

DISCIPLED VETERAN CONFERENCE

SEP 1-2, 2026

FLORENCE BAPTIST TEMPLE

FBT.ORG

843-662-0453

2308 S. IRBY ST. FLORENCE, SC 29505



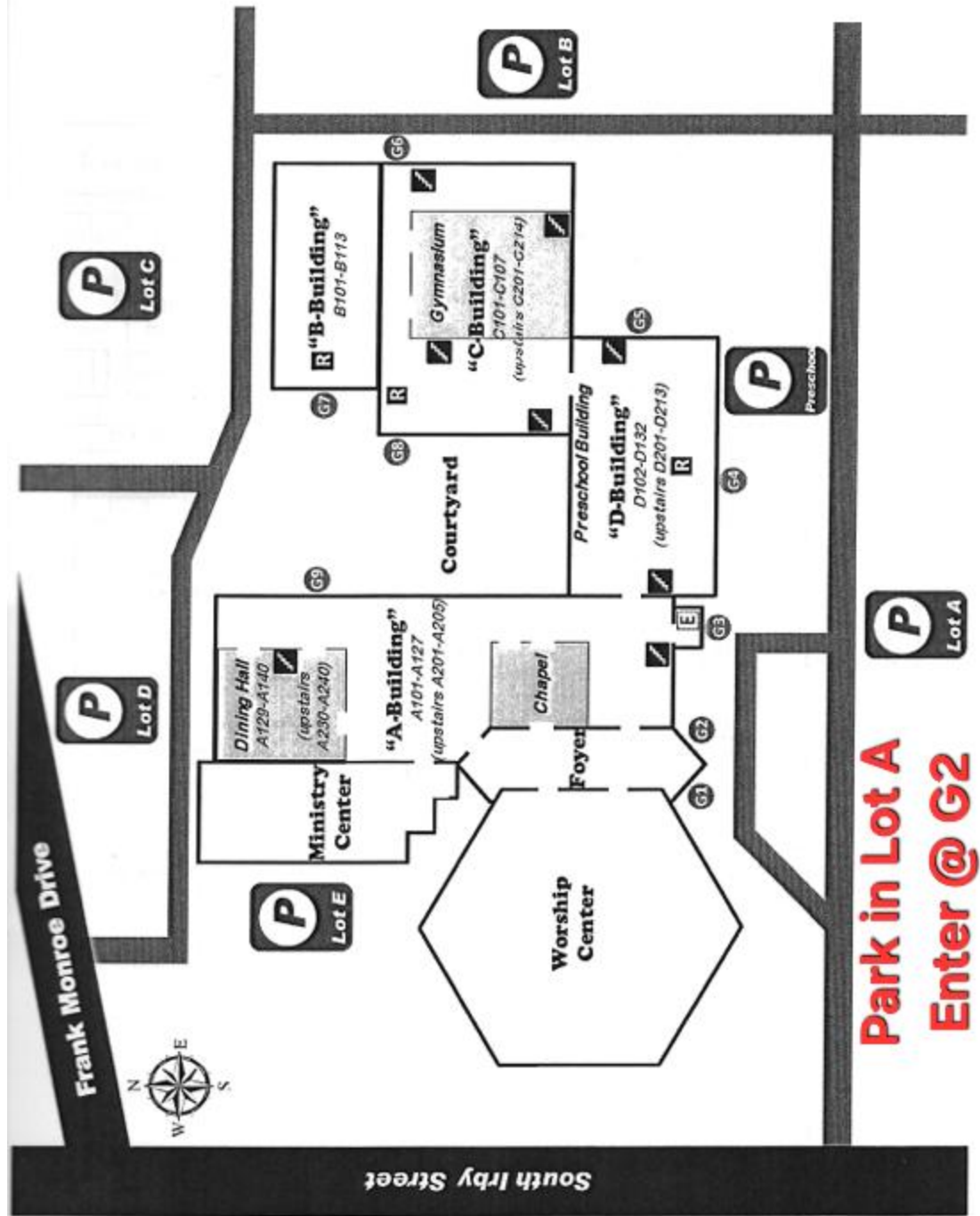
Conference Schedule

Tuesday Sep 1

17:00 – 19:00	Check In / Reception	FBT Chapel
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Wednesday Sep 2

Morning Sessions			
08:00 – 09:00	Breakfast / Registration	Coffee, Juice, Doughnuts, Fruit	
09:00 – 09:05	Introduction	Steve Massie	Discipled Veteran
09:05 – 09:15	Welcome to FBT	Pastor Monroe	Florence Baptist
09:15 – 09:30	DV Effects on a Church	Pastor Jennings	Cherry Street
09:30 – 12:00	Morning Session	Steve Massie	Discipled Veteran
12:00 -13:00	Lunch / DV Room Tour	Chick-Fil-A Box Lunch	
Afternoon Sessions			
13:00 – 15:30	Afternoon Session	Steve Massie	Discipled Veteran
15:30 – 16:00	Engaging Your A/O	Jason Lange	Cherry Street
16:00 – 17:00	Q&A	Massie/Lange/Gainey/Jennings	
17:00 – 19:00	Free Time		
19:00 – 20:00	Attend & Observe FBT Discipled Veteran Meeting		



Introduction

WE ARE AT WAR

1 Peter 2:11 *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which **war** against the soul;*

1 Timothy 1:18 *This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest **war** a good warfare;*

2 Corinthians 10:3 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not **war** after the flesh:*

- **Ladies and gentlemen, WE ARE AT WAR!** Peter and Paul specifically say it, and many others in scripture allude to it. Unfortunately, those of us who currently have the watch don't often view it as a war.
- It's not like war, it's not something like war, our Lord tells us through scripture that we are at war.
- We have victories, we have casualties, we have an enemy, we have an army, we have weapons, we have ground forces, we can even call in air support. Our problem is that we don't often see it and treat it like it's a war.
- Those of you actively in ministry know you are in a war and those of you who are preparing will soon know it.
- The only difference between this war and the wars our country fights is that in this war the ramifications are eternal, we will never be allies with the enemy, and we know how the war ends.
- Our goal today is to lay out a proven battleplan that you can take back to your battlefield, apply it, and reach many of your veteran families with the Gospel.

