

FLORIDA VETERAN HEALTH HEROES

NOVEMBER 2019



MISSION

TO PROTECT, PROMOTE AND IMPROVE THE HEALTH
OF ALL PEOPLE IN FLORIDA THROUGH INTEGRATED STATE,
COUNTY AND COMMUNITY EFFORTS.

VISION

TO BE THE HEALTHIEST STATE IN THE NATION.

VALUES

INNOVATION

WE SEARCH FOR CREATIVE SOLUTIONS AND
MANAGE RESOURCES WISELY.

COLLABORATION

WE USE TEAMWORK TO ACHIEVE COMMON GOALS
AND SOLVE PROBLEMS.

ACCOUNTABILITY

WE PERFORM WITH INTEGRITY AND RESPECT.

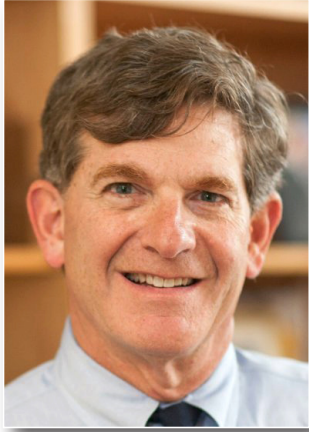
RESPONSIVENESS

WE ACHIEVE OUR MISSION BY SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS
AND ENGAGING OUR PARTNERS.

EXCELLENCE

WE PROMOTE QUALITY OUTCOMES THROUGH
LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT.

A TRIBUTE FROM THE STATE SURGEON GENERAL



The Florida Department of Health is committed to serving Florida's residents and visitors with transparency and strives to build upon ways to keep the public informed. We do this by engaging our stakeholders—the many groups and organizations representing our citizens that contribute to the health

care of our state. Florida continues to have the country's third-largest veteran population with over 1.5 million veterans who call Florida home. The Department recognizes the sacrifices made by members of our military and their families and works to ensure that the licensure experience is one that reflects our appreciation and gratitude.

Various licensure support services are offered to members and veterans of the United States Armed Forces and their qualified military families. One service the Department offers is the Florida Veterans Application for Licensure Online Response (VALOR) system, which provides expedited licensing for honorably discharged veterans and their spouses seeking licensure in all health care professions. Veterans and spouses who ap-

ply through the VALOR system receive a waiver of most licensing fees.

The Department provides additional armed forces licensure support, including an opportunity for physicians to receive a temporary certificate to practice in areas of critical need. Also offered are renewal exemptions for active duty service members holding a health care license in Florida, and temporary licensure for spouses of active duty service members who possess a valid license in another state, the District of Columbia, or any possession or territory of the United States. Through these programs, we are creating a veteran-friendly regulatory environment that encourages veterans and their spouses to choose Florida for their health care practice after their discharge from active duty.

I encourage you to review the Department's fifth Florida Veteran Health Heroes, a publication in which we recognize Floridians who protect the health of others while serving our great nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Rivkees". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" and last name "Rivkees" clearly legible.

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

**We are thankful for all who serve the people of
Florida and the United States**

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES



Army

Before the Army was established, colonists were organized into rag-tag militias with no real structure or unified chain of command. But in spring 1775, most wanted to attack the British near Boston but knew they needed more structure to confront the professional soldiers on the other side. That's where the official birth of the Army came in, on June 14, 1775, through a resolution from the Continental Congress.

The next day, George Washington was appointed as commander-in-chief of the new Army, and he took command of his troops in Boston on July 3, 1775, according to the Army History Division.

Of the 44 men who have served as president of the US, 31 had military service. Twenty-four of them served in the Army, or state militias (our modern-day National Guard). Though being in the military is not a requirement for the presidency, President George Washington started a trend that saw future presidents, in some cases, making their name as war heroes. For example, Theodore Roosevelt received the Medal of Honor for his famous charge up San Juan Hill, and George H.W. Bush received the Distinguished Flying Cross during World War II and barely escaped after his plane was shot down.¹



Navy

At the start of the War of 1812, the U.S. Navy had only 16 seagoing warships at its disposal, compared to more than 600 on the British side. Even with most of the Royal Navy occupied fighting Napoleon in Europe, a stifling blockade of the Atlantic coast took shape. However, the Navy did manage to win some single-ship actions in the Atlantic.

