

Veterans Extra

The Villages Is a Veterans Stronghold, A16

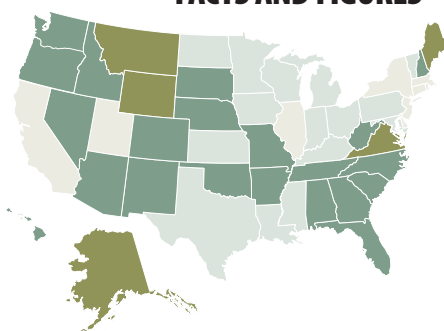
Outdoor Freedom: A group is giving Florida's veterans access to outdoor activities. **A18**

Built on Veterans: From the Revolutionary War to now, the U.S. is held up by its veterans. **A20**

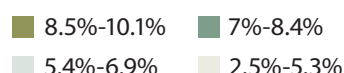
Parady Presents Annual Tribute to Veterans

Parady's Tribute to Veterans easily ranks as one of The Villages' largest commemorations on behalf of a grateful community. Hundreds, if not thousands, of residents and guests will gather from 5 to 9 p.m. Monday at Brownwood Paddock Square to celebrate and honor the commitment of those currently serving in the U.S. armed forces but particularly those residents in The Villages who sacrificed time from their lives to serve others. Expect a lot of emotion, tears and pride, at this event, said Greg Parady, CEO of The Villages-based Parady Financial Group, the event's premier sponsor. He answered a few questions about his company's participation in the 11th annual celebration. — *David R. Corder, Daily Sun*

MILITARY VETERANS FACTS AND FIGURES



U.S. VETERAN POPULATION 18 YEARS AND OVER BY STATE



16,200,322

The number of veterans living in the United States during 2022, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That is a 9.8% decrease over the five years ended 2022.

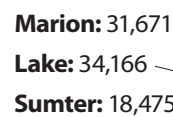
1,322,675

The number of veterans living in Florida during 2022. That is an 8.1% decrease over the five years ended 2022.

13.7%

The percentage of veterans living within The Villages metropolitan statistical area. The highest percentage of any MSA not located near a military base.

VETERANS LIVING IN THE VILLAGES TRI-COUNTY AREA



Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Tell our readers how Parady's Tribute to Veterans evolved into what it is today?

A: We're just so fortunate at Parady Financial Group to be a part of the Veterans Day celebration at Brownwood Paddock Square. We got involved 11 years ago. One of my clients, Joe Hambright, chairman of The Villages Honor Flight, mentioned the event to us, and I told him I wanted to be involved in it, because we already were sponsoring so many other veterans-related fundraisers and golf tournaments. That's because so many of our clients are veterans or they're related to veterans. It's become a partnership among our clients, people we know in the community who aren't clients and Parady Financial and its affiliated companies. So, if it's important to them, then it's important to us, including my own family. It's such a worthwhile cause that we just wanted to be a part of it.



How big of a task is this for you, your staff and all the volunteers?

A: This is such a gigantic undertaking that our entire team puts together. I'm so fortunate to have a team that donates its time to ensure the success of these events. I'm fortunate that we have so many clients who also donate their time. We also have volunteers in the community who are not clients. And we're blessed to have the support of other companies, and The Villages, too, that support us. When you see that type of passion, it makes it very easy for me to get behind that kind of dedication with the financial support. And once we commit, we're all in. The goal is an assumed outcome. The minute my team and I commit, we're 100 percent all in to making it as big of a success and enjoyable for the entire community.



What personally inspires you the most about this event?

A: This event is extremely gratifying because it affects so many people in our community. The reach and the deep-rooted passion for our veterans in our community is unparalleled. Our veterans have an impact on everyone in this community. Either they live next door, or they have a parent, relative or neighbor who is a veteran. How could we not be humbled to be a sponsor of one of the biggest events all year in The Villages? We get to be the premier sponsor and graciously allowed to make it even better every year. It is one of the most emotional events that you'll experience. There's an authentic and immediate response to everything that happens during the event. Everyone who attends is so authentic and raw in emotions. How cannot you not feel proud about what happens there?



Rachel Stuart | Daily Sun

Claudia Blake, center, of the Village of Belvedere, performs with The Villages Twirlers and Drum Corps during Parady's Tribute to Veterans event at Brownwood Paddock Square.



What's one aspect of the celebration that makes you smile?

A: We're donating \$25,000 ourselves, and whatever else we raise during the event fundraiser, and presenting a check to The Villages Honor Flight. That is going to give them an opportunity to send more veterans to Washington, D.C., to see the monuments that honor them. Now I chuckle at this, but my wife, Jenni, is prone to rounding up numbers. So it could be more. That's because she and I get caught up in the emotion of it all. It's so much bigger than who we are. You just get caught up in the emotion, and how can you not give just a little bit more. This is something we're so very proud to be associated with. The community has been so good to us for 25 years that this is the absolute least that we can do to give back to a community that has given us so much.

Parady's 11th Annual

TRIBUTE TO VETERANS

Honoring Those Who Have Served

NOVEMBER 13

5:00 PM - 9:00 PM
BROWNWOOD PADDOCK SQUARE®

Parady Financial Group is proud to be supporting Villages Honor Flight (VHF) for an 11th year. This outstanding organization enables military Veterans to visit Washington, D.C. area memorials at no cost to them. Visit the website of this great organization today: www.villageshonorflight.org

