



"A STRONG COMMITMENT TO OUR FUTURE."



EQUESTRIAN PADDOCKS & BARNs

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

R/V CAMPGROUND

THERAPY GARDEN/  
CHEF'S GARDEN

OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATER

REHABILITATION CENTER/  
PHYSICAL THERAPY  
ACTIVITY CENTER

OPEN LAWN/  
EVENT SPACE

# VETERANS LODGE MODEL



ROPES COURSE

MAIN ARRIVAL/  
WELCOME CENTER

CHAPEL

ADMINISTRATIVE

OVERNIGHT CABINS

FUTURE FAMILY CABINS





## VISION & MISSION

Veteran's Lodge is a subsidiary of Veterans Holding, Inc., a 501(c)3, and is committed to honoring and empowering veterans. Veterans Lodge will focus on the abilities, not disabilities, of our nation's veterans. Whether in need of one of our health and wellness programs, looking to further their education, or interested in job training and placement, every veteran will be equally welcomed. Our mission is to provide a healthy environment in a serene setting where veterans and their families can come to rehabilitate through predictive health, innovative education, and transformational research.

Veteran's Lodge aims to provide the following:

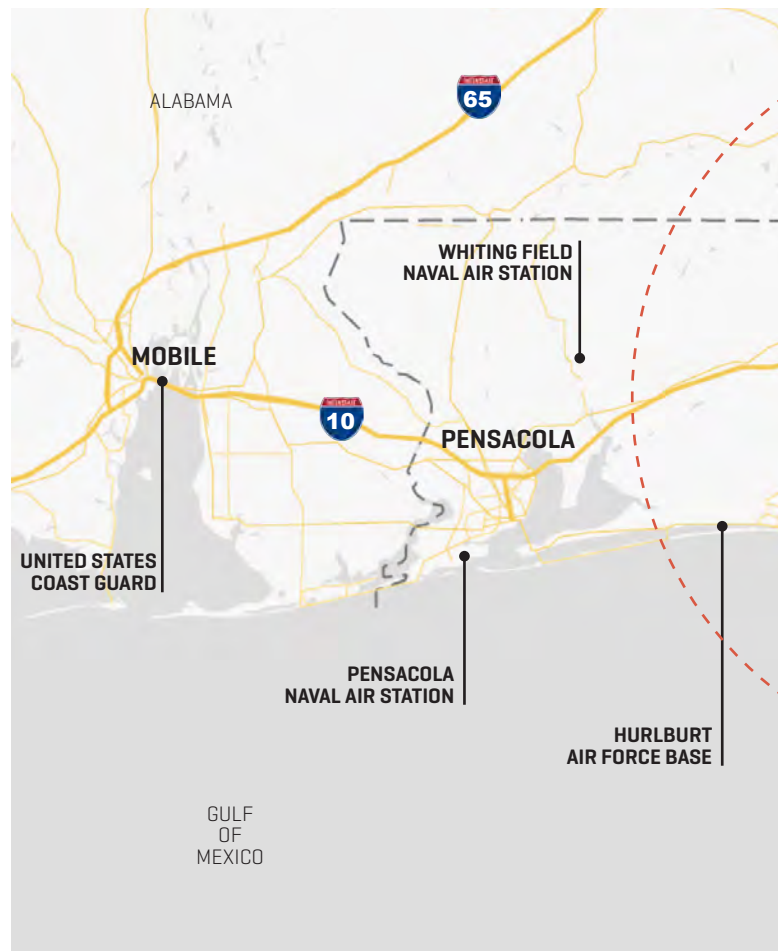
- Patient Rehabilitation
- Post-secondary education
- Job training for specific skills requested by affiliate employers
- Cutting edge research and development for frontal head injury and PTSD
- Lessening the burden on the government through private institutions
- Long term wellness care
- Holistic family therapy

The Lodge will be a place of healing and an icon for others to follow in private and public partnerships. At the Veterans Lodge, we will want the veterans to know their wounds,

# VETERANS LODGE

## INTRODUCTION

Veterans Lodge is an unprecedented and significant commitment to the present and future welfare of our veterans. It is a project never before undertaken by either public or private groups. Envision a community where veterans can come together to heal — both in mind and body — and take the important steps to realize a successful future. The Lodge will be a place where veterans become financially independent, physically sound and psychologically fit by creating a welcoming atmosphere, free of judgment replete with inspiration and opportunity. The primary focus will be on veteran's abilities, not disabilities. It will serve as an icon for others to follow in both private and public partnerships. It will be a place where veterans know their wounds — whether visible or invisible — are a symbol of their courage and sacrifice. We will help veterans get their lives back after they return by providing them with enriching therapy, abundant education alternatives and a strong sense of community. Our ultimate goal is to create a network of Veterans Lodge locations across the United States in areas with high concentrations of servicemen and women.