In trouncing HMS Guerriere, for example, USS Constitution earned the nickname "Old Ironsides" for the way opposing cannonballs supposedly bounced right off; yet its main successes came inland. With African-Americans playing a big role—due to manpower shortages, a prohibition on black sailors had gone out the window—Navy squadrons blasted their way to control of strategically important Lake Erie and Lake Champlain.

No president had ever served in the Navy until World War II when it suddenly turned into a near prerequisite for reaching the White House. John F. Kennedy commanded a motor torpedo boat that was run over by a Japanese destroyer in the Solomon Islands. Lyndon B. Johnson was briefly stationed in New Zealand and Australia despite being a sitting member of Congress. Richard Nixon supervised air cargo operations. Gerald Ford served as an aircraft carrier's assistant navigator and was nearly swept overboard in a typhoon. Jimmy Carter attended the Naval Academy (and became a submariner after the war). George H.W. Bush flew 58 combat missions, including one in which he was shot down over the Pacific. In fact, from 1961 to 1993, the only non-Navy man to become president was Ronald Reagan.²



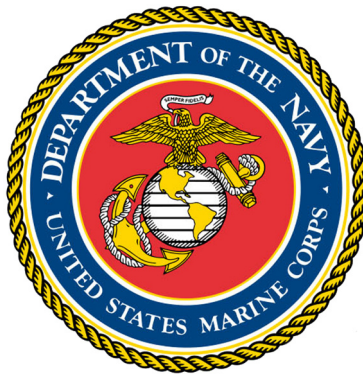
Air Force

On Aug. 1, 1907, the U.S. Army Signal Corps formed the Aeronautical Division, which later evolved into the U.S. Army Air Force. The National Defense Act of 1947 created an independent Air Force.

In 1947, then-Air Force Capt. Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier in his Bell X-1 rocket-powered aircraft, kicking off a race of pilots who competed to do the next big thing, eventually leading to outer space and a man on the moon.

An "ace" is a pilot who has shot down five or more enemy aircraft. The top jet ace in U.S. Air Force history is Joseph C. McConnell, a "Triple ace" who shot down 16 MiG fighters during the Korean War over a four-month period, bagging three on his last combat mission of the war. His record still stands.

Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush served as airmen. Reagan served in WWII when the branch was still the Army Air Forces. Bush served in the Texas Air National Guard before transferring to the Air Force Reserve during the Vietnam era.³



Marine Corps

Captain Samuel Nichols was commissioned as the first Marine officer by the Second Continental Congress on November 5th, 1775, but he wasn't confirmed in writing until November 28th, 1775. Soon after, Nicholas took office setting up a recruiting station at Tun Tavern, the birthplace of the Corps.

A lesser known fact is the Marine Corps was disbanded in 1783 after the Revolutionary War and didn't exist for 15 years. It would make its return on July 11th, 1798 and brand itself as the Corps we've come to know today.

While the Marine Corps is its own branch of the U.S. military, it falls under the administration of the Department of the Navy. With roughly 185,000 active-duty personnel and 38,500 reserves, the Marines are the smallest branch of the armed forces. To put that number into perspective, the Army currently has more 541,000 personnel, while the Navy has more than 317,000 personnel, and the Air Force has 333,000.

The term "semper fi" is used by many Marines in conversation. "Semper fi" is a direct reference to the Marines' motto, Semper Fidelis. Latin for "always faithful" or "always loyal."⁴



Coast Guard

The Coast Guard was founded on August 4, 1790, after Congress commissioned the construction of ten ships to help enforce federal tariffs and prevent smuggling.

Alex Haley, who wrote the acclaimed Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Roots*, was the Coast Guard's first journalist.

Bruce Melnick, a 1972 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, rose to the rank of commander in his 20-year career in the service. In 1987, he was selected by NASA to be an astronaut, making him the first Coast Guard aviator to participate in the program. Daniel Burbank, a captain in the Coast Guard, became the second when he was selected in 1996. He went on to spend 188 days in space over the course of four missions.