Section 1

THE TACTIC

1. The veteran problem isn't veteran suicide, homelessness, addiction, isolation, or the divorce rate. The root veteran problem is their lost soul. The previously listed problems are simply a lost soul revealing itself.
2. However, there can be no argument that among veterans these issues are extreme. The extreme factor is the result of military training.
3. Here is what I mean by that. When you go into the military the first thing you do is basic training. The purpose of basic training is to change the way you view, act, and react to the world.
4. While you are in the military that way of thinking works, because the world you live in is built for the way you think, and everyone around you thinks the same as you do.
5. Then comes the day you leave the military world, enter the civilian world, and everything is different and you are alone. There is no basic training to bring you back into the world.
6. The federal government spends over \$13 billion dollars annually on 45 distinct programs, managed by 11 different federal agencies, for the purpose of reintegrating veterans back into civilian life. They are fighting a losing battle in large part because we don't want to be reintegrated back into a way of life that we view as inferior.
7. The problem is when you take a group of people who one day live in a society built on structure, integrity, and value, then the next day drop them alone into a society where it doesn't exist, we should expect some difficulty. This makes them easy targets for our enemy (Satan).

8. Now in the civilian world, and longing for the structured comradery of the old world, Satan is all too happy to provide it. However, as we all know, nothing good comes from anything he is involved in. His motive is to bring him to Hell, and his method is via comradery.
9. These are just a few examples of how the enemy uses veteran comradery to progress his mission:
 - A. **Hells Angels** – The Hells Angels were formed in the 1940s by veterans returning from the second World War for the purpose of recreating the comradery and brotherhood of the military society that they all missed. It is obvious how the enemy has used it to progress his mission.
 - B. **Veterans of Foreign Wars & American Legion** – The VFW and Legion organized for the enjoyment of veteran comradery and has arguably produced more alcoholics and destroyed more veteran families than any other organization.
 - C. **Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers** – This is one of the enemy's more blatant efforts. They state their purpose as, and I quote, "Dedicated to building community and advocating equal rights for non-religious service members".
 - D. **Norse Religion** – In contrast to the atheist group and ensuring the enemy can collect those who desire religion. The Norse religion which is steeped in the warrior mentality and for that reason is one of the fastest growing officially sanctioned religions among military members. You can have Thors hammer along with nearly 100 other religious emblems placed on your headstone at Arlington National Cemetery.

- 10.If you understand spiritual warfare at all you can see the enemy's plan. All these organizations are nothing more than comradery tactics utilized by the enemy to progress his front against our Lord.
- 11.The normal methods of attracting people to church do not normally work with veterans unless they have some church background prior to service.
- 12.With all this in mind our tactic is simple, **Steal the enemy's tactic.** Steal the enemy's tactic of comradery and utilize it in a church setting allowing us to give veterans and their families the gospel.

Section 2

MAKE IT FAMILIAR

1. In the last section we determined that The Enemy utilizes comradery to drag veterans further away from the Lord and our best effort is to utilize that same comradery to bring them closer to the Lord.
2. In doing so we don't want to create a subsect of the church, but we want to integrate them into the doctrine of the church, and the best way is to do that is to make church doctrine familiar.
3. It's really not that different from what we do in Spanish or youth ministries in that we utilize language and culture to reach those groups with the gospel.
4. Many of the things that work well in the military correlate well with Biblical principles. This makes it so much easier for veterans to understand Biblical principles. For example:
5. **Church Language** correlates well with military life.
 - A. The Bible is the SOP - In the military there is a "standard operating procedure" (SOP) for everything. The SOP is a trusted procedure that you must follow even if it makes no sense to you, because it is proven. Well, when I tell an unchurched veteran that the Bible is the SOP for our lives it makes it easy for them to understand how critical the Bible is to our lives and that problems come when we don't follow the SOP, just like in the military.
 - B. Witnessing is Recruiting - In the military everyone is a recruiter. Properly representing the military and more specifically your branch is paramount. From the way you wear your uniform to the way you act in public is something you are always thinking about because it reflects the organization you represent. Witnessing is just like recruiting, **LESS THE LIES.**

- C. Salvation is Enlistment - Many veterans believe forgiveness and peace are impossible for them because of where they have been and things they've done. However, when you tell them about the warrior David and the fact that God referred to him as "a man after mine own heart" it reveals the lie that Satan has been telling them. This fact coupled with the comradery of other veterans often leads to salvation.
- D. Discipleship is Boot Camp - In the military, veterans learned that training the man behind you is an essential part of everyone's job. Therefore, the doctrine of discipleship comes naturally to a newly saved veteran. They expect to be trained. After salvation their first thought is usually what's next and who is responsible for teaching me.
- E. The Great Commission is the Mission - Veterans understand war and veterans care about other veterans. When veterans understand the eternal ramifications of this war and the directive given in the Great Commission, they are eager to drag other veterans from Satan's battlefield, spiritually triage them, and get them in the fight with them.

4. **Church Structure** correlates well with the military life.

- A. After living in a society of knowing when, where, and what I'm supposed to be doing, when dropped into the civilian world there is often a missing link.
- B. Your group, through the dictates of scripture, provides the structure veterans long for. Furthermore, it is a reprieve from the turmoil of the unstructured way of life in the world.

5. **Church Atmosphere** correlates well with military life.

A. For example, when James says **James 1:2 My brethren count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.** I cannot help being reminded of some senior enlisted man from my past telling me that something miserable that I'm going through is going to build character.

6. Look for opportunities to make your group familiar. Often it becomes a game of sorts to find similarities between Christianity and the military: Prayer is like comms; you never want to lose comms. Backsliding is malingering. Missing church is being AWOL.

Section 3

THE ROLES

1. The Pastor's Role

- A. Not every president is a veteran, but every president is the Commander in Chief. The same applies to your pastor. As in every ministry of the church, he is the approval authority in everything you do.
- B. Veterans understand, recognize, and respect authority and appreciate a pastor who cares enough about them to host a ministry for them. Although most pastors may not like it, I would encourage the leader to call attention on deck when the pastor enters the room.

2. The Church's Role

- A. Your Discipled Veteran group is a ministry of your Church. Utilizing special services like Veterans Day and Memorial Day is a good way to grow the ministry. Make a church wide effort to invite veterans and ensure they meet your Discipled Veteran Leader.
- B. Every church member knows an unchurched veteran. Distribute the referral cards from the Discipled Veteran website to church members and ask them to refer a veteran to your Discipled Veteran group leader. Some churches have periodically placed them in the bulletin and keep them available in the foyer.
- C. During Church Visitation it is a good idea to have your members note if they visit the home of a veteran. They should note it on the visitation card so your leader can add them to their Discipled Veteran target list.

- D. Make Discipled Veteran invite cards available to your church members. As they are out and see a veteran wearing a hat or shirt, thank them for their service and give them an invitation card.

