

November 9, 2015

Late Breaking News, Compelling Ideas, Just Plain Good Stuff for the Gaming Industry!

Doing more than just a discount off the buffet

How three gaming organizations are giving back to our veterans

[By Christine Motta Faria, VP of Marketing, Raving Consulting Company](#)

Earlier in the year, I wrote a [special newsletter](#) around Memorial Day, and asked our readers to tell me about their connections with a soldier. I was surprised by the several emails that I received from veterans currently working in the gaming field. Folks who I've had conversations with for almost 14 years, but never knew of their proud and sometimes painful service; some from Vietnam, to Afghanistan and Iraq. They asked that I didn't share what they had written to me.



I'm not surprised though; most veterans I know don't talk much about their service.

What I'm sharing today are the responses I received from three organizations that have made a dedicated effort to support veterans in their communities.

Riverside Casino & Golf Resort: Golf for Injured Veterans Everywhere
Can you make a difference at your golf resort?

Dan Franz, General Manager, was one of the first to respond to the newsletter, and shared the extraordinary program that Riverside Casino & Golf Resort created back in 2007. Go to this [link and watch the video](#) - it really says it all.

Through this program, many veterans who had not been active because of injuries or feelings of isolation, are now a part of something greater that is helping them improve their quality of life.



How it works is that veterans with disabilities being seen at the Iowa City VA Medical Center, are given the opportunity to learn and play the game of golf for recreational activity, due to the partnership of three area entities. The VA Medical Center in Iowa City, the Iowa PGA Section, and Riverside Casino & Golf Resort have established the G.I.V.E. (Golf for Injured Veterans Everywhere) Foundation, which raises money to fund the Golf for Veterans program, for Iowa veterans who are injured or have disabilities.

The golf program has four phases of training for veterans to participate in that enhance the injured veteran's mental, social, physical, and emotional well-being; and improve their quality of life. The phases include: introduction of golf (rules, equipment, dress, scoring, etiquette, etc.), indoor instruction at Riverside Casino and Golf Resort, practice outdoors at Blue Top Ridge, and the final phase that has veterans playing rounds of golf at Blue Top Ridge.

Throughout the year, Riverside holds several events to keep this valuable program going.

Dan shared, "Our involvement in G.I.V.E. is something that we are very invested in and proud of - something that, along with our unique Iowa non-profit and casino operator partnership model and our employee volunteer program Winning Hands, furthers a big part of our overall mission statement, "To Contribute to our Communities through Service and Development."

Riverside Casino and Golf Resort is a part of Elite Casino Resorts, which has two additional properties in the state of Iowa: Grand Falls Casino and Golf Resort in Larchwood, IA, and Rhythm City Casino Resort in Davenport, IA. The grand opening of The Falls golf course at Grand Falls earlier this year served as a fundraiser for the G.I.V.E. Foundation, and the program has recently expanded to Des Moines, in partnership with the Warrior Run Golf Course in Norwalk, IA. Elite Casino Resorts encourages its team members to give back to their community, and has several initiatives to reward these activities.

Encompass Develop, Design & Construct - Veterans Memorial Park Project
What skills can you contribute to a project?

John Stewart, President, is no stranger to giving. He and his team devote their time, professionally and personally, to giving to the communities where they live and work. In fact, they give away 50% of their profits. With a [daughter Leah, who is an active Marine](#), John's team jumped at the chance to help design, coordinate and build a new 33,000+ square foot veterans memorial, in their home state of Kentucky.

He shared that, "Because of my personal respect for those men and women who have given their lives to make this a great and strong country, I have chosen, along with a number of our team members, to volunteer to assist in development of a very worthy cause. This country was founded on many of the same principles that Encompass embraces. In appreciation for the defenders of our many freedoms, a group has been working for the past five years to develop a new Memorial that honors those Kentuckians and many others who have served all of us in all branches of the military. That project has now been funded for Phase 1, and the land has been donated. We are assisting by managing the design and construction portions of the project (schedules, design development, construction documents, budgets, cash flow, construction coordination). There are many veterans involved, businesses that have agreed to donate labor or materials, as well as others like us who appreciate and have family members who have served. All are volunteers."