The U.S. Coast Guard is the only military branch that is not a part of the Department of Defense. Since 2003, the Coast Guard has been a part of the Department of Homeland Security.⁵

1. Szoldra, P. (2017, June 14). 7 surprising facts you probably don't know about the US Army. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/7-surprising-facts-you-probably-dont-know-about-the-us-army-2015-8>

2. Greenspan, J. (2015, September 30). 7 Things You May Not Know About the U.S. Navy. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/news/7-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-u-s-navy>

3. Stilwell, B. (2018, September 18). 17 things you didn't know about the US Air Force. Retrieved from <https://www.wearethemighty.com/articles/air-force-facts>

4. H. E. (2009, November 13). Birth of the U.S. Marine Corps. Retrieved from www.history.com/this-day-in-history/birth-of-the-u-s-marine-corps

5. uscg.mil. (2015, August 3). 25 Coast Guard Facts for 225 Years: Celebrating the Coast Guard's Birthday. Retrieved from www.uso.org/stories/1656-25-facts-for-225-years-celebrating-the-coast-guard-s-225th-birthday

OurHeroes



JOE BOSKO, RN, BSN



Joe Bosko was born in Akron, Ohio, and graduated from Cuyahoga Falls High School in June of 1983 and left for Navy recruit training in Orlando, Florida, that September. Following boot camp, he reported for training as an Aviation Electronics Technician in Millington, Tennessee. After com-

pleting electronics training he reported to Naval Air Station Pensacola for Naval Aircrewman Candidate School (NACCS), then attended Radio Operator School at Naval Air Station Moffitt Field, California, and followed that with Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape (SERE) School in 1984. Upon completion of radio school, Joe reported to his first duty station of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One (VQ-1) at Naval Air Station Agana, Guam, as a Naval Aircrewman and Aviation Electronics Technician. He deployed frequently to Atsugi Japan, CUBI Point Philippines, Osan Korea, and a number of other sites, flying over 2000 flight hours in support of Navy reconnaissance operations.

In 1988, Joe transferred to Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, to Oceanographic Development Squadron Eight (VXN-8), to work as a Radio/Radar Operator and technician. In 1992 Joe and his family transferred to Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily, Italy, as he joined the CINCUSNAVEUR Executive Transport Detachment. During this tour, Joe was an electronics technician and a radio/satellite communications operator for Admiral Mike Boorda, Admiral Leighton Smith, and others traveling throughout Europe. When his tour completed in 1995, Joe went to Naval Air Station Miramar to attend Navy Drug and Alcohol Counselor School (NDACS). Later

he reported to Naval Station Mayport for shore duty as a Drug and Alcohol Counselor. After a successful tour as a counselor, Joe transferred to Naval Air Station Jacksonville as part of VP-30's Executive Transport Detachment (VP-30 VR Det) supporting the Chief of Naval Operations and other military commanders. By the time Joe left the VR Det, he was a Chief Petty Officer, had logged over 7500 flight hours, and had completed a bachelor's degree in Computer Information Systems at Columbia College of Missouri. In 2003 Joe reported for his final tour. He took a shore duty position at the Naval Branch Health Clinic Mayport as the Director of the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program at NAS Mayport, Florida. During his final two tours, Joe completed a Master of Business Administration Degree (MBA) at Webster University. He retired from active duty in October of 2007.

In 2008, Joe moved to Tampa, Florida, to work as an electronics technician and crewmember flying into hurricanes for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). While at NOAA he operated and maintained all of the weather systems, computer systems, and radars on board the hurricane hunter aircrafts N42 and N43. Joe was promoted and continued his flight and maintenance duties while deploying to a variety of remote sites in the Caribbean and Newfoundland, Canada. In 2015, after over 32 years of working on planes, and approximately 10,000 flight hours, Joe was ready for a change. He left the Hurricane Hunters and moved back to Jacksonville to attend an accelerated nursing school program at Jacksonville University. Following the rigorous 17-month Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program, at 54 years old, Joe was hired by Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville as a Transplant Nurse, where his duties primarily include caring for transplant patients. He loves being a nurse and knows that this is what he was meant to do. He likes to joke that he is the only individual who can honestly say, firsthand, that it is easier flying into a hurricane than it is to be a nurse.

OurHeroes



MICHAEL CASTRO, RN, BSN



Lieutenant Colonel Michael Castro is a Drill Status Guardsman assigned to the 114th Space Control Squadron, based at Patrick Air Force Base (AFB)/Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (AFS). Lt Col Castro is currently the Assistant Operations Officer and a Space Operations Crew Commander. Michael began his

active duty service in 2004 as a nuclear launch officer, serving as a missile combat crew member at F.E. Warren AFB, WY. During this tour, he assumed the deputy commander, commander, instructor, and codes controller positions, developing his nuclear launch expertise. After completing his tour, Michael was transferred to Vandenberg AFB, CA, serving as a nuclear operations instructor, guiding and mentoring future missileers. During his assignment, he also aided in honing nuclear launch operations skills, developing training products, and controlling highly sensitive and classified documents. In 2011, he completed his missile instructor tour, then separated from active duty, joined the Air National Guard and also started pursuing a nursing degree. Since joining the Guard, Michael had the opportunity to work in space launch and now space control operations at Patrick AFB/Cape Canaveral AFS, FL. Michael served as the Training Chief, Scheduling Chief, Weapons and Tactics Chief, and now the Assistant Operations Officer, the third-ranking individual in a squadron of 80 personnel.

