



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

# COUNCIL COURIER

Space Coast Honors Non-Profit of the Year 2024

SEPTEMBER 2025



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center



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### US Coast Guard Celebrates 235th Birthday

About 200 Coast Guard sailors and family members attended, and there was great support from over 20 vendors and veteran organizations.

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## “JROTC Gets Big Boost to Start 2025-26 School Year”

On 06 August at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) Museum, the community joined together in providing support to all 4 Brevard County JROTC Units.

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AUGUST 2025

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The Courier is a monthly publication prepared and distributed in both print and electronic forms by the VMC/BVC. It reports the ongoing projects by the many committees and departments.

Articles for submission and request for advertisement must be sent to the address listed below. The deadline is the 25th of each month.

Please send submissions to:  
brevardvmc@gmail.com

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## Our Organization

As of 1 June 2025:

[List of Board 2024-2025](#)

As of 30 October 2024:

[BVMC Committee Departments 2024-2025](#)

As of 28 July 2024:

[BVC VMC Org Chart 2024-2025](#)



## Mission Statement

**Brevard Veterans Council:** The Brevard Veterans Council (BVC) is a 501(c)19 veterans organization.

BVC's mission is to work in conjunction with area veterans, local government, and other veterans' organizations to support and promote the interests and welfare of Brevard County veterans and their families.

**Veterans Memorial Center:** The Veterans Memorial Center (VMC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. VMC's mission is to maintain and operate a premier facility to educate the public and provide a vibrant memorial to the service and sacrifice of all military veterans and their families through a museum, memorial plaza, library, and veterans park.

**Brevard Veterans Council, Inc. & Veterans Memorial Center, Inc.**

400 South Sykes Creek Parkway

Merritt Island, FL 32952-3547

Office 321-453-1776

DAV Service Office 321-452-1774



# VMC President's Report

**LCDR Dean Schaaf, USN (Ret)**

With school back in session and most vacations over, we are getting back to normal with events being scheduled and more demands for speaking engagements and such.

We had a great Military Order of Purple Heart ceremony on August 10 and honored seven veterans with bricks in the plaza, plaques from Florida Senator Mayfield and US Representative Haridopolos along with many other Tchotchkies. Quilts of Valor were also presented by Karmel Sowers and her organization.

The Military Officers Association of America Cape Canaveral held our annual picnic at the BVMC, used the grill outside, and fed 52 members of MOAAC and 32 members of the Sea Cadets and parents. MOAAC also presented the Courageous Division with a check for \$1500 to help with expenses in support of the Sea Cadets. Pictures will be in the Courier covering this event.

Space Coast Daily will be having one of their expos at the Center tomorrow, August 20 with an expected attendance of 200-300 people. Around twenty vendors are expected in the Gray Hall with nine more in the Museum. The Red Cross food truck will provide lunch for everyone, and we hope for a successful event.

The air conditioning unit has been out in the Gray Hall, but the county has installed two portable units that are working as hard as possible to combat the oppressive heat we have been experiencing.

The Space Coast Office of Tourism Visitor Information Center has invited us to have a 60 day static display of what the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, Museum, Library, Plaza, and Park has to offer to the public. The visitor center is located at 267 W Cocoa Beach Cswy (SR 520). It is in a strip mall across from the Dinosaur Store and Museum in Cocoa Beach. This will be our chance to let the public know of the hidden gem of Merritt Island and Brevard County. We will set up the display the first week of September.

The Amphitheater and the other building which houses the restrooms and concession stand have really taken shape. The grading for the new road into the park from Fortenberry is in work as well as additional parking places. We are close to having water again in the park pavilion restrooms. Roger Scruggs continues to photograph and post the pictures as it is being built.

All three of our "senior" services are celebrating their 250th anniversaries this year with several different ceremonies. The Coast Guard celebrated its 235th anniversary on August 4th with an open house at the USCG station. The Army celebrated its 250th with the Navy and Marine Corps milestones coming up in October and November. The Air Force celebrated their 77th anniversary on September 18 and the Space Force will be 6 years old in December 2025.

God bless our fallen heroes, MIAs, and POWs and God bless our armed forces.

Dean  
Go Navy beat Army!

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## Chaplain's Corner

**Chaplain Chip  
Hanson  
USMC (Fmr)**

As your Chaplain, also a Marine Corps combat Veteran, I find the division of our Great Nation, abhorrent, that is our 249-year-old society is in a state of unrest to the point of anger, hatred, and even violence.

It appears that our great society is breaking at the seams. To all who read this, please set aside all of our discriminatory feeling's beliefs, anger and hatred.

Whether you are a Jew, Christian, Agnostic or nonbeliever, Democrat or Republican, Our Nation was formed for the benefit all who are Citizens of the U.S.A.

We can and we must show a display of unity, not only at our meetings but also when we are in public discussing anything concerning us or our Country. And hopefully, others will follow by example.

"Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." Philippians 2:3 ESV

GOD BLESS AMERICA  
Chaplain Chip Hanson.



