



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

COUNCIL COURIER

MAY 2024



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center

ATT DECEDER
SAFR/PA-ANG

ER
AF
RIP CHRISTIAN L.
BELLMORE USAF
12/6/03 - 6/19/23



WHAT'S INSIDE

Become An Advocate to End Veteran Suicide

Fire Watch is building a life-saving network of community members and organizations trained to identify the warning signs of veterans in crisis and to direct those veterans to the help they need.

— page 6

AUSA Excited to be a Tenant Organization

AUSA speaks on the importance of partnering with BVMC.

— page 8

RUSH Construction Community Support to JROTC Units

Thanks to Rush for supporting the VMC and JROTC!

— page 17

Ensuring a Legacy at VMC

Last summer 19-year-old Merritt Island High School graduate, Christian Bellmore, died in the US as a result of military service.

— details page 15

MAY 2024

COURIER CONTENTS

President's Report • Page 3
 BVC Chairman's Report • Page 4
 Library Report • Page 5
 BVC Vice Chairman's Report • Page 5
 Chaplain's Report • Page 6
 Secretary's Report • Page 6
 Book Report • Page 18
 Patriot Report • Page 20-21
 Event Calendar • Page 23
 Boosters • Page 25

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 third Wednesday of each month.

Please send submissions to:
 brevardvmc@gmail.com

© 2024



Our Organization

As of 29 February 2024:

[List of Board Members 2023-2024](#)

As of 24 January 2024:

[Committee Department Assignment 2023-2024](#)

As of 24 January 2024:

[BVC VMC Org Chart 2023-2024](#)



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)

April was a busy month for the Veterans Center and May will be much the same.

First and foremost, it was my birthday month, and I had my 39th anniversary of my 39th birthday on April 20th.

All of you who are board members or hold positions of leadership within the BVC or VMC have been approached by the nominating committee as to serving positions for the next year. Thanks to Rita Perini, Karen Kroft, and Chip Hanson for their work as the nominating committee. I want to make it clear to all members that anyone who wants to step up and become more involved with the VMC or BVC, this is your chance. Contact any member of the nominating committee or the ExComm to get your name on the ballot. **WE NEED YOUR HELP, PLEASE STEP UP TO ANY OF THESE POSITIONS.**

Activities and Events

The month of April was especially busy for me, as I had several events with some of the other organizations I support as part of my role as President of the VMC and Community relations. I attended the annual Shrimpeast at the Port on April 5th as a member of the Propeller Club. The event was a fundraiser for Maritime scholarships for High School graduates. On the 6th of April, the Navy League and Propeller Club supported the Port Ministry by cooking for around 400 crew members from the five Cruise Ships that were in port. We do this on a quarterly basis. On April 13th I attended the Naval Ordnance Test Union (NOTU) Submarine Ball and loaned them our Klaxon from the WWII diesel submarine, USS Hardhead SS-365. Also on April 13th, I attended American Space Museum's Shuttlefest III, an annual celebration

of support to the NASA Space Shuttle Program. American Space Museum is a member of the Museums of Brevard (MOB) along with the VMC.

The VMC hosted the April 27th Brevard Parkinson's Alliance 5K walk/run fundraiser in the park. It began with a Running Zone sponsored 5K walk/run followed by an event with food trucks and vendors. Many of our personnel supported, as did the Sea Cadets and JROTC cadets to make it a successful event. On the same day, the Cape Kennedy Corvette Club hosted a car show, Vettes on the Island, in Dillard's parking lot across the street from the VMC. We had our canopy set up to promote the VMC and to thank the Corvette Club for graciously donating a portion of their earnings to the Veterans Memorial Center.

Events coming up in May include the annual Vietnam Reunion at Wickham Park from 9-12 May and, of course, the VMC Memorial Day Program on 27 May. The VMC is taking our museum show on the road to the Volusia County Fair Grounds Valor Days in Deland on May 4th and 5th. They are excited to have us. Ed, Kristi and I will support the event. On the 5th, we will host Back Brevard Heroes in another big event in our park. On Saturday, May 25th, the Navy League, and Propeller Club will host the 22nd Annual Maritime Day at Rusty's Seafood and Oyster Bar at Cape Canaveral. The event will comprise of a short program on the deck at Rusty's followed by a boat tour of the Port of Canaveral and lunch.

The VMC Building and Park

We are still waiting for the county to

VMC/BVC CONTACTS

VMC President

Dean Schaaf
dschaaf@brevard.net
321-794-4371

BVC Chairman

Ted Suzor
suzorted9@gmail.com
321-271-4327

VMC Vice President

Paul Julian
pjulian54@gmail.com
321-448-7600

BVC Vice Chairman

Jim Carleton
jimcarleton4@gmail.com
321-543-0646

BVC/VMC Secretary

Kristi Blanchard
brevardvmc@gmail.com
321-453-1776 ext. 5

BVC/VMC Treasurer

Dave Clayton
bvmctreasurer@gmail.com
321-453-1776 ext. 6

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





VMC President's Report Cont.

LCDR Dean Schaaf, USN (Ret)

finish a parking study before we can proceed with the project, this should be finished in April. In fact, we have a meeting with MIRA on April 25th and should get more information. The VMC and Merritt Island Redevelopment Agency (MIRA) got approval from the Tourist Development Council for additional funding that was unanimously approved. The next step is to take it to the County Commissioners for approval. We are hoping for a groundbreaking in a couple of months.