3. The Leaders Role

- A. Invision yourself in the role of the command senior enlisted. Your main responsibilities are preparing and teaching lessons, herding your people, keeping the enemy out of your camp, and ensuring the group keeps their focus on the soul.
- B. Motivation and encouragement are very important aspects of the leader's role. He sets the tone for how active or inactive the group will be in progressing the mission. Remind the group often that we are at war and our brothers and sisters are lying on the battlefield dying, and it's our duty to get them.
- C. Comradery is not only an important factor in creating and progressing the mission of your team, but also an important factor in drawing in lost veterans. The leader must foster comradery by not only getting to know the veteran, but their families, for the purpose of nurturing comradery.
- D. Veteran ministry like every ministry is The Great Commission, however, one of the strongest of human relationships already exists advancing the process, use it.
- E. Be prayed up and in your Bible so you are already ready when, not if, the enemy attacks. If he doesn't attack you are doing it wrong.

4. Lieutenants Role

- A. The lieutenant's job is to assist the leader. As you grow it will require more than the leader can or should be doing alone.
- B. Use the Lieutenants for tasks such as planning comradery and evangelical events, making contacts, and filling the gap when the leader is unavailable.
- C. Your Lieutenants should be trainable, respected, and have leadership potential. They are the leader's direct disciples.

5. Saved Members Role

- A. Members are saved members of your church who are a part of the veteran ministry, which makes them scripturally responsible to the Lord and your pastor.
- B. Their role is to actively infiltrate the veteran community for the purpose of giving them the Gospel. The leader and Lieutenants' role is to help them be accountable to their responsibility.
- C. Accountability is crucial, that's how a veteran knows you care about them and that's also how a veteran shows he cares about you. Hold them accountable in carrying out the mission.
- D. Members have the privilege of performing any other assignment the leader deems they are prepared for.

6. Lost Members Role

- A. If your team is doing it right, you will always have saved veterans and lost veterans. They will have different jobs of course, but they are on the team. Include everyone, even lost veterans in the effort of inviting new veterans to the group.
- B. The role of lost members is to become believers, although not referred to as lost members the term is utilized here for distinction, they are those veterans who attend the group for comradery but have yet to become believers.
- C. They hold no position but are there for the purpose of comradery and the opportunity to be witnessed to, they are fully fledged members of the group and are often very good recruiters.
- D. If you treat them like the team, they will want to be a bigger part of the team. This gives the enemy less opportunity to separate them from the team.

7. Disciplined Veteran's Role

- A. This is your church's ministry, but through the process of experience we have learned where the enemy has set some traps in the past and can help you navigate around them. Please call, email, or text with any questions, concerns, ideas, or anything else that you would like a second opinion on.
- B. Use our resources as little or as much as you like. As the Lord leads, we will continue to provide new curriculum and resources for our website.

Section 4

OUR ONLY MISSION

Matthew 28:19&20 19Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

1. In the veteran world it is extremely easy to get sidetracked into veteran benefits, service groups, and ceremonies. All of these are nice things but do nothing in and of themselves to further the gospel mission.
2. Our only duty is to teach people the Gospel. Therefore, in everything your Discipled Veteran group does, the first question is does it progress our ability to present the Gospel. If it doesn't don't do it.
3. There are many other veteran groups that exist for the purpose of veteran benefits, service groups, and ceremonies. The enemy will continually make attempts to draw your group into that realm; the leader must be on point guarding against it.
4. With our only duty in mind, although Discipled Veteran doesn't get involved in those functions, we will utilize organizations like the Veterans Administration and local veteran groups to infiltrate the veteran community but don't do it unless there is an opportunity to distribute the Gospel at least by giving out invite cards.

Section 5

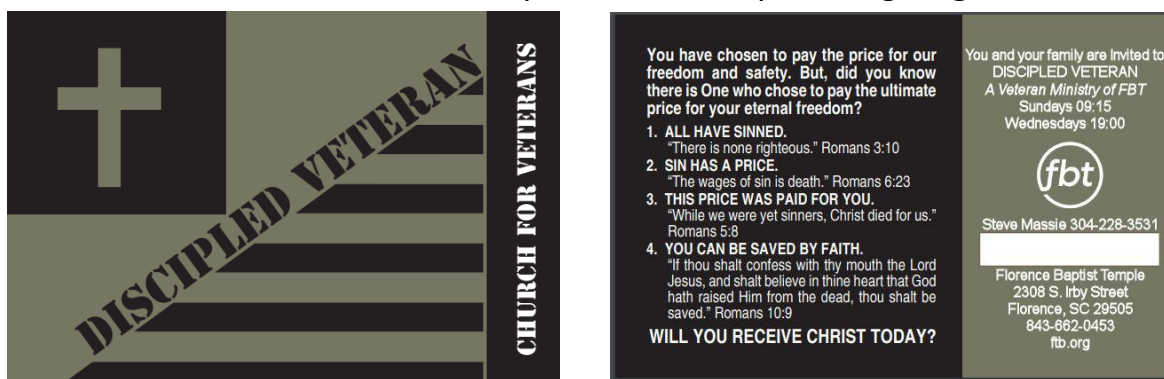
PREDEPLOYMENT

1. **Picking a Leader** – Choose a saved, veteran, man to lead your Discipled Veteran Ministry. Be mindful that in choosing a leader the most important attribute is someone who can and will follow God. However, when I go into battle, I want to follow someone with some scars on their face. Remember the people we are trying to reach are going to have the same scars and will appreciate someone who has dealt with what they are dealing with and can give them counsel on how God led them through it. The enemy hates it when he faces someone he has faced before, who knows his tricks, and how to lead others through them. Discipled Veteran is more than happy to help you vet and choose a leader.
2. **Your Initial Group** - When you begin your group do not invite every veteran in the church to be part of the group. Remember, this is not a group for veterans in the church but a group to bring lost veterans into the church. **First**, choose no more than five people your leader can motivate and mobilize from within your church to recruit, enlist, train, and join in the Great Commission Mission. **Secondly**, diversification is the name of the game because you want to be able to reach as many different groups of veterans as possible. If possible, chose people of different branches, varying eras, a female veteran, and others with as many different experiences as you can. The goal is to have someone to fill each gap. A Vietnam veteran will reach a Vietnam veteran better than an Iraq veteran; a female will reach a female veteran better than a male. Consider which branch is most prevalent in your area and build on that.
3. **The First Meeting** - You must have something to invite them to, so set a date and start promoting the date for your first Discipled Veteran meeting. Set it a minimum of a couple weeks out, allowing you time to prepare your space and properly promote the meeting. Do not be discouraged if you don't have visitors at the first few meetings, use that time to set the tone and motivate your team. The very first Discipled Veteran Meeting was attended by only five people.

