



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

COUNCIL COURIER

MARCH 2023



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center



WHAT'S INSIDE

Immortal Four Chaplains Ceremony

On a rainy day to a small crowd, these legends were honored. — page 9

Patriot's Dinner Recognition

Kudos to members and tenants recognized among those in Brevard County. — page 14

Community Outreach at Pioneer Day

VMC is out in the community spreading the word about our center and park! — page 16

Hot Rods for Heroes Hosts Biggest Event at the VMC

In one of our largest events yet, Back Brevard Heroes held its annual fundraising event full of old and new cars, craft vendors and food trucks to fund it's May event.

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MARCH 2023

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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 Those submissions received after that date will not be published.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

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Our Organization

As of 12 Sept 2022:

[List of Board Members 2022-2023](#)

As of 1 Feb 2023:

[Committee Department Assignment 2022-2023](#)

As of 1 November 2022:

[BVC VMC Org Chart 2022-2023](#)



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)

Even though February only had 28 days (this year), it seemed like it would never end. Groundhog Day? We were busy!

Although lightly attended, the Immortal Four Chaplains commemoration was a success because of the efforts by the Marine Corps League. Well done USMC. The VMC was a participant in the Pine Island Preservation Society's Pioneer Day at Sam's House and St Lukes Episcopal Church. Harry Beaver and I had our Canopy set up with materials promoting the VMC and Museum and even had our [WWII traveling trunk](#) on display. This year we took our Jeep to the display which drew a lot of attention for photo ops. We sponsored two JROTC drill meets in the park with the usual great attendance. Back Brevard Heros sponsored a Car Show which drew around 125 cars and packed the park. More on this event in another section of the Courier.

March will not be as busy with big events, but please support the Last Naval Battle of the Revolution program on Saturday, March 18. We expect a great turnout with Naval Ordnance Test

Unit (NOTU) playing a major part. The guest speaker will be their Commanding Officer, CAPT Schneider, with their Color Guard and Signal battery participating.

Last month I talked about the upgrades in the Library (which are still continuing) and I can now report on a new look in the Museum Store with new display cabinets and racks for shirts. Thanks to Dave Boyd and his crew for the upgrades. If you haven't been to the park to see the new playground, please take the time to check it out. We are seeing an increase in bookings in the park pavilion because of the improvements. More to come is an adult exercise area adjacent to the playground. Sort of like a "muscle beach" in our park.

We are in need of a morning MOD and have reached out to all tenant organizations for volunteers. If you know of anyone that could support the VMC from 0800-1200 any day of the week, please let us know.

Thanks to all volunteers that keep this center running, we couldn't do it without you.

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[FACEBOOK](#)
[WEBSITE](#)
[YOUTUBE](#)



Traveling Historical Trunks Available

The BVMC Military Museum operates a "Traveling Trunk" Program to help bring history to life in schools, libraries, other museums, or 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. Visit [our website](#) to learn more.





Council Chairman's Report

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

Strength in Numbers

You may not have noticed, but the numbers of people and organizations interested in being a part of the BVC and VMC has been growing. Here are some interesting facts:

- We now have over 75 volunteers in all categories who work on a regular basis at the VMC.
- We have had five new organizations in four months join as lifetimes member tenants and are now up to an historical record of 16.
- We are averaging about four new individual lifetime members per month the last few months.
- We are now well over 500 paid members which has grown

and retracted over the years -- from what began as six members in 1978 when the BVC was founded.

- The numbers of veterans living in Brevard County continues to grow. Our "Umbrella BVC/VMC" represents 72,000 of them as of 2023.

It is a good thing we have so many volunteers and members since once the Amphitheater and final phases of our Park are completed, visiting numbers and events booked are bound to increase.

So, as Dean and I have said many times over the past few years, thanks to all our volunteers and active members - do and please continue to help spread the word so we get more of each in 2023 and beyond.

Veterans' Children's Easter Party

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 344
Annual Veterans' Children's Easter Party
Saturday April 1, 2023 from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.
Veterans Memorial Park, 400 South Sykes Creek Pkwy.
Merritt Island

All Veterans' children & grandchildren are welcome, we just need to know you'll be there so please RSVP by
Tuesday, March 28th Diane: (607) 382-3405 or
dianed276@yahoo.com

games, crafts, lunch, and
an Easter egg hunt with
the Easter Bunny

Contributions of individually wrapped candy
(no chocolate), small Dollar Tree type Easter baskets, and
candy filled plastic Easter eggs can be left at the MOD
office at the Veterans Memorial Center. Please be sure to
mark it for Diane Davison, ALA 344



Saturday, March 18, 2023
Veteran's Memorial Center
1000-1100 a.m.