We are improving our "lobby" entrance and have met with Vic Rogers, our "architect" for the project. Thanks Vic, for all your work and ideas. I am sure everyone will be impressed with the fresh look of our entry way when we are finished.

We have an election coming up so step up into a leadership position, board position or committee chairperson. We need you!

Finally, I want to thank all volunteers for keeping the Center operating and for all your dedication. God bless you and all armed services as we serve our nation.

Dean

GO NAVY – BEAT ARMY

The PURDUE BOILERMAKERS went all the way in the NCAA March Madness Tournament (as I predicted) but met a better team and came up one game short of a championship.

VMC/BVC CONTACTS

VMC President

Dean Schaaf
dschaaf@brevard.net
321-794-4371

BVC Chairman

Ted Suzor
suzorted9@gmail.com
321-271-4327

VMC Vice President

Paul Julian
pjulian54@gmail.com
321-448-7600

BVC Vice Chairman

Jim Carleton
jimcarleton4@gmail.com
321-543-0646

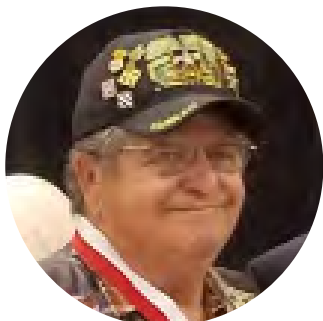
BVC/VMC Secretary

Kristi Blanchard
brevardvmc@gmail.com
321-453-1776 ext. 5

BVC/VMC Treasurer

Dave Clayton
bvmctreasurer@gmail.com
321-453-1776 ext. 6

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



BVC Chairman's Report

Ted Suzor
USA (Fmr)

Hello There! Just a note to let everyone know that I will be running again this year for Chairman. I know I didn't get much done this year. I had some health things I had to take care of. Now that's behind me I look forward to a better year. So with that said I will step up to the plate and take care of things like I should.

Thank you



VMC Librarian Report

Joe Davie,
USAF (Fmr)

Two New Veteran Interviews

The library interviewed two veterans from the Vietnam era in April Ben Bydalek and Beverly Sangeleer.

Ben Bydalek Served in the USMC from March 1966 to March 1968. He was assigned to Delta Battery 2nd Battalion 11th Marines 1st Marine Division. Ben's artillery battery took part in multiple combat operations in Vietnam and earned him a Purple Heart, Combat Operations Ribbon, and Presidential Unit Citation. Ben currently operates the Vietnam War Exhibit & Education center located off US Highway 1 in Melbourne. Call 321-212-9726 for personal appointment.

Beverly Sangeleer served in the Navy Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War. Completed OCS at Newport R. I. and and commissioned as a Lieutenant J.G. Her duty station was the Philadelphia Naval Hospital from 1967-1969. She served as Ward Nurse and Charge Nurse to wounded veterans. Ben and Beverly Support each other today in Veteran outreach.



[Click here to see Ben's interview](#)



[Click here to see Beverly's interview](#)



321-507-0873

**1365 N. Courtenay Pkwy, Unit C,
Merritt Island FL 32953**



BVC Vice-Chairman's Report
Jim "JC" Carleton
USMC (Fmr)

May. When I think of May, I think of Memorial Day. Unlike Veteran's Day, which honors all those who have served, Memorial Day, always the last Monday in May, honors the people who died while serving in the military. This is an incredibly special day where we reflect on the American's who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving and protecting our country. On Memorial Day, you can honor those fallen by attending the Memorial Day service at the Brevard Veteran's Memorial Center on Monday, May 27th at 0930 hours. We at the BVC/VMC are planning a momentous event to show our appreciation for our fallen heroes.

Also, while I have your attention, you may be interested in getting a little more involved with the organization and outstanding hidden facility on Merritt Island. Elections are coming up for all positions. We have a place for everyone. Nominations for all positions will close at the General Membership meeting on May 8th at the Veterans Memorial Center. Come by and say hi, put your name in the hat. We would love to see you!



Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain Chip Hanson
USMC (Fmr)

A brief history on Memorial's Day

Memorial Day is a federal holiday in the United States, for remembering 1,498,240 men and women who died, and 40,031 still missing in action, while serving in our Country's Armed Forces. The holiday, which is currently observed every year on the last Monday of May, this year, will be held on May 24, 2020. The holiday was originally held on May 30 and marks the unofficial start of the summer season.

Memorial Day is not to be confused with Veterans Day – Memorial Day is a day of remembering the men and women who died while serving, whereas Veterans Day celebrates the service of all U.S. military veterans Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force and now the Space Force.

Merchant Marines are not a part of our Military. That is why they are not recognized on a Veteran holiday. (ref CITREP, Wikipedia, and several other publications).

In 1868, General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union veterans founded in Decatur, Illinois, established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the Union war dead with flowers. By the 20th century, various Union and Confederate memorial traditions, celebrated on different days, merged, and Memorial Day eventually extended to honor all Americans who died while in military service.

In 1915, following the Second Battle of Ypres, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, a physician with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, wrote the poem, "In Flanders Fields". Its opening lines refer to the fields of poppies that grew among the soldiers' graves in Flanders.

In 1918, inspired by the poem, YWCA worker Moina Michael attended a YWCA Overseas War Secretaries' conference wearing a silk poppy pinned to her coat and distributed over two dozen more to others present. In 1920, the National American Legion adopted it as their official symbol of remembrance.

