



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

COUNCIL COURIER

Space Coast Honors Non-Profit of the Year 2024

DECEMBER 2024



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center



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Veterans Day 2024: VMC Ceremony Shines

Over 300 attended the "Honoring Our Veterans" ceremony on Veterans Day hosted by VMC.

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DECEMBER 2024

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

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

Please send submissions to:
brevardvmc@gmail.com

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Our Organization

As of 29 November 2024:

[List of Board 2024-2025](#)

As of 30 October 2024:

[BVMC Committee Departments 2024-2025](#)

As of 28 July 2024:

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



Mission Statement

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

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

Veterans Memorial Center: The Veterans Memorial Center (VMC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

VMC’s mission is to maintain and operate a premier facility to educate the public and provide a vibrant memorial to the service and sacrifice of all military veterans and their families through a museum, memorial plaza, library, and veterans park.

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VMC President's Report

LCDR Dean Schaaf, USN (Ret)

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving Day with family and friends and I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce held their annual Space Coast HONORS awards program on Friday, September 20th and the Veterans Memorial Center was honored as the Non-Profit Business of the Year for 2024! This is the first time since the Brevard Veterans Council and the Veterans Memorial Center has received one of these awards. CONGRATULATIONS VMC!!! This paragraph was in November's Council Courier, but I want all of our members to take pride in what they have accomplished. Thanks to all of our volunteers!

Well, the Hurricane season is officially over, and we have completely recovered from damage sustained from Milton. Thanks again to Charles, Thomas, and Bill Pollock who cleaned up most of the debris after the storm.

The Brevard County Parks and Recreation Department, Directed by Mary Ellen Donner sponsored an impressive ground-breaking program for the Amphitheater and park improvement project. We had a great turnout with several dignitaries, politicians, and the general public in attendance. We were all surprised when Mary Ellen Donner announced that she is retiring at the end of the year. Her replacement has been selected and was in attendance. The picture of the amphitheater and plans of the park are on display, along with one of the gold shovels, in the museum.

Thanks to Donn Weaver and Dean Schaaf for their tireless efforts over the last five years working with the Merritt Island Redevelopment Agency (MIRA) and County and State officials to finally make this happen. Ivey Construction is the lead contractor and in the process of fencing off the restricted areas in the park during the construction. They have moved an office trailer in and the VMC will attend their weekly progress meetings.

During construction in the Park, which will be around nine months, there will be no access to the park from the main parking lot. Entrance to the park will be from the west parking lot and over the bridge between the lakes. The pavilion, playground, exercise, and the raider challenge areas should be accessible unless the workers are running electricity or irrigation to those areas. The users of the park will see major interruptions to their regular routines of walking or jogging along the walkways for several months. Be patient and courteous during the construction phase. I am enclosing a map of the park for your reference. The red marks designate the blocked off entrances to the construction areas.

Going into December, we have many bookings in the Gray Hall for holiday parties. The VMC will have our holiday party during our General Membership meeting on Wednesday, December 11 starting at our regular time of 9:30am with holiday refreshments.

Other events of significance are the Merritt Island Christmas Parade starting at 10am on Saturday, December 7. It is along the same route at the July 4th parade, from Merritt Island High School to Edgewood Jr/Sr High School. We will be participating with our Christmas Eagle in the back of my truck and will be led by our color guard carrying the VMC banner.

Our main event in December is the Holiday Illuminations event at the VMC on December 14 from 3 – 8 pm, sponsored by Community Advocacy for Merritt Island (CAMI). It will be held in the parking lot around the VMC and will feature a free community concert by the very popular group HOT PINK, Christmas Market, Food Trucks, Tree Lighting and much, much more. See the posters

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VMC President's Report Cont.

LCDR Dean Schaaf, USN (Ret)

around the VMC advertising the event. The tree lighting will feature the solar tree that I built for last year's celebration held out in the park. Fingers crossed that it works again this year. The Gold Star Family Christmas Tree will be the in center of the museum again this year. More information on the event can be found on CAMI's website, www.ca4mi.com.