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



ARMED FORCES DAY

THIS FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT HONORS SERVICE
MEMBERS ACROSS THE SIX BRANCHES OF MILITARY.

BREVARD VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER
400 S SYKES CREEK PKWY, MERRITT ISLAND

MAY 20, 2023

GATES OPEN 3:00PM
CEREMONY 4:00 PM
MUSIC 5:30 PM

Special activities include:

Static Displays Vendors
Kid's Zone Food Trucks

Live musical performance by Rockie Lynne,
Veteran and Country Music Artist



GENERAL ADMISSION \$5
FREE TO MILITARY COMMUNITY

New Veterans History Project Interview: Joe Tichich



Paul Julian interviewed Joe Tichich in February for the Veterans History Project. Joe enlisted in the Air Force at an early age. He went on to serve in the Air Force Reserve forces. After

earning his degree in Electrical Engineering while serving as a NCO in the reserves, he was offered an opportunity to become an officer by completing another training program. He went on to serve 30 years total in the reserves and the Air National Guard. Joe was deployed overseas at Qatar during the Iraqi Freedom Operation and deployed to GTMO to manage their communications. See and hear him tell his story at the link below.

[Click to see the Joe's full Veterans History Project interview.](#)



Library Notes

SGT Joe Davie, USAF (Fmr) VMC Librarian

February kept the library busy preparing for an outreach presentation to the Cocoa Beach library. Together we developed a PowerPoint presentation with the help of Kristi Blanchard and Wayne Rowe. Joe Davie gave the presentation on Feb 17 at the Brevard County library in Cocoa Beach.

We shared the story of the history of how the BVC and VMC organizations began and pictures of our facilities available. Our library has over 4400 books and media in our collections. Joe encouraged folks to make use of our facilities. We are a specialty library available to anyone interested in doing research or learning about US Military history.

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.



MISSION

The Veterans Memorial Center (VMC) offers a special Veterans History Project (VHP) in coordination with the American Red Cross and Library of Congress (LOC) at no charge. The VHP mission is to collect, preserve, and make accessible the personal accounts of American veterans of all services and periods of history. Thus, future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war and other military service. After the recorded interview the veteran and family will receive their own DVD, one will be kept at the VMC library, and electronic copies will be downloaded to the LOC.



TO PARTICIPATE

If you are a veteran, simply contact us and we will arrange a video recorded interview in the VMC library or, in special cases, at your home. The conversation can last thirty minutes or two hours. That is up to you. The story can include your service and how your life was spent after the military. Remember hundreds of veterans have told their stories which are preserved forever on VHP DVD's at the VMC Library and LOC.

CONTACT US

To arrange an appointment please contact either:

Joe Davie	321-626-5462	jdavie@cfl.rr.com
Paul Julian	321-749-7369	pjulian54@yahoo.com

VIDEOGRAPHERS

Joe Davie	321-626-5462	jdavie@cfl.rr.com
Paul Julian	321-749-7369	pjulian54@yahoo.com

VHP SUPPORT

Bill Wilkening	321-428-3422	Hank Rhodes	321-799-1219
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Chaplain's Corner

This month I am going to pass along information about our National Cemeteries.

ALL Veterans with an honorable discharge are eligible to be interred in any National Cemetery. No one can reserve a spot in any National Cemetery. The exception is if both Spouses are Veterans, and one dies the remaining Spouse can reserve the spot next to the deceased.

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of our National Cemeteries with available space, opening, and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a Government headstone or marker, a burial flag with Military Honors from their Branch of the Military, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowance.

Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the Veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependents' name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the Veteran's headstone, at no cost to the family. Eligible spouses and dependents may be buried, even if they predecease the Veteran.

Cremation as an Option

Cremated remains represent about 75% of interments in National Cemeteries. They receive the same honors as casketed remains. However, with cremated remains, there are 4 separate ways of interment:

- They can be buried in the same manner as a casket, with the same headstone as a standard casket grave.
- The cremated remains can be placed in the columbarium (a wall with areas for the urns).
- The ashes can be buried in the Ossuary (a Memorial Garden) and the name placed on the Memorial Wall.
- Finally, if the Family chooses to spread the ashes in a manner that cannot be visited (such as spreading them around in the ocean or a meadow or other ways the Veteran wanted to interred), the name of the Veteran can be placed on the Memorial Wall.