On May 26, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson designated an "official" birthplace of the holiday by signing the presidential proclamation naming Waterloo, New York, as the holder of the title. This action followed House Concurrent Resolution 587, in which the 89th Congress had officially recognized that the patriotic tradition of observing Memorial Day had begun one hundred years prior in Waterloo, New York. The village credits druggist Henry C. Welles and county clerk John B. Murray as the founders of the holiday. Snopes and Live Science discredit the Waterloo account.

"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13 ESV

Visit the VA at
<https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance/>
 to read how to apply for
 burial allowances



Secretary's Report

Kristi Blanchard
USA (Fmr)

Hello Membership,

Let's stand against veteran suicide. I want to challenge you!



**STAND AGAINST
VETERAN SUICIDE**

The Fire Watch is Florida's fight to end veteran suicide. They are building a life-saving network of community members and organizations trained to identify the warning signs of veterans in crisis and to direct those veterans to the help they need.

Many organizations have become a Veteran Safe Place (VSP) but not the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC). We have 12 Watch Standers but require 50 for the "VSP" designation.

I would like to challenge the over 400 BVMC members to let us know that they are trained as Watch Standers or ask you to get trained!

I reached out to Henry Angulo, Regional Programs Director (South FL) and partner of the BVMC, and he provided the following guidance:

- "I know it can be challenging to schedule a time and date for members to have the training in person. So, our online training may be the better option.
- We just need the members to complete the training online to add "Brevard Veterans Memorial Center" as their "Organization" when they submit their information.
- They can also provide you a picture or copy of their certificate once completed to you and we can count them.

Any individual can become a Watch Stander by completing our online training at <https://www.thefirewatch.org/watch-standers>. The training consists of watching 2 to 3 short videos, familiarizing yourself with our resource guide and signing a pledge.

Send a copy of your completed training certificates to me at brevardvmc@gmail.com. Thanks so much in advance!



VMC Youth Activities Committee Chairman

Paul Julian, USN (Fmr)

Courageous Division Sea Cadets

As of this writing we have 19 registered cadets, up by two from the end of last month. We are working toward and anticipate bringing aboard more Cadets in the near future. Our recruiting goal for CY2024 is to have 25 registered cadets by 31 Dec 2024.

On March 2nd, we performed our first drills at our new "alternate" drill site at the NOTU facilities on Cape Canaveral Space Force Base (CCSFB). Although we spent most of the time at NOTU's Trident Basin facility, MT1 Steven Hall gave us a tour of much of the unclassified NOTU facilities. We would like to thank MT1 Hall and the NOTU command for giving us the privilege of using their facilities for our training!

On March 16th, we returned to our "homeport" at the Veteran's Memorial Center. During our morning drill, we focused on supporting the Center's "Last Naval Battle of the Revolutionary War". In the afternoon, we practiced marching, formations and movements.

On Monday, April 1st, we held our annual board meeting for our 501(c)(3). Captain Nate Heuberger, USN Retired, stepped down after almost seven years from being President. He will still be our Navy "consultant", lecturer and financial auditor.

A Look Ahead!

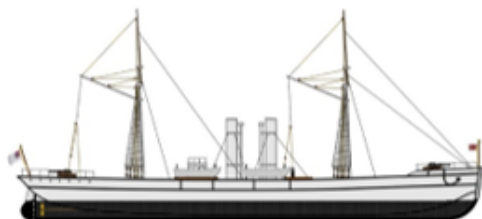
The next month – May, is shaping up to be very busy! It starts with a set of standard drills on Saturday, May 4th at our VMC headquarters. The next day, on Sunday, May 5th, we will provide support during the "Back Brevard Heroes" BBQ. Two weeks later, on May 18th, we will drill once again at NOTU on CCSFB. During these drills, we will have our final practice for our "program" for our annual "Courageous Division Awards & Graduation" ceremony which will take place the very next day (i.e. Sunday, May 19th). Please note that there will be two Cadets graduating from our program. One of the graduates - Cadet Chief Chapin, has been one of our best Cadets ever – we hate to see her go! However, we anticipate her providing strong leadership in whatever path she decides to embark!

VMC Library Discussion Group Series

**Adventures of the Rebel Raider [Tallahassee](#)
The [Ship](#), The [Captain](#), and Their [Stories](#)**

Presented by Wayne Rowe, CDR, USN-[ret](#)

**Tuesday, May 28, 2024, 6:00-7:30pm
The Library, Veterans Memorial Center, Merritt Island**



The Ship -- CSS Tallahassee

A true story of maritime audacity that has never received proper treatment.

In August 1864, the Confederate Navy deployed the fast cruiser Tallahassee to threaten the Northeast Coast of US.

AUSA Excited to be a Tenant Organization with BVMC

By Vincent (Kip) Mathias
President, Space Coast Chapter of ASUS

The Space Coast Chapter of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) is very thankful to the Veterans Memorial Center's Board of Directors for accepting us as a tenant organization.


Brevard County is the core geographic area of the Space Coast Chapter's six-county presence, and we have over four thousand members in that footprint. It is accurate to say some of our members are not yet aware of the Brevard VMC and its various programs.

Our Space Coast Chapter values are aligned with the VMC's values, and our Chapter supports many of the same and some additional veteran programs. Some of our members already are life members at the VMC serving in various volunteer capacities there.

We are inviting all VMC members to our June 14th, 6:00-8:00 pm General Membership Meeting and Membership Drive at the Broken Barrel Restaurant. <https://www.brokenbarreltaVERN.com/> at 4700 S. Babcock Street, Palm Bay, FL 32905. Food and beverages will be from the menu. Our Guest Speaker will be Guy C. Swan, III, Lieutenant General, US Army, ret. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_C._Swan_III.

