



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

# COUNCIL COURIER

MARCH 2022



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center



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## Honoring Veterans Throughout History: Four Immortal Chaplains

*Selfless sacrifice and interfaith cooperation are remembered in the story of the Four Chaplains at the VMC's yearly commemoration.*

*In a day of ceremonies, music, and food, the VMC held a successful event remembering these long ago heroes, and celebrating those still with us.*

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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 must be sent to the address listed below. The deadline is the third Wednesday of each month. Those submissions received after that date will not be published.

Please send submissions to:  
[brevardvmc@gmail.com](mailto:brevardvmc@gmail.com)

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## Our Organization

As of 17 January 2022:

[List of Board Members 2021-2022](#)

As of 14 February 2022:

[Committee Department Assignment 2021-2022](#)

As of 14 February 2022:

[BVC VMC Org Chart 2021-2022](#)



## Mission Statement

**Brevard Veterans Council:** The mission of the Brevard Veterans Council 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 mission of the VMC is to maintain and operate a premier facility to support veterans and their families, educate the public, and provide a vibrant memorial to the service and sacrifice of all military veterans through a museum, memorial plaza, library, and 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)

I strongly share our Chairman's message on Teamwork at the Veterans Memorial Center! We could not be the organization we are without our volunteers.

Last Monday, February 7th, I was installed as the **President of the Navy League of the United States Cape Canaveral Council**, serving all of Brevard County. Paul Julian was installed as the Vice President. I plan to draft an article to fully describe the Navy League's mission in a future issue. In short, the Navy League is a civilian organization founded in 1902 that supports the four maritime forces, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines, their members, and families, through direct action and education of the public. One of our Council's missions is to support our local Sea Cadets, Courageous Division.

## Dates to remember in March:

### March is Women's History Month

March 3	US Naval Reserve (USNR) birthday
March 5	USN Seabee birthday
March 20	Meet the Museums of Brevard
March 25	Medal of Honor (MOH) Day
March 29	National Vietnam War Veterans Day

## Museums of Brevard (MOB)

As a member of the MOB, which includes twenty-two museums and historic homes in Brevard County, we continue to **spread the word about our venues**. There are brochures in the Museum and in the racks outside

the Library. Please distribute these to visitors to the Museum, Library and Center.

We participated in the **Pioneer Days** at Sam's House and St Lukes Episcopal Church on north Merritt Island. Our exhibit was a hit and collected over \$80 in donations. For the first time, we displayed the WWI traveling trunk which drew plenty of interest. Thanks to Ray Norman and Donn Weaver for supporting the event last Saturday.

We have another MOB member, Field Manor Historic Homestead and Grove, on Merritt Island just south of SR 528, which will host their Founders' Day event on March 12 from 1200 to 1500. See the flyers posted around the VMC for more information.

## Patriots Awards Dinner

Donn Weaver and I attended the Patriots Awards Dinner on February 17 sponsored by Honor America, the Board of Directors for the Liberty Bell Museum. We are working with them on their reopening after two years inactive.

Liberty Bell also sponsored a Meet and Greet at the VMC on January 20. The VMC was recognized for our assistance to Honor America and the Liberty Bell Museum. Presently it is only open from 1000 to 1400 on Tuesdays with other times available by appointment. The Museum is located at 1601 Oak St, Melbourne, near the Melbourne auditorium on Hibiscus.



## VFW Teacher of the Year

On 12 February, the Commander of VFW Post 10131 in Cape Canaveral and attendees present honored Ms. Athena Pietrzak for winning the **VFW District Teacher of the Year Award**. Athena, who teaches AP history at West Shore High School, has volunteered at the VMC Museum and Store on weekends and summers for several years and actively works with our Vets Back to Class

Program and our Museum's traveling trunks initiative.

Congratulations to Athena- who is clearly a great teacher and veterans' advocate. She received \$500 from the VFW Post and will learn in March whether she wins the State of Florida Title. The national VFW winner will be announced in April and wins \$5000.





# Council Chairman's Report

by **Donn Weaver**  
Captain, U.S. Army (Fmr)

*As I wondered about a good topic for our March Courier, my mind came to one word that has really led to the success of our Council and Center: Teamwork.*

We all learn how crucial that word and concept is in the military, playing sports, raising a family and joining veterans organizations as a volunteer. Without it, things are much harder and much less enjoyable. The opposite of it destroys any organization.

In my opinion, 2021 was the best year yet in the eight years I have spent focused on the BVC and VMC in terms of teamwork. I hope our volunteers and members feel the same way. In fact, I have sensed for many months now the very positive attitude, personal enjoyment and camaraderie most feel when driving into the VMC for whatever volunteer job or mission. I certainly have that feeling even when some curveballs might come on any one day.

Each of you likely measures teamwork in different ways but for me it reached the **A Plus level** at the VMC in three ways of late:

**1. We had no trouble filling Board and leadership positions--and in**



getting everyone in them to sign up for multiple committees and special projects.

**2. We continue to get new volunteers** and almost all our pre-covid workers have come back and most seem to be smiling through much of their shifts.

**3. In a milestone, I counted close to 30 VMC volunteers who spent time with us to support the big event on 06 February: Honoring Veterans Throughout History.** When that many come on a Sunday afternoon, you know teamwork and helping each other is a big reason why.

So, as we look toward March, even more big upcoming events as well as many more visitors, clients, rentals, and meetings, we can all be confident and comfortable knowing teamwork at the VMC is locked in.

Thank You!!!!

