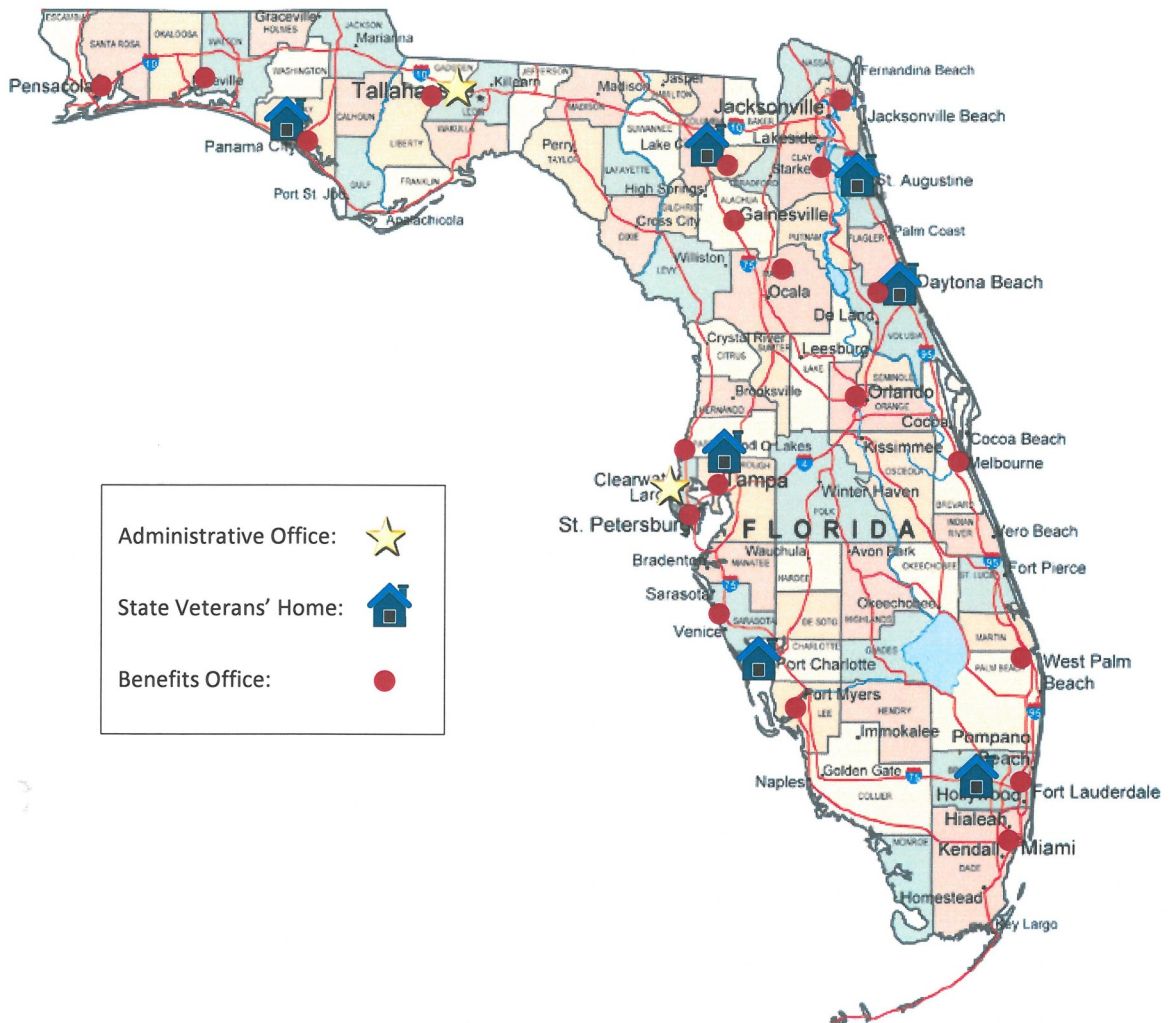
The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) is a Cabinet agency responsible for assisting Florida veterans, their families and survivors in improving their health and economic well-being through quality benefit information, advocacy, education, and long-term health care.

FDVA's main administrative office is in Largo, with a satellite in Tallahassee, and its two primary program areas are located throughout the state:

- **The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance**, providing professional assistance to Florida veterans and their dependents in obtaining financial benefits and health care treatments from the VA;

and

- **The State Veterans' Homes Program**, providing comprehensive, high-quality health care to eligible veterans in need of long-term skilled or assisted living care.



## Who We Serve



At more than 1.5 million, Florida has the third largest population of veterans in the United States, after only California and Texas. Veterans do not present a distinct appearance. They blend into the general population. They cross lines of race, sex, and age. What they have in common is the willingness to serve something larger than themselves. They put their lives on hold and answered a call when their nation asked, and we, at FDVA, work every day to honor their commitment.

### Florida's 1,520,563 military veteran population includes:

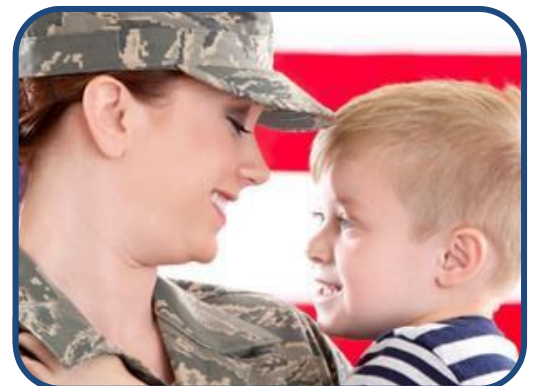
- ⇒ 166,222 Women Veterans
- ⇒ 190,146 Military Retirees
- ⇒ 272,168 Disabled Veterans
- ⇒ 101,590 World War II Veterans
- ⇒ 490,589 Vietnam Veterans
- ⇒ 211,302 Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans

Every federal dollar earned by Florida's veterans is a dollar Florida does not have to pay for needed services, and a dollar entering Florida's economy.



### Federal dollars garnered in support of Florida's veterans this fiscal year include:

- ⇒ \$4,728,273,000 in Compensation and Pension
- ⇒ \$4,392,344,000 in Medical Benefits
- ⇒ \$5,337,252,000 in Military Retired Pay to retirees and beneficiaries
- ⇒ \$1,310,158,000 in other benefits (Education, Insurance, Construction, etc.)