Lt Col Castro currently holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a focus on Business Management, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and a Master of Aeronautical Science with a focus on Space Operations Management. Michael received his Business

Management degree from the University of Central Florida, Orlando, in 2002. He received his Space Operations Management degree from Embry Riddle, Daytona in 2010. Michael also completed the tedious two-year nursing program, achieved his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of North Florida and successfully passed his boards in 2015. Michael built his nursing experience on a cardiac progressive care unit and emergency department and is now a Gastrointestinal nurse, at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, FL. Additional training include Space 100 (Vandenberg AFB, CA), Aerospace Basic (Maxwell AFB, AL), Squadron Officer School (Maxwell AFB, AL), Basic Instructor (Vandenberg AFB, CA), Technical Training/Teaching Internship (Vandenberg AFB, CA), Principles of Instructional Development (Vandenberg AFB, CA), Training Development (Lackland AFB, TX), Technical Writer (Vandenberg AFB, CA), Space 200 (Peterson AFB, CO), Space Control Mission Qualification Training (Cape Canaveral AFS, FL), Air Command and Staff College (Correspondence at Maxwell AFB, AL), Crew Commander Upgrade Training (Cape Canaveral AFS, FL) and Nurse Residency Program (Baptist Medical, FL).

Lt Col Castro's awards and recognition include various military and civilian accolades. He received eight "Outstanding" (highest possible) and "Excellent" ratings in higher level Air Force Inspections. While on missile combat crew, Lt Col Castro earned eight Highly Qualified (highest possible) ratings on crew evaluations, culminating in a Crew Member Excellence award. He also received Volunteer of the Quarter and Professional Team awards. Since serving as a nurse, Michael was recognized by the hospital system CEO three times for exceptional care provided to his patients and their families.

Lt Col Castro is currently enrolled in the Family Nurse Practitioner, Doctor of Nursing Practice program at the University of North Florida. Once complete, he hopes to continue practicing at Mayo Clinic in either the GI or Endocrine department.

OurHeroes



AMY LOESCHE, RN, MSN



Amy Hans Loesche was commissioned an Ensign in the United States Navy in 1999 as a Nurse Corps Officer. She began her career at the National Naval Medical Center (now Walter Reed Military Medical Center) in Bethesda and subsequently stationed at Naval Hospital Naples, Italy. Affiliated with the Reserves after her release from Active Duty in 2005, she served as both Administrative Officer and Assistant Officer in Charge for

her local Reserve unit. Commander Loesche deployed to Landstuhl Army Regional Medical Center in 2009 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Following her return, she completed her Masters of Science in Nursing with a Nursing Education focus and later went on to attend the Navy's Perioperative Nursing Program in Jacksonville, Florida. Commander Loesche currently serves as the Command Training Officer for Operational Health Support Unit (OHSU) Jacksonville, the largest OHSU in the US Navy Reserves. Her awards include the Navy Commendation Medal, four Navy Achievement Medals, and the Army Achievement Medal. She is currently completing her Doctor of Nursing Practice and works as the Supervisor of Nursing Education and Professional Development at Mayo Clinic, Florida.



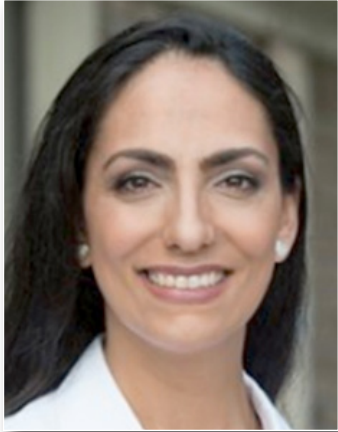
**The Florida Department of Health
salutes our veterans for their hard
work and dedication.**



OurHeroes



SAMIRA MEYMAND, DDS, MPH



Dr. Samira Meymand is an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon practicing in Jacksonville, Florida, and is an accomplished leader in both the Florida dental community and the United States Navy. A veteran of 23 years, Dr. Meymand's military career has taken her all over the world, and she draws upon her

experiences in championing safe care practices, volunteer efforts for children in need of dental health services, and increased leadership opportunities for women in the dental and medical professions.

