

2022 Veterans of Influence: UCF Lake Nona Hospital's Eddie Brooks gleaned business lessons as a soldier



EDDIE BROOKS

[Eddie Brooks](#) learned plenty of lessons about leadership while serving in the U.S. Army.

The director of facilities management at the UCF Lake Nona Hospital was drafted during the Vietnam War when he was just 19 years old. He served with Delta Troop 7/17th Cavalry Regiment operating out of Camp Holloway in Pleiku, Vietnam, conducting military operations between Pleiku and Qui Nhon over the Mang Yang Pass. He received a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service for ground operations against hostile forces during the same period.

Another thing he came away with: lessons in learning how to be a good executive, Brooks said. "It influenced the insights I gained in leadership. I think of the burden my leaders must have felt when directing young troops."

After two decades of military service, Brooks found his way into a career in the health care industry. Most recently, his biggest task was [opening the new 204,700-square-foot UCF Lake Nona Hospital](#) acute-care hospital in southeast Orlando's Lake Nona community. The property was developed through partnership of Nashville, Tennessee-based HCA Healthcare Inc. (NYSE: HCA) and the University of Central Florida College of Medicine.

It was quite a challenge to open the LEED Silver+ Certified building in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brooks said, which made it his proudest accomplishment in the last year.

Brooks also is quite active in the community as a member of various industry organizations, ranging from the American Society for Healthcare Engineering to The Association of Medical Facility Professionals. In addition, he's a charter member and past president of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post No. 30, and volunteers and contributes to the Disabled Veterans Association, Fairways to Warriors, Meals on Wheels and the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.

For his accomplishments, Brooks was named one of *Orlando Business Journal's* [2022 Veterans of Influence](#). This year, information on the honorees is published online monthly. All the honorees will be featured in *OBJ's* Nov. 4-10, 2022, weekly edition.

Here's more from Brooks:

What was your biggest lesson learned during the pandemic? The need for all health care providers to support both patients and one another during this historic health event

How has your military experience influenced your career? I had some exceptional leaders who managed to tap into everyone's strengths and minimize their weaknesses. The good leaders I knew always were fair, even-handed and mission-oriented — that is what I take into everyday life. I also served under weak leaders who did not possess the ability to inspire confidence in a plan. This is true in most organizations.

What was an experience during your years of service that had the biggest impact on you? A big challenge during my military service was trying to finish my education. Because I served in Special Operations, it was not always possible. However, I was able to earn a master's degree before I retired.

If you could change one thing from your past, what would it be? The year I spent in a combat zone

What was your favorite pastime during Covid-19? To stay home and cook with my wife

What's your hidden talent? Thinking I can play golf — I can't

Eddie G. Brooks Sr.

director of facilities management, UCF Lake Nona Hospital

- Military branch: U.S. Army
 - Years served: 20
 - Operations served in: Vietnam War, 1970-71
 - Highest rank: E8 (first sergeant)
 - Education: Associate's in accounting and bachelor's in business administration, Northeastern University; master's in procurement and materials management, Webster University
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