Visit the VA at

<https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance/>

to read how to apply for burial allowances

There is never a charge for any interment at a National Cemetery or the Memorial Wall.

Finally, Veterans aren't eligible if they were convicted of a Tier III sex offense and sentenced to a minimum of life imprisonment—and the conviction is final. These Veterans also don't qualify for a Presidential Memorial Certificate, a burial flag, a headstone, or a marker. (Oct 12, 2022)

"It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived."

-- George S. Patton

John 15:13 - Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

God Bless America
Chaplain Chip Hanson

FLORIDA NATIONAL CEMETERIES

Barrancas Naval Air Station 1 Cemetery Rd Pensacola, FL 32508-1054 (850) 453-4108	St. Augustine 104 Marine St St. Augustine, FL 32084-5004 (904) 766-5222
Florida 6502 SW 102nd Ave Bushnell, FL 33513-8914 (352) 793-7740	South Florida 6501 S State Rd 7 Lake Worth, FL 33449-5309 (561) 649-6489
Cape Canaveral 5525 U.S. Highway 1 Mims, FL 32754-4826 (321) 383-2638	Jacksonville 4083 Lannie Rd Jacksonville, FL 32218-1247 (904) 766-5222
Bay Pines 10000 Bay Pines Blvd St. Petersburg, FL 33708 (727) 319-6479	Tallahassee 5015 Apalachee Pkwy Tallahassee, FL 32311 (850) 402-8941
Sarasota 9810 State Rd 72 Sarasota, FL 34241-9574 (941) 922-7200	

The Legacy of Four WWII Chaplains Lives on in Brevard County

by Donn Weaver

On Sunday, February 5th, it rained hard most of the day along the Space Coast which kept attendance down, but several veteran organizations still held a unique ceremony of remembrance, including at the Veterans Memorial Center (indoors) on Merritt Island.

Eighty years ago, on February 3/4, 1943, the USAT Dorchester troop transport vessel pressed into service during World War II was sunk by torpedoes from a German UBoat about 120 miles southwest of Greenland. Hundreds of American soldiers on their way to England and Navy crewmen perished in the explosions or in the icy waters as the vessel sank. Thanks to US Coast Guard Cutters and many acts of heroism may were also saved. It is often described as the second worst maritime disaster for the United States in WWII.

On that night several eyewitnesses reported on an amazing sight — four US Army Chaplains from three different Protestant and the Jewish faith were seen locking arms and praying together as the bow of the ship slipped under the Atlantic Ocean surface. Before that they had given up their cold weather gear and life jackets to army soldiers and helped organize as many lifeboats as they could. Witnesses later confirmed they indeed saved many lives as the sacrificed their own.

After the war, the story spread and it was decided to always honor and remember these “Four Immortal Chaplains” through ceremonies around the country every early February. Completely funded by donations a Chapel and Museum was built in Philadelphia over the years which is now a foundation. Details about this amazing story now 80 years removed from the incident can be found on the website: fourimmortalchaplains.org. In 2001 the Chapel was moved to the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

In 2018 the Veterans Memorial Center created a monument with donations of more than \$22,000 to honor the Immortal Four and All Chaplains. Like an older memorial in Sebastian, FL, that monument was endorsed by the Four Immortal Chaplains Foundation and tells the story with some information about the chaplains.

Ruled ineligible for the Medal of Honor due to rules about direct combat, the Four Immortal Chaplains received many awards including the Purple Heart. Decades later Congress



Pictured: Immortal Four Chaplains Ceremony.

approved creating a special Gold Medal of equal weight to the Medal of Honor to the families of the Four.

At the 2023 VMC Ceremony, Marine CorpsLeague Detachment 513 of Brevard conducted the ceremony and reenactment of survivors returning the life jackets to the four chaplains. MCL Det 513 is led by Dennis Herring, pictured below in the red jacket on the far right.

Many of the participants in the ceremony and observers were VMC members. Those included Dean Schaaf, Donn Weaver, Chip Hanson, Bob Doyle, Dennis Herring, Roger Scruggs, Brian

(continued on next page)



ATLANTIC MUSIC CENTER

www.atlanticmusiccenter.com

Brian Gatchell, Owner
150 East Drive, Ste C | Melbourne, FL 32904
321.725.5690



(continued from previous page)

Whalen, Skip Taylor, Vinnie Howard, and others. All remarked it was among the best VMC ceremonies in the 7 years it has

been done there, but all were disappointed the rain, and a busy start to 2023 likely kept so many spectators away.