**The 2025, Brevard County 9/11 24th Anniversary  
Memorial Tribute will be held at:**

### **The Veteran's Memorial Park**

Located at:

**400 South Sykes Creek Pkwy  
Merritt Island, FL 32952**

**CITIZENS OF BREVARD COUNTY JOIN US**

**AT 6:00PM ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025  
SUPPORTING AND REMEMBERING THE FIRE, POLICE, EMS,  
CIVILIANS, AND MILITARY WHO LOST THEIR LIVES ON 9/11  
AND ALL THOSE AFTERWARDS WHO SUFFERED  
THE LOSS OF LIFE AND MEDICAL 9/11 CHALLENGES.**



## Secretary's Report

**Kristi Blanchard  
USA (Fmr)**

### **Elections for Newly Created Brevard VMC - October 8, 2025**

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center is pleased to announce elections for its newly created Brevard VMC leadership positions. Voting will take place on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at the Veterans Memorial Center (400 South Sykes Creek Parkway, Merritt Island).

Open positions for current BVMC members include: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three elected Directors.

The Nominations Committee, chaired by Dennis Herring with members Ailene Picheco and Karen Croft, is now accepting nominations. BVMC Members are encouraged to self-nominate or submit names in writing of qualified candidates directly to the committee in person or via email.

- Dennis Herring - dmherring7602@sbcglobal.net
- Ailene Picheco - apicheco@att.net
- Karen Croft - KCroft7@cfl.rr.com

#### **Important Deadlines:**

- August 27 - September 28, 2025: All nominations must be submitted.
- October 1, 2025 Newsletter: Full list of nominees will be published.
- October 8, 2025: Elections held from 8-9:30Am at the VMC Library, 400 South Sykes Creek Parkway, Merritt Island.

If you have questions about the nomination process, please contact the Nominations Committee directly. For general questions, you may also reach out to any member of the current Executive Committee.

We encourage all members to participate in this important step in shaping the future of the Brevard VMC.



# VMC Librarian Report

**Hank Rhodes  
USN (Fmr)**

In July 2025 (the most recent month for which data is available), the library hosted 226 visitors.

Over the past month, the library team has received an influx of donated books, which have been carefully examined. Once accepted, each book has been cataloged, labeled and placed on the shelf. What we can't use goes to the "Free Books" cart.

So far this year, our team has conducted four VHP interviews. Post-production is complete. We are in touch with several other prospects. These interviews become part of the American Folklore Project at the Library of Congress. Hopefully, future generations will be able to experience these interviews by video (or possibly some other technology yet to be invented) and rather than being dry entries in school books, the experiences of our veterans will be a living legacy to generations of Americans yet unborn.

In September, we will resume our last Tuesday night discussion group. Since October marks the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Navy, on September 30 a Navy veteran will conduct a presentation. At least six locations in the United States claim to be the birthplace of the U.S. Navy. We will discuss the case for and case against each claim, and hopefully learn about the origins of America's guardian on the seas.

Non Sibi Sed Patria --- "Not for self but for country."

## Book of the Month: "War As I Knew It" by General George S. Patton

**Reviewed by H.V. Rhodes**

Just as General George Patton stands out as a unique character in American military history, so *War As I Knew It* is an unusual book, consisting of three discordant sections. It is less a narrative than an outline or a draft of a book that was never completed due to General Patton's untimely death shortly after the conclusion of World War Two. The present book was compiled by the General's widow, Beatrice, and Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Paul Harkins, Deputy Chief of Staff to Patton (and later commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam from 1962-1964).

The first section, based on letters to Beatrice, covers the campaigns in North Africa and Sicily. A disproportionate share of this section is allotted to describing ceremonies involving the King of Morocco (a U.S. ally), Vichy French officials (enemies turned allies), and of local architecture. The second section, by far the largest, details the battles and campaigns of the Third Army from August 1944 to the end of the war, including the counterattack to relieve Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge. General Patton's description of his deployment of Corps and Divisions in an unrelenting advance reads like a chess grandmaster's account of crushing a worthy opponent. Unless one has a detailed understanding of European geography, however, at times the narrative is difficult to follow. The accompanying maps are helpful but only to a degree.

This section is peppered with General Patton's choice aphorisms: "A pint of sweat saves a gallon of blood" (his own), "In every battle there comes a time when both sides consider themselves beaten; then he who continues the attack wins" (General U.S. Grant) and the often-repeated "Do not take council of your fears" (General Stonewall Jackson). He also does not miss an opportunity to criticize his nemesis from the Sicily campaign, British General Montgomery. The first chapter of the third section is a series of reflections and suggestions that resembles Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. The second chapter is a synopsis of 34 incidents in General Patton's career from West Point to the end of his command of Third Army where he illustrates his philosophy. Among the highpoints: In 1914, then-Second Lieutenant Patton protected an African-American soldier falsely accused of rape from a lynch mob in Kansas; and in 1943, his actions to restore confidence among the II Corps after the defeat at Kasserine Pass (Tunisia) under a previous commander, so these same soldiers were victorious at El Guetter within two weeks.

*War As I Knew It* is recommended for students of General Patton or of the Third Army. The third section, "Retrospect," is of greatest interest to the general reader. *War As I Knew It* (1975 reprint) is found in the VMC library as "Bio-Patt-01."