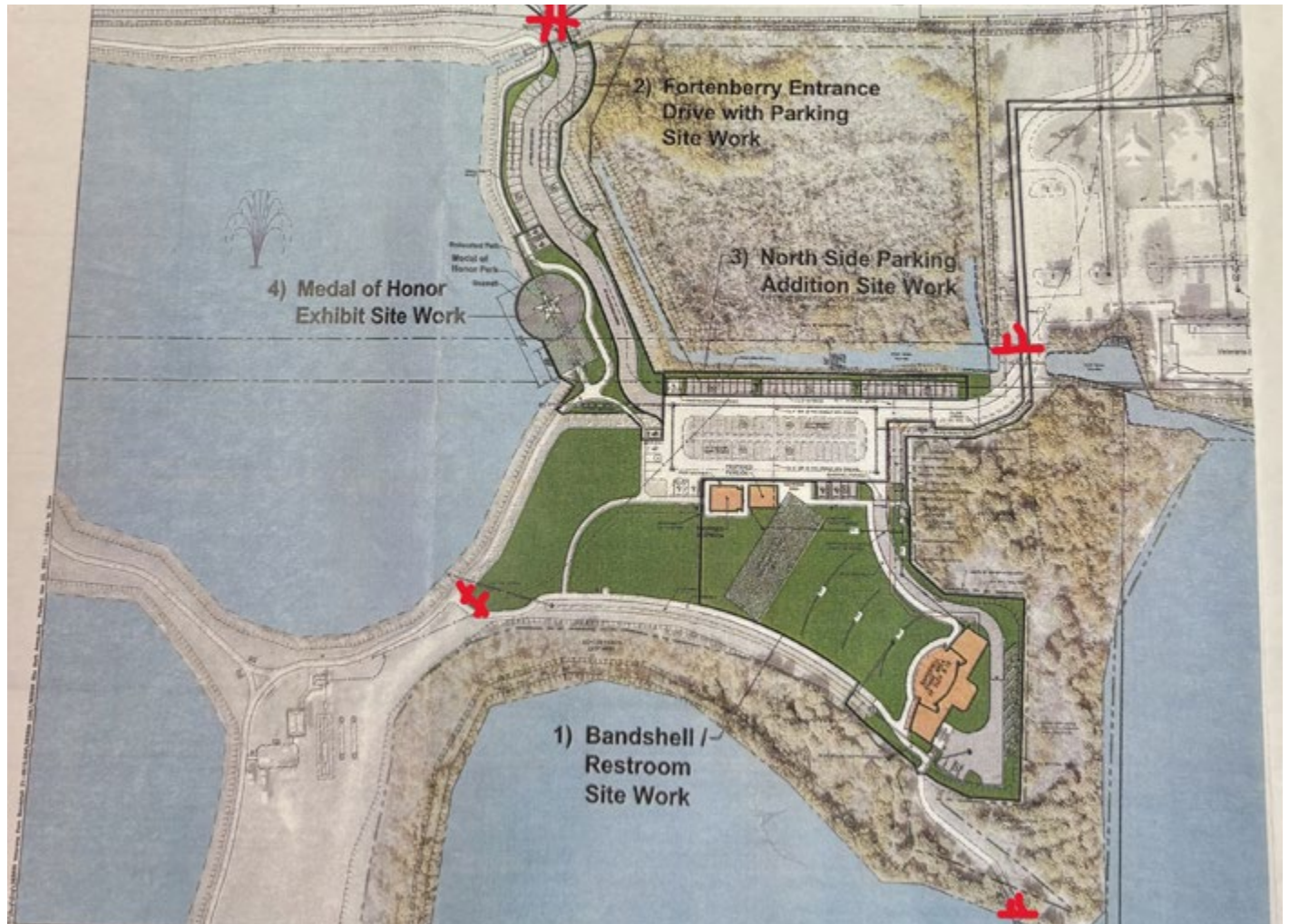
Also on December 14 is the Wreaths Across America at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery from 10-11am. Contact Donn Weaver or Jim Carleton for more information. There will be a Wreaths Across America Ceremony at Pinecrest Cemetery in Cocoa on December 15 at 2-4pm honoring Medal of Honor recipient Emory Bennet and all deceased veterans, Gold Star Families, and First Responders. Rolling Thunder FL-1 Chapter will escort the wreaths from VMC starting at 1pm. Contact Dorothy Walsh for more information. Please read our highly informative Courier and thanks to all that

contribute great articles on a regular basis. And thanks particularly to Kristi Blanchard, our secretary, and Information Technology expert for all her efforts in getting it out on time.