VA IS HIRING!!!!!!

WITH PREFERENCE TO VETERANS & ELIGIBLE SPOUSES

In support of the Congressionally approved "Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act" the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) will soon recruit veterans and qualified military spouses to fill federal civil service jobs ~~ and are seeking qualified candidates possessing the following skill-sets:

- Information Technology Specialists
- Customer Services (Medical Claims Examiners/Representatives)
- Logistics (Supply Chain Management) Specialists Acquisition/Inventory Management Specialists
- Management and Program Analysts
- Specialty Medical Staff

**In many instances, employment opportunities will offer remote (virtual) work locations, and you can work from home.

To expedite the process, you are highly encouraged to create an account and load your resume within [USAJOBS.Gov](https://www.usajobs.gov).



ATTENTION!

If you have been awarded one of these,

DID YOU KNOW . . .

There is a MOPH Chapter
at the Veteran Center on Merritt
Island?

Call 321-480-3669
We want to know you!



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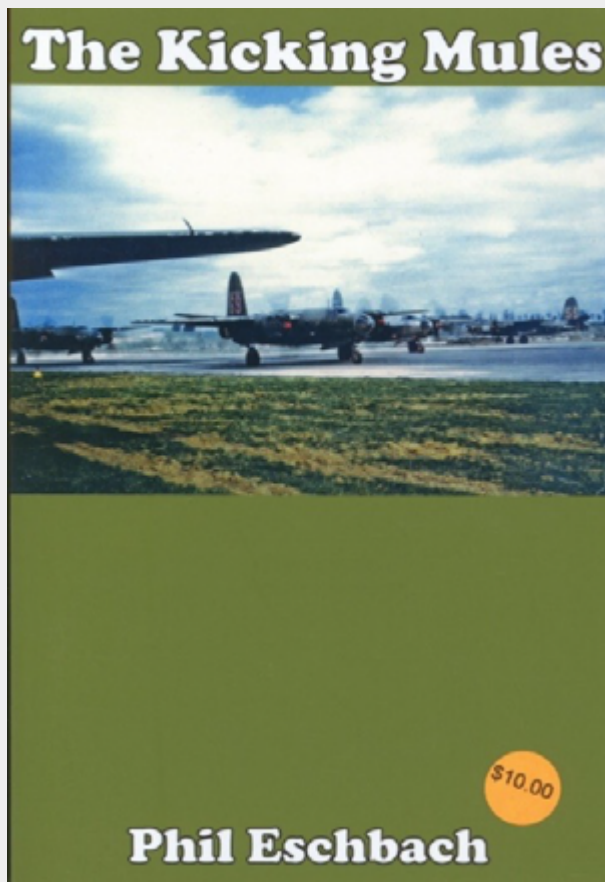
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Book Report

The Kicking Mules by Philip Innes Eschbach Jr

Report by Raymond Norman



The Kicking Mules (188 pages: self-published, copyright 2004) is a book by a local author.... USA (USAF) WWII Philip Innes Eschbach Jr. who was born in Melbourne, Florida on Aug. 19, 1923. He was a tenth-generation Southerner and a fourth-generation Floridian.

After high school Eschbach enlisted in the US Army (USAF). He attained first lieutenant. He was a pilot flying the B-26 Martin Marauder twin engine bomber. His initial European tour was in Sardinia during the 1944 Italian campaign and finished his tour in France in 1945 near Dijon. He had over 50 missions of dangerous combat. Just a guess at his 56 combat missions at roughly 10-12 hours per mission suggests that he spent one year in the air- briefing, mission over enemy territory and debrief.

After the war he obtained his BA and MA (with honors) at the University of Florida and became an English professor and retired in 1981 from Brevard Community College (EFSCU). I was teaching an engineering class in the evening at BCC. Perhaps we ran into each other??

If you are interested in this book, it is available in the BVC Museum store for \$10. Also, if you read this book start with the last two pages (187-188). One can correlate the missions that Eschbach flew with the Mules. Finally, there is a scholarship in his name at EFSCU.



Pictured: Veterans' Connections was one of 44 event vendors. VMC's Dorothy Walsh and Don Pearsall are shown on the right.

