

Post-Veterans Day Message

Dear Friends of Home Base,

Each year on November 11th, we pause to observe Veterans Day and honor all those who served our Nation and what we stand for. To our Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families: all of you made a difference when it counted, and I consider myself privileged to be one of you living here in Southwest Florida. Thank you for your service and sacrifice.

I strongly feel that when men and women across our great country volunteer to serve – that one half of one percent who swear an oath to support and defend our Constitution against all enemies with their lives as that might be necessary – there is created an implied TRUST that we will be there for them when they come home. Home Base SWFL is devoted to fulfilling that TRUST.

Our five-county region is home to more than 100,000 Veterans, 7,000 of whom served in the current wars. While most Service Members and Veterans who return from a deployment can reintegrate successfully into civilian life, it's estimated that 1 in 3 may experience mental health problems, such as PTS, major depression, and anxiety. And even though our state ranks third overall in the Veteran population, many former Service Members across Florida lack access to much-needed mental health services.

Those Veterans seeking mental health services have access to our Home Base nation-wide Intensive Clinical Program headquartered in Boston. For our local Veterans, Service Members, and their Families, Home Base SWFL now offers evidence-based clinical services in our home community at Lee Health.

Our community has continued to step up to help Home Base SWFL fulfill this trust. Our fellow citizens, colleges and universities, full range of business enterprises and the VA, Vet Centers in Naples and Fort Myers, YMCAs in Collier and Lee Counties, and many private Veteran organizations play an essential role in helping our Veterans on their journey towards health and wellness. It is with thanks to you all that our Home Base SWFL family of services now includes Warrior Health and Fitness, Adventure Series, Clinical Care, and the two-week Intensive Clinical Program (ICP). Home Base's establishment of all these programs with our community help fulfill that trust between our Nation, our communities, and our Veterans.

For my fellow Veterans and your Families, thank you for your service and sacrifice. It is my honor to be in your ranks this Veteran's Day and every day as I was honored to once wear the United States Army's uniform in the ranks of so many selfless and courageous Americans. I hope you will assist your fellow Veterans to be aware of Home Base SWFL's expansion efforts by raising awareness of these programs available to them and their families at no cost. Our Veterans earned all of this by their service and sacrifice for us all.

With great respect,

Frederick M. Franks, Jr.
General (Ret.), US Army
Honorary Director, Southwest Florida Warrior Health and Fitness Program
Home Base, A Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Program