4. **Meeting Time** - Select a meeting time, preferably during the regular midweek church service and here is why. The goal is to get veterans into the church. If your meeting is during the midweek service, before or after the service veteran visitors may see someone in the regular service that they already know, which will assist in getting them into regular services. There are other resources during the midweek service like nursery, youth groups, and the main service which accommodate a veteran's family who might join them. Midweek service is recommended over Sunday simply because it is easier to get an unchurched veteran and their family to church during the midweek service. The leader's or one of your members' spouses should be available and looking for new veteran spouses to set with in the main service. If your wife can make friends with a new veteran's wife, you will find it much easier to keep them both coming.
5. **The Room** – If you have the space, have a dedicated room, if done properly the space will be used throughout the week for other things associated with the veteran ministry such as counseling and discipleship. Make it a military space with flags for each branch, the US flag, and The Christian flag. Reserve a spot for a MIA/POW chair in the corner. The meeting format is discussion, so in the beginning when you are small, set the leader at the end of the table, with the tables and chairs in a fashion to support that. Ensure the coffee pot is working.



6. **Invite Cards** - It does not escape me that our recommended invitation cards may seem to contradict our goal of getting them into regular services because they read “church for veterans”, however, the focus of the card is to attract lost veterans and is not meant to make a doctrinal statement. They should include the meeting day and time, the church contact info, and plan of salvation. Three by five makes it easy for your guys to carry and looks less like you have an agenda when striking up a conversation with veterans you meet. Available under the resources tab of the website is a downloadable invitation card. Just change the church info and print. The blank space on the back is provided for the guy giving out the card to write his name and phone number prior to giving them out.



7. **Referral Cards** – Get the congregation involved. Every church member knows an unchurched veteran. Distribute the referral cards from the Discipled Veteran website to church members to refer a veteran to your Discipled Veteran group leader. Some churches have periodically placed them in the bulletin but keep them available in the foyer.

Veteran Referral Card	
CHURCH MEMBER NAME	
CHURCH MEMBER PHONE	
VETERAN NAME	
VETERAN PHONE	
VETERAN ADDRESS	
VETERAN AGE	
BRANCH OF SERVICE	
BEST TIME TO VISIT	
REFERRAL NOTES:	

8. **First Comradery Event** - Comradery building events will help promote and display comradery in the group. It is recommended that you schedule your first comradery building event after you've had a few meetings. This gives you time to promote it during the meetings and to invite new veterans your group will meet. Ensure it is open to every veteran, even if they have never attended a meeting, as this may be the event that makes them comfortable enough to start coming to the meetings. Ensure the event includes the veteran's family, as the families need to meet and start building comradery. A cookout at the church or nearby park is a good option for this first event.

9. **First Evangelism Event** - Sometime shortly after your first meeting schedule an evangelism event. This timing gives you opportunity to promote it in your meetings. Depending on the event, plan to have a Discipled Veteran table set up or some presence so you can meet veterans. It's good to have some way to collect their contact information for the roster that we will discuss later. Have them sign up for a gift certificate for a fishing trip or something you have planned in the future and then take every veteran that signs up at your table. Where the comradery event is for building comradery within the group the evangelism event is to be in the community distributing the Gospel and inviting veterans and their families to the group.

Section 6

MINISTRY MANAGMENT

1. **The Roster:** The Roster may be the most vital tool for managing your ministry because it helps you to manage your people. If the church already has a system to track people you may be able to use it but have some system in place to track your people. Discipled Veteran provides one that has been tailored for the ministry and works very well. It is imperative to list every veteran and spouse you encounter individually so you can maintain communication with them. Use your roster sheet to keep additional data such as family members' names, difficulties you can help with, branch of service, whether they are saved or not. Before long you should have more people to track than you can remember. This will also be useful as you send your weekly Discipled Veteran Updates and other necessary tasks. Under the resources tab of our website, you will find a roster template that you may use. Our roster is divided into four different colors **Red** is new or those that need special attention, **green** are my solid people, **yellow** are inactive, **blue** are contacts we have made but don't attended.

GRP	LAST	FIRST	PHONE	EMAIL	ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP	ATND	BRCH	VST	SVD	MBR	FAM	WRK	FB	SPOUSE	CONTACT	POC	NOTES
0	SMITH	JOE	8432261141	JS@GMAIL.COM	111 MAIN ST	FLORENCE	29505	W	A				WK	WAL MART	X	MARY	LOWES	REDD	VIETNAM, MISSING LEG
1	JONES	DAVEY	8432262121	DJ@GMAIL.COM	112 MAIN ST	FLORENCE	29505	WS	N	X	X	X	W	ENGINEER	X	SARA	VSO	NICK	VERY SMART
1																			
1																			
2	PULLER	CHESTY	8432264121	CP@GMAIL.COM	113 MAIN ST	FLORENCE	29505	W	M	X	X		S	RETIRED		NA	MC LEAGUE	MIKE	MENTAL PROBLEMS
2																			
2																			
2																			
3	SISSY	JOAN	8432264141	JS@GMAIL.COM	144 MAIN ST	FLORENCE	29505	E	AF	X				WAL MART	X		CITY HALL	SARA	ARROGANT
3																			
3																			
3																			

2. **Discipled Veteran Update:** The discipled Veteran Update is a weekly email sent to every person on your Roster whether they have ever been to a Discipled Veteran meeting or not. It includes upcoming events, service times, things going on in the church, and anything else you deem useful to attract veterans. Utilize links to the church's website in the weekly bulletin. After a while it becomes easy to cut and paste the previous weeks update into a new email, delete obsolete information, add new, then cut and paste as a blind carbon copy

everyone's email from The Roster. At times this may seem futile for the purpose of reaching people but in addition to disseminating information to your people, often someone you haven't heard from in months will find themselves in a difficult spot in life and will reach out because they get that weekly reminder that someone cares about them.