## Veterans History Project Feature: Barbara Prisco



**The Veterans History Project** conducted over 200 interviews with Brevard County Veterans who served in war time. [The Center's YouTube channel](#) includes some of these fascinating interviews, making them accessible to everyone.

**This month's feature:** an interview with **Barbara L. Prisco**. Barbara tells her story of service in the Army as a nurse during the Vietnam War.

[Click here to see the full interview](#)



## Traveling Historical Trunks Available

The BVMC Military Museum is launching a Traveling Trunk Program to help bring history to life in schools, libraries, other museums, and youth groups.

Each trunk focuses on a specific war (Civil War, WWI, WWII or Vietnam) and

contains an assortment of items—original or reproduction—that would have been commonly used by soldiers during that time in our nation's history.

This hands-on tool will help reinforce history lessons and bring a tangible human element into what students learn.

[Visit our website to learn more.](#)





# VMC/BVC Secretary's Report

CPT Kristi Blanchard, USA (Fmr)

The Flag Retirement box has been updated with a new design (see image), and flyers to let everyone know that they can retire their own flags at home and save our air quality too. Another nice improvement



to the flag retirement box is the installation of a plaque dedicated to the Eagle Scout who first installed it.

Many thanks to our local teens who are contributing service hours to retire the nylon flags, and our scouts who retire the cotton flags in the park. If you're looking to retire your nylon flag yourself, [Option 3 in this article](#) outlines how to DIY a flag retirement without burning.

## Website

Please take a peek at the updates made to the Veterans Memorial Center website's [Veteran Services](#), [Upcoming Events](#), and [Events & Meetings](#). Share with other organizations or friends and family!

## Bylaws

Several amendments to the bylaws were endorsed by the BVC and VMC Boards of Directors on February 2nd and approved by the membership on February 9th. Feel free to reach out to me with questions.

- VMC Article V, Section 1 – Updates to the VMC Advisory Committee.
- VMC Article XIII and BVC Article XIII – Updated the approval process for bylaws amendments.

## Advertise in the Courier

We appreciate having our corporate sponsors and veteran friendly businesses support us and hope they will consider advertising in the 2022 Courier. Please contact Donn Weaver (757.872.6576) if you might be interested or have questions.



### 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 2022 and beyond.



- VMC Article X, Section 6 and BVC Article IX, Section 6 – Added to clarify Governance Committee's role.
- BVC Article VI, Section 12 – Now refers to the new BVC Article IX, Section 6.

Remember to **celebrate International Women's Day** on March 8th with those special women in your life. Thank you to my fellow women veterans, too, as we celebrate our service and remember those who came before us.

## Christine Tate Honored

*Active Air Force Veteran working in support of other Vets receives "The Heart of Hospice Star"*

Our VMC Chair of the Women Veterans Support Committee and St. Francis Reflections partner with VMC, Christine Tate recently was awarded "The Heart of Hospice Star."

The ceremony was held on 17 February at the Space Coast Stadium as Ms. Tate, an Air Force veteran, was singled out for her many active roles with veterans in Brevard County, at VMC, and working with Space Coast Honor Flight and NVHS.

Her heart clearly is in the mission of supporting veterans in many ways. She has worked for St. Francis Reflections for 13 years and has held numerous medical positions.

Congratulations, Christine!! Thank you for all you do at VMC and throughout Brevard.



**Pictured:** After the ceremony, Ms. Tate is flanked by BVC Chair Donn Weaver and VMC Chaplain Chip Hanson

## New Online Veterans Sales Store

*Support Veterans and military history preservation with every purchase.*

The Veterans Sales Store that operates within the Veterans Memorial Center Museum is now open for [online shopping!](#) You can purchase limited items for yourself, family or friends from our newly launched online store with shipping or pick up options. More merchandise will be added as time goes on.



All profits from from sales in the Veterans Sales Store benefit the Veterans Memorial Center Museum and the Brevard Veterans Council Scholarship Fund.



**Island Direct Primary Care**

**I served our country now I serve my community**

“Doc John took the time to individually look up each of my meds and come up with a plan to keep them affordable. I would recommend anyone to this practice, he is the best PCP I've ever had.”

- A Happy Veteran Patient

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380 N Courtenay Pkwy, Merritt Island, FL 32953





## Library Notes

**SGT Joe Davie, USAF (Fmr)  
VMC Librarian**

The library continues to video veterans telling their story as part of the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. If you or members of your family are veterans, this is a great way to document your military career and share it with others.

Good Deeds Foundation gave the Veterans History Project a \$500 donation in February 2022 towards costs of supplies, DVDs, printing, and mailing. Copies of all VHP interviews are maintained in the VMC library. Veteran Interviews may be viewed in the library on the TV's DVD player from the Eisenhower couch.

### New Book Donation Policy

We have implemented a new policy in the library in regards to Books donated to the library. We would like to accept only new books that we do not already have in the library. Our librarians will lookup donated books to see if we already have a copy of the book before accepting new books.

We currently have over 4600 books in the library's collection and are finding that half or more of books donated are already on our shelves. So, we are currently accepting only non-fiction books pertaining to U.S. Military History that we do not already have.

We are storing many duplicate books on a shelf between the door and the Revolutionary War section. We are offering these books to anyone that wants them "Free of Charge". You may leave a donation in the Box if you like when you take these books, but it is not required.

We would like to give a special thanks to Jerry Anderson, a retired Navy Chief Petty Officer who lives in Cocoa. Jerry donated his extensive World War II collection, most of which were leather and hard bound books. All together we will be able to add 130 books to our collection of over 700 World War II books. We will be busy for a while cataloging and shelving them.