Finally, I want to thank all volunteers for keeping the Center operating and for your dedication. God bless our fallen heroes, MIAs, and POWs and God bless our armed forces.

Dean

- GO NAVY - BEAT ARMY on December 14 at 3pm
- Navy leads 62 - 55 - 7 in the series!
- USAF leads Navy 32 - 22
- USAF leads Army 38 - 19 - 1





Council Report

**Don Pearsall,
Chairman
USA (Fmr)**

Another winning month for veterans. The election has passed, so no more continual TV ads, so now we can get back to the business at hand.

We are meeting with the County Parks and Recreation this week to address the issue of us becoming one organization. Treasurer Dave Clayton, has already filed for a name change with the Internal Revenue Service. Our new name will be the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center.

A new lease will be needed, and the negotiating team will be, myself, Dean Schaaf and Dave Clayton. I have already drafted and had notarized the request letter to the county of what our intentions are. To familiarize yourself with the logic, it will be less confusing for everyone in the county, the public and most of all, our members. No more two separate entities, boards or directors, officers, or elections.

Vice Chairman Jim Carleton, also our Governance Committee Chairman, has his team working out all the administration issues like new by-laws, standard operating procedures, and areas of responsibilities.

There are many issues that still need to be addressed like the election cycle. Remember we will need a slate of all new BVMC officers, from the Board of Directors up to the President, so if you are interested in running for office, there is still plenty of time to make your decision.

Enough about that, we will keep you all informed with our progress. With Thanksgiving out of the way, we now look forward to Christmas. As always, the stores have their displays up just after Veterans Day, one store has Valentine's Day candy out already.

Despite all that it is time we have to think of our troops. It's hard time of year for them. I only spent two Christmases' away from my family. One on station in Europe, and one while serving in Vietnam. That was enough. If it wasn't for organizations like Oasis and other similar groups it would be much harder, so let's all support their efforts and pray for a peaceful Christmas.

Oh, one last thing GO ARMY BEAT NAVY.



Chaplain's Corner

**Chaplain Chip
Hanson
USMC (Fmr)**

I hope all had a wonderful Thanksgiving Day. Coming next at sundown December 25th begins the seven-day eight-night celebration of Chanukkah, which celebrates two things: a miracle in which one day's worth of oil burned in lamps for eight days, and the victory of the Jewish freedom fighters over the Syrian-Greek forces that tried to wipe out Judaism.

In a larger sense, then, Chanukkah celebrates a reaffirmation of freedom and a recommitment to the spiritual quest.

December 25th, Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The current celebration as we know it began under the Roman Emperor Constantine. He had accepted the one true God, and Jesus Christ as his Savior. The population of Rome was not converting easily. Constantine met with Christian leaders together they agreed to change the celebration of the winter solstice to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Thus began Christmas, as we now know it.

I would like to share a personal memory with all of you. I was a Marine in Vietnam in 1968, this was my Christmas memory:

The original unit that I had been assigned to had been almost wiped out, those who were left were assigned to different units in Vietnam. While I traveling to my newly assigned unit, this is what happened. I received a ride on a convoy heading in the direction I needed to go.

When the convoy reached its destination, I got a ride from a Marine in a jeep who was headed to the 1st Division headquarters. That was my destination. When we arrived, I reported in and I handed my orders to a Marine who would give transportation to my unit. He asked me if I was in a hurry to get to my unit. I told him no. He asked me to stow my gear and come with him; I and several Marines got to go to a USO show. We went to Danang and joined about a thousand others; we were treated to the Bob Hope Christmas show.

