



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

# COUNCIL COURIER

JULY 2024



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center



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*More than \$9000 was raised at the event this year including runner fees, a silent auction and other donations.*

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

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

Please send submissions to:  
brevardvmc@gmail.com

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## Our Organization

**As of 29 February 2024:**  
[List of Board Members 2023-2024](#)

**As of 27 June 2024:**  
[Committee Department Assignment 2024-2025](#)

**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)**

June was kind of slow with summer vacations starting, etc. It seems like we have had an increase in rental requests so we are doing something right and the word is getting out. The decorations for the wedding on Saturday, June 15 were fabulous. They transformed our room into a ballroom and included an arch on the boardwalk. Awesome.

With Kristi on vacation and me leaving on the 16th for Indiana, that left only Dave Clayton as the ExComm. I am told that Donn Weaver stepped up to support Dave during our away time.

I attended my 60th high school reunion, having graduated in 1964. The gathering was a combined reunion of all of the Fabulous Fifty's and the Swinging Sixty's with around 250 in attendance. Not bad for a small school.

Our next big event is the July 4th parade from Merritt Island HS to the Veterans Center for veteran participants. We have decided that since it is a Thursday, we will not have food or drink afterward, giving us a chance to enjoy the day with family. If you have any decorations to spruce up my pickup with Freedom the Eagle, get with me before the 4th.

The Brevard County School kicked off the "passport" for students to visit all of the 17 museums and historic homes that are participating in the program. Most of the museums and homes are reporting numerous students participating. See this month's Courier article for the announcement. Thanks to Jaline for taking the lead on getting a stamp!!

I hope everyone has had a chance to take some time off to "smell the roses". We had a great vacation, even though it always turns into a working vacation. It's still great to reconnect with friends and family.

We are packing tonight for our drive home and leaving tomorrow.

Dean  
GO NAVY BEAT ARMY

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[YOUTUBE](#)





## VMC Librarian Report

Joe Davie,  
USAF (Fmr)

### Updates on the Discussion Series

The library discussion group topic "CSS Tallahassee" was presented on May 28 by Wayne Rowe. The "Confederate States Ship Tallahassee" was an unknown story told in narrative format in a book written by Hank Rhodes, one of our librarians. Tallahassee was a Civil War commerce raider sent north to embarrass Abraham Lincoln's administration just prior to his re-election. Tallahassee was remarkably successful in sinking commercial ships in the North Atlantic during the month of August 1864. Hank is a retired US Naval officer that served aboard submarines out of Kings Bay, Ga Naval station. Hank's book titled "August 1864" is available in the VMC museum store or amazon.com.

We have decided to pause our library discussion group presentations during the months of July and August due to absent library volunteers Wayne, Norm, and Doug that return north for the Summer. The next discussion group is scheduled for 6:00 PM August 27. Just prior to 9/11 the discussion topic will be 9/11 and presenters will include Donn Weaver and Naval CAPT. Bill Toti (Ret.).

Joe Davie will be undertaking knee replacement surgery on Friday June 28 and will be unavailable in the library during July for recovery. Paul Julian has agreed to fill in for Joe as needed until he returns.

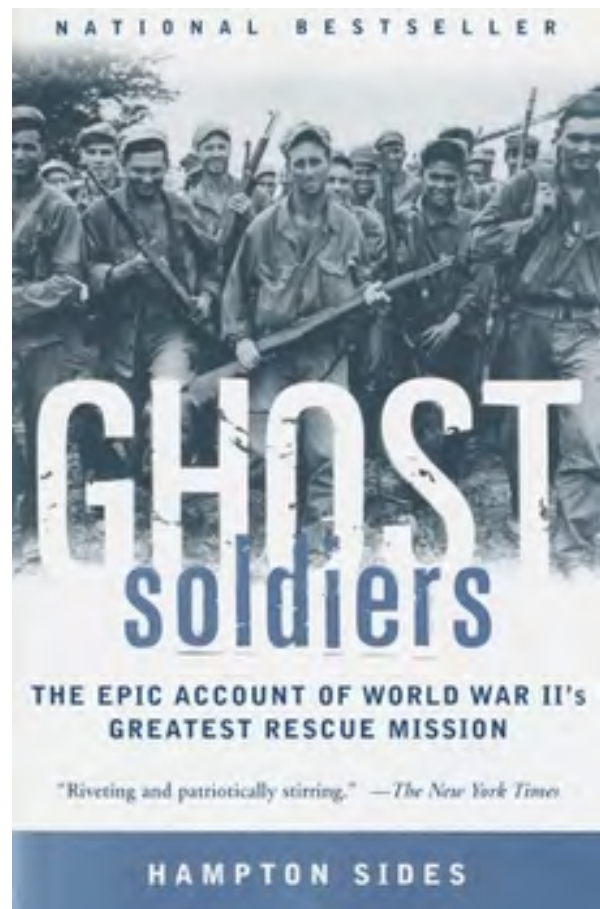
### Book Report: Ghost Soldiers: The forgotten Epic Story of World War II's most Dramatic Mission