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## THE LONG ROAD BACK HOME

Our growing veteran population is returning home to find a nation that has turned a blind eye to their needs. For many, the battle is not over when service to country ends. Three out of every four soldiers have been exposed to some type of blast trauma and intense combat situation<sup>1</sup>, making it increasingly hard to decompress and rejoin civilian life. The stress of everyday life continues to take its toll, making the transition from military life extremely difficult if not impossible. Uncertain economic times have further compounded the problem. Homelessness is on the rise.

- Suicide rates have increased 31.1 percent from 2001-2014.<sup>2</sup>
- Of the 4.1 million veterans nationally who served after 9/11, some 256,000 fall between the ages of 18 and 24 – a group that suffers from an exceptionally

high 10.6 percent unemployment rate.<sup>3</sup>

- Fifteen percent of veterans suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and half of these also suffer from Major Depression Disorder (MDD).<sup>4</sup> In Florida, 50,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan wars will confront a mental health condition.<sup>5</sup>
- The VA reports there are 20.0 million veterans living in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

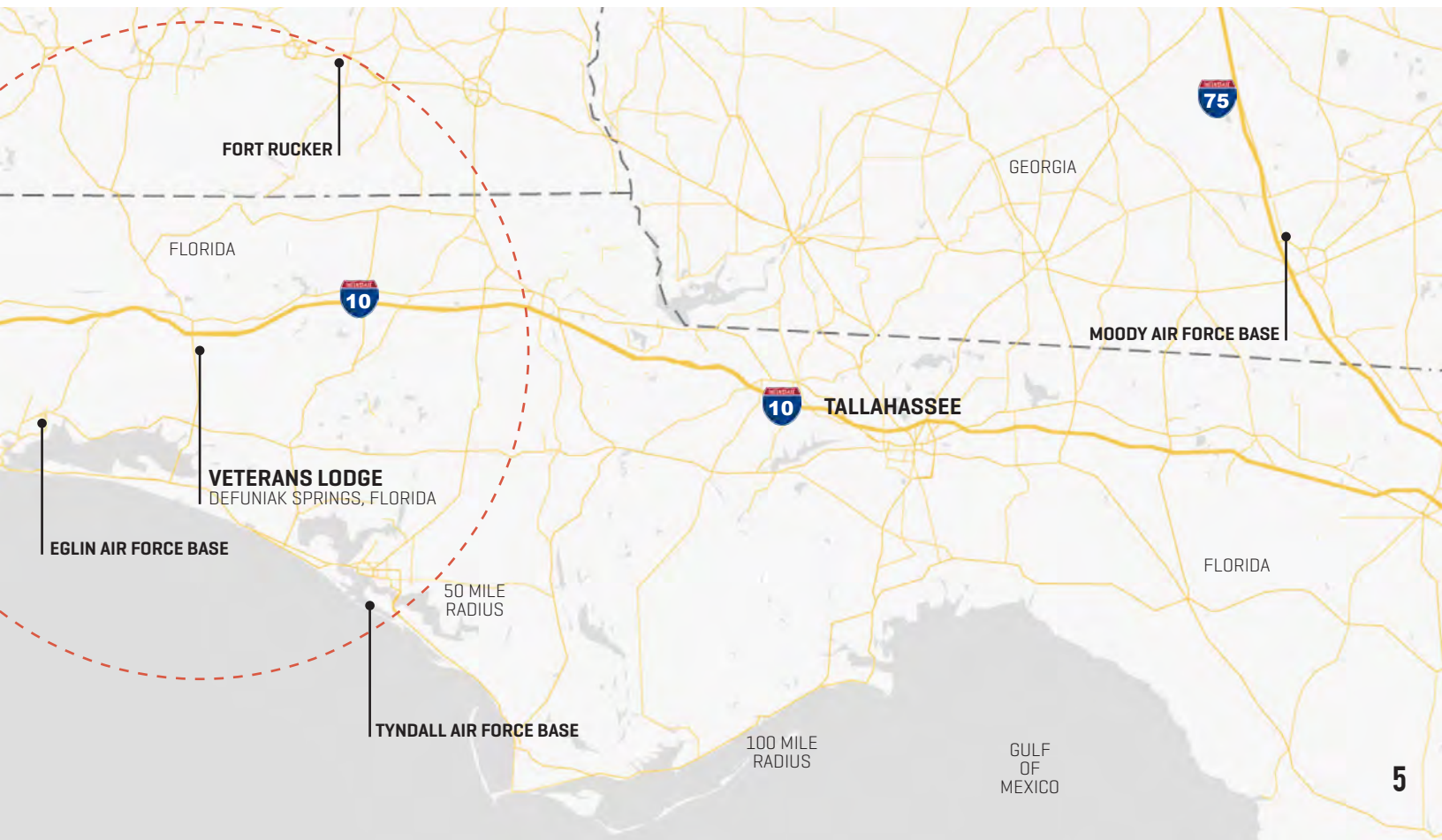
This is where Veteran's Lodge steps in.