Patient safety is Dr. Meymand's top priority in her private practice and her role as an anesthesia board inspector with the Florida Department of Health. Samira travels throughout the state of Florida to perform Anesthesia Inspections for General Anesthesia and Conscious Sedation permit holders.

Dr. Meymand earned her Biology Degree at Texas A&M University, then joined the Navy in 1996 on a four-year full academic Health Professions Scholarship to attend the Baylor College of Dentistry where she graduated with honors. She was dual-enrolled at the North Texas Health Science Center Master's in Public Health program and earned her MPH at the same time. Dr. Meymand was selected for an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery residency at the National Capital Consortium, Naval Hospital Bethesda, which coincided with the heights of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The pressures of surgical residency were amplified as hundreds of soldiers were expedited to Bethesda to be treated for serious and sometimes

devastating facial injuries. Samira performed critical surgical procedures for wounded warriors, one of the greatest honors of her career.

Dr. Meymand has deployed multiple times in her career, her first in 2004 in Djibouti, Africa, where she established the first general practice dental clinic. As the Chief Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon, she deployed to South America with the Operation Smile Team in 2009, where she performed orofacial surgeries and cleft palate repairs. She also deployed aboard the USS Harry S. Truman as the Chief Oral Maxillofacial Surgeon in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in 2017. Following in 2018, she served as the Officer-In-Charge of a joint field exercise where she led a hospital team of 51 doctors, nurses, ancillary services, and corpsmen through a mass casualty exercise. Her unit established and operated a 32-bed medical facility in an austere field environment and trained other medical providers to provide full resuscitation and emergency stabilizing surgery within a combat zone.

As a Commander in the United States Naval Reserves, Dr. Meymand is currently assigned to Expeditionary Medical Facility Camp Pendleton Headquarters Unit as the Assistant Operations Officer. Dr. Meymand looks for opportunities to mentor women coming up through the ranks, as she knows the challenges and sacrifices that come with being a military officer, surgeon, wife, and mother. Dr. Meymand comes from a military family, as both her father, father-in-law, and husband are former naval submarine officers. Her military awards include Navy Commendation (3 stars), Navy Achievement (3 stars), and the Navy Volunteer Service Medal. In addition to her military involvement, she is on staff for oral surgery trauma at several hospitals throughout the Jacksonville area. She is a member of the American Association of Oral Maxillofacial Surgeons, the American Dental Association, and the Florida Dental Association.

OurHeroes



ELAINE M. BROOKER-STOOTS, CRT



When Elaine was born in 1965, the United States was involved in the Vietnam War. She spent her early childhood reared by her mother, and her Baba (short for Babushka, grandmother in Russian), after the death of her father and maternal grandfather in the same year. Both men had

been in the military, World War II, and Korea, although her parents' families were rather new American citizens recently immigrated from Germany and Russia. Both of her maternal great grandparents came from Russia around the time of World War I. Her Baba was the third child born in the U.S., with her mother as part of the next generation.

In 1984, Elaine enlisted in the Air Force. After USAF Basic training, she was sent to Lowry AFB, Colorado, to learn about supply systems. Her first official base was Hahn AB, Germany. She was part of the 50th Tactical Fighter Wing, United States Armed Forces in Europe (USAFE), 50th Supply Squadron. The next orders for her duty station, was Grand Forks AFB, ND, where she was a part of the 319th Supply Squadron of the Strategic Air Command called "Warriors of the North." Fortunately, she arrived in July, giving her enough time to adjust to the extreme cold of North Dakota, being a former Floridian.

At Grand Forks, she was in charge of maintaining three small storerooms in the warehouse. She later cross-

trained into a Supply Systems Specialist, the base supply version of a systems analyst, and was part of the base mobility team. The team was required to keep a bag packed of specific items at all times and to be ready in 30 minutes to report to duty when called.

Elaine was discharged from the Air Force in 1990 after becoming pregnant with her daughter because she wasn't sure whether she wanted to be an active duty mom. She later learned that her decision was right as her mobility unit shipped out three months after her daughter was born, for Operation Desert Shield.

After leaving active duty status, she went to Grissom AFB, Indiana, as a military dependent spouse. In 1992, she returned home to Florida. Based on her experience in Germany, she decided to look into Respiratory Therapy and later enrolled at Erwin Technical Center in 1993. Since then she has worked at hospitals in five Tampa Bay area counties. Elaine is currently sub-specializing as a Registered Pulmonary Functions Technician. Elaine has enjoyed a very passionate 25-year career in Respiratory Therapy, working in several areas in the field.