On January 28, 1945, 121 US Army Rangers from the 6th Ranger Battalion slipped behind enemy lines in the Philippines and rescued 513 American and British POWs. These POWs were survivors of the Batan Death March and were left for 3 years in the Cabanatuan POW Camp on the Island of Luzon. The Author Hampton Sides had done his work interviewing several of the POW camp survivors, Army Rangers, and Pilipino resistance fighters that took part in the raid. Vivid minute-by-minute-descriptions unfold as personal details of the warrior ethic of Bushido from Japanese guards, resilience of the surviving prisoners and remarkable heroism of the Rangers and Filipino guerilla fighters. Once begun this book is hard to put down.

The US high command abandoned the men on Batan in 1942 by ordering the removal of General Douglas MacArthur from the small island of Corregidor just below Batan by ship.

Approximately fifty thousand American soldiers were forced to surrender to the Japanese by their remaining general as they fought their retreat to Batan. What follows is their forced march from Batan to three overcrowded prison camps set up north of Batan. This action took place shortly after losing a large part of the pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor and the decision to defeat the Germans in Europe first before returning to the pacific to face the Japanese. Resistance to the Japanese occupation developed due to their harsh treatment by the Japanese soldiers. Several Filipino resistance groups were supported by their local populations against the Japanese. Two of these groups joined the Rangers in their mission to rescue all the POWs in the Cabanatuan Camp. Communications from several spies including priests, doctors, and a cabaret owner had been established between the resistance and men inside the Camps. US Army command decided to use a select group from the newly formed of Army Rangers to attempt a rescue after hearing of Kill orders to prisoners held by the Japanese. Rangers march 30 miles behind enemy lines to surveil the Camp and decide on a daring nighttime raid. While the Filipino gorillas fight Japanese soldiers camped on a road nearby, the Rangers surround the POW Camp and fight their way in to rescue all the POWs in the camp. Ox carts from local villages were used to transport POWs that are not able to walk the 30 miles back to the American lines. The men that came out of the camp were "Ghosts" of their former selves.

Book Report by Joe Davie, Ghost Soldiers Catalog # POW-22 and WWIIPH-26





## Chaplain's Corner

**Chaplain Chip Hanson**  
USMC (Fmr)

We in America have been through some very tough times over the last couple of years. Covid 19 (that seems to never go away), riots, the economy, disagreement over the last election, and a country that is so very divided. Finally, the unwarranted disrespect by some groups to the symbol that defines the United States of America: The American Flag. The U.S. Flag Code formalizes and unifies the traditional ways in which we give respect to the flag, also contains specific instructions on how the flag is not to be used.

The following is a partial list of do's and don'ts associated with Old Glory, the U.S. Flag.

- Display the U.S. flag from sunrise to sunset on buildings and stationary flagstuffs in the open. When a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed 24-hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.
- On special days, the flag may be flown at half-staff. On Memorial Day it is flown at half-staff until noon.
- When flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.
- When placed on a podium the flag should be placed on the speaker's right or the staging area. Other flags should be placed to the left.

### When saluting the flag DO the following:

- All persons present in uniform (military, police, fire, etc.) should render the military salute. Members of the armed forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute.
- All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder.
- When stowing or disposing of the flag, DO the following:
- Fold in the traditional triangle for stowage, never wadded up.

### Quick list of Flag Etiquette Don'ts:

- Don't dip the U.S. Flag for any person, flag, or vessel.
- Don't let the flag touch the ground.
- Don't fly flag upside down unless there is an emergency.
- Don't fasten it or tie it back. Always allow it to fall free.
- Don't use the flag for decoration. Use bunting with the blue on top, then white, then red.

"But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish." -Psalm 9:18

GOD BLESS AMERICA

Chaplain Chip Hanson

For the full list of flag etiquette visit:

<https://www.military.com/flag-day/flag-etiquette-dos-and-donts.html>




## Secretary's Report

**Kristi Blanchard**  
USA (Fmr)

### Introducing the Board of Directors!

Hello Membership,

The July Elections are complete and congratulations to the incoming Board of Directors! They will be sworn in at the July 10th General Meeting.