# Park and Plaza Report

## By Donn Weaver

Countdown Begins – A few Months Away We Hope

### PARK

The month of August was hotter than usual and included more than 4 days lost to work due to heavy rains and lightning in the area, but the BVMC Amphitheater and other Park progress has now accelerated ahead of schedule. The roofs for both the Amphitheater and Concessions/Restroom Building were completed along with great progress on the new Fortenberry entrance and start of more than 100 new parking spaces. Some pathways were repaired so that the 27 Sep first JROTC 5K will be able to use them. By next month we should have a good handle on whether our hoped for Veterans Day, 11 November Ribbon Cutting is possible - assuming hurricanes stay away!

### BRICKS

The seven Purple Heart Bricks were laid in the monument area after the 10 August Ceremony, which you can read about in this issue. It was quite an event. There were only three other bricks ordered this month but upgrades and maintenance continued making our plaza look great, especially compared to many other such areas in the county.

### BENCHES

Orders picked up with the new Park opening soon (with four being delivered in August), including one requested by local fishermen who come almost every day to fish off our walkway behind the Gray Hall. That bench will stay out in that area to be enjoyed by all.

### TREES

Only one new Memorial Tree was requested but we had lots of inquiries about when the 27 already paid for would be planted. Right now, it planned to begin in mid-September.



Scottish Band practicing during construction.



Installing the roof.





## BVC Vice-Chairman Report

### Jim Carleton

Wow, how fast is this summer going, time flies. As we get ready to move into fall, we will be entering a remarkably busy time for the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center. The Governance Committee dedicated several months to the development of the organization's new by-laws. The BVMC by-laws were voted on and accepted in the spring of this year.

One of our next big issues is the election of new officers. This note will serve as notification of intent to start the election process. To that end, Don Pearsall has selected a Nomination Committee, presented it to the EXCOM, they then approved the team, and the following is your Nomination Committee for 2025: Dennis Herring, Chairperson, with Ailene Picheco and Karen Kroft as committee members. We are looking for "a few good men and women". We hope to have the election process complete before Veterans Day. If you are interested in taking your support of our veterans to the next level, please consider running for a BVMC office or one of the Board of Director member positions. Those interested in running need to send a written note or email to the EXCOM or the Nomination Committee Chairperson. The names will be processed, and nominees presented to the Board of Directors, then introduced at the General Membership meeting. You will have approximately 30 days to review candidates and then the election will be held at the next General Membership meeting.

The transition to the BVMC is moving along and the punch list of open items is getting smaller. Dave Clayton has resolved the name issue with the IRS. The discussion and signing of the new lease with Brevard County Parks and Recreation is in work. Don Pearsall has a handle on that and is working it. Meanwhile have you checked the progress of the Amphitheater? If not, you should. There is a beautiful facility growing in our back yard. They recently put the roof on the main structure and the new snack bar/restrooms are "looking good in the neighborhood". Several of us are keeping an eye on that with high hopes of it being ready for a grand opening around Veterans Day. Events at Gray Hall in the center are picking up as we head into fall. It's going to be a packed and exciting period for the BVMC. We invite you to join us in our collective effort to support and help our nation's veterans. Join us for a noble cause and enjoy yourself. I hope to see you all soon at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center.

As Always,  
Jim "JC" Carleton  
Semper Fi

## Veterans Connections

### By Don Pearsall, CEO

Holy Cow, have we been busy this last month. So much has happened in service to veterans and their families. everything from rental assistance, bus passes, automobile donations, we have two electric mobility scooters, with power ramps. A bunch of furniture and are restocking of the ever popular MRE's. We are working on the sequel to our book. "Back from the Front" which was published in November 2015. Since then, much has happened in the personal and medical management of PTSD and MSTS. Different methods, upgraded therapies and treatments. We have also restructured our organization that allows us a faster response to veteran and family needs.

We have two female veterans that have recently joined our organization. One from the Army the other from the Coast Guard, so I think that will make it easier for female veterans. They are taking charge of organizing podcasts and speaking to veterans groups about our services. We hope to kick this off sometime in early November. They also plan to visit military installations to speak to current or future veterans about many topics.

In other news, I will be working with Tom Fitzgerald from Southern Pride. He retired his mules that pulled the Caisson at the National Cemetery and replaced them with two beautiful horses. Actually, horses may be a little easier to train than mules. Ever hear the expression "Stubborn as a mule"? as a cool footnote, Tom and I are from the same area of upstate New York. It fact, two adjoining towns. I am looking forward to helping as his services are important to a grieving family.



**SENIOR SCENE®**

AUGUST 2025

FREE

We Remember Annette

Aging In Place

3 Retirement Mistakes

Outsmarting the Cruise Line

Cover Artist:  
AnnaJo Newman Vahle

Helping  
**SENIORS**  
of Brevard

FINANCE | HEALTH | ENTERTAINMENT | CALENDARS | NEWS

The new issue of Senior Scene Magazine is now available to pick up at locations around the Space Coast, including the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center. Enjoy the many informative and entertaining articles and challenging puzzles, including the VMC calendar and patriotic article. You can also read the entire issue at [www.seniorscenemag.com](http://www.seniorscenemag.com)

# Brevard Veterans Council Report

By Don Pearsall, Chairman

As the election approaches for the new organizations, it is getting near the time for the Council to become another chapter in the memories of Brevard County veterans. It's time, and it makes sense.