For questions or to RSVP for the event, please contact Corey Mason, VSpaceCoast@ausa.org, or cell: 321-537-5936.

The Space Coast Chapter of AUSA views our acceptance as a VMC tenant activity as a strategic opportunity for both organizations and we will work very hard to ensure this relationship flourishes for those we both serve.



Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
Space Coast Chapter invites you to our
General Membership Meeting/Membership Drive
to celebrate the

**US ARMY'S
249TH BIRTHDAY**

Friday June 14, 2024
6:00 to 8:00pm

BROKEN BARREL TAVERN
4700 Babcock Street NE
Palm Bay, FL 32905

**No-host dinner event | Open to the public
Guest Speaker**

Limited Seating. Please RSVP to Corey Mason at
VSpaceCoast@ausa.org or 321-537-5936.



MIKE ERDMAN

**ERDMAN
AUTOMOTIVE**

Mike Erdman



MIKE ERDMAN
TOYOTA



Humana

Doreen Barnes
Sales Representative

SERVICING BREVARD,
INDIAN RIVER, ST. LUCIE
AND MARTIN COUNTIES

☎ 772 486 8163

☎ 772 463 3000

DBarnes19@humana.com



HOSTED BY BVMC

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

LTC TIM THOMAS (RET) USA

GUEST SPEAKER:

COL HERMAN COLE (RET) USAF

EMCEE:

DEAN SCHAAF, VMC PRESIDENT AND LCDR(RET) USN



REMEMBER AND HONOR

MONDAY, MAY 27, 2024

9:30AM

BREVARD VETERANS
MEMORIAL CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CALL 321-453-1776 EXT. 5



Land of the FREE Because of the BRAVE

Celebrate our
Military Women
 On Women Veterans Recognition Day
Luncheon
Wednesday June 12
 11:30am-1:30pm
 Nyami Nyami River Lodge at the ZOO
 8225 N Wickham Rd, Melbourne, FL 32940

Military Women FREE With ID

Sponsorship Opportunities
info@wvet-project.org

Sponsor a Table \$500



Guest Speakers

Sponsor a Military Women \$50

Guest Speakers

She Served so YOU could Live FREE

***AF Vet Susan Glasgow CEO Kegman Inc**

***AF Vet Erin Kelly Realtor Investor Ekt Realty**

***AF Vet Garren Cone VA Benefits**

***AF Col Susan Romano Director Public Affairs AFTAC**

***AF Vet Elizabeth Cassidy Future Home Loan**

Retired Army Michelle Blackwood

***VA Orlando Women Veteran Health Care**

***Army Major PA, Leah Bucholz Prestige Veterans Medical Consulting**

***Army Vet Koday Bogart KB Solutions, LLC**

Jamie Brock *weVenture Womens Business Center

Erin Kelly
 PRESIDENT
 KEGMAN

LEAH BUCHOLZ
 MOAA

future home loans

Prestige Veteran MEDICAL CONSULTING

NAVY FEDERAL

DAR

CIVIL AIR PATROL

weVENTURE

AVET Project
www.avet-project.org

KEL TEC

vieta voice

Senior Life

StandOut
 Business - Signs - Printing

VMC has Spring Boomer Fest Covered

By Donn Weaver

The VMC table had a great spot at the semiannual Senior Life Boomer Fest on 29 March. As usual, our Public Affairs Committee Chairman, Harry Beaver, did a great job talking with dozens of the 500+ who visited the event. There was great interest in memorial bricks and coming to visit for the first time. Past BVC Chairman Donn Weaver helped out and credit goes to current VMC President Dean Schaaf, who worked at another event, but who spent hours updating the veteran contact section of the 2024 Annual Boomer Guide which can be picked up at the VMC.

We were neighbors with Space Coast Honor Fight that day, where BVC Chair Ted Suzor was busy promoting that wonderful mission to more than a few Vietnam veterans.

These types of events help to spread the VMC word so again, a big thanks to our public affairs guru Harry for leading that effort in many events all year round.



2024-2025 Elections on the Horizon

By Rita Perini

Dear Membership:

The 2024 nominations are now open for all Membership. This will include the Executive Committee (BVC Chairman, BVC Vice-Chairman, VMC President, VMC Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer) and two (2), three (3)-year Board positions on each of the VMC and BVC boards. Additional openings may be in one (1) or two (2) year Board positions.

If you are a member and interested in self-nominating or nominating another member (to be confirmed by the other member), please feel free to contact one of the Nominating Committee members:

1. Rita Perini - rperini@cfl.rr.com
2. Karen Croft - kcroft7@cfl.rr.com
3. Chip Hanson - chipvietnam68@aol.com

Nominations will close at the May 8, 2024 General Membership meeting and the Election will be held on June 12 prior to the General Membership meeting. Thank you for your consideration and continued support.

VMC Hosts Record Setting Fundraiser for Brevard Parkinson's Alliance

By Donn Weaver

On a beautiful if windy day on April 27, the Veterans Memorial Center and Park, as well as parts of the Merritt Island Mall, was the scene of a very special event. For the fourth time the Brevard Parkinson's Alliance (BPA) staged their annual 5K Race, 1K Walk and fundraiser at the VMC. The results were amazing.