Back Brevard Heroes Brings Biggest Event to VMC Park in Years

The grounds of the VMC park was vendor fair and food truck heaven on February 25th. Produced by [Back Brevard Heroes \(BBH\)](#) as their major fundraiser, this year they held an inaugural "Hot Rods for Heroes" adding a spectacular car show and crafts fair to their event. All makes and models of cars and trucks, vintage and new, showed up to the grounds for the day. Guest judges Chief Voltaire of Brevard County Fire Rescue and Sheriff Ivey of Brevard County Sheriff's Office were on hand to decide the car show winners.

BBH is a Local non profit organization "dedicated to supporting and appreciating our local first responders, our heroes, with an annual BBQ and other events." Those they want to show that they are loved and appreciated include those who server in local Law Enforcement, Firefighters, EMT, and Military members. In May, BBH will hold their annual recognition event at the VMC to honor and feed all local first responders, military and veterans at their Annual Back Brevard Heroes Celebration. Read more about the organizaition on their [website](#).



Pictured: Sea Cadet Color Guard opens the show!



Pictured: The Leaders of Back Brevard Heroes at the Car Show fundraiser



Veterans Store Report

Hope you all enjoyed the holidays and a Valentine's Day with your sweetie. Spring may finally be here, and we have been in the process of sprucing up the museum store.

We have added new shelving to make it easier to view and buy our t shirts and metal signs. We also have added some new and interesting books about military life from local authors.

Stop in and check out our new look and we will be happy to recommend a good book for a day of reading at the beach.

Jalaine Spears
Asst Store Manager



Pictured: A recent JROTC drill meet at the VMC Park

Park and Plaza Report

by Donn Weaver



Work continues to improve our beautiful Memorial Plaza each month. In addition to a dozen new bricks in February, check out upgraded Cement Benches for America's Boat Club new logo, the historical garden clubs and repaired wind chimes are and new Eagle Scout marker which had to be replaced after last fall's drunk driver episode.

Digging for electric, instigation and new exercise equipment is set to begin in the Park by April. We also supported Back Brevard Heroes along with three JROTC drill meets in the Park

in February. The BBH event featured over 1000 visitors for the car show (128 entries) 44 vendors and 9 food trucks.

There will be a photo story later of that 25 Feb event, which was a great success and probably the best attended event since the pre-covid Key Lime Pie Festivals. BBH will partner with us and other veteran organizations for their 07 May event to honor all First Responders, including military and veterans with a great start in fund raising after the car show.

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



FRIDAY NIGHT Dances

PROUDLY PRESENTED
BY THE VMC

**MARCH
3 AND 17
2023**

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.

VMC Members and Partners Recognized at 2023 Patriot Awards Dinner

On 23 February a number of VMC members attended the 2023 Honor America, Inc Patriot Awards Dinner. The event was also a fund raiser for our sister Liberty Bell Museum in Melbourne, one of the 21 Museums of Brevard Members, including VMC Military Museum. Two VMC members received Awards, along with two other of our tenant/partners. The Winners:

Cozette Merritt

Founder Cape Canaveral Ladies (Our CCNC/CCL Tenant)

Don Pearsall

Founder and CEO Veterans Connections

Dorothy Walsh

Veterans Victim Advocate (VMC Board Member)

George Rosenfield

WWII and Korean War Vet active with MOAACC (Tenant)

George Taylor, Jr

NVHS Partner (With VMC and his wife Jennifer Taylor)

The event was held with over 220 attending at the Grand Manor and was a great success. Congrats to the winners and here's hoping Liberty Bell Museum will be able to open more days and continue to be a good partner with the VMC Museum.



Pictured: Don Pearsall receiving award



Pictured: Dorothy Walsh accepts award

Seniors Who...

Play
Work
Learn
Travel
Laugh
Savor
Shop
Create
Share
Garden
Cook
Enjoy life...

SENIOR SCENE

We Have Arrived!
Senior Scene Lands on the New York Times Best Seller List
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Also read SENIOR SCENE

Seniors all around town are talking about their FREE magazine that has it all!
You know how to reach them with what they want to read most, in places they frequent most.
That's why advertising in Senior Scene works, and why our distribution has rapidly grown to now include the Space Coast!

Also read it at www.seniorscenemag.com

Pick up your FREE copy at the places you visit most!