Management succession is very important to our operation. There is always a need for someone already to lead in case of unforeseen consequences within the current leadership. As you can see, both positions, President and Vice President take a great deal of time. Our center is no longer a mom-and-Pop business. There are so many facets to this operation, and it is actually a full-time volunteer job.

I also think it will only increase when the new amphitheater is complete, as we will also need to work with the management company regarding the coordination of our events such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, the 911 ceremony and many others. The influx of visitors for concerts, I'm sure it will impact our museum, for many, even on Merritt Island, don't even know it exists. The outlook is bright for the future, and we owe it all to the people like Lou Rossi, Ray Norman and many of the other founders. Most of all, we want the 70,000 plus veterans and active military in our county to be proud and we stand ready and always "On Watch" still serving them.

GO ARMY- BEAT NAVY

# Our Constitution & It's History

By Julie Adamson

## A FEW FACTS:

- America was largely defined early on by two cities, Jamestown founded in 1607 and Plymouth founded in 1620.
- The average length of a national constitution across world history is 17 years.

"Now, more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless, and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness, and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave, and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature.... If the next continental does not find us a great nation... it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation do not aid in controlling the political forces." -President James Garfield



THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WAR POST & AUXILIARY,  
THE US AMERICAN LEGION POST & AUXILIARY, AND  
THE CITY OF CAPE CANAVERAL PRESENTS:

## VETERANS DAY PARADE & BBQ

Celebrate & Honor Our Veterans!

Bring your family and friends to commemorate our brave veterans and enjoy a day of celebration!

**Featuring:**

- Food available for purchase
- Live music
- Fun games for all ages
- A great time with your community







Date: Saturday, Nov 8, 2025  
 Time: 11:11 AM  
 Staging: Cape View Elementary School  
 Ending: Taylor Road  
 Festivities: Nancy Hanson Complex  
 Sheriff's Taylor Avenue Parking Lot

For info please contact:  
 E-mail: [VFWPost10131@gmail.com](mailto:VFWPost10131@gmail.com)

To Volunteer to help set up or help with activities:  
 E-mail: [VFW10131auxdistrict8@gmail.com](mailto:VFW10131auxdistrict8@gmail.com)

Applications available at the VFW, American Legion, and City Hall

# BVMC Scholarship Awards 2025

By Jay Longway, Scholarship Committee Chairman, USMC (Fmr)

The BVMC Scholarship Committee finalized their review of all applications received by the NLT 5 pm deadline on 28 June 2025. The Committee members (Garet McKiimmie, Vic Rogers, Mary Ann Tucker, Doug Bisset and Jay Longway) were the core team for reviewing all applications received for compliance, accomplishments and skills. As a result, each was rated and ranked to ensure a positive conclusion.

The results were indicated by the successful presentation of Scholarships to the following individuals with family members in attendance, at the 13 August BVMC General Membership meeting.



Lori-Anne Wright  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University  
US Navy Helicopter Pilot

Arabella Col'on.  
Flagler College  
US FBI / Law Enforcement

Marilynn Penney  
Eastern Florida State College  
US Naval Focus

Andon Picheco  
University of Central Florida.  
US Dept. of Interior

The Committee will reconvene in January 2026 to initiate the review of "lessons learned" of 2025 experiences, and apply appropriate refinements to the BVMC Educational Scholarship Program Application process for School Year 2026.

# PIE Kickoff Fair Has Veteran Connection

By Donn Weaver

Over 690 vendors and 200 visitors from the Brevard educational community, nonprofits and businesses attended the Partners In Education (PIE) Kickoff Fair at the Viera School Board Meeting Room. The major veteran participant was the Education and Citizenship Armed Forces Coalition of the Space Coast (ECAC).

Operating now for three years with strong support of the BPS leadership, veterans' organizations like MOAAC, SAR, VFW and Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, had a table at the Fair and shared information with over 100 teachers and administrators from 50 schools.

ECAC has produced a website linked to all things military from getting into the academies to training via delayed enlistment and much more; active duty/recruiters; the Museums of Brevard; and the annual Space Coast Military Enlistment Ceremony. Check out [www.becfo.org](http://www.becfo.org) for the website details.



ECAC table l-r, Stephanie Robinson (Works Force Brevard and STEM); Tammy Dennis (USAFC and ECAC Coordinator); Donn Weaver.



Some of the vendors at PIE Kickoff fare.

# Remember Victory Over Japan (V-J) Day – 80 Years Later

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice President

On 14 August 2025 the Veterans Administration held Ceremonies at every VA/NCA Cemetery in the country to remember a very important date in American military history – the surrender by Japan 80 years earlier to end WWII. About 40 people attended the event at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery (CCNC) that began early on a usual warm morning. Cindy VanBibber shared moving comments about the war's end and the huge impact that day had on millions of veterans who knew they were headed home, while over 400,000 of their buddies did not.