## A HEALING PLACE

Veterans Lodge will provide a setting to receive much-needed emotional counseling, transitional assistance, job training programs, business services, rehabilitation and long-term wellness care. Serving as a model not-for-profit humanitarian project, it can be duplicated over and over again throughout the United States.

The Lodge already is working with a major healthcare provider and management service, as well as major universities in the southeast to develop a comprehensive medical treatment and rehabilitation programs.

1Greer N, Sayer N, Kramer M, et al., Prevalence and Epidemiology of Combat Blast Injuries from the Military Cohort 2001-2014 [Internet], February 2016  
2U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Suicide Prevention, Suicide Among Veterans and Other Americans 2001-2014, 3 August 2016, Updated August 2017 by the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention  
3Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release - Employment Situation of Veterans Summary, 21 March 2019  
4Tanielian, Terri and Lisa H. Jaycox, eds., Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery, Santa Monica, Calif: RAND Corporation, MG-720-CCF, 2008. As of March 20, 2019: <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG720.html>  
5National Council for Behavioral Health, Meeting the Behavioral Health Needs of Veterans, November 2012  
6FloridaVets.org, FloridaVets.org Fast Facts, Accessed: 10 April 2019



# BENEFITS OF REHABILITATION



A Veterans Affairs study shows that on average, employment rates for veterans who achieve rehabilitation are 40 to 50 percentage points higher than those that discontinued rehabilitation.<sup>7</sup>

## MEETING THE CHALLENGES

Each Lodge will include a state of the art health care facility, counseling and rehabilitation services, educational programs, job training and placement, physical education facilities and family housing. Working with the VA, researchers and local hospitals, programs will be continually updated to deliver the best care — with the ultimate goal of returning our veterans to active and productive civilian life.

We believe each Lodge can successfully treat as many as 200 veterans on an ongoing basis. Some will be housed full time while others commute to receive treatment and training.

## BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

Each veteran will be assessed and then a personal blueprint will be drawn so that counselors and staff can work together to accomplish individual needs and those of their family as well. No one will be left behind. Our holistic approach will seek to understand the environment and mindset of each hero. What is uncovered during this explorative phase will serve as a roadmap by which overall treatment and rehabilitation is tailored.

## HEALTHCARE AND RECOVERY

Mental health and emotional stability rehabilitation is key and central to complete recovery. The complexity and severity of injuries present a new and complicated set of challenges for healthcare providers. The goal is to foster integrated, collaborative care and an environment where innovation is encouraged. The program is designed to remove negative stigma that often accompanies rehabilitative treatments.

## JOB TRAINING

Workforce and reintegration training is critical to veteran rehabilitation. It is directly related to self-worth and the ability to provide for themselves and their family. While many learn real-life professions while on duty, a large number do not. Therefore, it is vital that we offer true vocational training with marketable skills. Collaboration with companies who seek to hire veterans will be an integral part of the training process. Veterans Lodge will provide direct access to employment through training and placement in a wide array of industries including agriculture, trade programs, and ministry work.



## **BRINGING VETERANS TOGETHER**

Our prototypical Lodge will be located on 200+/- acre tracts in close proximity to military bases, medical facilities and educational institutions.