### Community Outreach

We enjoyed meeting Janice Murry, Brevard County's



**Pictured:** On 14 and 21 February, volunteers took turns covering an info table representing the VMC at the Merritt Island Library.

Here Norm Desmarais and Paul Julian stand their watches. Meanwhile the VMC also had a museum display during Black History Month at the Cape Canaveral Library. Thanks to all who helped us reach out into the community.

Area Library Director, to set up an outreach from the Brevard Veterans Center & Council to the Merritt Island public library.

Ms. Murray provided us a table in the entrance lobby to greet people as they came in and invite those that did not already know about us to come and visit us in our museum and library. Chip Hansen was there representing the DAV Chapter, as well as myself, Paul Julian, Norm Desmarais, and Donn Weaver.



# Discounted Jazz Concert Admission for Veterans Memorial Center Members



The Space Coast Jazz Society needed a venue to host their monthly live jazz concerts and since January of this year, has found a home at Veterans Memorial Center's Gray Hall. These concerts are open to the public and the **Jazz Society is offering members of the Veterans Memorial Center a \$5 discount on admission.**

Concerts are open to the public and feature a variety of professional jazz musicians and bands. Some past performances include Sax Madness Richie Cole, Phoenix Jazz Orchestra, Linda Cole, Jeff Rupert, Dan McMillion, Robert Navarro, Dan Jordan, Michelle Mailhot, John DePaola, Suzy Park and more.

Concerts usually take place on the second Sunday of the month from 2 to 4pm. Admission is \$10 for members of the Jazz Society and Veterans Memorial Center, \$15 for guests, and students under the age of 25 are free. Bring your own food and beverages as none are available for purchase, but tables, seating, great music and a beautiful view of the river are provided. Mark your calendars for an afternoon of live jazz by these bands:

- Sunday, Mar 13 - Drummer Fred Goodnight
- Sunday, April 10 - Saxophonist Billy Davis
- Sunday, May 15 (3rd Sunday) - Pianist Ron Teixeira & Jazz Scholarship Winners
- Sunday, June 12 - New Orleans Jazz Vocalist Sybil Gage

However, the Jazz Society is more than just entertainment. Their mission and goal is to "preserve and promote live jazz on the Space Coast". This is accomplished through hosting the monthly concerts, but more importantly, by supporting the education and aspirations of our youth. Each year, the Jazz Society awards \$1,000 jazz scholarships to graduating Brevard County High School seniors.

This non profit organization was officially founded in 1986 by jazz vocalist Alan Simms and jazz broadcaster Jack Simpson with the mission to "keep jazz alive." The first gathering of interested jazz fans was on April 9, 1984 at the Kiwanis Hall in Merritt Island. Jack Simpson's radio program "Jazz on the Beach" aired for more than 50 years in Central Florida and Brevard County.

If you'd like **more information about upcoming concerts**, you can pick up a concert card at the Veterans Memorial Center or go online to [www.SpaceCoastJazzSociety.org](http://www.SpaceCoastJazzSociety.org) and Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SpaceCoastJazzSociety](https://www.facebook.com/SpaceCoastJazzSociety). You can also email [Jazz@SpaceCoastJazzSociety.org](mailto:Jazz@SpaceCoastJazzSociety.org).



## FRIDAY NIGHT *Dances*

PROUDLY PRESENTED  
BY THE VMC

## MARCH 4 AND 18 2022

TICKETS \$7.50 PER PERSON. BYOB.

DOORS OPEN AT 6:30PM

DANCES TO BE HELD THE 1ST AND 3RD FRIDAYS OF EVERY MONTH  
The funds collected are donated to the VMC/BVC fund after paying for the cost of set up, take down and clean up. Each year the VMC awards scholarships for college bound or continuing college students from Brevard County who meet the BVC-VMC criteria.





# Chaplain's Corner

by Chaplain Chip Hanson  
USMC (Fmr)

If you're a veteran or service member and in crisis, start with the resources at <https://www.veteranscrisis-line.net/>



*Every year 703,000 people take their own life with many more attempting suicide. Every suicide is a tragedy that affects families, communities and entire countries and has long-lasting effects on the people left behind.*

Suicide is the tenth-leading cause of death in the United States. In 2019, there were an estimated 3.5 million people who planned a suicide and 1.4 million suicide attempts. A recent study found that one in 12 adults has had thoughts of suicide.

Anxiety and depression have risen across the board, and many Americans are consumed with worry about their health and that of their families. Likewise, the rate of suicide among veterans ticked upwards in recent years despite increased public attention and funding for the problem according to a new report released by Department of Veterans Affairs officials on Thursday.

However, the latest data still lags two years behind present conditions and does not include any figures from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, which mental health experts have warned may be causing even larger increases in the rates of mental distress and self harm among veterans.

## Staggering Suicide Rates

Numerous public figures and public awareness campaigns in recent years have quoted the figure of "20 a day" in reference to veterans suicide, but VA officials last year clarified that estimate also includes active-duty troops, guardsmen and reservists.

From 2005 to 2018, the overall suicide rate remained largely unchanged, between 17 and 18 veterans a day. That's in spite of numerous public awareness campaigns, VA outreach programs and new department training mandates enacted over the last two presidential administrations.

Veterans suicides made up about 14 percent of total suicides in America in 2018. VA officials have emphasized in recent years that mental health challenges and suicidal thoughts are not a

problem specific to the veterans community.

