

# First docket approved for Palm Beach County veterans court

## Set for November 18th

Posted: 11/11/2010

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WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. - The first docket is approved for the Palm Beach County Veterans Court.



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15th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Peter Blanc signed the administrative order Wednesday which approves the court's first docket on November 18th.

Under the newly created court, veterans accused of crimes will be identified within the court system and given options for treatment.

Substance abuse, mental health reviews, even housing will be available through the V-A.

Court administration has already started to identify how many veterans could take advantage of this special treatment court.

From June through December of last year, 362 veterans made their first court appearance here in Palm Beach County.

The court isn't geared to give preferential treatment but instead take advantage of existing V-A programs that could stop future crimes.

Any crime, from serious felonies to misdemeanors can fall into this court.

For some serious crimes, the V-A can only help with pre-release programs.

Palm Beach County Judge Ted Booras, who served in the Marines will preside over the hearings which will take place at the Criminal Justice Complex/Gun Club Facility.

Judge Booras said this court will help veterans get back on the right track.

"Try to get them that sense back of pride and once in a while just talking to them for a matter of two minutes from the bench to them standing, just coming out of jail next to a guard and all of the sudden they're talking to another military person and their whole mannerism can change," said Booras.

Booras will hear at least 8 veterans court cases starting next Thursday.

Veterans won't be alone in their court appearance because they'll have mentors.

Florida Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America president Jerry Klein said, "The experiences we had, we

can certainly related to the experiences that they bring back from their war experience."

Vietnam Veterans of America is just one of the groups that will guide veterans through their court hearings and treatment options.

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