After strategic review, our flagship site has been placed in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. This site will ensure that our first Lodge will be able to provide services that are geographically convenient to veterans, as well as have strong community backing.

Our flagship site will include all features. For future expansion, three versions of the Lodge have been designed as prototypes: the Battalion, Regiment and Brigade.

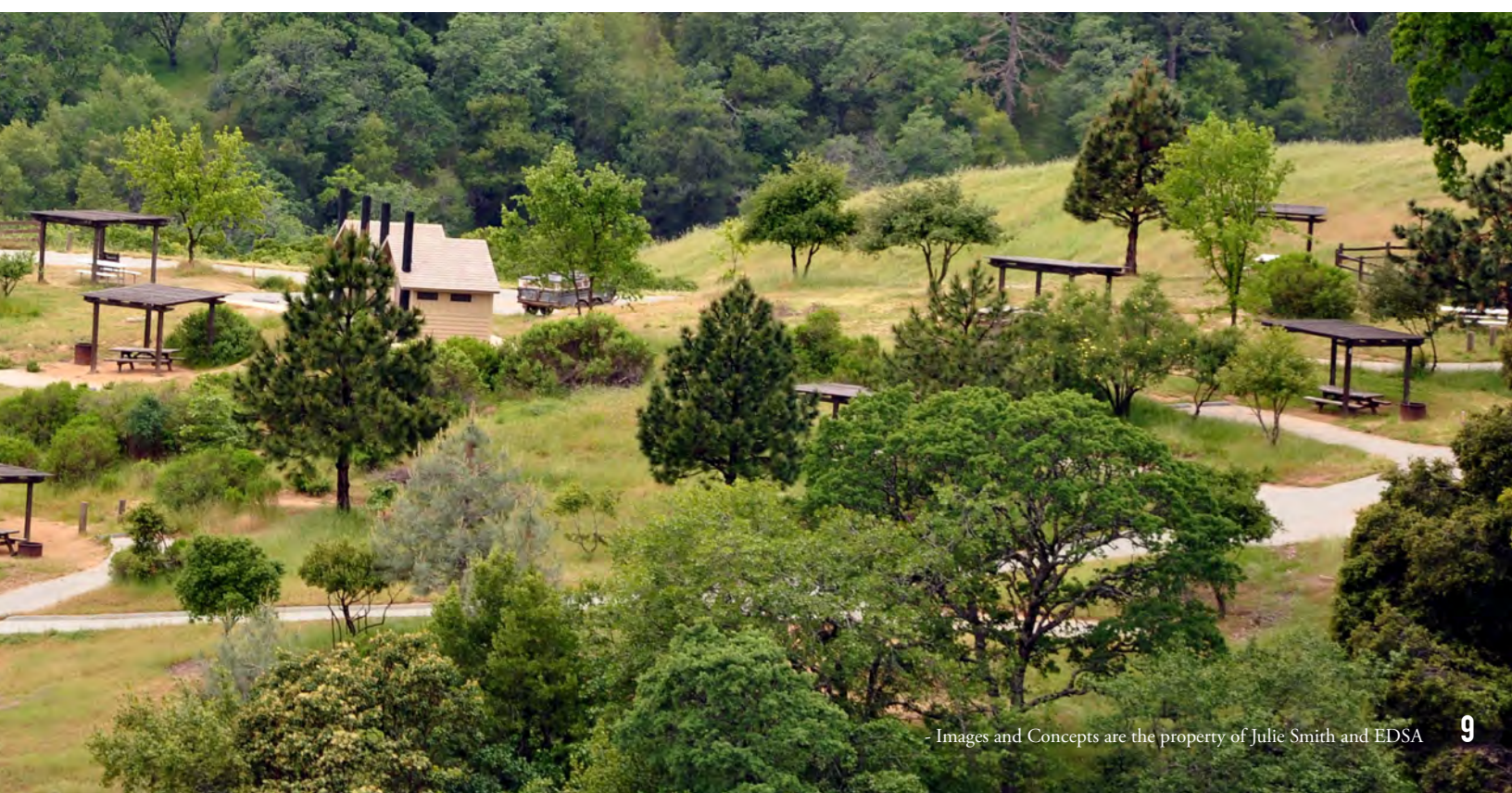
The smallest is the Battalion, which represents the basic Lodge requirements. The Regiment, the medium-sized version, adds certain perks and versatility. The Brigade, our largest Lodge, is the most comprehensive.