# Performance Measures

MEASURE	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Actual	2013-14 Standard
<b>Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance:</b> Provide information and advocacy to Florida veterans, their families and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.			
1. Value of cost avoidance because of retroactive compensation.	\$171,354,815	\$174,022,538	\$83,326,326
2. Value of cost avoidance because of issue resolution.	\$42,075,260	\$56,445,394	\$20,022,831
3. Number of veterans served.	105,824	110,405	89,764
4. Number of claims processed.	26,977	28,597	20,548
5. Number of services to veterans.	619,509	620,808	447,052

MEASURE	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Actual	2013-14 Standard
<b>State Veterans' Homes Program:</b> Provide quality skilled nursing and assisted living care services to eligible Florida veterans.			
1. Occupancy rate for homes in operation 2 years or longer.	97%	97.8%	90%
2. Percent of state veterans' homes in compliance with quality of care health care regulations.	100%	100%	100%
3. Number of state veterans homes beds available.	869	869	869

MEASURE	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Actual	2013-14 Standard
<b>Executive Direction and Support Services:</b> Provide effective and responsive management to support the divisions and programs serving veterans.			
1. Administration costs as a percent of total agency costs.	3.8%	4.64%	6.8%
2. Administrative positions as a percent of total agency positions.	2.4%	2.4%	4.4%

**The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance** provides professional assistance to Florida's veterans and their dependents in an effort to obtain financial benefits and health care treatment from the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). Success is measured by the number of veterans the department assists and the number of issues resolved for those veterans. "Assistance" is seen in a variety of components, including medical treatment, prescriptions, prosthetic devices, benefit checks, school program approval, veterans' preference investigations and determinations, voter registration, and disseminating veteran data to the public.



The Division is comprised of a Division Director, support staff, and three Bureaus: Bureau of Veterans' Claims and Assistance (FS 292.05(1)); Bureau of Field Services (FS 292.05(1)); and Bureau of State Approving Agency (FS 292.05(04)). Also included within the Bureau of Veterans' Claims is Veterans' Preference, Section 295.11, F.S.

The Division's Veterans' Claims Examiners (VCEs) are trained in the myriad of issues facing veterans who served in World War II through today's conflicts, with each era having unique issues and challenges. Each day finds VCEs offering assistance and guidance at Transition Assistance Program briefings for separating service members, congressional veterans' appreciation days, Homeless Veteran Stand Downs, and veteran service organization gatherings. We are proactive in our services to Florida's veterans, yet of the 1.5 million veterans in Florida, fewer than 300,000 currently receive VA service-connected compensation and pension benefits (not to be confused with military retirement benefits.) Efforts to reach these veterans, counsel them regarding benefits they may have earned, and assist them in garnering those benefits are expanding. For every state dollar expended for this division, more than \$128 of federal monies are brought into Florida.

**The Bureau of Veterans' Field Services** provides benefits counseling services to inpatients and outpatients in 31 of the USDVA's medical facilities in Florida and State Veterans' Homes, as well as outreach activities for FDVA throughout the state. Field Services also assists in staffing the state's Disaster Recovery Centers when established by the Division of Emergency Management. The Bureau's primary responsibility is to help veterans initiate, develop, submit, and prosecute claims and appeals for state and federal veteran benefits. The focus of Field Services is face-to-face contact with the client and the resolution of any number of issues related to the submission of claims for compensation, pension, or medical care.

The VCEs of the Bureau of Veterans' Field Services work closely with patient advocates in VA Medical Centers.

They also perform extensive outreach, and help veterans navigate the confusing and cumbersome process to obtain benefits from the USDVA. The services can result in monetary benefits, but often result in determining, verifying, and obtaining eligibility for medical treatments, medications, wheelchairs, hearing aids, ambulance bill reimbursements, lost check replacements, prosthetics, and other, non-monetary--yet valuable--benefits within the VA system. This service provides Florida veterans with significant economic value.



Dennis Latta brings information about veteran benefits to the Thundering Spirit Pow Wow at Mt. Dora.



**The Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services** provides counseling and assistance to veterans, their dependents and survivors, with the preparation, submission, and prosecution of claims and appeals for state and federal benefits as well as applications to correct military records. The bureau also supports the VA's initiatives of Homeless Outreach, Women Veterans' Integration, and 'Fully Developed Claims' program.



The Bureau's primary responsibility is to work directly with the decision resources in the USDVA Regional Office to expedite claims and to influence, through proactive advocacy, the most positive outcome. To this end, Veterans' Claims Services provides a quality control function by reviewing completed USDVA benefits rating decisions and paralegal due process assistance in the prosecution of veterans' disagreements with and appeals of USDVA rating decisions and debt identification and relief.

The Bureau is also charged by statute to train and certify County Veteran Service Officers. To maintain proficiency with the rapid changes in veterans' programs, the bureau provides training twice a year during the counties' semi-annual conferences.



**The Bureau of State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education and Training (State Approving Agency/SAA)** SAA is charged under the provisions of Title 38, United States Code (USC), and the federal contract entered into between FDVA and the USDVA and governed by Florida Statute 295.124. This Bureau is 100% federally funded. The Bureau reviews, evaluates, and approves programs of veterans' education at Florida's institutions of higher learning and non-college degree schools for participation in VA Education Benefit programs. GI Bill-eligible veteran flight training and employer On-the-Job and apprenticeship training also fall under the SAA's purview.

Education is one of the keys to the successful transition from active-duty to veteran status. Certifying quality programs in the state, and encouraging the use of Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits for those programs, is emphasized in all FDVA outreach activities. Attracting and keeping a young, educated veteran population is good for all of Florida.

On any given day, Veterans' Benefits and Assistance staff can be found providing outreach to veterans across the state.



# State Veterans' Homes Program

**The State Veterans' Homes Program** provides comprehensive, high-quality health care on a cost-effective basis to eligible veterans in need of either long-term skilled nursing care or assisted living services. Care is provided to veterans with qualifying war or peacetime service, who are residents of Florida for one year immediately preceding admission, and who require skilled care as certified by a USDVA physician. Admission criteria are based on the need to maintain a safe environment for all residents. The skilled nursing and assisted living homes only admit those persons whose needs can be met within the accommodations and services it provides with consideration for all residents.