Elaine has also been an active volunteer for Better Breathers of Tampa for three years. She's been a speaker twice for the Tampa Fight for Air Climb, a fundraiser for the American Lung Association that takes place in March every year. She's a member of the American Legion, Post 108, in Lutz/ Land O' Lakes and currently serves as Post Historian. Elaine is more aware now of the number of women serving our nation in combat areas and hopes to make things easier for brave women warriors by increasing the awareness of female veterans.

OurHeroes



FRED TAYLOR, NHA



While Fred Taylor served in Vietnam with the First Cavalry Division (Airmobile), he was engaged in some of the heaviest combat in the history of that war. On three separate occasions, he was wounded in battle (three Purple Hearts). The last time Fred was wounded, he was shot

through the left foot by a machine gun and right knee by an AK-47 high powered rifle. These were very serious wounds, and Fred was hospitalized for six months. Four of the six months, he was bedfast and hooked up to several machines. Any time he needed anything (water, bedpan, clothing, etc.), he had to rely on others to take care of him. After he was able to get out of bed in a wheelchair, he had two months of physical therapy and rehabilitation treatments. After being discharged from the hospital, Fred was on a walker, then crutches,

and then for years he used a cane to aid him in walking. When Fred became a nursing home administrator, many times over the years patients would say to him, "You have no idea what it is like being dependent on someone else to take care of you" or "You wouldn't know what it feels like to have to call for the bedpan and then someone to clean you up!" It would catch the patients by surprise when he would tell them that yes, indeed, he did know what that was like. By sharing his personal experiences with patients about being bedfast, it created a bond between them. During Fred's career, anytime he heard about call lights not being answered timely or that nursing staff members were going to patient's rooms, turning off the call light, and saying, "I will be right back" and never returning, this irritated him because he experienced the same.

Fred has walked-the-walk of his patients and knows how it feels when immediate attention is needed but not given. He has tremendous empathy for the patients under his care, and wants to provide the best care available, and while being the best patient advocate his patients could ever have on their side.

HEALTH CARE LICENSURE SUPPORT SERVICES

The Florida Department of Health is committed to honoring veterans, active duty service members and their families. We are sensitive to the many challenges military families face when required to relocate, and we are proud to offer a seamless process that eliminates any financial burden.

Florida Veterans Application for Licensure Online Response (VALOR) System

If you are a military veteran, or the spouse of an active duty service member seeking licensure in a health care profession in Florida, you are eligible for expedited licensure processing.

- To qualify, you or your spouse must apply for the license either six months before or after your honorable discharge from the United States Armed Forces.
- There is no application fee, licensure fee, or unlicensed activity fee for veterans and spouses of active duty service members who qualify for this type of license.

Military Veteran Fee Waiver

If you are a military veteran, you may be eligible for a waiver of the initial application and licensure fees for all health care professions.

- To qualify, your application must be submitted within 60 months of discharge from any branch of the United States Armed Forces.
- The initial licensure fee, initial application fee, and initial unlicensed activity fee will be waived for veterans returning from active duty service. ***This waiver does not include examination fees.***

Reimbursement for Veterans' Professional Examination Costs

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs will reimburse eligible applicants for the cost of licensing and certification examinations, not to exceed \$2,000 per test.

- These licensure and certification examinations must generally be deemed necessary to pursue a trade or profession.
- Please visit the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs for potential reimbursement for examination costs.

Temporary Certificate to Practice in an Area of Critical Need

Active duty service members and military veterans who served at least 10 years in the United States Armed Forces may be eligible for a temporary certificate to practice in an area of critical need.

- This certificate limits applicants to practicing in designated areas of critical need, and it is only available to physicians who have an active, unencumbered license in another jurisdiction of the United States.
- There is no application fee for physicians seeking this certificate. This certificate is limited to physicians who will not receive compensation for their service.

Military Platform – Temporary Certificate for Active Duty Military Health Care Practitioners

Persons serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and serving in the United States Public Health Service may be eligible for licensure under the Military Platform. The Military Platform is a military training agreement with a non-military health care provider that allows active duty health care practitioners the opportunity to treat patients admitted to non-military facilities, while also allowing them to develop and maintain the technical skills necessary to meet present and future health care needs of the U.S. Armed Forces.

- To qualify, an applicant must be an active duty service member and hold a valid license as a health care professional in another state, the District of Columbia, and/or any possession or territory of the United States.
- The license is valid for six months but is renewable with proof of continuing military orders for active duty assignment and evidence of continuation as a military platform participant.