"Findings documented in this report highlight the continuing and increasing problem of suicide among U.S. adults and among veterans, and the need for ongoing efforts to improve methods of suicide risk mitigation," the report stated.

## Hope in the Data

In a statement, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said that despite the lack of overall progress in suicide prevention among veterans, the report does show some areas of improvement.

"The data shows the **rate of suicide among veterans who recently used VA health services has decreased**, an encouraging sign as the department continues its work and shares what we learn with those who care for and about veterans," he said.

The rate of suicide among veterans who recently received some type of VA care decreased 2.4 percent from 2017 to 2018. For veterans with no connection to VA care, it increased 2.5 percent.

"This report offers data points that suicide is indeed preventable through clinically based and community-based prevention efforts and interventions, as well as through research and surveillance within and beyond the VA," the report authors wrote. "Yet this report also elucidates that while suicide is preventable, suicide and suicide prevention are extremely complex."



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## Anybody Can Do It - Strategies to Help the Struggling

With disparate legislation and programs, it's hard to see any direct approach to truly help combat suicide in Veterans.

However, there is one beacon of hope pointed out by the DAV National Commander, Andy Marshall. He references an article titled "Anybody Can Do It" in the [November/December 2021 issue of DAV Magazine](#). DAV Chapter 30 in Mountain Home, Arkansas, used a grant from DAV's Columbia Trust to build its suicide prevention program over several years.

Marshall goes on to explain that Chapter 30's success is worth looking at, as they used one of National Service Foundation's most underutilized programs and the Trust's role as a catalyst in bridging resources from well-populated chapters and departments to others in need.

How did Chapter 30 build such an innovative program? By proactively finding at-risk vets and educating the community about suicide warning signs, they built an effective program that drastically reduced veteran suicide in its area. While staffed with clinical and community psychologists, clergy, and medical center personnel, Dr. George Wolford, Chaplain of DAV Chapter 30 says, "It's not our credentials that get this job done. It's just that we got off our butts and did something. Anybody can do it."

Perhaps a harder look at better use of all our current resources can likewise make a difference in our local area.

## White House Executive Actions

In November, the White House announced a series of priority goals and executive actions that will drive suicide prevention efforts moving forward. These goals are outlined in "[Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide: Advancing a Comprehensive, Cross-Sector, Evidence Informed Public Health Strategy](#)."

This five-prong approach includes improving lethal means safety; enhancing crisis care and facilitating care transitions; increasing access to and delivery of effective care; addressing upstream risk and protective factors; and increasing research coordination, data sharing and evaluation efforts throughout the federal government.

The approach from the White House builds on existing programs and hopes to accelerate efforts.

"I think we're in a much better place than we were just a few months ago," Wilkie said of the suicide figures. "What I think this report will show is that once you get into VA care, the chances of death by suicide go down. It's finding those veterans and getting them in that is the key. And I think we've finally turned the corner on that."

**GOD BLESS AMERICA**  
Chaplain Chip Hanson



## Operations Report

**CPL Robert W. Doyle, USMC (Fmr)**

We are in a constant cleaning phase at the center. The kitchen has undergone a complete cleaning and we will be restructuring the layout soon.

Events are filling up fast so if you have something to book over the next 6 months get it on the calendar ASAP. Many groups have still not done contract updates for this year so please get it done so I don't have to call you to get the info we need.

We are out of water as per last month's writing. If your group has not donated water to the center please do so soon. Most of you know we do not charge you for monthly meeting space. This is the time to help the center.





## Veterans Honored in Many Ways: Special Ceremonies at the VMC on 06 February

by Donn Weaver

For many years, the Veterans Memorial Center has held a Ceremony of Remembrance for the Four Immortal Chaplains of WWII on the first Sunday afternoon in February to coincide with the 3-4 Feb 1943 date of their heroism after a troop ship was sunk off the coast of Canada. In 2022, the VMC decided to expand this event to honor even more veterans throughout history.

Here are just a few highlights and photos from this year's remembrances:

- 14 Women Veterans from several eras were specially honored by St. Francis Reflections
- More than 20 Vietnam Era veterans were pinned and presented a welcome home certificate by 8 members of the DAR
- 10 blood donations were made
- and nine other appointments set
- 110 people toured the National Wreaths Across America national mobile Van
- DAV National Commander Andy Marshall gave a memorable keynote talk
- The Marine Corps League did a great color guard and Immortal Four Chaplains Ceremony
- Lonnie and Delinda Beach Band came through with good sound and music
- Veteran Connections to a New Life served fantastic food and almost ran out of hamburgers
- We had over 20 veteran orgs and other vendors share the day
- Quilts of Valor got more than a few questions and possible applicants
- Space Coast Daily/Friday Night Locker Room captured all the ceremonies.



**Caption:** February 6th was a day full of honoring those that serve in many ways.





## Honoring Our Female Soldiers: 06 Feb Recognitions

While Veterans don't tend to seek out recognition for their service, it means a great deal to them when they are thanked for service to their country. At the 6 February event, St. Francis Reflections recognized fourteen notable women for their service from several eras, pictured above.

## Organizational Meeting Schedule

The VMC is home base for a number of Brevard County Veterans Organizations. These organizations meet at the VMC on a monthly basis; see the [Events & Meetings page online](#) for a full listing of times our hosted organizations meet.