Assisted Living level care is provided at the Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City, and includes rehabilitative assistance and other therapeutic measures to eligible ambulatory veterans who are not in need of hospitalization or skilled-nursing services. The focus of care in the Domiciliary Home is preparing veterans to function at their highest level of independence. A multidisciplinary approach is followed with the veterans participating in the established care plan.

Skilled-nursing home care provides full-service, long-term residential nursing care to eligible veterans in the six State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The homes are supervised 24-hours daily by registered and licensed nurses. Five of the six skilled nursing facilities operated by FDVA have dementia-specific care. FDVA operates nursing homes in Daytona Beach, Land O' Lakes, Pembroke Pines, Panama City, Port Charlotte, and St. Augustine.

Comprehensive services and a deep concern for all veterans go hand in hand at our FDVA nursing homes. Around-the-clock medical and nursing care is provided by a full-time staff of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and certified nursing assistants. Rehabilitative services, such as occupational and physical therapies, speech therapy, and recreational activities are provided under the direct supervision of licensed therapists. A variety of on- and off-site recreational and social activities are provided to encourage active minds, bodies, and spirits, and slow the process of physical and mental decline. A wide range of other medical services is also offered. These include dental, podiatric, and dermatological care. In spacious dining rooms, residents are provided with wholesome meals prepared under the supervision of licensed dietitians. The State Veterans' Home



A resident enjoys one of our new vans.

Program has a proud tradition of concern and commitment to the veterans. We remain at the forefront in ensuring that the level of care and services provided to our veterans meets or exceeds the highest standards in an environment that enhances the quality of life of each veteran.

Detailed individual facility reports are included as Appendices.

Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home residents enjoy it when University of Florida students spend MLK weekend volunteering at the Home.



### State Veterans' Homes Program Occupancy Rates

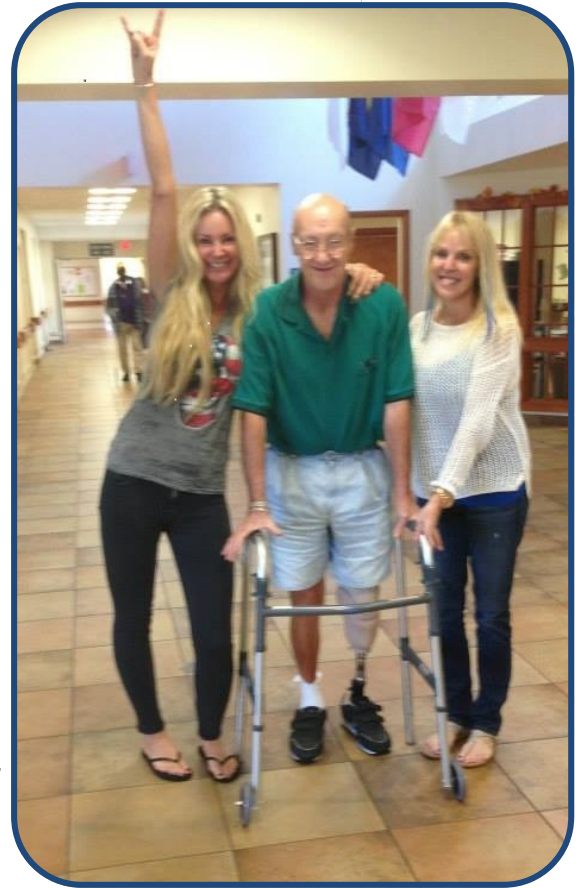
During Fiscal Year 2013-14, the average occupancy rate for State Veterans' Homes in operation two years or longer was 97.8%, and the average for the skilled nursing facilities was over 99%. Assisted living facilities traditionally operate at a lower occupancy than skilled nursing facilities, and the department is proud to announce the Robert H. Jenkins, Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City brought their occupancy rate above the 90% performance measure goal for the first time since they opened in 1990.

### Quality of Care

In December 2008, CMS enhanced its Nursing Home Compare public reporting site to include a set of quality ratings for each nursing home that participates in Medicare or Medicaid. The ratings take the form of several individual ratings and one overall comprehensive rating for each home, five stars being the highest and one star being the lowest. Overall ratings of five stars place a facility at the top ten percent of all rated facilities in their state. The primary goal of the rating system is to provide residents and their families with an easy way to understand the assessment of nursing home quality, making meaningful distinctions between high and low performing nursing homes.

FDVA is excited to announce that four of our six skilled nursing facilities have been recognized with this five star rating (Pembroke Pines, Panama City, Port Charlotte, and St. Augustine.) The remaining two have been rated at four stars (Daytona Beach and Land O' Lakes.) We are proud of the quality of care provided to our residents, in a warm, caring home-like atmosphere.

The State Veterans' Homes have made significant progress in standardizing clinical standards and procedures, resulting in residents receiving thorough and consistent care. Continuity of care is of the utmost importance when caring for the elderly. At each of the Homes there is an emphasis on providing the same caregivers (RNs, LPNs, and CNAs) on a daily basis. Providing consistent care gives affords the resident and caregiver the opportunity to establish a strong bond, resulting in outstanding outcomes. The relationships between caregiver and resident become very special over a period of time.



State Veterans' Home resident with volunteers who helped raise money for his new leg.



Our Homes work hard to combine fun with physical movement. Here a resident celebrates "National Toilet Paper Day" with an activity designed to elicit laughs and some friendly competition.

