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Governor Rick Scott Honors Over 100 Veterans with the Veterans Service Medal



CRYSTAL RIVER, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott awarded 114 Florida veterans with the Governor's Veterans Service Medal for their service to the state and the nation.

Governor Scott said, "I'm proud to recognize some of Florida's outstanding veterans for their service and personally thank each of them for the countless sacrifices they've made for our nation. It is so important to continue investing in Florida's military and veteran community and support those who serve and protect."

Governor Scott also highlighted investments in Florida's active military, veterans and their families in his Securing Florida's Future budget, including:

- \$200,000 for search and rescue vessels and protective equipment for our National Guardsmen to use during deployment;
- Nearly \$8 million to begin operations at the Lake Baldwin State Veteran Nursing Home, which will allow this facility to serve more than 110 veterans in the coming year;
- Doubling the funding to \$2 million for Building Homes for Heroes to build and modify homes for veterans who were severely injured while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- \$2 million for the Florida Defense Support Task Force, which helps support our military and defense communities and the many families who rely on them; and
- \$2.7 million to support veterans looking to obtain employment, start their own businesses and make Florida their home, including \$1 million for Veterans Florida to continue their mission of helping veterans find great jobs at Florida businesses.

The following Florida veterans were highlighted during today's ceremony:

Dave Bushnell

Dave Bushnell served in the United States Coast Guard from 1981 to 1988 and then continued his service in the United States Army for 18 years before ending his military career as Chief Warrant Officer 4 in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. In November 2016, Bushnell became a pilot for the Citrus County Sheriff's Office and earlier this year, became the Special Ops Aviation/ Marine Supervisor.

Sergeant Jason Strickland

Sergeant Jason Strickland served in the United States Army from 2001 to 2007, and was promoted to Sergeant E5 in 2004. During his military career, Sgt. Strickland deployed to Bosnia on a peacekeeping mission and later deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving a year in Ramadi, Iraq. Following his active duty, Sgt. Strickland joined the Citrus County Sheriff's Office as a deputy and was promoted to Sergeant this past February. His service in the Sheriff's Office has been recognized with the Medal of Valor and a Ribbon of Commendation.

Staff Sergeant Andres Moreira

Staff Sergeant Andres Moreira enlisted in the Florida Army National Guard in 1998 and has served in support of Operation Noble Eagle and deployed twice to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom. Throughout his 19 years of service, he has also supported Florida families during several hurricane relief missions, including Hurricane Irma. Staff Sergeant Moreira's actions have been recognized Army Commendation Medal, and the Combat Action Badge.

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