VanBibber also made reference to the solid obligation of our country and the VA to keep veteran history alive as she listed many of the key battles of the Second World War. Among the over 19,000 veterans and spouses now laying in honored rest at CCNC (as of 31 July) 2,157 of them are WWII veterans. Their number includes one Tuskegee Airman and his spouse who were re-buried at CCNC during a moving 2019 ceremony.

The North Brevard Color Guard rendered the 21-Gun Salute after a symbolic wreath was laid by an amazing Brevard County Resident, Cam Pelletier, now 103 years old. Cam Pelletier was a Navy SeaBee who served in combat during three major island campaigns in the South Pacific. His job was to help build airstrips and fighting positions for American aircraft and troops as they moved closer and closer to the Japanese main islands. Pastor Jerry Hanson led prayers for the fallen and wounded, but also for the decision of surrender which likely saved hundreds of thousands more lives. The beautiful Caisson shared by Tom and Denise Fitzgerald was flag draped and in place to honor all WWII veterans then and now.

The WWII V-J Day Ceremony is held every five years by all VA Cemeteries. Those who attended hoped they would make the next one and many more would attend as well.



Cindy VanBibber giving remarks with Pastor Hanson (seated) and the caisson.



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# Designer Bag BINGO

Sunday, November 16, 2025  
3pm - 6pm

Merritt Island Moose Lodge #2073  
3150 N Courtenay Pkwy,  
Merritt Island, FL 32953

**Admission - \$40 per person or \$200 for a table of 6**

Your admission includes 15 exciting bingo games with the chance to win gorgeous designer handbags, all while giving back to those who serve our country and community. Reserve a table of 6 for a discounted rate and enjoy the fun together! Seats are limited - grab yours early and help us celebrate heroes, one bag at a time!

**Hero & Handbag - \$300**

Be a hero with high style! As a Hero & Handbag Sponsor, your \$300 contribution provides a stunning designer handbag for our Designer Bag Bingo giveaway. You'll enjoy admission for two and receive special recognition during the event as a valued sponsor helping us make a difference - one bag at a time!

**Valor & Vogue Sponsor - \$650**

Where bravery meets elegance - as a Valor & Vogue Sponsor, your contribution covers the cost of a designer handbag and premier seating for 10 in addition to being prominently recognized as one of our top sponsors throughout the event and promotional materials.

For more information visit [www.hu2h.org](http://www.hu2h.org)  
email contact [email@hu2h.org](mailto:email@hu2h.org)  
or call (850) 919-4624

All proceeds benefit Heroes United to Heal Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit that supports veterans and first responders

 **MOAA Cape Canaveral  
GOOD DEEDS FOUNDATION** 

# FIRST ANNUAL VETERANS DAY RECOGNITION DINNER

Join us at this special event. All proceeds will go to support for military veterans, JROTC/ROTC and active duty projects in Brevard County

**\*\*\* SPONSOR A TABLE \*\*\***

NOV 8, 2025 • 5:15 PM COCKTAILS  
6 PM DINNER  
HOLIDAY INN VIERA CONFERENCE CTR



**TABLE SPONSOR-\$1,250**  
\*One Table (10 seats)

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\*Two Tables (20 seats)  
Full page ad in program  
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 **Education & Citizenship  
Armed Forces Coalition  
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Providing opportunities from Kindergarten to Career across Brevard County



**ECAC Goals**

- Expose students to Brevard Museums
- Engage veteran & civic groups
- Expand STEAM opportunities



Brevard Education, Civic & Funding Opportunities  
Find & finance your future  
[www.becfo.org](http://www.becfo.org)

Tammy Dennis  
ECAC Coordinator  
tdenniszone@gmail.com



**IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN!  
EARLY BIRD RENEWAL**

Renew Your Membership Dues for 2026 before November 7, 2025, and you will be invited to an Early Bird Dinner. Three Lucky members will be selected by a random drawing and their dues will be paid in full.

*In the spirit of Service Not Self, please renew your American Legion Auxiliary membership today and help us continue our mission outreach and advocacy efforts to serve our nation's veterans.*

Dues are \$45 per year.  
There are 4 easy ways to pay . . .

Pay Online: [www.ALforVeterans.org](http://www.ALforVeterans.org) - Login to your account. Click "Renew"

Pay by Phone: Call National Headquarters at 317-569-4570 between the hours of 8AM-4:30PM EST and speak with a real person who will assist you in paying your dues.

Pay by Mail:

Checks should be made out to:  
American Legion Auxiliary 344  
And mailed to:  
ALA Unit #344  
400 South Sykes Creek Pkwy  
Merritt Island, FL 32952-3547

Pay in Person: By cash, credit card, or check

Questions? [americanlegionaux344@gmail.com](mailto:americanlegionaux344@gmail.com)



**Holiday Illumination 5K**

**PRESENTED BY**  
**TRINITY FITNESS**  
**MERRITT ISLAND**

**REGISTER NOW** 

**\$30**

**Run or Walk!**

**Veteran's Memorial Park** | **December 13th 8:00am**

**Running Zone**  

**In partnership**

# JROTC Gets Big Boost from BVMC, MOAAC, ECAC and Others to Start 2025-26 School Year

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice President

During a half-day meeting at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) Museum on 06 August, the community joined in providing support to all 4 Brevard County JROTC Units. Classes start next Monday for the 7 Army, 3 Air Force, 2 Navy, 1 Marines and 1 Space Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs. The JROTC Instructors got a leg up in getting funds, completing event schedules, learning about BPS, Good Deeds Foundation (GDF) and Education and Citizenship Armed Forces Coalition of the Space Coast (ECAC) as well as Service recruiters and others support.