- BVC Chairman: Don Pearsall
- BVC Vice-Chairman: Jim Carleton
- BVC Secretary: Kristi Blanchard
- BVC Treasurer: Dave Clayton
- BVC Board of Directors 3-year term: Paul Julian and Crystal Turman
- VMC President: Dean Schaaf
- VMC Vice-President: Donn Weaver
- VMC Secretary: Kristi Blanchard
- VMC Treasurer: Dave Clayton
- VMC Board of Directors 3-year term: Ed Pingston and Dorothy Walsh

Thank you to the three additional members who took the training in June to stand against veteran suicide. I want to challenge more of you! The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) is about 1/3 of the way to becoming a Veteran Safe Place (VSP).

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.

1. Please find more information here: <https://www.thefirewatch.org/watch-standers>
2. Complete the training online and add "Brevard Veterans Memorial Center" as your "Organization" when you submit your information.
3. Email me at [brevardvmc@gmail.com](mailto:brevardvmc@gmail.com) when your training is complete.



**STAND AGAINST VETERAN SUICIDE**

# Gratitude to the Museum for Honoring the Army's 249th Birthday



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

June 2024 was a wonderful month between the Brevard VMC and the AUSA Space Coast Chapter.

I want to thank the Brevard VMC and Donn Weaver for hosting LTG Guy Swan, USA, ret., a AUSA Senior Fellow. LTG Swan expressed his appreciation for an exceptional tour of the museum on June 14, 2024, the Army's 249th Birthday. The museum is a mighty review into our Nation's military history. The tour included the importance of AUSA's support of the VMC over the years, as AUSA placed the WWII memorial and provided other financial support.

I also salute the VMC for the amazing support and care they have provided to active duty Gold Star Mother, SFC Samantha Mecke, USA. The VMC hosted a Memorial Run for her son, Airman Christian Bellmore, who passed away on June 19, 2023. We appreciate the VMC allowing the AUSA Space Coast Chapter to participate in supporting this event and look forward to future events..

A look into the short-term future: Mark your calendars.

The AUSA Space Coast Chapter will hold our quarterly General Membership Meeting (GMM) at the Brevard VMC on September 20, 2024, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Our scheduled keynote speaker is MG Michael Repass, USA, ret., who consults with Ukraine and Taiwan to address their defense requirements against potential regional threats. We believe this topic is of considerable concern to our community and the presentation will be open to the public and additional information will be available soon.

Reminder to all who are AUSA members, or anyone interested in our 2024 AUSA Meeting and Exposition, 14-16 December in Washington, D.C. It is the largest land power exposition and professional development forum in North America. There will be 33,000 attendees and 700 exhibitors from eighty countries, and it will include 150 conference and training sessions. Please see <https://meetings.ausa.org/annual/2024/index.cfm> for further details.

**"Bowling for Heroes"**  
 a Charity Event benefiting  
**Heroes United to Heal Foundation**

**Grand Prize  
 Shark Fishing Trip**  
 courtesy of  
**Fired Up Fishing Charters**

Where: **Blue Jays**  
 Palm Bay  
 4851 Dairy Road  
 Melbourne, FL 32904  
 When: August 24th, 2024  
 1:00 - 3:00 pm

**Tournament Rules**

- Initial entry fee of \$70 due upon registration.
- Grand Prize awarded to the team that presents the largest donation on the day of the event.
- Team Categories.
  - Juniors (High School Teams)
  - Corporate/Private Businesses
  - Hero category

(Heroes are defined as those who've served, past or present, in the military or as a first responder)

**REGISTER NOW** >

**Sign up by August 17, 2024**  
 To register or for more info,  
 contact: [admin@hu2h.org](mailto:admin@hu2h.org)

All proceeds from funds raised will be donated to our mission to End Veteran and First Responder Suicide.  
 Heroes United to Heal Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization



# ERDMAN AUTOMOTIVE



**MIKE ERDMAN**

**Mike Erdman**



**MIKE ERDMAN  
 TOYOTA**



# Vets Back to Class: A Year in Review

It was another outstanding year for BPS' Vets Back to Class (VBC) program. During the 2023/2024 School Year, VBC had the opportunity to speak with 4,250 students in twelve different schools across the county.

Developed in 2015, the VBC program was created by MOAACC and the Veterans Memorial Center (VMC) to provide educational outreach to the students of Brevard County. Over the course of nine years, the program has grown, evolved, and proven its value by educating kids of all ages in public, private and home school settings on topics ranging from the creation of our Constitution to the World Wars and War in Afghanistan. Veteran volunteers have donated their time and experience throughout the years, bringing a personal touch to history and military education by coming into the classroom setting to teach about these important subjects. During their presentations, these veterans discuss not only the history of our Nation, but their own personal history, with a focus on how being a Veteran has impacted their life. Oftentimes, they bring with them combat era trunks filled with actual artifacts that help to bring history to life for students. During the pandemic, the group got creative and filmed 18 Veterans covering key topics of value for our school systems. The video resources and other tools offered by VBC are always available online for teachers at BPS and other school systems.