<b>JULY 1, 2013 — JUNE 30, 2014</b>			
	State Veterans' Homes Program	Veterans' Benefits and Assistance	Executive Direction and Support Services
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>			
Salaries and Benefits	44,943,911	5,140,259	2,200,017
OPS	1,963,224	9,010	12,805
Expenses	14,666,890	316,370	707,420
Other Capital Outlay	559,435	4,693	182,033
Food Products	3,019,324	--	--
Vehicle	291,492		
Contracted Services	8,764,620	3,830	264,597
Recreational Equip. Supplies	63,976	--	--
Risk Management Insurance	2,727,433	15,164	12,802
Human Resources Assessment	347,261	34,092	9,437
Data Processing Svc SRC	--	--	10,382
<b>Total Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$77,347,566</b>	<b>\$5,523,418</b>	<b>\$3,399,493</b>
<b>Non-Operating Expenditures</b>			
Service Charge to General Revenue	213,075		
Refunds-State Revenues	1,358,558		
Non-State Revenue	53,337		
Payment Sales Tax	3,288		
<b>Total Non-Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,628,258</b>		
<b>Fixed Capital Outlay</b>			
Add & Improvements to State Veterans' Homes	2,687,239		
Maintenance/Repair	2,875,312		
<b>Total Fixed Capital Outlay</b>	<b>\$5,562,551</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$84,538,375</b>	<b>\$5,523,418</b>	<b>\$3,399,493</b>

# Department Recognitions



The Prudential Productivity Awards are made possible through the generosity of Prudential, and the vision of the late J. E. Davis and A. D. Davis, co-founders of Florida TaxWatch. Since 1989 Florida TaxWatch has publically recognized and rewarded state employees and work units whose work significantly and measurably increases productivity and promotes innovation to improve the delivery of state services and save money for Florida taxpayers and businesses.

In Fiscal Year 2013-14, FDVA was honored to be recognized by the awards committee, with four work units being recognized as Prudential Productivity Award winners:

- ⇒ Negotiated Settlements for Veterans (Veterans' Preference)
- ⇒ Implemented Biometric Time Clocks (State Veterans' Homes Program)
- ⇒ Developed Authorization Agreement (Applying indirect cost rate in Veterans' Homes)
- ⇒ Increased Outreach to Florida Veterans and Family Members (Veterans' Benefits)
  - ⇒ Improved Care Delivery (Certificate—Pharmacy in the State Veterans' Homes)
  - ⇒ Compliance with Federal Requirements on Direct Deposits of Resident Deposit Trust Fund (Certificate—State Veterans' Homes Program)



The Florida Public Relations Association's Golden Image Award has recognized outstanding public relations activities in Florida since 1968. They have become a standard of excellence, and winners demonstrate the very best examples of innovation, planning, and design. In the fall of 2013, FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray and Sachs Media Group were recognized for their *Honoring Those Who Served U.S.* outreach and branding campaign. The campaign was the 2013 recipient of the Florida Public Relations Association's Dick Pope All Florida Grand Golden Image Award, the industry's top annual honor, for the single best statewide public relations campaign.



Nursing homes vary in the quality of care and services they provide to their residents. Reviewing health inspection results, staffing data, and quality measure data are three important ways to measure nursing home quality. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have developed a rating system of 1 to 5 Stars to reflect the quality of care provided in a licensed home. Homes that receive an overall rating of 5-Stars are in the top ten percent of all homes in their state. FDVA is proud to state that four of our six long-term skilled care facilities have been recognized with this distinction:

- ⇒ Clifford Chester Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home, Panama City
- ⇒ Alexander Nininger Jr. State Veterans' Nursing Home, Pembroke Pines
- ⇒ Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home, St. Augustine
- ⇒ Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home, Port Charlotte



The Governor's Gold Seal Award program was established in 2002, and developed and implemented by the Governor's Panel on Excellence in Long-Term Care, composed of persons appointed by the Governor's Office, Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Health, Department of Elder Affairs, Florida Association of Homes for the Aging, Florida Health Care Association, Florida Life Care Residents Association, and the State Long Term Care Ombudsman. Gold Seal recipients must demonstrate a long standing quality of excellence, with over 30 months of data and surveys scrutinized. They must meet a quality of care scoring and ranking placing them in the top 10 percent of their region or top 15 percent in the state as well as be a 5-star facility in the CMS Nursing Home Guide. The Clifford Chester Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home in Panama City has been recognized as such a home of distinction. FDVA is proud that the care we offer our veteran residents, and the caring environment we provide. Our homes are truly 'home' for these men and women.



## Actions Taken Relevant to Florida Statutes

### FLORIDA STATUTES, § 292.05(4), (5), & (7)

**§ 292.05(4) F.S.** *The Department may apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services from the state, the United States Government or any of its agencies, or any other public or private source and may use funds derived from these sources to defray clerical and administrative costs as may be necessary for carrying out its duties.*

#### State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education and Training

Under the provisions of Title 38 USC, and the contract maintained between the FDVA and the USDVA, State Approving for Veterans' Training is charged with inspecting, approving and supervising programs and courses offered by accredited and non-accredited educational institutions (public and private). The specific approval information for each institution is furnished to USDVA where it is used in the awarding of veteran education benefits to eligible veterans and beneficiaries enrolled in these Florida institutions.

#### State Veterans' Homes

The State Veterans' Domiciliary and Nursing Homes operated by this department apply for and receive federal funds from the USDVA for per diem as well as construction and renovation grants. The Homes also accept funds from Medicare/Medicaid, Hospice, private insurance, and individual residents in the form of co-payments for services rendered. The Homes also accept cash donations as well as gifted items and services for the benefit of the residents.

**§ 292.05(5) F.S.** *The Department shall conduct an ongoing study on the problems and needs of those residents of this state who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and the problems and needs of their dependents. The study shall include but not be limited to:*

- *A survey of existing state and federal programs available for such persons that specifies the extent to which such programs presently are being implemented, with recommendations for the improved implementation, extension or improvement of such programs.*
- *A survey of the needs of such persons in the areas of social services, health care, education and employment, and any other areas of determined need, with recommendations regarding federal, state and community services that would meet those needs.*
- *A survey of federal, state, public and private moneys available that could be used to defray the costs of state or community services needed for such persons.*

FDVA continually surveys its constituency through feedback garnered while counseling thousands of veterans, through training critiques, participation in numerous veteran-related governmental committees, regular meetings with veterans' organizations and their leadership, and as possible, through analysis of official USDVA data and reports. The Bureau of Information and Research, intended by the legislature to perform this task full time, has never been funded. FDVA regularly attends Florida Veterans Council meetings with veteran service organization representatives throughout the state as a best-effort to gather information on veterans and their needs and to disseminate information on available benefits to as many veterans that can be reached.