# THE BATTALION LODGE

Our most basic lodge and will include:

- Overnight Cabins
- Dining Hall
- Therapy Garden
- Environmental / Nature Tactile Training and Response Course
- Rehabilitation Center
- Education/ Training Classrooms
- Walking Trails
- Administrative Office





# THE REGIMENT LODGE

Includes everything in the Battalion,  
along with:

- RV Camp Ground
- Equestrian Area
- Riding Trails
- Livestock Care and Training Facility
- Agricultural Harvest and Re-Training area





# THE BRIGADE LODGE

Includes everything from the Battalion  
and Regiment plus:

- Chapel
- Senior Care Facility
- Ropes courses
- Physical Education Facilities  
& Training
- Aquatic & Recreational Areas





# REHABILITATION AND RESEARCH FACILITY

A state-of-the-art Brain Injury Rehabilitation and Research Center is essential. Located on site or nearby, it assures that veterans will have the necessary resources and medical treatment for physical therapy and rehabilitation services. The focus will be on cutting edge research in PTSD, brain traumas, stroke wellness therapy and Neurolinguistic/Neurocognitive research and treatments. The rehab center will provide:

- Physical Therap
- Occupational Therap
- Speech Therap
- Audiology
- Physical Education Therapy  
(running, golf, swimming)
- Vision impairment rehabilitation
- Hyperbaric Treatment Center

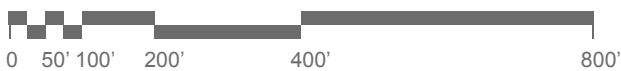




# MASTER PLAN

## LEGEND

- 1 Arrival Motorcourt/Event Space
- 2 Welcome Center
- 3 Look-out Tower
- 4 Chapel
- 5 Open Pavilion
- 6 Administrative Office
- 7 Education/Training Classrooms
- 8 Activity Center
- 9 Loggia/Covered Walkway
- 10 Open Lawn/Event Spaces
- 11 Parking (100 cars)
- 12 Rehabilitation Center/Physical Therapy
- 13 Aquatic & Recreational Areas/Lap Pool
- 14 Therapy Garden/Chef's Garden/Outdoor Classroom
- 15 Lagoon/Water Source
- 16 Outdoor Amphitheater/Assembly Area
- 17 Physical Education Facilities & Training
- 18 Maintenance
- 19 Ropes Course
- 20 Overnight Cabin & Dining Hall
- 21 Future Family Compounds
- 22 RV Campground
- 23 Main Access Road to Hwy 331 & I-10
- 24 Walking Trails
- 25 Riding Trails
- 26 Stream
- 27 Water Storage Tower /Entry Identity
- 28 Equestrian Paddocks & Barns





ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURE  
TACTILE TRAINING &  
RESPONSE COURSE

RE-TRAINING AREA

LIVESTOCK CARE  
&  
TRAINING FACILITY

AGRICULTURAL HARVEST  
&  
RE-TRAINING AREA





# KEY INSIGHTS

## FROM VETERANS LODGE MARKET ASSESSMENT AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

A detailed market assessment and feasibility study of the Veterans Lodge project was completed by Sage Age Strategies, a Florida-based economic consulting firm (consultants Malissa Illiano, MBA, Senior Consultant, and William McClain, MBA, Senior Branding & Communications Strategist). The following summary of the results indicates that a very positive opportunity exists for Veterans Lodge. The research was based on the methodology below:

- Web-based research including statistical and demographic data on veterans, payer information, regional health care providers, regional military bases, number of active duty personnel and health service innovations.
- Meetings with the Veterans Lodge principals and their advisory/support personnel to gain a thorough understanding of the project vision, long range plan, operational details and key next steps required to complete the project successfully.
- Discussions with key sources of influence within the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the VA Health Care System.