VBC Volunteer and Army veteran Doug Bisset presents a class on WWII at Heritage HS.

While the number of Veteran Volunteers ebbs and flows from year to year, the program itself continues to grow. During the 2023/2024 school year, VBC added STEM related programs including five special science fairs for BPS students at the VMC. In addition to the science fairs, veteran volunteer lectures, educational videos, and historical trunks of artifacts, the VBC also facilitated 14 school field trips to the VMC to further bolster students' knowledge of their Country's history. Furthermore, the Education and Citizenship Armed Forces Coalition of the Space Coast (ECAC), was developed this year in partnership with MOAACC, VMC, BPS, and other military and Department

of Defense (DoD) entities to bring additional education and career opportunities to students in Brevard County. In August, ECAC will be taking full effect with BPS. Over the summer, VBC is encouraging students and their families to check out local museums like the VMC, the Liberty Bell Museum, and more, to gain a better understanding of the rich history of Brevard County.



VBC Volunteer Pankaj Sharma evaluates entries at one of six BPS Science Fairs he supported the past year.

The VBC Program offers links to teachers where they can describe their classroom needs for these historical presentations. By offering a personal connection to the materials being learned, students will come away with a more intimate understanding of the history of our Nation and the men and women who helped to shape it and pave the way for others. As CPT Donn Weaver, USA Fm, head of the VBC program says, "Passing on our ethos is crucial." BPS Thanks CPT Donn Weaver, US Fm and all the Veteran volunteers that make the VBC program possible. We look forward to another stellar year to come!



**321-507-0873**  
**1365 N. Courtenay Pkwy, Unit C,**  
**Merritt Island FL 32953**

# Taking Action: 5K Run/Walk Reaps Benefits for Veterans

More than 120 registered for the 2024 Zachary M. Martin Annual Memorial 5K Run at Viera Regional Park on 08 June. Another 100 came to cheer and support this special event, including 10 members of Rolling Thunder FL Chapter 1. It was a run with a purpose, organized by Paul and Heidi Martin to honor their son, who died as a result of military service in June, 2022.

This year, the parents of another service member who lost his battle against PTSD, Kenny and Kari Green joined the Martin's in helping organize and advertise the event.

The Martins and Greens plan to hold the run every June and are hoping to stage the event at Veterans Memorial Center Park in 2025. The Martin's Foundation is an official 501c3.

More than \$9000 was raised at the event this year including runner fees, a silent auction and other donations. Proceeds will go to the Stop Soldier Suicide foundation and organizations helping veterans with PTSD. The Green's have created a moving web site about Zachary and their decision to make positive come from tragedy: [zacharymartinmemorial.com](http://zacharymartinmemorial.com)

The run was organized by Southern Timing and drew some very serious runners - the winner clocked in at under 18 minutes! It also included some families, walkers and several parents and grandparents of veterans.

It was indeed a case of taking action despite loss to benefit others in the face of sadness. Hats off to the Martins and the Greens and all who who participated.





# A Run/Walk with Heart: The First Annual Christian Bellmore Memorial 5K

By Donn Weaver



On a hot, humid Saturday (22 June) forty-four runners arrived and donated their time and money to enter the First of what will be many 5K races to honor the memory of a young Merritt Island High School Graduate. Christian Bellmore enlisted into the United States Air Force after graduation in 2022. He had finished basic and much of advanced Air Force training when he passed in Oklahoma at Tinker AFB a year later.

volunteers, along with our newest member partner, the Association of the US Army (AUSA), supported the event which ended just before a huge deluge. It was a chance to honor sacrifice and create a true legacy. Already the VMC and Christian's family are planning to make this event an annual remembrance each June.



Over 60 came out for the event with 44 registered as runners or walkers. Special thanks to Kip Mathias, President of Space Coast AUSA, Shaun McKinney AUSA/VMC, VMC Vice President Paul Julian and VMC, Charles Schaaf VMC and VMC photo king Roger Scruggs, for planning and handling many administrative aspects of the race. SFC Mecke wrote a note afterward: "Thank you for your support. Our family is humbled by your kindness and generosity, most of all your time. Thank you for guiding us through this journey."

VMC mission pillars include supported veterans and our youth. This event did both.