More than 200 runners participated in the 5K along with 80 walkers for the 1K. BPA had 70 volunteers; more than 20 sponsors and vendors which brought in more than \$15K; and 15 Cocoa HS JROTC Cadets gave up their Saturday morning to make sure runners made the correct turns. The race winner set a new record of just under 20 mins!!! It was truly a fun and heart-warming day with the goal of helping more than 5,000 Brevard residents living with Parkinson's as well as adding to research funding. President Barbara Fradkin and her BPA team did a great job and Running Zone also made it a smooth event with set up starting at 0600 am. At least 500 people were around as runners, helpers, watchers and supporters for the cause.



Pictured: Booths, galore!



Pictured: On your mark! Get set! Go!



Pictured: Cocoa JROTC Cadets get special medals, too!!



PRE-REGISTRATION

Come Join Us for a Free Flight

YOUNG EAGLES FLIGHT RALLY

Sponsored by EAA Chapter 724, Merritt Island Airport in Brevard County, FL

For Children 8-17 Years Old of Fallen Heroes, Catastrophically Physically and Emotionally Injured and Those that lost their Battle with PTSD

---- Military Servicemembers and First Responders ----

The Young Eagles Program is the only program of its kind with a mission to introduce and inspire kids in the world of aviation.



Cost: Free Flight and Aviation Intro

Date: May 11, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.

FAA Approved Aircraft & Licensed Pilots

Each Seat on Each Aircraft is Insured

Location: ****Enter from South Courtney Pkwy**

Merritt Island Airport

Merritt Island, FL 32952

Bring your camera!

1. Register at <https://youngeaglesday.org/?9816>
2. Questions? Please contact either Don White, easyhouse@yahoo.com, or Shaun McKinney, shaunpmckinney@aol.com, 614-327-6328. Read more about EAA's Young Eagles Flights Program at <https://www.eaa.org/ea/youth/free-ye-flights>.
3. When the formal online sign-up begins, permission forms must be signed in ink and brought to the event by the parent or legal guardian. Photocopies cannot be accepted.
4. All participating families will be formally invited to the Brevard County Military Museum, 400 S. Sykes Creek Parkway, Merritt Island, FL 32952.



PRE-REGISTRATION



Don Pearsall, Candidate for Brevard Veterans Council Chairman

In Partnership and Honoring the work of the DAV and VMC

I am running for the position of Chairman of the Brevard Veterans Council. I feel I have what it takes to effectively assist the veterans of Brevard County, and their families. I plan to resurrect the programs that have been neglected and add new ones that will adjust to the needs of homeless, at-risk veterans and their families.

I would appreciate your support and vote for BVC Chairman



Education & Citizenship Armed Forces Coalition of the Space Coast (ECAC)

By Donn Weaver

After months of planning, a new project in Brevard launched on 15 Feb 2024. It is the Education & Citizenship Armed Forces Coalition of the Space Coast (ECAC). The group will eventually include leaders and key contacts from all schools, public, private, and home school at all grade levels; DoD military education outreach units; DoD contractors; STEM focused program leaders; many veteran organizations and other groups that sponsor scholarships and other youth programs; and more. The program is set to fully launch in August when the new 2024-25 school year begins. A Museum attendance and service hours program is set to begin in June 2024.

The ECAC has three goals:

1. Steer students toward over 23 Brevard County Museums to both visit for credit and perform service hours.
2. Engage veteran and civic groups to provide details of their student scholarships, competitions, awards, STEM programs, and military track training from ROTC, Academies and more. These opportunities - including names, description & eligibility, and website link (for easy access to details) will be compiled in a list & populated on the Brevard Public Schools' website.
3. Expand opportunities for STEM related learning through new programs in the Brevard Public Schools and all schools. For

example, an outreach STEM program at PSFB and organizational STEM programs like the Civil Air Patrol, Fleet Reserve at Titusville HS and AFA's CyberPatriot and StellarXplorers.

These tools will equip all guidance counsellors and teachers in all schools - including home schools - with the tools to encourage a wider range of participation from students.

The NEXT QUARTERLY PLANNING MEETING is 2 MAY 2024, 6 pm at the Veterans Memorial Center Museum (VMC). More members outlined above are invited to join and sign up their programs.

Organizations are asked to provide the following:

- Name of the scholarship, competition, award, camp, STEM program, etc.
- Description & eligibility of opportunity
- Website link to access details
- POC w/contact information, if available

CONTACT: Tammy Dennis (tdennisone@gamil.com) or Donn Weaver (donnweaver2020@gmail.com)

Ensuring a Legacy at Veterans Memorial Center

By Donn Weaver and Shaun McKinney



Last summer 19-year-old Merritt Island High School graduate, Christian Bellmore, died in the US as a result of military service. He had completed basic and advanced training and was awaiting more training and possible PCS deployment. Last Fall the Veterans Memorial Center hosted a celebration of life with over 100 attending, many of whom were friends of Airman Bellmore. Leading

the family was his mother, US Army SFC Samantha Mecke, who has been in the Army for 17 years and is currently assigned to Fort Liberty in North Carolina. Merritt Island was her home and when she was often deployed, Airman Bellmore stayed in Merritt Island and lived with his grandmother.

After the service we worked with SFC Mecke to help her make sure her only son's legacy would forever be preserved on Merritt Island. Earlier this month a Memorial Bench was received and assembled. It will go along with a Memorial Brick in the USAF Plaza section and Memorial Tree, which will be planted when the VMC Park is upgraded. VMC also took steps to add the Airman's name to the American Legion sponsored bench just inside the Plaza Gate.



Pictured: Bellmore's Bench.