- Meetings with VA and non-VA healthcare providers across the defined 125-mile market region to review the Veterans Lodge concept, ascertain provider perceptions of the need, gather their feedback and input on programmatic components, and measure their level of interest in, and commitment to, referring appropriate patients to the planned Veterans Lodge.
- Conversations with key information sources included, but were not limited to: Steve Murray, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF (ret.), Communications Director at the Florida Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Robert M. Horton, Jr., Public Information Office, Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs; VA Outpatient Clinics; VA County Service Centers; Heather Cave, Manager, Military and Defense Programs, Enterprise Florida, Inc.; the Public Affairs Officer at all active duty military bases in the market region; and Rod Lewis, Ph.D., at the DOD-contracted Haas Center for Business Research, at the University of West Florida.
- Meeting with Key Leaders at Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare:
- Meeting attended by Col. Mike Prendergast, US Army (ret.), Executive Director of the Florida Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Mark O'Bryant, President and CEO, Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare, Ms. Paula Fortunas, President of the Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare Foundation, Mr. Jacob Vanlandingham, Ph.D., President of Prevacus (head trauma research) and others
- Meeting with Eglin Air Force Base Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic:
- Meeting attended by Mr. Robert (Robb) Rennie, DAFC, FACHE, Director Growth Management/Senior Civilian Liaison and Ms. Shirley Richmann, BSN, RN, Nurse Consultant
- Meeting at Pensacola VAOPC: Meeting attended by Mr. Jerron Barnett, VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System PublicAffairs Office and Ms. Kellee R. Bivens, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist.
- Meeting with Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Coast: Meeting attended by Mr. Roger Hall, Hospital CEO, Mr. Gus Andrews.

## MARKET DEMAND ANALYSIS

The following chart represents the calculated market demand for the Veterans Lodge project from that study. There was found to be an estimated 13,695 veterans and/or active duty servicemen and women in the market region who could benefit from the care and support services such as those planned for the Veterans Lodge project.

<b>Estimated Veterans in Market Region</b>	<b>267,788</b>
Estimated % Utilizing Healthcare Services	42%
<b>Veterans in Need of Care</b>	<b>112,471</b>
<b>Estimated Active Duty Personnel in Market Region</b>	<b>33,056</b>
Estimated % Utilizing Healthcare Services	5%
<b>Active Duty in Need of Care</b>	<b>1,653</b>
<b>Combined Total in Need [Line 3 + Line 6]</b>	<b>114,124</b>
Estimated % in Need of Additional Care & Support	15%
<b>Estimated in Need of Additional Care &amp; Support</b>	<b>17,119</b>
Assumed Capture Rate	80%
<b>Total Market Region Need</b>	<b>13,695</b>

## VETERANS LODGE MARKET REGION DEMAND

Assuming the Veterans Lodge will treat an average of 175 patients per day with each patient being required to receive at least six treatments, the total demand that would be required annually for the project would be 63,875 visits, or approximately 10,646 veterans in need.

The above demand represents a total need for nearly 13,700 veterans, which would equate to more than 82,000 annual visits, demonstrating a more than adequate market to support the project.

In addition, it is important to note that while this assessment only represents demand for the project through veterans and active duty military, there also exists a market for the project for those who are recovering from a severe injury or surgical procedure such as head trauma, amputations, etc. While it is assumed that the project will be primarily supported and filled by past and present servicemen and women, this additional target market only provides additional support for the project in the market.

## KEY REFERRAL SOURCES, SUPPORT, & EXECUTIVE TEAM BIOS

Meetings with potential referral sources for Veterans Lodge, including VA clinics and community hospitals, were both positive and productive. Representatives of these institutions unanimously expressed their enthusiasm for the project and the need it would fill within the VA's current continuum of care.

Based on the interviews conducted, all key entities appear willing and able to support the Veterans Lodge project as key sources of patient referral.

Key decision makers and sources of influence who were involved in this assessment process included Col. Mike Prendergast, US Army, (ret.), Executive Director, the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs; Mr. Roger Hall, CEO, Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Coast; Mr. Ronald Johnson, Assistant Director, VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System; Lieutenant General Robert F. "Bob" Milligan, USMC (ret.), former Comptroller of Florida and Florida Insurance Consumer Advocate; and Mr. Mark O'Bryant, President & CEO, Tallahassee Memorial Health Care.

Executive team members that will be facilitating the Veterans Lodge site include:

### **Julie Connell Smith, Founder and CEO**

Julie's professional career was comprised of brokering the selling and purchasing of large tracts of land between some of the biggest purchasers in the United States. Personal experiences with wounded veterans inspired her to create a place of love, healing, and support for servicemen and women and their families, and building that became Julie Smith's personal mission and life passion. For the last several years, Julie has turned her boundless energy and relentless efforts towards aiding returning and retired veterans. She conceived Veterans Lodge as an environment where veterans can safely begin transitioning back to civilian life.