His mom, SFC Samantha Mecke, USA, stationed at Fort Liberty, his entire family and more than 100 classmates and friends joined us last fall at the VMC for a celebration of life. His name is already forever linked with the VMC with bricks, a beautiful VMC Park bench, and a future Park Memorial Tree. It was added to the MIHS bench in the plaza entryway. That cement bench honors graduates who died as a result of service in the military and for our country.

Only weeks ago, his mom decided the first anniversary of his death needed to be remembered. She and her sister Claire organized on line registration and planned for awards, drinks, snacks, etc. VMC



# VMC Museum Helps Launch Brevard Student Museum Passport

By Donn Weaver

In mid-June, after months of planning and coordination with over 20 museums, the Brevard Public School System, the Museums of Brevard (MOB, a unique project was launched. Students at all grade levels K-12 (including public, private, magnet and home schools) were alerted to pick up their Passports at all participating Museums to begin their journey.

The program is part of a concept developed by the Education and Citizenship Armed Forces Coalition of the Space Coast (ECAC), the MOB and Brevard Public Schools to encourage students beginning this summer to visit as many of the museums as possible and receive there "Visa / Passport" Stamps. The Brevard School Board will honor students each fall and spring who reach 10 or more visits. They created a social media blitz and email campaign, much of which was filmed at the VMC museum on 24 June, to get the word out even before the next school year begins.

Look for more details and numbers of students who visit in the coming months. This program fits well within one of our key missions: encourage and teach youth about history and our military legacy. They are our country's future. Contact our Museum Staff and Dean Schaaf for more details.



## Information on the NVHS PTSA Program

The NVHS PTSA program was designed to create and offer post-traumatic stress Awareness, Action, and Anonymity to those who may be dealing with PTSD, as well as provide more information and education about PTSD to the overall community.

PTSD is what happens to someone who has experienced extreme and/or multiple exposures to traumatic events like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault. PTSD currently affects more than 1 in every 30 people on earth. Chances are you know many people with PTSD. Some know they are suffering from it, and some do not. PTSD affects every person differently. Sometimes it can be temporary. That is the best case scenario, but generally speaking those who genuinely suffer PTSD will always have it.

To help NVHS end homelessness among veterans, we have determined a great need for the awareness of what PTSD is, the awareness of who suffer from it, what actions can be taken to alleviate the symptoms, and an anonymous way to seek help for those who fear losing careers, friends, or family over stigma.

Don't be afraid to seek answers and help if you are suffering. Every 80 minutes a veteran commits suicide in the United States. Every 80 minutes we lose a valuable community member who served this great nation. We need to stop these statistics from increasing.

June 27th is National PTSD Awareness/Screening Day. Click [HERE](#) for the PTSD Screening page.



# Brevard Refuses to Forget One Veteran

On 01 June a Memorial Service was held to honor and remember an Army veteran of the Vietnam Era. The story of what brought about 60 people together for that service at Christ Central Church in Cocoa was amazing.



Howard Richard Browning was born in Ohio just before WWII began. He died, with no next of kin on hand or available to claim his remains, on the 4th of July 2023. Browning joined the Army in 1963 and served in the Ohio Army National Guard until 1969. He then served for more than 35 years in the US Postal Service before retiring first to North Carolina and finally to Brevard County alone about 8 years ago.

Just about a week before Browning died, US Army veteran, retired Brevard law enforcement Officer and now Chaplain David Rodriguez met him by happenstance at Ruby Tuesdays. Browning by then was in a walker and eating alone a few tables away from Rodriguez. A short conversational exchange led to sitting down together and learning Browning had also served in the Army. Plans to meet again were made and a photo taken. Months passed and Browning did not reach out. Rodriguez decided to do some research on the internet and eventually came across the funeral notice, posted days after the meeting.

He was moved to action. He and Pastor Tim Kroll reached out and eventually the funeral home confirmed there were no immediate next of kin but there was a phone number of a step daughter in North Carolina. Under US laws the funeral home could not pass that contact information, but promised to let Karen Connell know about Rodriguez. She gave approval to the home this spring to release the remains of Browning to Pastor Kroll. He and Rodriguez were about to arrange at their cost interment at a local private cemetery with a veterans section when they learned about Brevard No One Veteran Left Behind (BNOVLB).



Donn Weaver of BNOVLB met them at the Veterans Memorial Center Library in late May to hear the amazing story and provided a veteran hand carved urn for Brownings Ashes. He attended the service along with some neighbors, Combat Vets and other veteran motorcycle group members and others from the church. Thus, Browning's Celebration of Life had many to serve real witness. Only three people who attended said they had ever met Browning. His step daughter was too ill to travel but watched on zoom and shared her story when Browning married her mother and she was a rebellious teenager at that time.