3. **Stragglers:** Utilizing your roster, on a weekly basis, make a review of the people on your list noting who has not been in attendance. As you go down the list text or call each one as the Holy Spirit directs you. A simple text like "hey brother, just checking in, haven't heard from you in a bit" goes a long way in accountability and letting your people know you care about them. Before long you will have people texting you when they are unable to attend not because they don't want to get a text but because they know you care about them.
4. **Facebook:** Create a Facebook page specifically for your group. Name it "Disciplined Veteran (church name or town) ". There are many examples of the other groups already on Facebook that you can use. It can be a wonderful tool to display photos of what your group has been doing in terms of events and outings which work to attract other veterans to get involved. This is a great noncommittal way for veterans you meet to investigate the group before coming. Set it up so you must approve posts and comments before they are displayed but I would encourage you to allow most things if they are proper. This is a great place for branch rivalry to take place as it displays the nature of the group. Most every veteran has some sort of social media, usually Facebook to keep contact with those they served with. After you meet a new veteran find them on Facebook and send them an invite to your groups page.

Section 7

INFILTRATING THE COMMUNITY

1. We are not in the fight if we never leave headquarters for the battlefield. When you go on the battlefield the purpose is to search for and engage targets. Because of the existing comradery, targets are easy to acquire. Veterans want to talk to other veterans. That's why you often see veterans wearing branch, unit, and warfare badges on hats, shirts, and license plates, in hopes of running into someone with a similar history. Furthermore, veterans tend to go where veterans go because they share the same interests. This is the open door that makes it easy for veterans to interact with other veterans and gives you the ability to invite them to a veteran meeting at your church.
2. **The Battle Plan:** The Battle Plan is a check list that covers some of the information we are going over today, including a list of agencies, offices, and organizations that nearly every community has, that veterans congregate. Discipled Veteran has made inroads into these groups that you may use to open doors in your individual areas giving you access to their veterans. The Battle Plan we have created for you makes it easy to catalog steps and contacts to ensure you don't miss any. A copy of the battle plan can be found under the resources tab on the website.
3. **Lowes, Home Depot, Walmart, Gun stores:** These stores are great locations to meet and invite veterans to your church's Discipled Veteran group. Go into the store, pick up a paint roller so it looks like you are shopping and start hunting for people wearing Veteran hats and shirts. We wear them because we want to talk about our service with other veterans. We have found the best course of action is not to approach them with the intent of inviting them but with the intent of getting to know them, leave your cards in your pocket. Let them know you are a veteran, ask about where they served, have a conversation, then as you depart give them an invitation card and ask them to join you for a cup of coffee at your next meeting. Get their name and some sort of contact, if you can, and follow up.

4. **Veteran Treatment Court:** VTC is a court program for veterans that have gotten arrested for nonviolent offences. They focus on helping the veteran with the issue that caused their problem instead of just punishment. Every veteran in the Veteran Court Program is required to have a mentor that they are court ordered to have contact with. Across the nation many members of Disciplined Veteran groups volunteer to be mentors. Contact your county courthouse to determine if they have a VTC or if you can help them start one. Often, they don't have them because they don't have mentor volunteers. It only takes a few hours a week, but it can be an extremely valuable resource.
5. **Hospital Emergency Rooms:** Your local civilian hospital emergency rooms have veterans come in who have no one. The doctors want to help them further but just don't know how or what to do. If you build a relationship with the hospital via their volunteer clergy network and tell them to call you when they have a veteran come in they often will. Most hospitals will be able to certify you as Veteran Chaplain/Clergy with a ministry certification from your church. Leave your Invite Cards with the ER desk with a request to call you anytime they have a veteran that needs someone.
6. **Law Enforcement:** Many officers are veterans, and many officers respond to calls concerning veterans. Like Hospitals, officers don't have the resources to properly help veterans that they find themselves interacting with. Meet with your local sheriff, police chief, or agency public relations officer and let them know you are available. Give them your invite cards with the request that they contact you 24/7 when they interact with a veteran in need. Additionally, make yourself available for officers who happen to be veterans. These relationships are invaluable to a constant stream of veterans.
7. **Nursing Homes:** As the veteran population ages and nursing homes recognize veterans have financial benefits that cover nursing home costs, they are often full of veterans. Some American Legion posts have started holding meetings at the nursing homes because of the number of veterans living there. Although you

may not be filling the seats at the church, nursing homes will allow Discipled Veteran groups to hold weekly meetings at their facility for their residents. Also, you may find the home will transport them to the church for the regular meeting as an outing. Some areas have veteran nursing homes specifically for veterans.

8. **Veteran Restaurant Groups:** Search out the local restaurants and find out where the veterans meet for coffee. Somewhere in your town, no doubt, you will find one if not many. When you find one, put on your veteran hat, take others from your group, and start having coffee there. One of our leaders couldn't find one in his area so he started one that meets weekly, and it has grown. Remember it's about building relationships that lead them to Jesus.
9. **Homeless Shelters:** There are 38,000 homeless veterans in the US. The logistics of getting them to the church for a Discipled Veteran meeting are difficult. However, shelters have allowed us to hold weekly Discipled Veteran Groups at their location. Meet with the shelter director, tell them about the group, and ask. On meeting day bring a couple boxes of doughnuts and coffee and you will fill the room with veterans. Keep the focus on the mission of the gospel and steer clear of other issues. The Holy Spirit will let you know when to help a specific veteran concerning other issues.
10. **VA Transition Homes:** The VA operates a home in many areas where they allow homeless veterans 100 days of occupancy as they help them transition into permanent housing. Once you get in with one veteran, utilize that guy and get the others, with new veterans cycling individually every 100 days. The task is to keep the ones you gain after they get out and gain the new ones coming in. These homes can give you a constant stream of new veterans. This is a good place to run a van if you have one and a driver.
11. **Jails & Prisons:** 180,500 Veterans are incarcerated in the US, many as the result of issues prompted by military service. Because some jails have so many incarcerated veterans and the authorities recognize the advantage of having

them separated, we have found some have an area dedicated to veterans. Local Churches who have a Discipled Veteran Group, with approval, can reach those Veterans by beginning a Discipled Veteran group in the local prison or jail. Your sheriff usually operates the jail. Prisons will generally have a warden you can schedule a meeting with. Both are generally looking for positive activities for their inmates.

12. Veterans of Foreign Wars: VFW is certainly an example of going on the battlefield as most are essentially a bar, some are dry. However, by organization mandate one of their officers must be a chaplain and they usually don't have anyone to fill the position. This is a great opportunity for a Discipled Veteran to fill the chaplain position and have an influence. Because you are the chaplain it is difficult for them to discourage you from talking about God. The VFW requires members to meet specific military service requirements. I would not recommend sending one person to join alone but it is a tremendous opportunity for those who are wearing the full armor of God. The VFW has an auxiliary group for spouses also.