*The Space Coast Jazz Society presents:*  
**Monthly  
LIVE JAZZ Concerts**  
by a variety of professional bands

at Veterans Memorial Center, Gray Hall  
400 S. Sykes Creek Pkwy, Merritt Island

**\$5 discount for members of  
the Veterans Memorial Center**

**Open to the Public**

Schedule & details at:  
[SpaceCoastJazzSociety.org](http://SpaceCoastJazzSociety.org)



## Funds Raised for the Immortal Four Chaplains Memorial

*Vinnie Howard, Commandant of Brevard County Detachment #513, Department of Florida, Marine Corps League expressed gratitude in keeping the Chapel of the Four Chaplains memory alive.*

On 6 Feb, 2022, The Brevard County Detachment #513, Department of Florida, Marine Corps League, held its annual remembrance of The Immortal Four Chaplains with a multitude of participants.

Member/Marine **Kimberly Benton** served as the Right Rifleman, Member/Marine **Carlos Rivera** served as the Left Rifleman, and **Vinnie Howard**, the Detachment Commandant (Legion of Honor Recipient) carried the National Ensign.

Member & DAV State Chaplain **Chip Hanson** performed the ceremony. Detachment Chaplain **Robert Doyle** (Legion of Honor Recipient) and his daughter **Danielle**, played

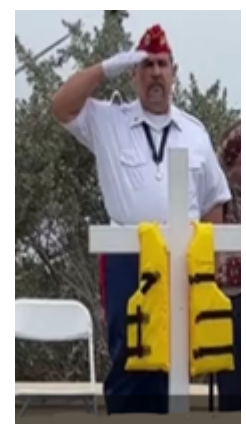
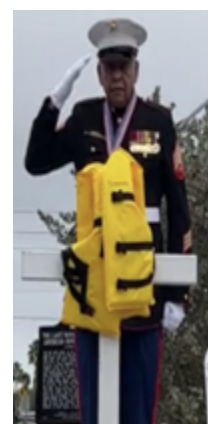
Echo TAPS.

Marine Benton rang the ship's bell, lit the candles and rendered a slow salute for each Chaplain, while the National President of the DAV, Andy Marshall, Marine Carlos Rivera, Marine Danny Garcia and Vinnie Howard returned the Life Jackets to the respective Crosses & Star of David.

It was a moving ceremony for all in attendance. Commandant Howard conducted a collection at the end of the ceremony; \$184 was collected and donated to the national Chapel of the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation in Philadelphia to help keep this tradition of remembrance and encouragement of selfless sacrifice and interfaith cooperation alive.



## Remembering the Immortal Four Chaplains







## JROTC Cadets Enjoy a Unique Event at Veterans Memorial Park

by Donn Weaver

*In the early morning hours of Saturday, 12 February, 55 JROTC cadets from six high schools did not roll over and go back to sleep like most of their classmates. Instead, they competed in a grueling but fun combination of timed sprinting laps and air rifle target shooting.*

**Pictured:** Post 344 Adjutant Ken Hill (L) and 344 Post Commander David Pincheck present the overall first place medals to the mixed MIHS team!!



**Pictured:** LTC Tony Austin, USA, Ret MIHS JROTC Instructor (L) and Donn Weaver, Post 344 member, present medals to the Rockledge Team

The scene at the Veterans Memorial Park where the range was set was inspiring. Each team of boys, girls and mixed cadets was composed of four members. Each team had to complete two 200-yard sprints and fire in two sessions at small targets with a heavy air rifle, all timed from start to final cadet finish.

The teams included Army JROTC units from host Merritt Island, Cocoa, Cocoa Beach and Viera as well as, for the first time, the Navy JROTC Unit from Titusville HS and the USAF JROTC from Melbourne HS. One of the Merritt Island Teams emerged victorious with Rockledge and Viera coming in second and third.

The medals presented were sponsored by the American Legion Post 344 based at the Veterans Memorial Center while about 60 parents and friends looked on. This was one of six JROTC events which have or will take place in the VMC Park in February and March. Check the calendar and come out one Saturday morning to see that rarest of sights: high school students who get up by 0500 on a Saturday and work as hard as they can until the mission is accomplished, usually around noon.

Special thanks to AL Post 344 for sponsoring this event and to MOAACC's Good Deeds Foundation for helping with the other events and competitions.





# The Patriot Report

**Disabled American Veterans (DAV),  
Space Coast Chapter 123, Inc.**

## Compensation and Pension Examinations

### *Tips and the process for attending the C&P exam.*

There is no other part of the Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefits application and adjudication process that is so intimidating as the Compensation & Pension (C&P) exam. Grizzled veterans who have jumped out of airplanes and confronted the enemy in countries around the planet are known to cower in fear of meeting a C&P examiner. The examiner may be a Veterans Health Administration employee or a contractor with a company that offers varying exams and services. There are other contractors who perform C&P exams and they may operate at a VA facility or out of private offices where they normally practice.

The examiner may be a physician or a physician assistant or a registered nurse practitioner or you may be offered a hearing exam by an audiologist and so on. Most exams are perfunctory and often confusing to the Veteran. Your key to success is simple; Speak the truth about your symptoms without embellishing the symptoms but not minimizing anything either. Make brief notes to yourself of anything you want to say. If you don't have a cheat sheet, you'll forget...you know you will. Don't ever display anger or be a smartass. There is nothing you can do to make this any better but to maintain your cool. The examiner does not make the decision about your claim and will only perform the task assigned by an order of the Regional office. Do not allow the examiner to cause you pain or discomfort during the exam by manipulating joints, etc.