On Christmas Eve 1968, my team was assigned to set up, in a large Vietnamese Cemetery. Each grave had a circular mound on top of it. We set up using these mounds as a barrier in case of a firefight. At midnight the sky lit up from red and green flares. I spent Christmas 1968 on top of a grave in Vietnam. The next week at the same grave at the same time the sky lit up proclaiming the first day of 1969. This meant I was officially a short-timer (less than 90 days in Vietnam).

Matthew 2:11 "After coming into the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY CHANUKKAH



Secretary's Report

Kristi Blanchard USA (Fmr)

Hello Membership,

As you can see in this month's Courier articles, this was an especially memorable Veterans Day celebration. For me personally, we went to the Tampa Bay Lightning game on the Thursday before Veterans Day and we were so impressed with appreciation they expressed for Veterans by including them in the game ceremonies and even had a group of young people join the USMC. On Friday, we went to my granddaughter's elementary school where they provided breakfast and a ceremony for the approximately 40 veterans in attendance. It is so invigorating to be with young people! I was really touched by a conversation that I had with an Afghanistan Purple Heart recipient who sat next to me. I participated in the 3rd annual Dash In Life sponsored St. Francis Reflections Foundation on Saturday and the NVHS Home Stretch 5K on Sunday – both races are family oriented and a lot of fun to run/walk – and I hope you'll join us next year! As one of the 80+ completing both races, I received a special commemorative medal. All of the money raised in these events supports great veteran causes like hospice and keeping families out of homelessness. Finally, my husband and I were at the VMC Veterans Day ceremony and I'm appreciative of the ExComm, speakers and volunteer support that made it such a great event.

Reminder to take your online Firewatch training so that the VMC can become a Veteran Safe Place (VSP). Look for an in-person event to be conducted in January 2025. We can do this!

1. Please find more information here: <https://www.thefirewatch.org/watch-standers>
2. Complete the 20-minute training online (as a veteran or civilian)
3. When you complete your account setup, add "Veterans Memorial Center" as your "Organization" (see the screen shot with this article)
4. Email me at brevardvmc@gmail.com after you complete your training

Thank you for all for what you do every day for veterans and their families!

Go Army, Beat Navy!



Deer Park Elementary in Tampa



The Bolts celebrate Veterans



My granddaughter and I at breakfast



VMC Librarian Report

Hank Rhodes
USN (Fmr)

In this month's column, we salute our own "Jersey Girl," Eleanor Fadok. Eleanor is the longest-serving member of the library staff and recently returned to us after recovering from a mishap.

Eleanor was raised in Bayonne, NJ, and remembers her father taking her to view the wreckage of the airship Hindenburg at Lakehurst. During World War II, she worked as a typist/ data entry clerk at the Western Electric plant in Kearny NJ. The Kearny plant spread over 3.5 million square feet and built radar systems for Navy ships. "We worked very long hours," she says, "but we all knew it was essential for victory."



Shortly after World War II, while avoiding someone else at a dancehall, Eleanor met a sailor on leave and began a romance that lasted over six decades.

Eleanor's husband, John had enlisted in the Navy upon America's entry into World War II and served aboard the USS Case (DD-370). He experienced combat in many of the notable campaigns of the Pacific Theater. Typical of the "Greatest Generation," with the mission accomplished, he completed his enlistment and resumed civilian life.

In addition to motherhood, Eleanor had a diverse employment history. She worked in a department store retailing women's clothing and was later employed by the Brevard County library system. She and John relocated to Florida when they bought a Dairy Queen franchise in Cocoa Beach, which they operated from 1972 to 1984.

After John's passing in 2011, Eleanor affiliated with the Brevard Veteran's Memorial Center where she has made a substantial contribution to the welcoming ambience of the library, as well as issuing gentle reminders to people who are overdue in returning our books.

Eleanor is a mother to five, grandmother to seven, and great-grandmother to fourteen. In her own words, she is "98 years young and still having fun." The rest of us are glad she's on our team.