13. American Legion: The American Legion is much like the VFW, however normally without the bar and they are less stringent on service requirements. The American Legion is for all veterans, and they also have a mandated officer position of chaplain which brings with it the same opportunities as the VFW chaplain. Nearly every town has one and I would encourage as many Discipled Veterans as possible to infiltrate and become members. The Legion has an auxiliary group for spouses.

14. Disabled American Veteran: DAV mostly focuses on helping veterans obtain benefits. They are also active in operating vans that help veterans make medical appointments. They too have a chaplain in their organizational structure. The DAV has an auxiliary.

15. Veteran Service Office: The Veteran service office is a state office that exists in nearly every county. Their primary purpose is to assist veterans, and their families obtain VA benefits. This means that nearly every veteran family in your area who apply for veteran benefits will go into this office. In that Discipled Veteran is a veteran service organization they will list and refer your group with the other organizations. Usually, every county Veteran Service Officer is a veteran. A bonus is if you can get your county's Veteran service officer to join your Discipled Veteran group. This is also a great resource for finding out what veteran-related activities are going on in the community that your group needs to be involved in. In addition to the State Veteran Service Office other organizations like community health centers offer benefit filing services. Often, they will allow you to interact with veterans hold Bible studies and invite veterans to the group.

16. VA Clinics & Hospitals: VA Hospitals and clinics are great, everyone there is a veteran. Waiting rooms are great places to talk to and invite veterans to your meetings. Leave your cards in the waiting areas of different clinics. Through the volunteer services office you will find numerous opportunities that will allow you to interact with veterans. If you happen to be a mental health patient at the VA, ask your counselor to take a stack of cards and give one to his patients that he feels may benefit from getting out of the house and being around other veterans.

17. The goal is to get you and your people plugged in to as many places as you can, so they create a constant stream of new veterans with little effort, allowing you to target the next area.

Section 8

EVENTS

1. **Comradery Building:** Comradery is the attractant that fuels this ministry. However, these are not just comradery events. Some veterans may not come to a meeting, but they may come to a comradery event and realize church veterans are just like me. They then often feel comfortable coming to a meeting because of comradery. These events should never have a cost associated with them. There are plenty of free or inexpensive things you can do to create an avenue to give a veteran the gospel. Many companies will also provide discounts for veteran groups. Family cookouts, range days, fishing trips, and warrior breakfasts are all good ideas. One of our biggest annual comradery events is the annual River trip hosted by Bible Baptist in Beckly, WV (2026 pictured below). Another is the Army Navy Football game. It doesn't matter if they like college football, who wins The Commander in Chief's Trophy does matter. GO NAVY BEAT ARMY



2. **Evangelistic Events:** Evangelistic events are those scheduled for the exclusive purpose of reaching new veterans and their families with the Gospel. They should include some avenue for doing that or there is no reason to participate in them. Below are a few examples:

A. **Veteran's Day:** Obviously, Veterans Day is one of the biggest days of the year for the veteran ministry. On this day there are numerous opportunities to get the Gospel out. Discipled Veteran has a national connection with Golden Corral. Every year on Veterans Day Golden Corral gives a free meal to veterans. Historically they have struggled with how to confirm those entering the restaurant are veterans. To resolve that problem a Discipled Veteran member stands at the entrance, confirms veteran status, and gives them a Discipled Veteran invite card. That card then becomes their free meal ticket. If you don't have a Golden Corral in your area search for another restaurant that gives free meals and approach them. This may sound like something small but in just four hours, in an area with a veteran population of 7%, we give 800 to 1,000 veterans the Gospel annually.



B. **Community Events:** Fairs, gun shows, parades and farmers market type events that allow you to set up a table are great ways to interact with veterans. Have some cards so you can invite them. Display photos of your events to attract their attention. Have a signup sheet for your next event. This will allow you to gather their contact information and get them on your roster.

Section 9

THE MEETING

1. **BE FIRST:** The Leader should be the first one in the room. You need to ensure the room is prepared before the first person gets there. Ensure the coffee pot is full and the tables are set prior to the first arrival. You also need to be there to greet every person that arrives as they enter the room. If you are talking to someone and someone new arrives, have a backup person in place ready to meet them at the door. When a new person arrives, before you leave them find out which branch they were in and introduce them to someone else in the group from that branch.
2. **Announcements:** It's a good idea to have a whiteboard in the room that you can list the events and prayer list on. Ask the group if they know of something in the community that Discipled Veteran needs to be a part of. This is a good responsibility for your Lieutenants.
3. **Accountability Reports:** Holding one another accountable to each other, the group, and the mission are very important. Each week saved or lost go around the room and report on the veterans we met during the preceding week. Have them report as much information as they can for each invite such as name, branch of service, era they served in, and where you met them. If we are building relationships and having conversations this information should be easy. Often you will find that some of you go to the same barber and now you can invite the barber multiple times. Use this as a time to encourage, strategize, and train on where and how to interact with veterans. Have invite cards on each table.
4. **Prayer Requests and Praise:** This is not just time to make a list but a time to report on our brothers with needs, allow the group to reveal their heart about struggles they are having, and request help. Encourage them to announce the blessings that God has given them over the previous week. Over time this will

become a teaching time for the group as they see requests and needs turn into praises. Not only the meetings but everything you do should begin with prayer.

5. **Open in Prayer:** Do not ask someone prior to if it is ok to call on them to pray, veterans will most always say no because they feel unqualified. Use this as an opportunity to call on someone that you know and have been working with to grow. It is an opportunity for them to take the next step. Ensure that you remind them that it's ok to look at the board and go down the list as they pray.
6. **The Lesson:** As you proceed it is more important to have a meaningful discussion than it is to rush through a lesson to complete it. As you teach, stop periodically and ask if anyone has questions or would like to add anything. Keep an eye on the faces in the room, often you can see a question or concern. Don't be afraid to say hey Joe it looks like you have a question. Undoubtedly, if Joe has a question or comment someone else does also. Once the discussion starts your job is to moderate and keep the discussion on point. If you see it moving away from spiritually meaningful content move on. It's ok if a lesson takes two or three weeks to complete if it is meaningful. You do not want this lesson period to seem like a traditional church group because this is not a traditional church group. The people in your group have been through and had to do some tough things. Maintain Biblical standards but encourage discussions that would not be had in the little old lady class. All the prepared lessons are on the website so if you want your group to follow along, they can go to the website and pull up the lesson, if not don't mention it to them.
7. **Close in Prayer:** Again, call on the guy who needs to pray. The same discussion applies as in the opening prayer, with the addition of anything that may have been brought up during the meeting that you need to pray about. Ask the Lord to help us apply the lesson to our lives.
8. **Encourage Fellowship:** It is not uncommon for this to go on for an hour. Often you can leave the building thinking you are the last one there and find a group

of veterans in the parking lot planning their next fishing trip, showing off the newest gun they bought, or talking about the lesson. These are the things that let you know you have succeeded at creating a unit. Leaders should plan an hour after and intentionally invite them to hang around.