**§ 292.05(7) F.S.** *The Department shall administer this chapter and shall have the authority and responsibility to apply for and administer any federal programs and develop and coordinate such state programs as may be beneficial to the particular interests of the veterans of this state.*

**State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education and Training**

FDVA maintains a contract with the USDVA to provide for State Approving for Veterans' Training. Costs are reimbursed 100% by the USDVA and include coverage of the bureau's clerical and administrative expenses.

**State Veterans' Homes Program**

The Department operates the State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City, and State Veterans' Nursing Homes in Daytona Beach, Land O' Lakes, Pembroke Pines, Panama City, Port Charlotte, and St. Augustine. The Homes' Program may apply to receive federal funds that provide for the needed facility renovations and monthly per diem for eligible residents for the cost of care.

The total number of beds currently available in the State Veterans' Homes Program is 869. Of those, 720 are nursing home beds. The veteran population over 65 years old in Florida is estimated to be 697,000. According to Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration, Florida has a total of 83,229 nursing home beds and an over-65 population total of 3.4 million--more than half a million with Alzheimer's or related dementias. The construction of new State Veterans' Nursing Homes is subject to approval by the Governor and Cabinet, with 35% of the funding provided by the Florida legislature and 65% of construction costs matched by the USDVA.

**Veterans' Preference in Hiring and Retention**

Florida Statutes (§ 295.07) provide that the state and political subdivisions accord preferences in appointment, retention, and promotion to eligible veterans. Section 295.11, Florida Statutes, tasks FDVA, upon written request of any eligible person, to investigate complaints alleging violation of veterans' preference rights.

The department successfully made several important changes to the state's veteran preference statutes to make it easier for veterans to obtain employment with the State of Florida and its political subdivisions, including:

- Veterans' preference was extended to all veterans regardless of their disability rating or wartime service.
- The residency requirement for claiming veterans' preference was removed from the statutes.
- Veterans' preference was extended to Gold Star parents who have lost a son or daughter under combat conditions, and to currently serving Florida National Guard members and reservists.

**Congressman C.W. Bill Young Veteran Tuition Waiver**

The department worked closely with the Florida Legislature to create Section 1009.26(13) known as the "Congressman C.W. Bill Young Veteran Tuition Waiver," which waives out-of-state tuition and fees for honorably discharged veterans.

FDVA continues to evaluate the evolving trends and conditions in the state based off its outreach efforts and implemented studies. Adjustments to FDVA's long-range plans are subsequently made in order for the agency to better meet the needs of Florida's veteran population.

**County Population and Federal Benefit Distributions**

FY13 Summary of Expenditures by State						
Expenditures in \$000s						
County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care
ALACHUA	17,505	\$ 201,955	\$ 56,996	\$ 12,225	\$ 1,468	\$ 131,265
BAKER	2,625	\$ 14,746	\$ 5,620	\$ 719	\$ 105	\$ 8,302
BAY	22,405	\$ 134,321	\$ 93,443	\$ 11,614	\$ 2,241	\$ 27,022
BRADFORD	4,033	\$ 24,398	\$ 6,945	\$ 678	\$ 130	\$ 16,645
BREVARD	65,116	\$ 432,556	\$ 248,823	\$ 32,973	\$ 6,008	\$ 144,751
BROWARD	84,388	\$ 522,109	\$ 237,590	\$ 63,756	\$ 9,246	\$ 211,517
CALHOUN	1,207	\$ 7,394	\$ 3,897	\$ 257	\$ 101	\$ 3,139
CHARLOTTE	19,138	\$ 112,140	\$ 62,019	\$ 3,123	\$ 1,526	\$ 45,472
CITRUS	26,022	\$ 121,138	\$ 58,373	\$ 3,075	\$ 1,443	\$ 58,246
CLAY	28,748	\$ 169,881	\$ 91,815	\$ 27,625	\$ 2,458	\$ 47,984
COLLIER	27,056	\$ 87,402	\$ 49,358	\$ 4,787	\$ 3,056	\$ 30,200
COLUMBIA	7,713	\$ 98,910	\$ 28,666	\$ 1,607	\$ 486	\$ 68,151
DE SOTO	2,412	\$ 12,549	\$ 6,475	\$ 292	\$ 48	\$ 5,734
DIXIE	1,599	\$ 19,246	\$ 6,111	\$ 141	\$ 179	\$ 12,815
DUVAL	97,642	\$ 525,661	\$ 249,926	\$ 105,874	\$ 5,792	\$ 164,069
ESCAMBIA	40,851	\$ 246,747	\$ 153,890	\$ 25,337	\$ 3,263	\$ 64,257
FLAGLER	11,480	\$ 55,295	\$ 30,327	\$ 4,961	\$ 807	\$ 19,200
FRANKLIN	1,487	\$ 5,592	\$ 2,926	\$ 134	\$ 24	\$ 2,507
GADSDEN	3,786	\$ 23,331	\$ 11,354	\$ 1,184	\$ 247	\$ 10,546
GILCHRIST	1,559	\$ 15,918	\$ 5,684	\$ 385	\$ 84	\$ 9,765
GLADES	971	\$ 5,305	\$ 1,365	\$ 28	\$ 14	\$ 3,897
GULF	1,772	\$ 8,331	\$ 5,794	\$ 337	\$ 82	\$ 2,118
HAMILTON	1,229	\$ 11,770	\$ 4,459	\$ 191	\$ 6	\$ 7,113
HARDEE	1,457	\$ 7,832	\$ 3,818	\$ 266	\$ 65	\$ 3,683
HENDRY	1,823	\$ 11,881	\$ 6,012	\$ 561	\$ 15	\$ 5,292
HERNANDO	21,501	\$ 145,603	\$ 77,800	\$ 6,089	\$ 1,231	\$ 60,483
HIGHLANDS	9,887	\$ 67,682	\$ 32,871	\$ 1,630	\$ 880	\$ 32,302
HILLSBOROUGH	92,584	\$ 880,881	\$ 339,886	\$ 96,756	\$ 7,473	\$ 436,765
HOLMES	2,008	\$ 15,529	\$ 11,483	\$ 427	\$ 32	\$ 3,587
INDIAN RIVER	14,122	\$ 73,022	\$ 40,464	\$ 2,815	\$ 1,690	\$ 28,053
JACKSON	4,970	\$ 30,586	\$ 17,663	\$ 1,184	\$ 165	\$ 11,573
JEFFERSON	1,429	\$ 7,625	\$ 4,000	\$ 312	\$ 270	\$ 3,043
LAFAYETTE	720	\$ 4,664	\$ 1,259	\$ 71	\$ 6	\$ 3,329
LAKE	32,329	\$ 185,979	\$ 96,116	\$ 7,425	\$ 2,550	\$ 79,887
LEE	53,892	\$ 269,168	\$ 136,912	\$ 15,562	\$ 4,687	\$ 112,007
LEON	18,510	\$ 93,813	\$ 42,816	\$ 12,425	\$ 1,803	\$ 36,769
LEVY	4,555	\$ 46,490	\$ 14,005	\$ 818	\$ 320	\$ 31,346
LIBERTY	644	\$ 2,503	\$ 1,424	\$ 50	\$ 1	\$ 1,028