Initial Licensure Fee Waiver for Military Spouses

If you are the spouse of a military veteran, you may be eligible for a waiver of the initial application and licensure fees for most health care professions.

- To qualify, your application must be submitted within 60 months after your spouse's honorable discharge from any branch of the United States Armed Forces.
- The initial license fee, initial application fee, and initial unlicensed activity fee will be waived, provided you apply for licensure within 60 months after your spouse is discharged from any branch of the United States Armed Forces. ***This waiver does not include examination fees.***

Temporary License for Military Spouses

As the spouse of an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States, you may be eligible to receive a temporary license to practice your health care profession in Florida. The purpose of the temporary license is to allow you the opportunity to work in your respective profession while your spouse is assigned to a duty station in Florida.

- To qualify, your spouse must be on active duty and assigned to a duty station in Florida. In addition, you must hold a valid license as a health care professional in another state, the District of Columbia, and/or any United States territory or possession.
- The license is valid for one year.

Please Note: If you desire to practice beyond the expiration of the temporary license, you should begin the regular licensing application process as soon as possible.

To apply for a license or learn more about licensing options for veterans, active duty military members and their families, visit <http://flhealthsource.gov/valor>.

LICENSURE RENEWAL PROVISIONS

You may be able to keep your license in good standing and be exempted from certain license renewal provisions if you meet the following criteria:

- You are an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States
- You hold a Florida health care practitioner license in good standing with your profession's administrative board or the Department at the time of your enlistment
- You are entitled to practice or engage in your profession prior to joining the Armed Forces

If you meet these criteria, your license will be kept in good standing without your having to register, pay renewal fees, or perform any other license maintenance act. This provision remains in effect through the duration of your active duty service, and for six months after discharge, provided you are not actively engaged in your licensed profession in the private sector for profit.

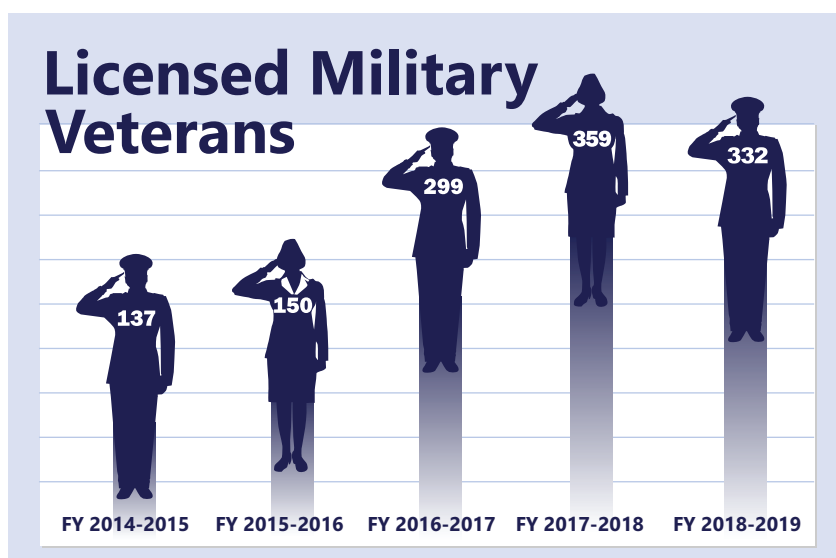
Spouses of members of the Armed Forces of the United States who hold a Florida health care practitioner license in good standing may also be exempted from license renewal provisions, but only in cases of absence from the state because of their spouses' active duty assignment.

TO OUR MILITARY AND VETERAN COMMUNITY

The Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) seeks to create a veteran-friendly regulatory environment to encourage military service members to choose Florida for their health care practice after active duty. A fee waiver program began in fiscal year 2013-2014 to ease most of the financial burden of applying for licensure, and participation has steadily grown.

During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, 332 military veterans and their spouses were licensed through VALOR thereby increasing our total to 1,277, exceeding our strategic goal of 1,255 licensed military veterans by December 2020.

VALOR expedites the licensure process and is designed to issue licenses for all qualified initial applicants within one day. MQA is committed to helping ease the transition of military health professionals into civilian life and seeks to encourage them to practice in Florida by making the licensure process one that reflects our gratitude for their service.





MILITARY AND VETERAN RESOURCES

The Department is pleased to provide the following information on resources for military members, veterans, and their families.