Pictured: Christian's siblings visiting his memorial and sharing lunch with him.



Pictured: Christian Bellmore's Brick in the Park.



American Legion Auxiliary Unit 344
Is collecting Manufacturers Coupons
to send to our active duty troops.
Please leave them in the box on the
table outside the library at the
VMC.



Vietnam War Exhibit & Education Center



Brevard County's **"Newest"** Military Exhibit

DEDICATED TO THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE



HUNDREDS OF AUTHENTIC ARTIFACTS

-Education – Awareness – Reflection-

Please call for times – 321-212-9726

- Rt 1 & the Pineda Causeway -

"Across from Grills Restaurant"



2475 Jen Drive #5, Melbourne, FL.

vietnamwarexhibit.com – Fb: Vietnam War Exhibit

RUSH Construction Community Support to JROTC Units

Members of Rush Construction Team, led by Mike Lipinski (center with glasses) after they completed installing 8 large poles at Cocoa HS for the JROTC Raider Challenge Program, JROTC Instructor LTC Joe Pavone, USA, RET is kneeling in center. Rush has now helped four high schools, all at no cost.

They installed the "river crossing" poles at the Veterans Memorial Center Park in use for 8 years for county and district meets every fall. Thanks to Rush for supporting the VMC and JROTC!!!



Seniors Who...



**Play
Work
Learn
Travel**

**Laugh
Savor
Shop
Create
Share
Garden
Cook
Enjoy life...**



Also read SENIOR SCENE

Seniors all around town are talking about their FREE magazine that has it all!

We 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!



Park and Plaza Report

by Shaun McKinney

Bricks, Benches and Trees

Bricks: Five new submissions were received. All orders are with CSPRAY and will be in place in early May 2024.

Trees: All memorial plates for the trees are in hand in the VMC Library.

Benches: All orders for memorial benches have been received and are assembled.

Plaza: Eagle Scout candidate, Nebraska Danger Trask, completed his Eagle project by completing a one hundred percent inventory and a location review of 1000+ plaza bricks. Nebraska and his team of twelve to fifteen individuals

completed this project on Saturday, April 13th. They also completed some ground clean-up while there. This project consisted of an intensive digital and hard copy review of the plaza records and created a baseline with 100% accuracy. The data from Nebraska's Eagle project is the foundation of data going into our plaza kiosk. The VMC thanks Nebraska and his team for their efforts.

The Brick, Bench and Tree Team consisting of Garet McKimmie, Doug Bisset, Wayne Fried, and Shaun McKinney are proud to support veterans' families.

If you are interested in ordering a memorial brick, tree, or bench and have questions, feel free to contact Shaun McKinney @ 614-327-6328



Book Report

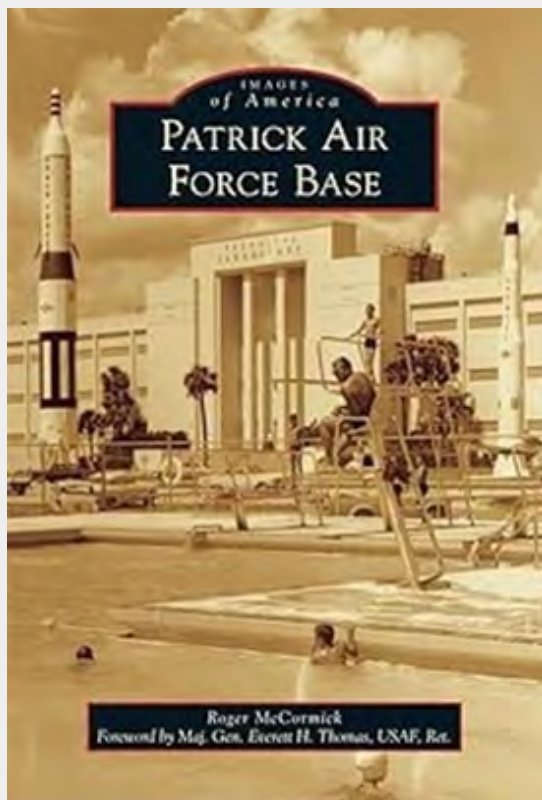
"Patrick Air Force Base" by Roger McCormick

Patrick Air Force Base has a long history dating back to World War II when it was established as the Banana River Naval Air Station (BRNAS). Authorized by the Naval Expansion act of 1938 BRNAS was commissioned on October 1, 1940, and served as an adjunct to the Jacksonville Naval Air Station. PBM Mariner and PBV Catalina Seaplanes were initially flown on anti-submarine patrols along Florida's east coast. The Banana River was used for taking off and landing. The OS2U Kingfisher, another smaller float plane, was also used for search and rescue missions at the new Naval Base.

Following WWII a long-range proving ground for guided missiles was needed by all the US military services. BRNAS along with Cape Canaveral as a launch site was selected as the best location after trying Baja California and Arizona.

The Joint Long-Range Proving Ground was established in 1949 by the US Air Force. Patrick Air Force Base was named after Major General Mason Mathews Patrick. A graduate of West Point, General Patrick was an avid military pilot and early adopter of our Air Service in 1923. The Missile test range was named after General Patrick on August 1, 1950. Many photos of missile development and testing along the extensive Eastern Test Range are included in this book.