**FY13 Summary of Expenditures by State**

**Expenditures in \$000s**

County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care
MADISON	1,853	\$ 12,456	\$ 5,058	\$ 360	\$ 264	\$ 6,775
MANATEE	30,009	\$ 163,663	\$ 83,671	\$ 9,002	\$ 2,852	\$ 68,138
MARION	45,745	\$ 260,849	\$ 108,390	\$ 8,325	\$ 3,415	\$ 140,719
MARTIN	14,001	\$ 78,081	\$ 36,242	\$ 2,377	\$ 2,278	\$ 37,185
MIAMI-DADE	61,552	\$ 550,098	\$ 193,350	\$ 69,310	\$ 3,824	\$ 283,614
MONROE	7,887	\$ 47,807	\$ 21,189	\$ 4,594	\$ 466	\$ 21,558
NASSAU	8,744	\$ 38,731	\$ 19,776	\$ 3,861	\$ 538	\$ 14,555
OKALOOSA	32,208	\$ 212,049	\$ 148,217	\$ 28,834	\$ 4,899	\$ 30,099
OKEECHOBEE	3,141	\$ 26,909	\$ 12,166	\$ 414	\$ 55	\$ 14,275
ORANGE	67,832	\$ 535,144	\$ 234,597	\$ 81,344	\$ 6,566	\$ 212,636
OSCEOLA	17,152	\$ 140,667	\$ 69,464	\$ 14,082	\$ 700	\$ 56,422
PALM BEACH	76,947	\$ 568,068	\$ 217,606	\$ 34,841	\$ 15,647	\$ 299,974
PASCO	50,568	\$ 361,217	\$ 162,106	\$ 21,456	\$ 3,632	\$ 174,024
PINELLAS	86,504	\$ 775,097	\$ 309,891	\$ 38,122	\$ 8,704	\$ 418,380
POLK	53,918	\$ 301,135	\$ 146,151	\$ 17,291	\$ 3,762	\$ 133,931
PUTNAM	7,766	\$ 61,308	\$ 22,307	\$ 1,598	\$ 381	\$ 37,022
SAINT JOHNS	20,424	\$ 89,196	\$ 47,757	\$ 8,961	\$ 2,121	\$ 30,357
SAINT LUCIE	22,893	\$ 161,357	\$ 75,632	\$ 8,205	\$ 1,594	\$ 75,927
SANTA ROSA	22,809	\$ 144,231	\$ 100,027	\$ 17,250	\$ 1,935	\$ 25,020
SARASOTA	38,130	\$ 183,846	\$ 100,138	\$ 8,588	\$ 5,537	\$ 69,583
SEMINOLE	30,363	\$ 193,037	\$ 91,037	\$ 20,924	\$ 3,204	\$ 77,872
SUMTER	14,557	\$ 81,353	\$ 42,398	\$ 761	\$ 1,217	\$ 36,976
SUWANNEE	4,625	\$ 40,475	\$ 13,773	\$ 726	\$ 380	\$ 25,596
TAYLOR	2,108	\$ 14,529	\$ 6,122	\$ 285	\$ 197	\$ 7,924
UNION	1,718	\$ 9,006	\$ 3,342	\$ 243	\$ 7	\$ 5,414
VOLUSIA	53,789	\$ 342,868	\$ 171,981	\$ 40,020	\$ 4,668	\$ 126,200
WAKULLA	3,338	\$ 14,980	\$ 8,074	\$ 904	\$ 32	\$ 5,970
WALTON	6,274	\$ 29,731	\$ 19,117	\$ 1,645	\$ 635	\$ 8,334
WASHINGTON	2,530	\$ 14,974	\$ 10,304	\$ 535	\$ 129	\$ 4,005
<b>FLORIDA (Totals)</b>	<b>1,520,563</b>	<b>\$10,152,816</b>	<b>\$ 4,728,273</b>	<b>\$ 892,555</b>	<b>\$ 139,645</b>	<b>\$ 4,392,344</b>

**Notes:**

\* Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2013, are produced by the VA Office of the Actuary (VetPop 2011).

\* Expenditure data sources: USASpending.gov for comp & pension and voc rehab; Veterans Benefits Insurance Center for Insurance; Allocation Resource Center (ARC) for Medical Care costs.

\* Expenditures are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. For example, \$500 to \$1,000 are rounded to \$1; \$0 to \$499 are rounded to \$0; and "\$ -" = 0 or no expenditures.

\* The Compensation & Pension expenditures include dollars for the following programs: veterans' compensation for service-connected disabilities; dependency and indemnity compensation for service-connected deaths; veterans' pension for non-service-connected disabilities; and burial and other benefits to veterans and their survivors.

\* Medical Care expenditures include dollars for medical services, medical administration, facility maintenance, educational support, research support, and other overhead items. Medical Care expenditures do not include dollars for construction or other non-medical support.

### Florida Veterans Foundation

The Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF) was created by the 2008 Legislature as a Direct Support Organization of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. As a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, all donations to the Foundation go to support Florida veterans and their families. Information is available at [www.FloridaVeteransFoundation.org](http://www.FloridaVeteransFoundation.org).