Dean Schaaf, President of BVMC, briefed on the status of the \$8.2 M BVMC Park Amphitheater and related Park upgrades, which will support numerous JROTC events starting in late September. He also encouraged museum tours, service projects and support to major events like 9/11 Remembrance, Last Naval Battle of the Revolution, Veterans and Memorial Day events at the BVMC and Park. MOAAC's Treasurer, RADM Wayne Justice, USCG, Ret and GDF President Donn Weaver spoke about plans to support JROTC with major cash grants (\$42,000 total), purchasing all trophies, ribbons and medal (\$20K for 15 major events), special JROTC projects during the year, and possibly another cash infusion for the second semester. MOAAC's Student Affairs Committee including Dan Wilson, Hans Hunt, Mike Broski and Scott Waggoner, spoke about special events, awards, service hour options and much more.

BPS Superintendent Mark Rendell made a surprise visit to encourage the JROTC Instructors with their important missions for the year ahead and to announce a new program. With the help of the veteran community, he will support a unique Challenge Coin program for every JROTC school to award stellar cadets and all seniors who serve two or more years as cadets when they graduate. That would become their "first" official military challenge coin. Some will get another if they choose to join any military branch next year at the Ceremony noted below.

Led by Matt Susin, Brevard Public Schools Board Member, an ECAC team with Yvette Cruz (BPS Community Relations), Tammy and Maj Gen Dwyer, USAF, Ret, briefed about the new ECAC website. It offers access to students, parents, teachers, JROTC Instructors and guidance counselors to all options for scholarships, training and awards related to the military. This includes getting into the Academies, ROTC College Scholarships, delayed enlistment training programs and working with the Museums of Brevard to enhance student visits and knowledge about the military and veterans. They confirmed the plan to host a second annual BPS/ECAC Space Coast Military Services Enlistment Ceremony in late April 2026 at the new BVMC Amphitheater and Park is in the works.

By the end of the morning, the JROTC Instructors departed with more capabilities and were better aware of how much our community and BPS support them as they begin another year working with likely over 2500 JROTC cadets in Brevard.



All JROTC Instructors after each receiving their \$3000 GDF checks with Wayne Justice, MOAAC in the missile.



L-R Wayne Justice LTC Joe Pavone, Donn Weaver, SFC Freddie Moreno and SFC David Mercer with Astronaut's CSM Sean Branham and LTC Damion Atchison in the background after getting their check.



Donn Weaver and Dean Schaaf provide BVMC and other information (photo courtesy TSS).



Hans Hunt, a former JROTC Instructor for 12 years and 2VP MOAAC outlines support plans.

# US Coast Guard Celebrates 235th Birthday

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice President

Despite being one of the hottest afternoons of the year and both cutters away from port on missions, Monday, 4 August, was a banner day at the USCG Station Port Canaveral. About 200 Coast Guard sailors and family members attended, and there was great support from over 20 vendors and veteran organizations.

AVET deserves special recognition for providing and cooking all the BBQ meals of hot dogs, chicken and much more. The USO had great giveaways for the kids, and the music was festive with short speeches of appreciation and lots of raffle prizes.

As always, the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center and MOAAC were set up next to each other. The Good Deeds Foundation of MOAAC contributed \$1,000 to the USCG Station Foundation in support of the USCG birthday and USCG Family Day. GDF also regularly supports AVET and USO for all they do for active-duty military and families.

One highlight of the event was the USCG Station Fire Suppression Truck breaking out the hoses for the kids to seek out and cool down, along with a big water slide. Thanks to Hans Hunt of MOAAC and Harry Beaver of BVMC for being the primary organizers to make sure we showed our sincere support for what the Coast Guard members and their families do for our country. Semper Paratus.

Check out the article's photos taken by Donn Weaver and Dean Schaaf.



The supporting teams surround the basketball court.



USCG Fire Team saves the day (MOAAC and VMC people wished they had joined the kid).



The VMC tent with Harry Beaver covering for four hours!! with help from VMC President Dean Schaaf.



DAV Service Officer Jennifer Cook will be participating in the Walk for her second year in a row. In 2024, Space Coast residents raised over \$144,000 at the Walk to End Alzheimer's. [https://www.wesh.com/article/walk-to-end-alzheimers-raises-over-cocoa/62315733?utm\\_campaign=snd-autopilot&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1iN0oQ4iQXle0faxWfTDtod1OWahK\\_ykVLjFNcmldkovGPVm52wsN\\_nzo\\_aem\\_HgiyeGj7sV9laWXNxFsecA](https://www.wesh.com/article/walk-to-end-alzheimers-raises-over-cocoa/62315733?utm_campaign=snd-autopilot&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1iN0oQ4iQXle0faxWfTDtod1OWahK_ykVLjFNcmldkovGPVm52wsN_nzo_aem_HgiyeGj7sV9laWXNxFsecA)

If you would like to donate or register as a participant in this year's Walk, please click here [https://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr\\_id=18495&pg=personal&px=23555767](https://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr_id=18495&pg=personal&px=23555767)

# Detachment 513 Marine Corps League

CONTINUING SERVICE...BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER.