This story, hopefully, will end in late September 2024, when BNOVLB plans to include Browning with other veterans not claimed by families in a special service at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery to try to insure no one vet is left behind.





# 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**



# Park and Plaza Report

by Shaun McKinney

## Bricks, Benches and Trees

**Bricks:** In May ten 8x8 Bricks for the Purple Heart section were ordered through Donn Weaver.

**Trees:** All memorial plates for the trees are in hand in the VMC Library. We did not receive any orders for tree memorials in May.

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

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

If you are interested in ordering a memorial brick, tree, or bench, feel free to stop in the museum for order forms or contact Shaun McKinney @ 614-327-6328.



**Please Join  
Sheriff Wayne Ivey & Junny  
At The Annual**

# 11th of 4 July

**Parade  
10:00 AM START**

**PARADE ROUTE:  
MERRITT ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL,  
HEAD SOUTH ON COURTNEY PKWY.  
AND THEN EAST ON MERRITT  
AVENUE ENDING AT EDGEWOOD  
JR/SR HIGH**

**For More Information or To Register  
Please Visit [www.bsocharity.org](http://www.bsocharity.org)  
Or Call 321-264-7755**



# 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

# Seniors Who...

**Play**  
**Work**  
**Learn**  
**Travel**

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

**SENIOR SCENE**  
 THE NEW SPACE COAST MAGAZINE ESPECIALLY FOR SENIORS 50+  
 Complimentary • September 2023  
**We Have Arrived!**  
 Senior Scene Launches  
 It's Newest Issue  
 On The Space Coast...  
 Read On!

**INSIDE:**  
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 Discounts  
 Calendar  
 Crossword Puzzle  
 Recipes  
 Health Articles  
 Hobbies  
 Events  
 Dr. Ernst  
 Dr. Gross  
 Space Coast History

Cover Art by Dorothy Rhines

## 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.  
 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](http://www.seniorscenemag.com)

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



# You're invited to a Life Line Screening event!

Where: Veterans Memorial Center

When: Friday July 26, 2024



Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in **Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings.**

Trusted by over 10 million customers.

Screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection.

**Who should attend:** Anyone over the age of 40

**Special Pricing for \$159**

- Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
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These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease.

Those with abnormal results should discuss possible next steps with their family healthcare provider and ensure they understand the risk and benefits of any additional testing or procedures.



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## 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!



# The Patriot Report

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

### Veterans Have Options to Upgrade Character of Discharge

Individuals who leave the military with a discharge that's less than fully honorable have the right to apply for an upgrade of that discharge even if it is years later. They can apply through their own military department's Discharge Review Board or through their military department's Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records.

The military department they served in encourages all service members who believe they have suffered an error or injustice to request relief from their military department review boards. This is what Christa Specht, Director of the Office of Legal Policy for the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness has said. When a service member leaves the military, the discharge paperwork indicates not only the reason for the separation but the character of the discharge on the official document called a DD Form 214. Most service members will leave service with an honorable discharge, but some service members might receive a less favorable characterization of their service, such as a discharge under other than honorable conditions.

The characterization of a discharge affects the types of benefits an individual is eligible for after military service, including educational benefits, and can also affect the kind of occupation a former service member might be eligible to apply for when their military service concludes.

There are many reasons a discharge characterization might warrant an upgrade. For example, an event that led to an other-than-honorable discharge characterization may have been driven, in part, by the presence of a traumatic brain injury or by posttraumatic stress disorder, which might not have been considered when a service member was initially discharged.

There are two avenues former service members can use to pursue a change in the characterization of their discharge.

First is the Discharge Review Board, also called a DRB. The military departments each have their own DRB.

Second is the Board for Correction of Military or Naval Records, also called a BCMR or BCNR. Again, each of the military departments has its own BCMR or BCNR. Marines and sailors apply to the Department of the Navy boards; airmen and guardians apply

to the Department of the Air Force boards; and soldiers apply to the Department of the Army boards. Specht said prior service members must make it clear when applying to either of these boards what it is they want to accomplish. "When completing an application, it's important not only to state what kind of change is desired but to include an explanation for why the military record is unjust or wrong and, if possible, provide documents that support that conclusion," she said.

If a discharge occurred less than 15 years ago, the former service member can apply to the appropriate military department's Discharge Review Board and ask to have the basis for discharge, discharge characterization, or re-entry code changed.

Applying to a Discharge Review Board begins with filing a DD Form 293, Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States. The form can be filed by mail or electronically. More information on how to successfully apply to a military department's DRB can be found on Military OneSource.