Foundation highlights this fiscal year:

- ⇒ The Foundation received 393 requests for financial assistance, and approved 190.
- ⇒ The Foundation provided direct financial assistance to veterans totaling \$98,096, covering, but not limited to, items such as housing, emergency housing, utilities, identification documents, and transportation.
- ⇒ The Foundation raised \$113,406 targeted for two Homeless Veteran Stand Down events. The events offer a variety of services to area homeless veterans, including medical and dental care, hygiene, legal services, clothing, emergency housing, and transportation.
  - ◇ In April, the North Florida Homeless Veterans Stand Down in Tallahassee assisted 305 veterans and over 600 volunteers from a wide array of agencies participated.
  - ◇ In May, over 830 volunteers assisted 284 veterans at the South Florida Homeless Veterans Stand Down in Miami.
  - ◇ The main goal of both events was to provide desperately needed services and support to homeless veterans with respect and dignity.
- ⇒ The Foundation provides funding (\$18,000) for the printing of the FDVA Veterans Benefits Guide, distributed by all FDVA Veterans' Benefits personnel as well as County Veteran Service Offices, VA Hospitals and clinics, military bases, as well as other public and private entities throughout the state.

**Col. Washington J. Sanchez Jr.**  
U.S. Army, Retired  
Chairman

(850) 488 – 4181  
Suite 2105, The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399



# Appendix IV

## Associated Veteran Service Organizations

As the accredited representative of 11 veterans' organizations, FDVA has the opportunity to prosecute claims before the USDVA on behalf of veterans who have placed their trust in these organizations by completing an "Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative" designation. There are no fees charged to veterans for FDVA services.

Listed below are the Veterans' Service Organizations which this department represents in claims processing with the USDVA:



American Ex Prisoners of War



American Legion



American Red Cross



Blinded Veterans Association



Fleet Reserve Association



Jewish War Veterans



Marine Corps League



National Association of County Veteran Service Officers



Non-Commissioned Officers Association



The Retired Enlisted Association

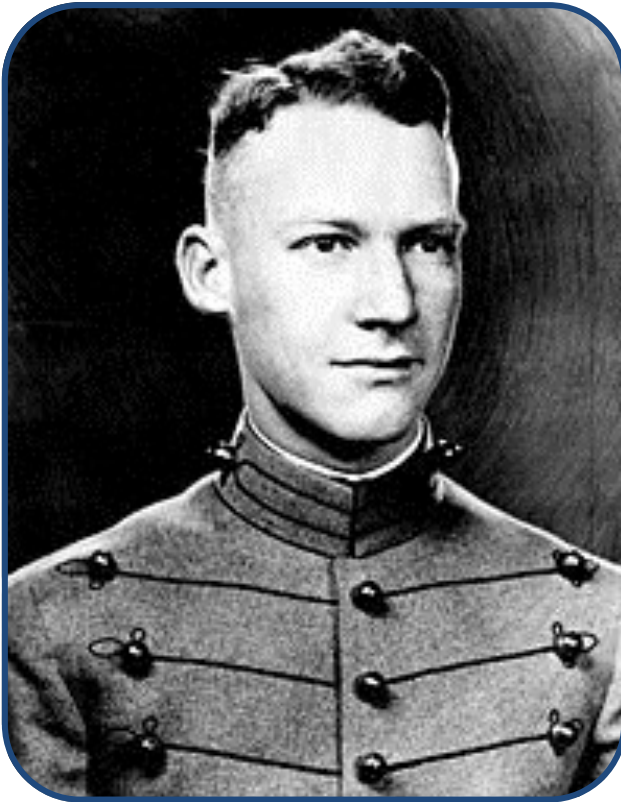


Veterans of World War I (Family Members)

## Certified Veteran Service Officers

In rendering assistance to the veterans of Florida, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs works closely with all county and city Veteran Service Officers. A listing of each county veteran service officer, their location, phone number and e-mail address are available at <http://floridavets.org/resources/county-veterans-service-offices-2/> . If you are reading the FDVA Annual Report online your computer will let you go directly to the site by pressing and holding down the Ctrl key on your keyboard and left clicking your mouse on the link.

The FDVA website [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org) provides many references and programs that can assist veterans and their families at the federal, state, and county level. All agencies work together in assisting Florida's veterans, their families and survivors to improve their health and economic well-being.



Alexander Ramsey Nininger Jr., for whom the State Veterans' Nursing Home in Pembroke Pines is named. Nicknamed "Sandy," Lt. Nininger was the first U.S. soldier to receive the Medal of Honor in World War II.

He graduated Ft. Lauderdale High School, where he was a member of Key Club International. To this day, that organization awards the "Sandy Nininger Award" to high school seniors throughout America who exemplify his character.

Nininger loved to draw, graduated the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1941, and was killed in the Philippines when he was 23.

# Appendix VI

## Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home Lake City (Columbia County)

**2013-14 Occupancy Rate: 90.2% (98 Admissions, 87 Discharges)**

**Condition of the Home:** The facility is the very first Veterans' Home in Florida and the only Assisted Living Facility, having opened in May 1990. With ongoing upkeep, and periodic energy-saving and cosmetic renovations, the home continues to operate in excellent condition.

**Home Life:** Set on a quiet property with deer and wild turkey observed nearly every evening, Jenkins residents enjoy diverse outings and multiple activities on the grounds, in the local community, and across north-central and northeast Florida. The Domiciliary Home prides itself of providing excellent customer service in a home-like environment. We don't just look after residents' essential needs: we integrate opportunities to participate in lectures, book and special interest clubs, celebrations, socials, and other programs that promote healthy, vibrant lifestyles.



Domiciliary residents on a trip to the Jacksonville Zoo.



Residents visit the National Hot Rod Association Museum.



Residents displaying the Christmas wreaths they made.



Members of the Domiciliary Home's Culinary Club.

## Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home Daytona Beach (Volusia County)

**2013-14 Occupancy Rate: 99.2% (57 Admissions, 62 Discharges)**

**Condition of the Home:** The facility, opened in December 1993, has undergone \$7 million in renovations since 2010. The facility is in excellent condition. Ongoing maintenance ensures a high level of safety as well as appearance.