A Compensation and Pension examination is not entered into your medical record as it is not a health care event. You do not establish a doctor-patient relationship with the examiner and no treatment, prognosis or therapy is offered. The exam document is not a part of your medical history, rather it is an administrative tool used to determine a very narrowly focused question or questions about your disability claim. The C&P exam is a part of your electronic VBMS claim that's in process and you do not have a right of access to that. There is nothing for you to reply to. Until your claim is

*Compensation and Pension Examinations can be unnerving. However, with a cool head, planning in advance and diligent note taking you will have less need to worry.*

completed and you have the decision in hand, there is no reason for you to have a copy of the C&P exam.

### **The Must Do & Must Not Do in regard to your C&P Exam**

- You may take records with you but the examiner may refuse to see them. Do the best you can to present your case to the examiner while recognizing that the examiner may not accept any documents from you and may insist on sticking to a scripted Q&A dialogue.

VA examiners aren't required to accept any documents from you. Documentation supporting your claim is routinely submitted by you or your representative as a part of your claim file for review by the VA rater, not the examiner. VA C&P exams are tightly controlled and the examiner is only allowed to focus on exactly what the rater has requested. Some examiners are more rigid than others and if your examiner isn't open to reviewing your documents, don't worry...accept it. In the final analysis anything the examiner reports is only a part of the process.

- The examiner won't treat you or prescribe medicines.
- The examiner does not have any insight about how your claim will be decided. Don't bother to ask.
- DO make notes for yourself before you go. This is the only way you'll be sure to tell

*(continued on next page)*

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the examiner all the details you want to share.

- DO be courteous at all times. Don't complain to the examiner about all the indignities you've suffered. Focus on the reason you're there.
- Do wear any prosthetic devices the VA prescribed for you. NEVER try to fake any symptom. If you aren't prescribed a neck brace, don't wear one.
- You may request that a family member or friend join you during the exam. The examiner may agree or refuse your request.
- DO NOT attempt to secretly record any part of the

exam.

- DO NOT over-exert yourself trying to please the examiner. This exam is about your worst symptoms, not the best.
- DO NOT take any pain medications prior to your appointment!
- DO use your common sense. This exam probably won't make or break the decision about your claim but it can help.

(Source: VA Watchdog.org)

George Furis

Department Service Officer (Ret.)



## ARMY OCS Graduate?

*The U.S. Army Officer's Candidate School Alumni Association has a newly formed chapter - the Space/Treasure Coast Chapter (STCC) - based in Melbourne.*

The Chapter's goals are to help preserve the OCS legacy of service and sacrifice, increase Army leadership's appreciation of the OCS program's crucial role in developing future leaders, assist local veterans in need and provide opportunities to enjoy the camaraderie and friendship of fellow OCS graduates.

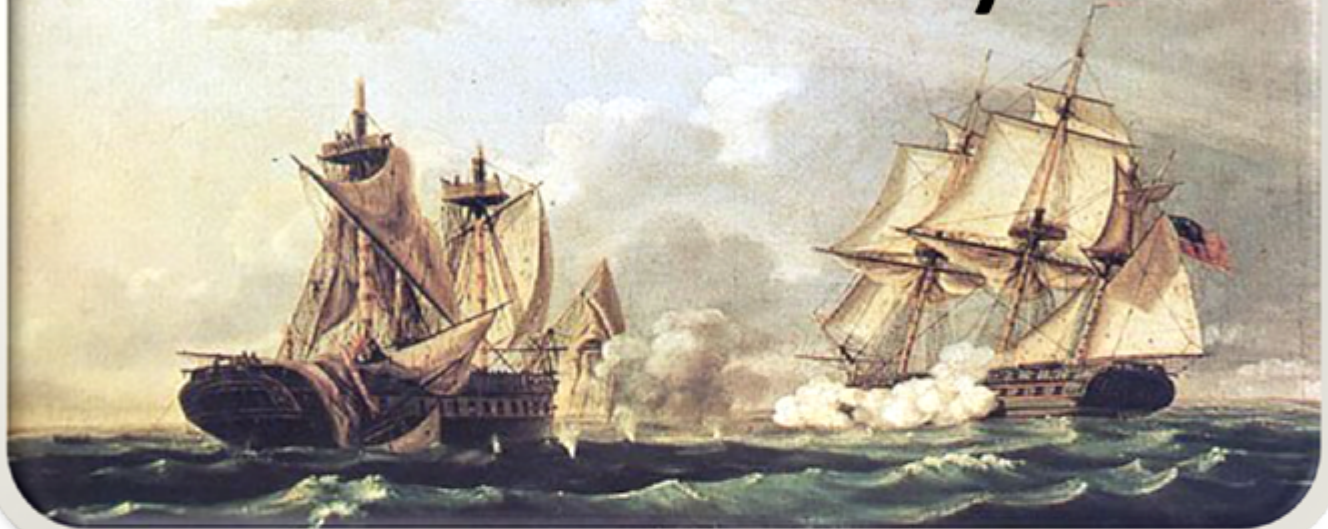
STCC is open to all Army OCS graduates - Active, Reserve, National Guard. We hail from many walks of

life but share the common experience of OCS, no matter which OCS we attended. As of early February 2022, we have 21 members, four of whom are OCS Hall of Fame inductees. We especially welcome veterans of the Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan conflicts and the Global War on Terror.

We hold three general meetings per year, plus informal social gatherings. Our area of operation includes Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin Counties. Interested or need more information? Please contact Rob McCall at (305) 923-9057 or Donn Weaver at (757) 871-6576.