For any other errors on military records, if a former service member's discharge occurred more than 15 years ago or if the DRB denied a request for a particular change, former service members can apply to their military department's BCMR or BCNR. In addition to correcting a service member's basis for discharge, discharge characterization, or re-entry code, BCMR and BCNRs can make many other changes, including modifying a performance evaluation or changing a military award received.

Applying to a BCMR or BCNR involves completing and submitting a DD Form 149. More information on how to successfully apply to a military department's BCMR or BCNR can be found at MilitaryOneSource.

"It's also important to remember that review boards are allowed to consider post-service conduct and may correct records as a matter of clemency or leniency," Specht said. "An applicant can provide evidence of a positive reputation in the community, character references, educational degrees or certificates earned, or a positive job history to help support their claim for relief. If a former member's separation from the service was due to misconduct, an applicant can include expressions of remorse or, if pertinent,



evidence of a drug-free lifestyle.”

For advice on which military department DRB to apply to, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs maintain a joint website that details the process and provides a personalized recommendation.

For additional assistance, an online video tutorial explains the differences between a DRB and a BCMR or BCNR. The video, called “Overview: Applying to the Military Department Review Boards,” can be found by searching for “Discharge Review Board” in the course catalog on the MilLife Learning website.


## Sleep Apnea? Get M.A.D.

Sleep Apnea can double your risk for sudden cardiac death and triple your risk for dying from many other causes. Your doctor probably will tell you to use a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine at bedtime to help with airflow. But, as you can imagine, trying to sleep with a scuba-like mask and hose attached to your face is hardly a recipe for a good night’s sleep (and it does nothing for your love life either).

Moreover, many people find that CPAPs are uncomfortable, noisy, need constant cleaning and can even damage your teeth. It is no wonder nearly half the people of the people prescribed a CPAP stop using them in as little as three weeks! Now there is a better way to stop the life-threatening danger of sleep apnea.

Just get M.A.D. No, I do not advocate getting angry and starting a riot. I am talking about something called a Mandibular Advancement Device (MAD) It’s a custom -made device that is worn overnight like a dental retainer. It moves your lower jawbone forward. This keeps your throat soft tissues from collapsing and blocking your airway. Research has shown that a MAD Device performs almost as well as a CPAP in improving oxygen flow to your body and brain.

And research shows that you are more likely to keep using MAD verses the CPAP and you will use it for a longer than the CPAP.



*A MAD Device performs almost as well as a CPAP in improving oxygen flow to your body and brain.*

# VET FEST 2024



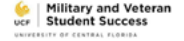
- ★ Get answers to VA benefits and health care questions!
- ★ Learn more about VA services and Veteran resources!

**Date & Time:** Tuesday, July 2, 2024, from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
**Located at:** Pegasus Ballroom, University of Central Florida’s Student Union Building - 12715 Pegasus Drive, Orlando FL, 32816

Scan here to RSVP:



- Parking will be made available in parking garage H.
- VA shuttles will be available onsite to chauffer guests to and from the parking garage.
- Public bus transportation thru LYNX will also be made available for free to any Veteran traveling to or from the event (riders must present the event flyer to be eligible for free transportation to and from the event).
- For questions, email [vhaorpublicaffairs@va.gov](mailto:vhaorpublicaffairs@va.gov)



The Orlando VA Healthcare System (OVAHCS) will host a Summer VetFest/PACT Act event on Tuesday, July 2, 2024, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. in the Pegasus Ballroom, in the University of Central Florida’s (UCF) Student Union Building, located at: 12715 Pegasus Drive, Orlando FL, 32816.

Parking will be made available in Parking Garage H. VA shuttles will be available onsite to chauffer guests to and from the parking garage. Public bus transportation thru Lynx will also be made available for free to any Veteran traveling to or from the event (riders must present the event flyer to be eligible for free transportation to and from the event).

For planning purposes, event organizers kindly request your RSVP here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LVX977L>.

Veterans Benefit Claims Assistance, Eligibility and Enrollment Services, toxic exposure screenings, outreach tables with free giveaways and more will be available to all who attend.

The PACT Act Summer VetFest is just one component of the VA’s nationwide PACT Act Veteran outreach campaign, which is the largest coordinated outreach campaign in VA history.

Keep updated & let us know how we’re doing



# Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar July 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/>

## JULY 2024

**04 Jul – Annual BCSO Merritt Island Independence Day Parade.** 1000-1100. Begins at Merritt Island HS 0900 staging. Break off parade (1100) at Edgewood HS. Contact BCSO to register or for more information ([www.bcsocharity.org/](http://www.bcsocharity.org/) 321-264-7755). NOTE: The VMC scrubbed plans for an after Parade event given weekday involved and other area parades and events..