All Veterans provide a level of service while on active duty for a given period of time, be it 4 years, 12 years, or with some staying until retirement with 20+ years of service. And after those hectic years of service, it is not un-common for a vet to join one of the many Veteran Service Organizations (VSO's) i.e. the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Marine Corps League, or the Fleet Reserve Association, to maintain contact with comrades and continue to provide and support their local community and veterans. Although somewhat A-typical, a few individuals are able to pursue both careers simultaneously providing equal sustenance to both entities. While serving in either status, as a member of the active forces or in a VSO, you progress to your "terminal rank", be that the rank structure or the elected officer position. But what then? If on active duty you typically retire and start collecting your retirement. In a VSO environment, since you are voluntarily serving in a position of authority and knowledge, you move into support rolls and committee activities, hopefully providing guidance, wisdom, and insight for others following in your footsteps. Even in these rolls, leadership is by example. Showing your tenacity and commitment to a cause is inspirational and sometimes, when the circumstances are right or the stars align properly, the setting is profound and acute.

So it was on 26 July '25 when four Commandants (Past and Present) from the Marine Corps League Detachment 513 joined ranks for a Color Guard performance at the USSSA Space Coast Stadium in Viera, FL. Presenting the Colors at the start of the USSSA War Games Baseball Tournament were current Commandant Chuck Betz (2025-202?), Jr. Past Commandant Rick Bedford (2023-2025), Past Commandant Dennis Herring (2022-2023), and Past Commandant Vinnie Howard (2016-2022), joining ranks as the Brevard County Sheriff's Office helicopter did a low-pass flyover.

This continuing service, even after holding the detachment's highest ranking position, shows true dedication to our service, our detachment, our league and fulfills the mission to benefit the veteran's and youth communities in Brevard County. More importantly, this commitment provides an example of enthusiasm for the younger members of our organization. Hopefully inspiring them to carry on this unselfish attitude of ardent military bearing.

Our Marine Corps heritage is one of selfless service to God, County, and Corps and our execution of perfect military showmanship should be inspirational to all who witness these events. Our country, our Corps, our flag presented with dignity, reverence, and precision is an example for all to follow.  
IT JUST NEVER GETS OLD !

*United for Heroes  
A Gala for Hope & Healing*



**VIP Tickets - \$250  
General Admission - \$125  
Sponsor Packages Available**

Go to [www.hu2h.org](http://www.hu2h.org) to learn more  
Saturday, February 28th 2026  
5 pm - 10 pm  
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8701 Astronaut Blvd  
Cape Canaveral, FL

*Dress Code: Dress to Impress/Formal*

**Featuring Keynote Speakers**  
American Sheriff Mark Lamb  
&  
**SOCM Ross Munro, (Ret) US Navy SEAL, Team SIX**

Featuring the Evening's Emcee, Brevard County Clerk of Court and Comptroller, Rachel M. Sadoff  
&  
Auctioneer Extraordinaire, Brevard County Sheriff, Wayne Ivey

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**Bar Sponsor - \$5000**  
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Includes VIP Admission for four with open bar, premier seating with keynote speakers, American Sheriff, Mark Lamb and Retired Navy SEAL Master Chief, Ross Munro, a signed copy of Mark Lamb's most recent book, company recognition on all promotional materials to include website, social media and Table Signage

**Floral Sponsor - \$3000**  
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**Program ads**

**Full page - \$250 \* Half page - \$150 \* Quarter page - \$75 \* Eighth of a page - \$50**

Accepting donations for auction items For questions about becoming a Sponsor, email: [contact@hu2h.org](mailto:contact@hu2h.org) or visit [www.hu2h.org](http://www.hu2h.org)

All proceeds donated to Heroes United to Heal Foundation, a 501c3 dedicated to ending veteran and first responder suicide by hosting mental wellness retreats



# U.S. Navy



## 1775-2025

At least six places claim to be the birthplace of the U.S. Navy. Join us as we discuss each claim and uncover the origins of America's Guardian on the Seas.

6PM Tuesday Sep 30  
BVMC Library  
Merritt Island, FL



**Responders are ready and available to support you.**



## Advertise in the Courier

### RATES

Business Card: \$50 per year  
 Quarter Page Color: \$150 per year  
 Half Page Color: \$250 per year

Our emailed newsletter reaches hundreds, including vet organizations, government officials, 500 VMC members and more.

Ads are in support of the VMC, a 501(c)3 organization, and may be tax deductible. Funds will be used to improve the Courier and expand circulation in 2023 and beyond.





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## VETERAN TRANSPORT SERVICES

Veterans have gone above and beyond in their service, and we believe it's our turn to reciprocate. While we typically offer weekly services, we have developed special packages to offer greater flexibility for our veterans.

Whether it's attending a doctor's appointment, grocery shopping, completing errands, or simply enjoying social activities, we are here to provide the support you need!

