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VETERANS BOND THROUGH HUMOR AND HELPING OTHERS AT NASA

Rockledge, FL – Marine Veterans Vincent “Vinnie” Howard and Robert “Bob” Piccolella have worked side-by-side at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, FL, for years on a Brevard Achievement Center (BAC) AbilityOne contract. They have forged a tight bond through their shared pride as Marine veterans, their commitment and dedication to their jobs and to helping other veterans -- and through their never-ending sense of humor. As Vinnie points out, “We laugh all day long, and that makes the day go by.”

And those days are filled doing a very unique job. As specialized cleaners, Vinnie and Bob work at the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB), where they build the rockets near the launch pad for NASA. They clean the mica dust from the crawlers that drive the rocket to the pad. They also work miles above the ground on the mobile launcher platforms. Part of their jobs is looking for FOD – or Foreign Objects and Debris. FOD are objects that could impact the functioning of the rockets themselves, so it’s a detailed and critical job. Vinnie notes, “Each building presents its own challenges, and where Bob and I work, there are a lot of challenges, and we are up to the task.” They also love being a part of history.

An unbreakable tie that binds them together is their mutual commitment to helping other veterans. As veterans with disabilities themselves, they understand the challenges many of them face. Both help individuals with specific needs, including with finding employment and dealing with PTSD, and they have also been long-time volunteers with Toys for Tots. In addition, Vinnie has committed much of his personal time to working with many veteran organizations, including the Marine Corps League, Wreaths Across America, the Color Guard and Honor Guard, and Disabled Veterans of America.

They often finish each other’s sentences, and at work, Vinnie and Bob are sympatico when it comes to high-quality work. Bob says, “No matter what we do, because there’s times we have to knock out three or four buildings. I know exactly what I’m doing. He knows exactly what he’s going to do. We don’t have to even talk.” Vinnie adds: “We just divide and conquer.” BAC Project Manager, Maria Mays shared, “Robert and Vincent are instrumental in the improvements of our team. Acting as mentors, they lift struggling co-workers and drive them to be the best that they can be, making our BAC-KSC team highly regarded by our customer.”



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There is no doubt that their friendship will endure, even as Vinnie moves to a new position at BAC as a customer service representative in their call center. "There's always an opportunity within this company to improve yourself and move on," Vinnie points out. "And I am so looking forward to this new challenge because I love being challenged."

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