**04 Jul – Melbourne 4th of July Independence Day Parade** 1000-1100 Downtown Melbourne. Starts at Liberty Bell Museum (1601 Oak St) with Ceremony and Awards there afterwards. Route along Hickory to New Haven East , ending at New Haven and Municipal. Grand Marshalls are Green Gables and Larry/Jeanette Jarnes. Celebrate Americana. Contact Melbourne City Events Center for more info.

**05 Jul – Palm Bay 2024 Independence Day Celebration** at East Florida State College, Palm Bay Campus 1700- 2100. Food, music, vendors, FIREWORKS and much more. Vendor Sponsorships available. Contact Daniel Waite on 321-626-2912 or [daniel.waite@palmbayflorida.gov](mailto:daniel.waite@palmbayflorida.gov) to register as a sponsor or for more information.

**16 Jul – Women Veterans Yoga**, VMC's Gray Hall 11am-1pm. Contact Crystal Turman,[crystal.turman@wellspringcs.org](mailto:crystal.turman@wellspringcs.org), for more info

## AUGUST 2024

**03 Aug – Annual Coast Guard Birthday and Family Day** at Coast Guard Station Port Canaveral 1000-1500. USO, MOAACC Good Deeds, VFW 10131 and many other sponsors and booths. Free food and fun, great activities for kids. Come celebrate the USCG Birthday and support the Station's people and families. Access and parking just before closed entrance to Space Force Staton CC south gate.

**04 Aug – Annual Purple Heart Recognition Ceremony** at the VMC Gray Hall 1400-1600 sponsored by Chapter 453 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Special recognition of 10 PH recipients and ceremony to tell their stories and recognize their sacrifices. Contact Donn Weaver, 757-871-6576 for more information.

**09 Aug – Annual National Veterans Homeless Support** Fundraising Dinner 1715- 2100 Radisson Resort at the Port. Hosted by Brevard County Constitutional Officers including Sheriff Wayne Ivey. Sponsorships and individual tables/seats available. \$100 per seat, \$1250 for Sponsor tables. Silent auction, Live Auction , 50/50 raffle and a great dinner!! Visit [www.nvhs.org/events](http://www.nvhs.org/events) to register or email [events@nvhs.org](mailto:events@nvhs.org).

**14 Aug – Senator Marco Rubio's Staff Mobile Office** Hours at the VMC 1300-1500, specifically for Veterans and their families.

**20 Aug – Women Veterans Yoga**, VMC's Gray Hall 11am-1pm. Contact Crystal Turman,[crystal.turman@wellspringcs.org](mailto:crystal.turman@wellspringcs.org), for more info

**24 Aug – Seminar for High School Soph's, Juniors and Seniors** on Military Academy, ROTC Scholarships and other military paths to education and leadership. VMC Gray Hall, Foyer and Library 1300- 1700. Contact Donn Weaver, 757-871-6576 for more info or to request a Poster about the event.,

**24 Aug – Bowling for Heroes Charity event by Heroes United** to Heal Foundation at Palm Bay Shore Lanes 4851 Dairy Rd, Melbourne 1300-1500. Five man team entry fee is \$70 for each lane with grand prizes available in Juniors (under 21). Corporate/Private Business, Hero (Vets and First Responders) categories. Register your team by email: [admin@hu2h.org](mailto:admin@hu2h.org). The event is aimed at "Striking Out" the stigma of PTSD and vet/ first responder suicide. ,

**27 Aug – VMC Library Discussion Series** 1800-1930. 9/11 Missed Warnings. CAPT Bill Toti, USN Ret. Drinks and snacks served.

**27 Aug – Women Veterans Luncheon**, VMC's Gray Hall, 11am-1pm. Contact Crystal Turman, [crystal.turman@wellspringcs.org](mailto:crystal.turman@wellspringcs.org), for more info.

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



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	<a href="mailto:jdavie@cfl.rr.com">jdavie@cfl.rr.com</a>
Paul Julian	321-749-7369	<a href="mailto:pjulian54@yahoo.com">pjulian54@yahoo.com</a>

## VIDEOGRAPHERS

Joe Davie	321-626-5462	<a href="mailto:jdavie@cfl.rr.com">jdavie@cfl.rr.com</a>
Paul Julian	321-749-7369	<a href="mailto:pjulian54@yahoo.com">pjulian54@yahoo.com</a>

## VHP SUPPORT

Bill Wilkening	321-428-3422	Hank Rhodes	321-799-1219
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Please make your check payable to: Brevard Veterans Council (Boosters).

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