9. **Individual Needs:** At the end of the meeting while others are fellowshiping is a great time to address individual needs. Veterans often appreciate the direct approach so if you see someone who seems like they are dealing with a problem take them aside and ask them about it. It is also a great time, if you feel led to ask if they are saved. A simple statement like “Don’t feel like I’m calling you out because I ask everyone this, but if you were standing before The Lord today, what would He do with you?” Any answer other than a resounding Heaven requires further discussion.
10. Furthermore, you will note that there is no time allotted during our meetings for discussion about anything other than a veteran’s soul. There are plenty of other times and organizations to address other things but NOT at a Discipled Veteran meeting. That said if you see that a veteran could use some assistance, know the resources and individually direct the veteran to them. Then as a loving brother in Christ help him through whatever their problem is.

Section 10

THE FAMILY

1. When a Service member is in the military their family is also. That's not to say that they are deployed in combat areas but that the societal aspects of military service are the same. They may live on military bases, go to military schools, all their friends are living the same way and experiencing the same things in a different place away from extended family and familiar places. On the day the veteran leaves the military and all things familiar, so does the family.
2. The National Institute of Health Research shows military service has a transgenerational impact, with families absorbing behavioral and mental health attributes related to the veteran's experiences, such as hypervigilance, stress responses, and higher rates of externalizing behaviors. Family members frequently adapt to the structured, high-stress, or trauma-exposed realities of the veteran influencing household dynamics. Spouses and children often mirror the invisible coping mechanisms of the veteran.
3. It really makes sense that the family takes on the attributes of the leader. Those attributes work well in the comfort of a society built for it with others who are experiencing the same things, but unfortunately when it's all over and the family is plucked out of that environment and dropped into the world it causes difficulty for everyone in the family. **I can't count the times my wife has said "I didn't used to be like this; I've been around you too long."**
4. Again, as we mentioned when we spoke of the veteran, all focus is on reintegration of a people who don't want to reintegrate into an inferior society. The enemy provides options, none of them good. So, we recreate the veteran society including the family in a church setting. This gives veteran spouses other veteran spouses with similar experiences.
5. One may think that a spouse who was not with the veteran during service would be exempt from this problem, but the opposite is true. Often, it's even more

difficult for them because they are experiencing the family leadership style of the veteran without having experienced the situations that caused them. For this reason, this family stands to get more help from Discipled Veteran than others. She will soon find that it's not a personal problem with her husband or only them dealing with these issues but that there is an entire honorable subculture of society that she may have never known.

6. More often than not it's the spouse that first says there is a problem, something needs to change and then makes the initial step. Veteran families are extremely important to your Discipled Veteran Mission and will feed every other ministry in your church, which is the goal.

Section 11

Sunday School

1. As stated, we recommend you have your Discipled veteran meetings during your midweek services. However, as groups grew some churches have integrated a veteran and spouse Discipled Veteran Sunday school class.
2. **The Class:** These classes usually fall under the Discipled Veteran Ministry but integrate into the churches regular Sunday school Program. We have found this to be extremely beneficial for several reasons. Discipled Veteran Sunday school classes help integrate the family into the church, it gives another opportunity to reach veterans that may not be available on Wednesdays, and additionally some veterans are uncomfortable attending anything without their spouse, Sunday school solves that problem.
3. **The Children:** When a group gets a new family, the leader should personally introduce the parents and the child to the child's Sunday school teacher. That introduction coming from a trusted veteran will overcome many hurdles for the new family.
4. **Church Curriculum:** In a move to integrate with the church the Veteran Sunday school class should use the same Sunday school curriculum that every other Sunday school class in the church uses, however, the leader should change the language and illustrations to better teach his veteran family audience.
5. **Leader and Lieutenant Roles in SS:** When you institute a Discipled Veteran Sunday school the leader and the lieutenants must be prepared to shift and take on duties. This is really a wonderful next discipleship step for your lieutenants and serves as evidence that the program is advancing. While the leader still directs the entire ministry including the Sunday school class, we recommend his teaching duties move from midweek to Sunday school and under the direction of the leader, the lieutenants lead the group during the midweek service.

Section 12

LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Don't be churchy:** This is not to cast a shadow on church culture but often in church culture the foreshadowing consideration is hurting someone's feelings. To the point that it has almost become impossible to question, teach, or hold one another accountable. Don't do that, most veterans appreciate accountability if they know it comes from a place of wanting to help them. For example, if one of your guys miss church the first time it is perfectly acceptable to send them a text that says "**hey, just checking on you**". They know why you're sending it, they know if the reason they missed was acceptable, and they appreciate you having their back. On a second time it is acceptable to send a text that reads "**are you alive, we miss you**". These guys appreciate it because they know you care and it holds them accountable. On a third time, **be knocking on their door**.
2. **Branch Loyalty:** Branch rivalry is a good thing and contributes to comradery building. As the veterans enter the room, keep a head count of the branches represented and use it to motivate the least represented to increase their numbers. On occasion we have run competitions to see which branch can bring the most visitors during a specific period. To a nonveteran it may sometimes sound like they hate each other but it's part of the culture, encourage it.
3. **Female Veterans:** Although doctrinally there must be separation of duties among male and female veterans, ensure that you have and utilize your female veterans. They are your best option in reaching other female veterans with the Gospel. Opening and closing the group in prayer or putting them in charge of an event is a spectacular way of making a female veteran part of the group.
4. **After the Lessons:** Although we continue to add lessons to our website at some point leaders may find that they have taught all the lessons from our website. As the leader, after teaching two years of lessons you will have a good idea of

what your people need to hear in a lesson and know how to prepare lessons, so don't be afraid to write them. This serves as a good growth test for the leader.