Employment/Business:

Employ Florida Vets

<https://veteran.employflorida.com/>

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

www.esgr.mil

Florida State Veterans' Homes Recruitment

<http://floridavets.org/were-looking-for-you/>

Florida Veterans' Business Assistance

www.fptac.org

Benefits:

Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide

<http://www.bluetoad.com/publication?i=371864>

eBenefits: Gateway to Benefit Information

<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>

Post-9/11 GI Bill and Veteran Education Benefits

www.gibill.va.gov

Veterans' Resources:

Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Military and Veterans Assistance Program (MVAP)

www.myfloridalegal.com/MVAP

Florida Department of Financial Services -- Financial Frontlines Program

<http://www.myfloridacfo.com/YMM/FinancialFrontlines/>

Florida Department of Financial Services -- Small Business Program

<http://www.myfloridacfo.com/YMM/smallBusiness/Default.aspx>

Locate Military Records

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/>
www.consumerfinance.gov/service-members

Women Veterans:

Homeless Women Veterans

http://www.va.gov/homeless/for_women_veterans.asp

VA Center for Women Veterans

<http://www.va.gov/womenvet/>

VA Hotline on Health Care and Benefits for Women Veterans

1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)

Women Veterans Health Care

<http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/>

Agencies, Departments, and Organizations:

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA)

<http://floridavets.org>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

www.va.gov

Florida Department of Military Affairs

<http://dma.myflorida.com/>

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Operation Outdoor Freedom

www.operationoutdoorfreedom.com

Florida Defense Alliance

<http://www.floridadefense.org/>

Florida Defense Support Task Force

<http://www.enterpriseflorida.com/fdstf>

Florida Veterans Foundation

<https://helpflvets.org>

Veterans Florida

<http://www.veteransflorida.org/>

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Office of Service Members' Affairs

www.consumerfinance.gov/servicemembers

General Information:

MyFlorida.com

<http://www.myflorida.com/>

Returning Service Members

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>

Florida Military License Plates

<http://www.flhsmv.gov/specialtytags/miltags.html>

A stylized graphic of the American flag, featuring a blue field with white stars and red and white stripes, waving and partially obscured by a white curved banner.

We are very proud of our VALOR program

**which expedites licensing for military veterans and
spouses of active duty service members.**

The Department is committed to honoring veterans, members of the military, and their families who face challenges when required to relocate. The VALOR program has benefitted many families, and the Department is dedicated to easing their financial burden.



Military Holidays/Recognition Days

January

- Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service (Third Monday)

February

- Four Chaplains Day (Third Monday)
- President's Day (Third Monday)
- Coast Guard Reserve Birthday (February 19)

March

- Month of the Military Caregiver
- Navy Reserve Birthday (March 3)
- Seabee Birthday (March 5)
- K-9 Veterans Day (March 13)
- Medal of Honor Day (Florida) (March 25)
- Vietnam Veterans Day (March 30)

April

- Month of the Military Child
- Gold Star Wives Day (April 5)
- Air Force Reserve Birthday (April 14)
- Army Reserve Birthday (April 23)

May

- National Military Appreciation Month
- Silver Star Service Banner Day (May 1)
- VE (Victory in Europe) Day (May 8)
- Military Spouse Appreciation Day (May 8)
- Children of Fallen Patriots Day (May 13)
- Armed Forces Day (Third Saturday)
- Memorial Day (Last Monday)

June

- D-Day Anniversary (June 6)
- Flag Day (June 14)
- U.S. Army Birthday (June 14)
- Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday (June 23)
- Anniversary of the Start of the Korean War (June 25)
- National PTSD Awareness Day (June 27)

July

- Independence Day (July 4)
- Korean War Veterans Armistice Day (July 27)
- Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary (July 29)

August

- Coast Guard Birthday (August 4)
- Purple Heart Day (August 7)
- VJ (Victory over Japan) Day (August 15)
- Marine Forces Reserve Day (August 29)

September

- Patriot Day (September 11)
- U.S. Air Force Birthday (September 18)
- POW/MIA Recognition Day (Third Friday)
- Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day (September 29)

October

- Columbus Day (Second Monday)
- U.S. Navy Birthday (October 13)
- National Day of the Deployed (October 26)

November

- Military Family Month
- U.S. Marine Corps Birthday (November 10)
- Veterans Day (November 11)

December

- Civil Air Patrol (USAF Auxiliary) Birthday (November 1)
- Pearl Harbor Day (December 7)
- National Guard Birthday (December 13)
- Anniversary of the Army Chaplain Assistant (December 28)