Additional executive team members are currently being assessed.

## Board of Directors

### **Marius van der Riet**

Marius established his career as an officer in the South African army before serving as a defense attache for his home country in Washington D.C. Relocating to the United States from South Africa in 1994, Marius successfully entered into the business arena; first in cross-cultural commodity companies and later transitioning into defense contracting through his self-built enterprise Reed International Inc. Marius's company grew from six contractors to over 2000 employees and have won multiple contracts worth hundreds of millions with the US government, UN, and several middle eastern countries.

### **Lupton Pittman**

Pittman began his professional career by enlisting in the US Navy after graduating from UNC. After his service, Pittman formed the defense corporation, Ballistic Solutions Technologies, and has since grown the company to meet the needs of American servicemen worldwide. Pittman helps to supply the wounded vet organizations surrounding Ft. Bragg with necessary equipment to deliver their services. In 1996, he formed the Old South Marlin Club which hosts events for wounded veterans as well as sponsoring fishing trips for servicemen including participation in the Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament. Additional sponsorships include those for servicemen into Hope for Warriors trips and the Ken Onion Bear Hunt for wounded vets. Throughout his career, he has prided himself on creating lasting relationships with soldiers currently serving and veterans. Lupton has always had compassion for our servicemen and veterans, which led him to take his current role at the Lodge in hopes to heal our wounded and save the lives of those who need it the most. He sees the need for Veterans Lodge today, more than ever.

## Director of Rehabilitation

### **Dr. Wade Rinehart, PT, DPT, CMTPT/DN,**

Dr. Wade Rinehart first earned his Master's degree in Physical Therapy in 1999 from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. He later returned to the same university to complete his Doctorate in Physical Therapy in 2009, graduating Summa Cum Laude. Dr. Rinehart completed his undergraduate studies at Florida State University, graduating with highest honors and earning a Bachelor's degree in Nutrition and Fitness/Exercise Physiology.

Dr. Rinehart is the owner and operator of First Choice Physical Therapy and has devoted his entire career to the outpatient orthopedic setting. He is highly skilled in spinal manipulation and state-certified in dry needling. His professional interests include:

- Dry Needling
- Spinal Manipulation
- Headache Management
- TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint) Dysfunction
- Sports Injury Treatment and Training

## EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION

It was recommended that the Veterans Lodge project proceed with confidence based on the following findings:

- Data gathered from the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense (via the University of West Florida's Haas Business Research Center) indicates that sufficient numbers of prospective patients exist for the Veterans Lodge project to achieve its required volumes.
- The leadership of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System has expressed their enthusiastic support of the Veterans Lodge project.
- Healthcare providers in the region, including both VA and community based health facilities, have expressed their support for the project and indicate they would refer appropriate outpatients to the proposed site.
- Veterans Lodge currently holds provider numbers for billing and reimbursement payments for both the VA Healthcare System and TRICARE, the insurance entity that serves our active duty military.
- The results of the demand analysis confirm there are a sufficient number of potential patients in the defined market region for Veterans Lodge to achieve the target volumes required for successful operation.
- Veterans Lodge has received the support of both Florida state and federal officials.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Veterans Lodge is ideally positioned to respond to the major national health crisis affecting our returning veterans and to make a landmark impact on their health, well-being and quality of life. Given their multiple health needs and their growing numbers, the public/private partnership known as Veterans Lodge represents an innovative solution and a template for expanding quality care to veterans throughout Florida and beyond.

The United States has witnessed a very sad chapter in our nation's history as thousands of servicemen and women who willingly gave of themselves for their country now face despair, desperation and lack of hope. Veterans Lodge is being created to assure this does not continue. Our nation is fortunate to have a visionary in Julie Smith, who refuses to stand idly by and watch the suicide, unemployment, homelessness rates of our veterans continue to rise. Veterans Lodge is an idea whose time has clearly come. Our country needs this vision of a loving, healing and life-changing oasis for veterans to come to fruition. We all have a great debt to repay our veterans, and we cannot leave a single one of them behind (Malissa Illiano, William McClain, Sage Age Strategies).



**"THEY SERVED US,  
NOW WE WILL SERVE  
THEM."**

- Julie Smith



BY  
JULIE SMITH  
IN COLLABORATION WITH



PREPARED FOR