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 Patriot Report

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

The PACT Act Fraud Prevention

Have you recently been contacted by a company aggressively seeking to legally represent you in filing presumptive VA claims authorized by the PACT Act? If so, be wary as the company might be seeking a portion of your VA benefits.

Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (PACT Act) represents the biggest expansion of Veteran benefits in history, and many Veterans may be eligible to receive compensation for their service. The PACT Act adds 23 burn pit and toxic exposure-related conditions to VA's list of service presumptions, including hypertension, with the expansion of presumptions related to Agent Orange exposure by including Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Guam, American Samoa, and Johnston Atoll as locations for Agent Orange exposure.

While this legislation brings great promise to Veterans, it's also a monumental opportunity for fraud. VA has received multiple reports of unaccredited law firms or companies targeting Veterans to offer their services to file claims for presumptive conditions. Unaccredited law firms and companies are reaching out to help for a fee as high as 40% of the Veteran's retroactive payment and 40% of the Veteran's first year of entitlement payments.

VA is committed to help protect Veterans from predatory entities, by educating Veterans, their families, and all partners about the types of activity and tactics being used against them.

To avoid being a victim of these schemes, here are some helpful tips to remember:

- **Apply directly to VA.** You may submit your application securely [online](#) via VA.GOV or in person at any regional office. You may file your claim directly with VA, and VA will help you gather the necessary evidence to support it. There are no costs or hidden fees to apply. Do not agree to pay an unaccredited individual or organization a percentage of your disability compensation payment or retroactive entitlement. If you need help filing a claim, there are [accredited representatives](#) to assist you.

Please visit the VA updated websites to ensure you are speaking with the proper parties in filing VA claims.

- This is a better idea. Go to your nearest or preferred **Disabled American Veterans Service Office** and get all the help you need at **NO CHARGE** whatsoever. Or you can go to any Veterans Service Organization to get assistance; the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, The American Legion, the VFW, The Paralyzed Veterans, etc., just to name a few.
- **Be cautious of aggressive law firms or companies.** Firms may use frequent communications (phone, text, and media messages) to establish a sense of urgency.
- **Be cautious of for-profit companies that use VA's name.** They may alter their name to create a false association with VA and establish legitimacy. Examples include a website such as [VAclaimsassistance.com](#) that incorporates VA into its name.
- **Review all legally binding documents thoroughly.** Never sign a blank form someone else will fill out later or give them full discretion to act on your behalf. See the contents before you sign and keep a copy for yourself.
- Be wary of media advertisements regarding legal representation for presumptive VA claims. Companies advertising legal services may be predatory and financially motivated to obtain your VA benefits.
- If a company or individual is projecting misinformation or has questionable business practices regarding VA entitlements, file a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#) at and the [Better Business Bureau](#).

(continued on next page)

- To report suspected fraudulent activity, please contact the VA Office of Inspector General ([OIG](https://oig.va.gov)) [Hotline \(va.gov\)](https://oig.va.gov).
- Veterans and survivors who think they might be eligible should apply for PACT Act benefits right now. Go to va.gov/PACT or call 1-800-MYVA411 for more information.

By protecting Veterans' benefits against fraudulent activity, you can help honor their service and sacrifice.

Source: [Veterans Benefits Administration](https://www.va.gov/benefits)

Presumptive Conditions for Ionizing Radiation

For Veterans who participated in a radiation-risk activity during service, VA assumes that certain cancers are "presumptive diseases" and are directly related to their exposure. If you have any of these cancers or participated in any of the radiation risk activities, the VA is looking for you!

- Leukemia (except chronic lymphocytic leukemia)
- Lymphomas (except Hodgkin's disease)
- Multiple myeloma (cancer of plasma cells)

The above list of presumptive diseases applies to Veterans who served in any of the following "radiation risk activities":

- Radiological cleanup of Enewetak Atoll (1977-1980).
- U.S. Air Force plutonium cleanup mission near Palomares, Spain (1966).
- U.S. Air Force plutonium cleanup mission at Thule, Greenland (1968).
- Participated in the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan between Aug. 6, 1945, and July 1, 1946.
- Were prisoners of war in Japan near Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.
- Participated in atmospheric nuclear weapons tests conducted primarily in Nevada and the Pacific Ocean between 1945 and 1962.
- Participated in underground nuclear weapons testing at
 - Amchitka Island, Alaska before Jan. 1, 1974.
 - Nevada Test Site for at least 250 days from January 1, 1963, through December 31, 1992.
 - Service at one of the following gaseous diffusion plants for at least 250 days

before Feb. 1, 1992:

- Paducah, Kentucky; Portsmouth, Ohio; or K25 in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

These disabilities were added to the list of presumptions due to radiation exposure:

- All cancers
- Non-malignant thyroid nodular disease
- Parathyroid adenoma
- Posterior subcapsular cataracts
- Tumors of the brain and central nervous system

George Furis

Department of Florida
Service Officer (Retired)
USAF SMSgt (Retired)



Community Outreach: Merritt Island Pioneer Day

The annual Pioneer Day event held by Sam's House in partnership with St. Luke's Episcopal Church celebrates history, art, music and nature on Pine Island. This year, on February 11th, the sleepy little stretch of North Tropical Trail was alive with visitors, parades and culture.

In amongst the live music and historical reenactments was the Veteran's Memorial Center. The VMC provided our World War II Jeep for display and a tent to speak with event goers and let them know all the great things that we have to offer! Thank you to VMC President Dean Schaaf, VMC Public Affairs Chairman Harry Beaver (not shown) and retired Brevard County Parks and Recreation Director Jack Masson for volunteering to reach out to the community at the Pioneer Day event this year. Our volunteers make our mission happen!



Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar March 2023 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

04 Mar — JROTC Drill Meet in Veterans Memorial Park District Championship (0700-1300)

18 Mar — Commemoration of the Last Naval Battle of the American Revolution 1000-1300 VMC Plaza, Museum and Gray Hall

APRIL

01 Apr — American Legion AUX 344 annual Easter Egg Hunt at Veterans Memorial Park 1300-1500

29 Apr — Brevard Parkinson's Alliance 5K to raise funds to beat Parkinson's. 0700-1200 Veterans Memorial Park, Center and Plaza. 0800 5 K Run with Running Zone and 1000 1K Walk.Stroll for those with Parkinson's. Register on line at secure.runningzone.com.

MAY

07 May — Back Brevard Heroes Festival to honor First Responders and Veterans, VMC Plaza, Gray Hall and Park 0930- 1400.

20 May — Space Coast Military and Family Appreciation Day and BBQ — On Armed Forces Day 2023, From 1500-1900 at the VMC and Park. Featuring CW Award winning singer Rocky Lynne!!!! "Heroes Come from Small Towns" and "Proud to Be a Soldier: Active duty unit displays, music, food, kids games, many special activities to honor our active duty forces and their families who eat free. Co sponsored by CBRCC MAC, VMC and Military Recruiters.

29 May — Memorial Day Remembrance VMC 0930-1030

JUNE

03 Jun — Annual Courageous Division NSCC Sea Cadet Awards Ceremony, VMC Gray Hall and Library 0800-1500

JULY

04 Jul — BCSO/VMC Annual Independence Day Parade on Merritt Island. Details coming in May.

OCTOBER

26 Oct— BCSO Shredder Event – VM PARK – 0900-1030.

For events beyond October, please visit the [VMC online event calendar](#).



**USA RIVER RATS PRESENTS
MEDAL OF HONOR PARK**

Spring Fling

AT THE VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK

**MEDAL OF HONOR TRIBUTE
FOOD BOUNCE HOUSE GAMES
FREE ADMISSION
SATURDAY MARCH 25, 2023**



**FROM 11AM TO 4 PM
400 SYKES CREEK PARKWAY
MERRITT ISLAND**

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



Boosters

Adair, Mark and Karen Croft, IMO
MSGT Edmond Adair, USAF, RET Feb, 2025

Bateman, Skip & Ruth July, 2026

Bisset, M Doug Sept, 2023

Carleton, Jim Feb, 2024

Clayton, David & Anne July, 2023

Eliason, Sandra Oct, 2023

Fadok, Eleanor Dec, 2023

Fleet Reserve Branch 263 July, 2023

Florida State University College of Social Work
April, 2023

Huffman, Kenneth, USN Nov, 2023

Leonhart, Rick Mar, 2023

Longway, J.P & Donna Dec, 2023

Norman, Ray April, 2027

Rathbun, Don & Barbara Dec, 2023

Schaaf, Dean & Susan July, 2023

Sherman, John S. (Tank) Oct, 2023

Sherman, Rheta Campbell Oct, 2023

Weaver, Donn & Jeanne Sep, 2023

Space Coast Honor Flight May, 2023

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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) _____