Book Report by Joe Davie



Advertise in the Courier

RATES

Business Card: \$50 per year

Quarter Page Color: \$150 per year

Half Page Color: \$250 per year

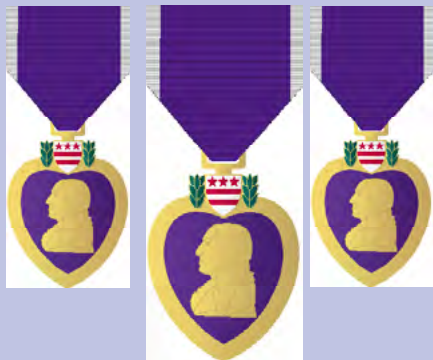
Our emailed newsletter reaches hundreds, including vet organizations, government officials, 500 VMC members and more.

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.



Old Fish House Restaurant
249 W Cocoa Beach CSWY
Cocoa Beach FL 32931
Call us at (321)-799-9190

OPEN
Tues.-Thurs. 11:30 am - 9:00 pm
Fri. & Sat. 11:30 am - 9:30 pm
CLOSED
Sunday & Monday



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!



UNIQUE ART
by
Dan Haddad

310 Le Jeune Dr
Merritt Island, FL 32953

321-536-5585
rrragent@gmail.com






[Click to see Dan's art in action in this video!](#)



ATLANTIC MUSIC CENTER

atlanticmusiccenter.com

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



The Patriot Report

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

Meet Your Service Officer John (Jack) Donohue



John (Jack) Donohue: Born 28 January in Brooklyn, New York where I was raised, went to grade school, and 1st year of high school. I finished high school at Mount Saint Joseph's in Baltimore, MD in June of 1955 and volunteered for the draft into the U. S. Army in March 1956. I went to Fort Carson, CO and became part of B Battery, 28th Field Artillery, Battalion, 8th Infantry Division for basic and artillery training before shipping to Germany in Operation Gyroscope in September. In November, I transferred to B Battery, 264th Field Artillery Battalion (Atomic) and separated to the USAR in February of 1958.

In June of 1960, I married my teenage sweetheart, Joan, and this year will mark our 64th anniversary. Then in August 1960, I was appointed to the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) and served just under 21 years before retiring as Captain. While in the FDNY, in 1973, a friend told me that the USCG was looking for prior service military personnel who were experienced police and firefighters to fill the Coast Guard's new task of port security. I joined and 24 years later, I retired as PSS3 (W-3).



After leaving the FDNY, I was awarded a scholarship to Pace University and graduated in 1984 with a degree in Public Accounting. I worked for Vulcan Installation as bookkeeper, comptroller and finally as CFO before



*The time window to file
a Camp LeJeune Toxic
Water claims will close on
August 10, 2024.*



leaving in 1993. I realized that I didn't want to be an accountant anymore and that I would rather do something to help people more directly. I started working for Federation Employment and Guidance Services, a private health care agency that operated group homes, employment training centers, half-way houses and total care facilities for adults with all degrees of mental health issues. As Director of Safety and Security, I got to see, in my opinion, some of the most dedicated health care professionals imaginable. I retired in 2005 and in 2008 my wife and I moved to IRCC in Viera.

I joined the DAV in Merritt Island in 2012 and became a Certified Service Officer in 2013. Since then, I have served more than 3000 volunteer hours in Space Coast Chapter 123. In addition to being a Service Officer, I also serve as the Treasurer for the Chapter.

"That's Not My Job"

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have.



Camp LeJeune Toxic Water Claims Will "Sunset" This Coming August

The time window to file a Camp LeJeune Toxic Water claims will close on August 10, 2024.

The good news for those who have already filed claims is litigation moving more quickly. Track 1 discovery depositions (individuals who allege they have contracted bladder cancer, kidney cancer, leukemia, Parkinson's disease, or non-Hodgkin's lymphomas) have begun, and the trial could be as early as May. In a ruling February 6, the court determined that victims could not have their cases heard by a jury and all trials will be heard by a federal judge.

CLJA does not list specific covered diseases. Anyone could sue if they resided, worked, or were exposed to water at Camp LeJeune for at least 30 days between 1953 and 1987. And that exposure caused them harm.

Some law firms are drawing the line on what claims they will file as a U.S. government agency study concluded certain diseases are more closely associated with Camp LeJeune exposure.

Many veterans are concerned about should they file a claim under the CLJA will that put their VA benefits at risk. The VA has plainly stated in its official guidance that "...if you awarded relief from a CLJA lawsuit, your VA benefits will not be reduced, and your eligibility for other VA benefits will not be affected." If a veteran is already receiving benefits or

other compensation for injuries caused by the water at Camp Lejeune, the act still gives them the right to sue; and the benefits will not be lost even if action is brought under the act.

However, it is important for veterans to understand what is at stake with disability benefits and take pause before filing a lawsuit or joining a class action. If a veteran receives compensation from a lawsuit, the Justice Department will consult with the VA to "offset" any lawsuit compensation a veteran has already received (or is receiving) from the VA for the same disabilities. The government will not allow you to be compensated twice for the same purpose.

With the August 10th "Sunset" deadline fast approaching, if you are inclined to file a lawsuit, you are encouraged to file that administrative claim as quickly as possible. Your condition does not have to be on the VA presumptive list or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to file a claim. Surviving family members may pursue claims on behalf of deceased loved ones.

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

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





Traveling Trunk Program

Bringing history to life

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) Museum offers 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 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. The contents of these trunks can be used for research, exhibition, or as a hands-on educational resource that piques student interest in history by engaging them in object-based learning.

Contact us to connect with veterans if you would like to add a human perspective to the artifacts in the trunks.



Trunks are available for the Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War.