**Home Life:** *At Emory L. Bennett, we are a tight-knit family of residents and staff. We enjoy great support from our volunteer organizations. Every day we focus on serving our residents with compassion, sharing their lives, and providing peace of mind for their families.*



Residents enjoy a trip to the nearby Daytona Motor Speedway.



The young students of Riverbend Academy entertain residents with a patriotic program.



Unique to the State Veterans' Homes, Daytona residents enjoy screened porches that overlook the beautiful, shaded grounds of the secluded property.

# Appendix VIII

## Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home Land O' Lakes (Pasco County)

**2013-14 Occupancy Rate: 99.6% (48 Admissions, 49 Discharges)**

**Condition of the Home:** The facility recently completed an exterior renovation that is not only lovely, but provides additional strength in the event of a hurricane, and interior upgrades that included a new fire panel and monitoring system. Interior improvements include upgraded handrails, flooring, and new resident room furniture. The facility marked the passing of its fifteenth anniversary this year, having opened in April 1999, and remains in excellent condition.

**Home Life:** *Set on a quiet property, veteran residents enjoy diverse outings and activities. The Home prides itself on incorporating family and community members into our events, and fostering deep friendships among the residents. We encourage resident driven choices, including the adoption of two cats and adding an aviary to the Baldomero Lopez family.*



A Lopez resident was selected to participate in Honor Flight, a program enabling World War II veterans to visit Washington, D.C., and see 'their' memorial.



A resident receives a Korean War recognition on Veterans Day, from LtCol Tom Castriota, USMC, Retired.



The Shriners entertained with a parade on Memorial Day.



Residents hard at work on crafts.

Excellent ★★★★★

## Alexander "Sandy" Ninger Jr. State Veterans' Nursing Home Pembroke Pines (Broward County) 2013-14 Occupancy Rate: 99.0% (50 Admissions, 52 Discharges)

**Condition of the Home:** The home is in excellent condition, with several updates including new flooring installed this past year. The facility opened in June 2001 and has weathered several strong storms, yet vigilant monitoring and upkeep ensure continued safe operation and beautiful appearance.

**Home Life:** *Residents gather around the salt water fish tank for coffee in the morning...the daily domino game usually begins after the morning workout...social gatherings on new patio furniture in fountained courtyards...life in the Ninger Home is anything but sedentary. Frequent outings provide the residents with an open forum to the surrounding community, and volunteers provide a highly popular Friday afternoon "Happy Hour."*



Sailors visit the facility during Fleet Week.



Our amazing speech therapists make hard work seem like fun.



Ninger residents participate in the Las Olas St. Patrick's Day Parade.



A visit from therapy pets is always special.



# Appendix X

Excellent



## Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home Panama City (Bay County)

**2013-14 Occupancy Rate: 99.9% (44 Admissions, 44 Discharges)**

**Condition of the Home:** The Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home opened in October 2003, and recently upgraded their flooring, resident room furniture, and dining chairs. The secured patios have all been freshly landscaped, providing a beautiful area for residents and visiting family members. The home remains in excellent condition.

**Home Life:** *The Clifford Chester Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home is located in a beautiful, wooded setting, surrounded by wildlife and nature. The veteran residents enjoy regular outdoor activities and frequent offsite events such as ballgames, movies, restaurants, and shopping. There is always something fun and interesting happening for our residents at Sims.*



Sims residents seriously deliberating their votes for the Home's Chili Cook Off.



Residents enjoying the beautiful patio furniture generously donated by the St. Joe Community Foundation.



A Sims resident runs the bases during the immensely popular Miracle League baseball game.

Excellent ★★★★★

## Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home Port Charlotte (Charlotte County)

2013-14 Occupancy Rate: 99.1% (75 Admissions, 75 Discharges)

**Condition of the Home:** The Jacobson Home celebrated its tenth anniversary this year, having opened in March 2004. In a continuing effort to present a home that is comfortable and dignified, the Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home has installed new flooring, upgraded all bedroom suites, overhauled the landscaping and is in overall excellent condition.

**Home Life:** *We're a modern facility surrounded by an involved community of supportive public and civic organizations. Douglas T. Jacobson actively celebrates and honors veteran service and memory with interactive community events both on the secluded grounds and within the historical neighboring cities.*



Two Jacobson residents and their escorts visit the World War II Memorial on an Honor Flight trip.



Dedication of the Blue Star Memorial marker on the grounds of the Jacobson State Veterans' Home.



Residents tend their donated hydroponic garden. Harvested vegetables were eaten by Jacobson residents.



Residents enjoy a bowling outing with the Vietnam Veterans of America.

# Appendix XII

Excellent ★★★★★

## Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home St. Augustine (St. Johns County)

**2013-14 Occupancy Rate: 99.6% (47 Admissions, 51 Discharges)**

**Condition of the Home:** This is FDVA's newest State Veterans' Home, a LEED-certified Gold facility, that respects the environment while providing a warm, caring atmosphere for its residents. The Lassen Home opened in September 2010 and remains in excellent condition.

**Home Life:** *The Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home, situated in a lodge-like setting, prides itself in customer care and services. Residents enjoy a wide variety of special events and diverse activities designed to appeal to individual interests.*



Lassen residents enjoy a day fishing the St. Johns River.



St. Johns River State College law enforcement students swap stories with a Lassen resident during a visit.



Summer Blast Off is a very popular celebration at Lassen. Residents enjoy water balloons, squirt guns, Hawaiian ice, and a variety of activities designed to beat the heat of Florida summers.



The Home's annual Black and White Ball is a much-anticipated event. The Home is beautifully decorated, the residents dress formally, and the staff takes care to make it a beautiful evening for all involved.



Governor Rick Scott and First Lady Ann Scott shake hands with Tampa native Marvin Holland. Mr. Holland served in the Air Force and Air Force Reserve, and currently resides in the Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home in Land O' Lakes. Governor Scott presented residents with the Governor's Veterans Service Award in September 2013.



Residents of the Clyde Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home, St. Augustine, enjoy a tour of Jacksonville Naval Air Station, with Commanding Officer Captain Roy Undersander.