★★★★★

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- 6 Hours - \$190.00
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- 20 Hours - \$580.00

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- Package must be used within 90 days.
- 2 Hour minimum each transport.
- 48 Hour notice required

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Kay Rathke, U.S. Army (Retired) Master Sgt. &  
 Women Veterans Call Center Representative



U.S. Department  
 of Veterans Affairs



# Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar September 2025 and Beyond

Contact VMC for any additions or other information.

NOTE: Some events change in between our monthly mailing of the VMC Calendar. Keep up to date with those changes using our web link: <https://veteransmemorialcenter.org/upcoming-veterans-events/>

## SEPTEMBER

**06 Sep – NEW TIME AND VENUE.** Space Coast Honor Flight Send Off, 0400 -0530 hrs at Melbourne Airport Terminal. Honors 40 plus veterans and guardians with travel to Wash DC to visit their monuments and memorials. Check out SCHF.org for more info.

**10 Sep – DAV Chapter 32 9-11 Special Event** and Remembrance 1700-1930 at Eau Gallie Civic Center, 1531 Highland Ave, Melbourne. FREE EVENT for Veterans, First Responders and families. Food at 1700, Ceremony with guest speakers at 1800. Raffles, Silent Auction, Military Art Auction and more. RSVP to mail@fldav32.org

**11 Sep – 09/11 Remembrance Ceremony BVMC Plaza** and Gray Hall 1800 - 1930 (NOTE NEW TIME) Sponsored by Retired NYPD Club 1013, MOAAC/GDF and BVMC. Featuring Police and Fire Color Guards, Fife and Drum Corp and much more with speakers who were there in NYC and DC on 9/11. Contact Donn Weaver at BVMC 757-871-6576 for more information.

**11 Sep – Patriot Day Firearms Fun Night**, Family Friendly, at Frogbones Shooting Center 404 S Harbor Blvd, Melbourne 1730-2030. Free to active-duty military and veterans. Others are \$100 which includes dinner, gun rental, prizes and much more. Fundraiser event by AVET. Contact AVET at [www.avet-project.org](http://www.avet-project.org) to register and get more information.

**12 Sep – Seventh Annual Tuskegee Airmen Golf Tournament** Fundraiser, 0730 - 1300 at the Indian River Colony Golf Club in Viera. Celebrate the legacy of the Tuskegee Airman along a beautiful course. Registration \$130 per golfer; \$500 per foursome. Luncheon after play with all proceeds benefiting Youth Outreach programs. Contact [tai-cfl.org](http://tai-cfl.org) for info and to register.

**15 Sep – “We Love our Community Fundraiser”** at Texas Roadhouse 1975 Viera Blvd in Rockledge 1630-2100 hours. Come and enjoy a great meal with portion of proceeds going to the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center in honor of their support for many years of the 9/11 commemoration

ceremony. Thanks to Art Grenci, BVMC member and former LAPD Officer who served in NYC after 9/11. Contact Donn Weaver, 757-871-6576, for info.

**27 Sep – First JROTC County Raider Challenge Invitational** Meet at BVMC Park 0630- 1230. NOTE: At least 12 schools from three counties and over 300 JROTC cadets are expected. While the Amphitheater project will still be underway, the 3.5 K long pathways and plenty of other field space will be available. Contact Donn Weaver of BVMC on 757-871-6576 for any questions. Veteran organizations pass out trophies and are welcome to support our youth. Most action including awards ceremony takes place 1030-1230.

**30 Sep – BVMC Discussion Series at the Library** 1800-1930. The US Navy 250th Anniversary will be explained and celebrated including details about the six places that claim to be the Navy's birthplace. Contact Hank Rhodes, BVMC Librarian for more details. Refreshments and special cake.

## OCTOBER

**03 Oct – Annual NVHS Dinner and Fundraiser** to support homeless and at-risk veterans and their families. Save the Date. The Difference a Decade Has Made. 1700 -2100 at Radisson Resort by the Port. Hosted by Brevard's Constitutional Officers Semi to formal attire. Seating limited at \$125 per chair. Contact [www.nvhs/events.org](http://www.nvhs/events.org)

**11 Oct – NEW TIME AND VENUE Space Coast Honor Flight** Send Off 0400 -0530 hrs at Melbourne Airport Terminal. Honors 20 plus veterans and guardians with travel to Wash DC to visit their monuments and memorials. MOAAC/Good Deeds will present annual SCHF and FIT guardians support check. See [SCHF.org](http://SCHF.org) for more info.

**11 Oct – Second JROTC aCounty Raider Challenge Invitational** Meet at BVMC Park 0630-1230. Expect 12 schools from three counties and over 300 JROTC cadets. While the Amphitheater project will still be underway, the 3.5 K long pathways and plenty of other field space will be available. Veteran organizations pass out trophies and are welcome to support our youth. Awards ceremony takes place 1030-1230.

BECOME A BOOSTER TODAY and help defray the cost of producing our newsletter.  
Only \$10.00 per name, per year.



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If you feel your name is missing and that you paid for Booster sponsorship this year, please contact the Treasurer. Thank you for your forbearance and understanding. Fill in your names and send to the BVC along with your check.

Please make your check payable to: Brevard Veterans Council (Boosters).

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