The 238th Commemoration of the  
**The Last Naval Battle  
of the Revolutionary War**



**Saturday, March 12, 2022**  
**Veteran's Memorial Center**  
**1000-1100 a.m.**

**Presented by the Sons, Daughters, and  
Children of the American Revolution**







# Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar March 2022 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/other-veterans-events/>

## MARCH

**05 Mar — JROTC Regional Drill Meet at Veterans Memorial Park** 0630-1230. Trophies Awarded by MOAACC/Good Deeds Foundation.

**12 Mar — Commemoration of the Last Naval Battle of the American Revolution** 1000-1100 VMC Plaza Outdoors area. Sponsored by the Brevard Sons of the American Revolution Chapter. SAR and DAR Units from all over Florida expected to attend. Food Trucks and other festivities planned. Contact the VMC, Donn Weaver or Doug Bisset, for more information.

**12 Mar — Founders Day at Historic Field Manor** 1200-1500 with music, food tracks, tours and events to raise money for one off the oldest buildings in Brevard. Relive History. Located at 750 Feld Manor Drive on Merritt Island. Details on [events@fieldmanor.org](mailto:events@fieldmanor.org).

**19 Mar — 2022 Rotary of Indialantic Gala and Auction** 1700-1900 at the American Muscle Car Museum. Dinner and auction to raise funds for Afghani Interpreters among other Rotary charities. Tickets for \$100 or \$200 with VIP tour of hundreds of classic cars. To register or for more information email Henry at [fundraisingemp@gmail.com](mailto:fundraisingemp@gmail.com).

**25-26 Mar — JROTC Commanders Cup Air Rifle Championships** at Rockledge HS, Friday 1500-1800; Sat 0900-1230. Trophies awarded courtesy of MOAACC Good Deeds Foundation.

**31 Mar — Office of Sen. Mario Rubio monthly office hours for veterans to report issues and questions to the senator.** VMC Library 1400-1600. POC: Tom Self 407-254-2573. Appointments encouraged.

## APRIL

**08 Apr — Senior Expo 1000-1600 at Club 52 in Melbourne.** Dozens of vendors and information related to seniors and senior veterans. Sponsored by Senior

Life, Bluewater Group.

**28 Apr — Office of Sen. Mario Rubio monthly office hours for veterans to report issues and questions to the senator.** VMC Library 1400-1600. POC: Tom Self 407-254-2573. Appointments encouraged.

**30 Apr — “Battle of the Badges”** at the VMC and Park 1000-1400. Public Welcome to watch a variety of events as Brevard’s Police and Sheriff personnel challenge the Brevard Fire Teams in a variety of competitive events. Food and drinks available for all fans and contestants at nominal costs — no betting authorized!! Look for more details in late February. Part of a special FIRST RESPONDERS WEEKEND at the VMC.

## MAY

**01 May — Third Annual First Responders Appreciation BBQ** at the VMC and Park 12-1500. Free for all First Responders, Active Duty and Veterans including BBQ, drinks, music, special kids events, vendors that support First Responders and veterans. Done in partnership with Back Brevard Heroes and the VMC. Contact [backbrevardheroes@gmail.com](mailto:backbrevardheroes@gmail.com) for more information.

**14 May — The Space Coast Food Festival** 1400 - 1830 at the VMC and Veterans Memorial Park. Sponsored by the Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce. This popular, community event has been held at the Port and other large venues. Room for organizational tables and canopies as well as good entertainment and great food to sample. POC is CBRCC 321-459-2200.

**30 May — Memorial Day Ceremony** at the VMC 0930-1030.

For events beyond May, please visit the [VMC online event calendar](https://veteransmemorialcenter.org/other-veterans-events/).

## VMC Cemetery Support Committee Expands Reach in Brevard

*Last summer the VMC set up a new committee to provide a county-wide leadership role to honor veterans who are laid to rest in Brevard County cemeteries.*

The Cemetery Support Committee helped launch the largest number ever Brevard Wreaths Across America ceremonies and wreath laying last year. They worked diligently in over 30 cemeteries and have worked hard in 2022 to enlist American Legion and VFW Posts throughout the county to adopt more cemeteries in their geographic areas.

The Flyer below is being circulated along with conducting VMC outreach briefings at District VFW and Legion meetings in February and March. **The Goal is simple, but very challenging:** Adopt as many cemeteries as possible to ID and clean up veterans graves throughout the year; honor as many veteran



**Pictured:** A Wreaths Across America ceremony this past winter at Cape Canveral Cemetery.

gravesites as possible with American Flags around Memorial Day and wreaths from Wreaths Across America during the Christmas holidays.

Thanks to Chair Dorothy Walsh and Co-Chair Chip Hanson and all others who are working this noble mission.



### **Brevard Veterans Council & The Veterans Memorial Center Cemetery Support Committee**

**Our Goal: Ensure every veteran's grave in Brevard  
County is honored and remembered**

**For more information or how to become involved please  
contact Dorothy Walsh, Committee Chairman:**

**[dwalshusa@gmail.com](mailto:dwalshusa@gmail.com) or 321-426-6736**



**Pictured:** One of our memorial benches with plaque. More benches are available to dedicate--forms and details are in the Library and Museum.



is a summary of where we are from the Park Planning Committee. Meanwhile, more and more organizations are booking the Veterans Memorial Park for Events, as well as the Center itself.

Dean and I met with Larry Lallo of MIRA, Tim Lawry, Brevard County Project Manager, Michael Dunlap, County Facilities Supervisor, as well as a new MIRA Deputy, Stephanie Maduskle who joined MIRA.