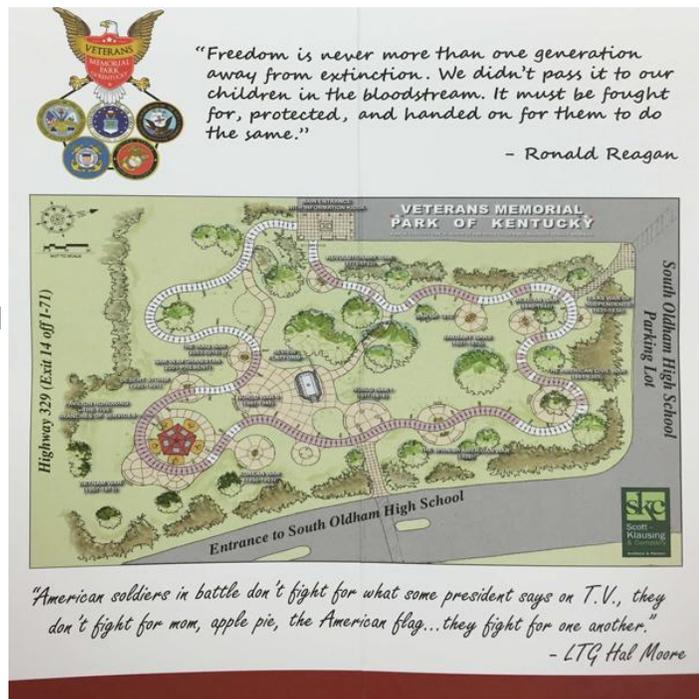
The purpose of the park is to recognize those who served their country, especially those who paid the ultimate price, AND to educate park visitors, especially the youth, in military history.

MGM Resorts International's Salute to the Troops Veterans Day Weekend Celebration

Is giving to veterans a key component of your culture?

MGM Resorts International offers several programs and initiatives that serve veterans and members of the Guard and Reserves. As a matter of fact, in 2014, the Department of Defense Program named MGM Resorts International an "Extraordinary Employer."

Over Veterans Day weekend last



year, MGM Resorts hosted more than 65 wounded warriors and their guests during its annual "[Salute to the Troops](#) ." For the past five years, MGM Resorts has partnered with USO and American Airlines to give wounded veterans an extended holiday weekend in which they are treated like high rollers. The 2014 weekend featured a special celebratory concert by entertainer and humanitarian, Gary Sinise, and the Lt. Dan Band. Upon arriving in Las Vegas, hundreds of MGM Resorts employees welcomed the wounded warriors to The Mirage Hotel & Casino, the host property, during a "Walk of Gratitude." Plans are in the works for this year's Salute to the Troops weekend.

In 2012, the company started Boots to Business, in partnership with the American Red Cross of Southern Nevada. The program is designed to employ veterans who are transitioning back to the civilian world after leaving the military.

MGM Resorts also created an employee Veterans Network Group in an effort to further engage employees who are veterans or current members of the Guard and Reserve. The group meets monthly to provide employees with professional development training, networking opportunities, and exposure to high-level executives.

This summer, MGM Resorts hosted its annual Veterans Career Fair at The Mirage. Hundreds of Las Vegas-based veterans attended.

In 2014, MGM pledged \$250,000 to the [Nevada Military Support Alliance](#) (NMSA) to help build the state's first [Fisher House](#) for military families. The [Fisher House](#) will be built on the site of the Southern Nevada VA Medical Center, and will provide no-cost housing to families of patients receiving care at the medical center.

Also, in support of employees who are called into active duty, MGM Resorts provides eligible employees with supplemental pay and benefits during a combat tour for a declared military action. The company continues all benefits coverage for employees who take a Military Leave of Absence. This includes medical, dental and vision for the employee and his/her dependents.

Much thanks to all the veterans who responded to my original newsletter, and thank you to the companies for sharing their stories that were featured in this article!

The Raving Flash! Report is compiled weekly by [Christine Faria](#), Raving's VP of Marketing, and is designed to be a "quick read" covering everything from interesting casino promotions to gaming news. See our archived reports and newsletters by clicking [here](#). Got an interesting promotion or news item? Contact Chris at 775-329-7864.

John Stewart will be presenting with Kell Houston and Dennis Khanh at [Raving's 18th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#) on the panel, [Are Non-Gaming Amenities the Next Step for Retaining and Growing Your Customer Base?](#) Don't miss attending our signature, long-running conference!