Trunk FAQs

How do I reserve a Traveling Trunk?

Download and fill out a *Traveling Trunk Loan Agreement* form. Availability is on a first-come, first-served basis.

How long can I keep a trunk?

Trunks are loaned for three weeks.

What does it cost?

Trunks are available free of charge.

How do I pick up and return my Traveling Trunk?

Borrowers may come in person to the BVMC to pick up and return a trunk during regular visiting hours.

What are my responsibilities?

As borrower, you must agree to return the trunk by the due date and be responsible for its care and security while it's in your possession.

Contact Ed Pingston at 321-794-9401
Scan or Visit

<https://veteransmemorialcenter.org/traveling-trunks/>



Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar May 2024 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/>

MAY 2024

05-12 May – Traveling Wall and Reunion at Wickham Park. Details in March. See above 15 April to register and for info.

05 May – Back Brevard Heroes (BBH) Hero Fest Celebration and BBQ to honor first responders and veterans at the VMC Plaza, Buildings and Park. 1000 – 1600. See details in April.

18 May – Space Coast Honor Flight to Wash DC for selected veterans to visit their memorials. Guardian volunteers and other supporters welcome for ceremony to launch the flight – 0130 hours at the Senior Center in Wickham Park, Melbourne. Contact SCHF on 321-456-7031 or info@spacecoasthonorflight.org for more information.

21 May – Senator Rubio's Staff Mobile Office Hours at the VMC, 1300-1500, specifically for Veterans and their families.

25 May - Mike Erdman Toyota Annual Memorial Day Ceremony at their dealership 0830-0930 on Rte 520 just west of I95 in Cocoa. Special speakers, flag raising and unique ceremony for veterans, the Erdman team and the public.

27 May - Memorial Day Ceremony at VMC Plaza 0930-1100. LTC (RET) Tim Thomas, USA, is keynote speaker with special presentation by COL (RET) Herman Cole, USAF. Call 321-453-1776 ext 5 for more information.

27 May - Memorial Day Ceremony at the Liberty Bell Museum in Melbourne 0930-1100 featuring Gold Star Family Remembrances and Guest Speaker, CAPT Jason Schneider, USN, Commander at NOTU.

27 May - Memorial Day Observance, Remember and Honor, at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery in Scottsmoor / Mims 1000-1100 Flag Assembly Area. Special speaker and tributes at first fully open public ceremony at the CCNC since 2019. CAPT William Toni, Navy Submarine Sailor will give the keynote with Esther Bower of Fox 35 Orlando acting as EMCEE. Contact 321-403-0128 for more information.

27 May - City of Cocoa Memorial Day Tribute at Riverfront Park in Cocoa following Parade. Ceremony begins at 1700-1800.

28 May – VMC Library Discussion Program 1800-1930 “Adventures of the Rebel Raider Tallahassee: The Ship, the Captain, and Their Stories.” presented by Wayne Rowe.

JUNE 2024

08 Jun – Space Coast Honor Flight to Wash DC for selected veterans to visit their memorials. Guardian volunteers and other supporters welcome for ceremony to launch the flight – 0130 hours at the Senior Center in Wickham Park, Melbourne. Contact SCHF on 321-456-7031 or info@spacecoasthonorflight.org for more information.

08 Jun – Zachary M. Martin Memorial 5 K Run/Walk at Viera Regional Park (2300 Judge Fran Jamieson Way) in Melbourne 0800-1000. Proceeds will benefit Stop Soldier Suicide and help Brevard County veterans with PTSD. visit zacharymartinmemorial.com to register and for more information about this 501c3.

12 Jun – Military Women Veterans Recognition Day Celebration and Luncheon 1130-1330 at the Nyami Nyami River Lodge at the Brevard Zoo, 8225 N. Wickham, Melbourne. Details and sponsorship information at info@avet-project.org.

JULY 2024

04 Jul – Annual BCSO and VMC Merritt Island Independence Day Parade. 1000-1200 with details in May. Start at Merritt Island HS and finish at Veterans Memorial Center with food and festivities.

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



IN COORDINATION WITH THE AMERICAN RED CROSS AND LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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
Paul Julian 321-749-7369

jdavie@cfl.rr.com
pjulian54@yahoo.com

VIDEOGRAPHERS

Joe Davie 321-626-5462
Paul Julian 321-749-7369

jdavie@cfl.rr.com
pjulian54@yahoo.com

VHP SUPPORT

Bill Wilkening 321-428-3422

Hank Rhodes

321-799-1219

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, 2025

Carleton, Jim March, 2025

Clark, Garrett Sept, 2024

Clayton, David & Anne July, 2024

Ericson, Robert & Robin Mar 2026

Fadok, Eleanor Dec, 2024

Fleet Reserve Branch 263 July, 2024

Florida State University College of Social
Work, August, 2024

Fugaro, Ricardo and Joan April, 2024

Huffman, Kenneth, USN Nov, 2024

Kanis, Jussara and Michael Nov, 2027

Longway, J.P & Donna Dec, 2028

McKinney, Shaun and Adora Sept, 2024

Muckler, Bill, CAPT. USMC May, 2028

Norman, Ray April, 2027

Schaaf, Dean & Susan July, 2024

Sherman, John S. (Tank) Oct, 2024

Sherman, Rheta Campbell Oct, 2024

Taylor, Skip USA (Ret.) June, 2024

Weaver, Donn & Jeanne Sep, 2024

Space Coast Honor Flight May, 2024

.....

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) _____