#### Topics Covered included:

1. Next Phase of Planting not requiring Irrigation
2. Placement of Irrigation in the core of the park and along the point
3. Electric Drop Line Plans and Transformer Locations
4. Conduit for security cameras
5. Location of Lighting poles (Some of which will have cameras mounted)
6. Scope and Location of underground power cables
7. Location and numbers of electric Stub Hubs for food trucks, vendors
8. The Expanded Playground and covers with need for lighting in that area
9. Timing of likely ground breaking for laying the three lines above: water, power and camera

It was a very positive meeting with VMC ideas and views taken into full account.

#### NEXT STEPS:

A. Meet in March to have a final review of the above decisions with a fully prepared and approved site plan adding the three above lines.

B. Bid out a special Landscaping Grant by a private citizen for summer planting.

*(cont. on page 20)*

## Park and Plaza Report

by Donn Weaver

During February we received donations for 12 more bricks in the Plaza and CSpray began a monthly new "spruce up" plan when they engrave bricks that includes:

- Edging and trimming
- Weed killer applications
- Ant powder applications
- Section by section power washing and sealing
- Repainting aging and flaking white benches and more.

With this new maintenance plan, we hope the Plaza will always look nice and the costs for keeping it that way spread out over several years.

### Monument for Fallen Allies

The Monument for Fallen Allies, which will be located near the Four Chaplains and All Chaplains Monument, reached a milestone in February **passing the \$18,000 fund raising mark on the way to the \$28,000 estimated final cost.** Three contracts with the appropriate vendors to fabricate, prep and install the new monument were completed. In early April, the 501(c)3 sponsoring the project will seek Phase II permission from the VMC Board and the County to proceed with fabrication using an updated model and the financial report to buttress their plan.

Like many other sectors of our economy, such construction projects are experiencing major supply chain issues, so ground breaking is delayed until June and Dedication reset for the 9/11 Ceremony if completed.

### Park Update

On 11 Feb we held a major meeting with County Officials on the next steps related to Phase III, IV and the Amphitheater in the Park. Below



(cont. from page 20)

C. No Permits are needed for decisions reached today, but the county will have to run all plans through engineering and other advisers and obtain approvals for the final project before launching competitive bidding.

D. Continue evaluating Phase III upgrades meshed with Amphitheater designs and requirements.

### KEY POINTS FOR PHASE IMPROVEMENTS:

A. Ground Breaking for any underground work will likely be delayed until summer due shortage of County Staff, final design work and bidding.

B. County Approvals for the Amphitheater design and bid are not likely to be complete before late Fall 2022 with the goal to complete that construction in the third quarter of 2023.

C. There will likely be no impact at all on Park Events until August and most events after can likely proceed

even if some areas have to be roped off for safety.

D. Memorial Tree Planting is delayed again until at least October 2022 .

Finally, Please help us remind the public we have a memorial bench donation program for the Park. Forms and details are in the Library and Museum. A sample of one bench and plaque is to the left of the Museum Entrance.



**Hortencia's Cleaning Services**

321-986-7039  
perrusquiah@gmail.com  
**CALL FOR A QUOTE!**

## Being Prepared for Emergencies AED Devices and Trained Volunteers come to VMC



**Pictured:** In the photo, Operations Director Bob Doyle takes possession of the first AED with the second to follow soon. Mr. Sima is donating the racks and coverings to install the devices.

While it took many months of planning to complete, on 15 February the VMC purchased its first approved AED and potentially life saving device, with a second device coming and paid for by Brevard County Parks & Recreation.

**The program was coordinated for us by Shawn Sima**, a medical professional with a passion to see AEDs distributed to all Brevard Schools and many other facilities. His daughter's life was saved some years ago by a quick thinking instructor followed by AED treatment. Since then, Mr. Sima has changed the direction of his profession and his life.

We cannot thank him enough for his persistence in shepherding this program. Over the holidays five VMC volunteers, Bob Doyle, Ted

Suzor, Kristi Blanchard and Rodger Pickett took a two hour computer course and two hours of training from Mr. Sima to qualify them (and us) with the County to receive and use the AED device. Thank you all!!

There are thousands of people, many of whom are older and some with health issues, who visit the Center and Park each year. That number will only grow. Having these devices on hand could truly one day mean the difference between life and death.

The BVC/VMC ExComm decided we should have two. One device will be placed in or near Gray Hall and the device from the County in the museum to be transported to the Park for major or strenuous events.

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



## Boosters

Bateman, Skip & Ruth July, 2026	Neugebauer, Susan Mar, 2022
Bisset, M Doug Sept, 2023	Rapp, Gary (USMC) Aug, 2022
Clayton, David & Anne July, 2022	Rathbun, Don & Barbara Dec, 2023
Eliason, Sandra July, 2022	Roseland, Tom & Patrice Jan, 2023
Fadok, Eleanor Dec 2022	Schaaf, Dean & Susan July, 2022
Fleet Reserve Branch 263 July, 2023	Sherman, John S. (Tank) Sept, 2022
Fugaro, Joan & Ricardo Nov, 2022	Sherman, Rheta Campbell Sept, 2022
Kaufmann, John & Cindy Mar, 2022	Schmid, Ted Jan, 2023
Leonhart, Rick Mar, 2023	Space Coast Honor Flight May, 2023
Longway, J.P & Donna Dec, 2023	Tucker, Mary Ann Mar, 2022
Malpass, Dick & Louise May, 2022	Weiler, Philip R. Feb, 2023
Martin, John & Roberta Nov, 2022	Weaver, Donn & Jeanne Sep, 2022
Mueller, Mel & Dora Mar, 2022	

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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).

Single Name per year- \$10.00 / Double Names – \$20.00

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_