5. **Lesson Box:** The Lesson box serves as an anonymous way for members of your group to request a lesson on a topic they need to know more about. Provide some 3x5 cards, a ballot box, and encourage your group to write a topic. If you have a Sunday school class and the lieutenants are teaching the midweek group, they can also write on the card which lieutenant they want to teach it. Leaders should approve and have a discussion with the teaching lieutenant before they present it to your group, as you are responsible for them all. On the rare occasion that you may not have lessons in the box the leader should put anonymous cards in the box for each lieutenant based on topics you think your lieutenant would gain from preparing a lesson on and what he thinks the class needs to hear.
6. **Target List:** Periodically, in addition to normal ministry visits, usually during our church's "new move" visitation program we generate a target list of veterans and or veteran families to visit. The list is comprised of those on our roster that have visited our group but have not returned, referrals from members of the church, veterans we know from the community, and veterans that church members have met during our new move visitation program. The plan is to gather as a group, split into teams of two, and go make visits.
7. **Flags and Signs:** You will find as you drive through neighborhoods that veteran families fly branch flags, have branch signs in the yard, and have cars in the drive with veteran plates on them. While wearing an obvious veteran hat or shirt, preferably from the same branch, ring the doorbell. Tell them you were passing by, saw their flag, and wanted to stop and invite them to the group.
8. **Widows of Veterans:** There are several organizations by different names for widows of veterans. Please reach out invite them and take care of them.

Section 13

THE WEBSITE REVIEW

We make every attempt to keep the website updated with everything you may need to operate your churches Discipled Veteran ministry. Below is a summary of each page.

1. Home: Upcoming events, programs, and announcements
2. Process: This page is used to explain the process of reaching veterans and the correlation with doctrine.
3. Resources: On this page you will find resources for your ministry like roster, battleplan, and invite cards.
4. Curriculum: Provides click to download pdf document of lesson series written specifically for veterans.
5. Contact: Gives way for you and your leader to contact us with questions and suggestions. This page also lists my personal cell number for more immediate matters.

ENGAGING YOUR AO

Lesson Notes

Disciplined Veteran Leader Conference — Closing Session

AO = Area of Operations / your community

Opening: Stephen Hitchcock's Testimony

Training gave you the manual. What you don't have yet is your _____.

What stood out to you about this story:

Movement 1: Recon Your AO

Five Principles — fill in the missing word:

1. Go first. The door doesn't _____ itself.
2. Partner, don't _____.
3. Know your ground before you _____ on it.
4. A _____ has to lead the group.
5. Your _____ are your best access point.

What are the access points already in my AO? (VA, treatment court, VFW/Legion, city events, online presence, member networks):

If you haven't started a group yet: which access point will you approach first, and what's your first step?

If you already have a group: which access point haven't you engaged yet, and what's stopping you?

Other thoughts on this movement:

Movement 2: Sustaining the Advance

The first _____ to _____ weeks run on novelty.

Four things that sustain a group — fill in the missing word:

1. Rotating _____ and table leaders.
2. Varying the _____ on purpose.
3. A structured _____ you can lean on.
4. Building _____, not dependence.

If you haven't started a group yet: what's one ownership role (setup, snacks, a meal, a creative project) you'll build into your group from the very start?

If you already have a group: what's one thing you can hand off to a member in the next 30 days?

Other thoughts on this movement:

Movement 3: Holding the Line

"_____, not spurty" — that's the growth pattern to expect.

Encouragement and accountability happen weekly through _____ and _____ relationships (not just big events).

If you haven't started a group yet: what will help you expect steady, not spurty, growth from day one, so you're not discouraged early?

If you already have a group: a phrase you want to remember when someone leaves your group badly?

Other thoughts on this movement:

Closing

God is the _____ of this ministry. I am not the destination — I'm the _____.

If you haven't started a group yet: one step you'll take this week toward your first meeting:

If you already have a group: the one thing you will do before next Wednesday:

Final thoughts:

AO TOOLKIT

Engaging Your Area of Operations

The Frame: Training gave you the manual. This is your terrain. Recon it, build ownership into it, and hold the line when it costs you something.

☐ Recon Your AO

Check off what you've identified in your town — you don't have to hit all of these to start, but you need to know what's there.

- ☐ Nearest VA facility
- ☐ Local Veterans Treatment Court (if one exists in your county)
- ☐ VFW / American Legion post(s)
- ☐ Upcoming city events (parades, fairs, community gatherings)
- ☐ A findable online presence (even a simple landing page)
- ☐ Names from your current members of vets they know who aren't in the group yet

If you haven't started a group yet: your "current members" may just be you and a few veterans you already know — start your list with them.

☐ Five Principles to Remember

- ☐ Go first. The door doesn't open itself.
- ☐ Partner, don't duplicate. Find what's missing, not what's already covered.
- ☐ Know your ground before you walk on it. Recon is a task, not a feeling.
- ☐ A veteran leads the group. Trust is built by the man who wore the uniform.
- ☐ Your members are your best access point. A named invitation beats any flyer.

☐ Build Ownership, Not Dependence

If you haven't started a group yet: pick one of these to build in from week one, so the group never runs on your energy alone.

If you already have a group: pick one to hand off this month.

- ☐ Weekly room setup/teardown team
- ☐ Monthly themed meal (sign-up sheet, potluck or cash donation)
- ☐ Snack rotation for regular meeting nights (partner people up)
- ☐ A creative project (shirts, logo, name tags — let a member run it)
- ☐ A shared group project (e.g. building a parade float together)

☐ Hold the Line

If you haven't started a group yet: expect this from the start, so it doesn't catch you off guard.

If you already have a group: come back to these when discouragement hits.

- ☐ Expect steady, not spurty, growth.
- ☐ Some people you invest in will leave — sometimes badly. That's not failure; that's real ministry to real people.
- ☐ Build encouragement and accountability into your weekly rhythm, not just big-event moments.
- ☐ Remember: God is the hero. You're the bridge, not the destination.

This week, pick one box above and do it.

Recommended Restaurants near Florence Baptist Temple

1. Stefano's Italian of Florence	843 664-9191	2600 S Irby St
2. Tubb's Shrimp & Fish Co	843 779-5579	1500 2 nd Loop Rd
3. Chipotle Mexican Grill		2037 S Irby St
4. Starfire Grill	843 661-7827	2130 West Palmetto St
5. Cracker Barrel	843 662-9023	1824 West Lucas St
6. Mellow Mushroom	843 407-1442	120 Dunbarton Dr
7. Olive Garden	843 669-8399	2901 W Radio Dr
8. Don Jose Mexican	843 673-6988	2020 West Palmetto St
9. Konnichiwa (Chinese/Hibachi)	843 407-7097	2100 West Evans St
10. Red Lobster	843 661-7130	2540 David H Mcleod Blvd