Book Report: A Higher Call by Adam Makos

Book Report by H.V. Rhodes

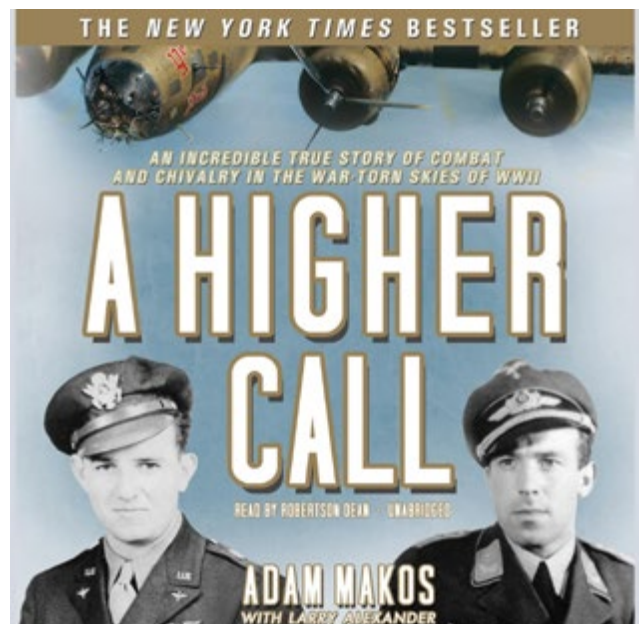
A Higher Call recounts a remarkable 1943 encounter over Germany between the crew of an American B-17 bomber and a German fighter pilot. The B-17's commander, Second Lieutenant Charles Brown, and Luftwaffe ace Second Lieutenant Franz Stigler followed very different paths to their extraordinary meeting.

Brown's journey reflects the classic story of a small-town American drawn into World War II, enduring rigorous training, forging deep bonds with comrades, and stoically carrying out missions while mourning fallen friends. Stigler's passion for flight began early, and as Germany rearmed, he transitioned from airline pilot to Luftwaffe ace, sustained by his Catholic faith and patriotism, while distancing himself from Nazi ideology.

The book highlights that most Germans, including Luftwaffe airmen, did not fully embrace Nazi ideals. It also notes how, as the war turned, Luftwaffe pilots were unjustly scapegoated as "cowards" despite their remarkable combat achievements.

Through parallel stories, the book explores the challenges of bomber missions, the strategic failings of Nazi leadership, and the capacity for human decency even amid conflict. The overarching theme is one of hope and reconciliation, reflecting on a better world forged from the trials of war.

A Higher Call is available in the VMC library as "Air Force-67." Navy veteran and VMC librarian H.V. Rhodes recommends the book. Rhodes is also the author of *August 1864*, a Civil War naval adventure novel available on Amazon.



JROTC Raider Challenge Championship: What Rain?

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice-President



After two postponements and one cancellation due to Hurricane Milton, the third try was the charm. On 2 November, the District JROTC Raider Challenge Championships were held at the Veterans Memorial Center and Park. While the kickoff 5K run took place with no rain, a steady drizzle started and lasted for all four of the remaining grueling events: Tire Flip, Run/Carry/Drag, Litter Carry and Rope Bridge.

Nine Brevard High School JROTC programs (male, female air mixed teams) with over 190 cadets competing. All seven Army programs were joined by Satellite (USAF) and Palm Bay (USMC). The cadets showed amazing improvement and teamwork compared to the first meet held five weeks earlier and with no other meets possible in between.

Florida Tech Army ROTC sent 7 cadets to help grade and hand out trophies. Brevard Fire and Rescue provided EMS support, but despite the rain and because of all the practice, there were

no injuries requiring treatment by them. Seven MOAACC and several VMC members were on hand to cheer on the cadets and help present the championship trophies funded by the MOAACC Good Deeds Found action (\$1700).

The event was coordinated by Cocoa Beach Jr/Sr High School JROTC Instructors. Their female team again scored first place and qualified for the State Championship on 16 November. Three other teams from Merritt Island and Viera also qualified, based on times for the events and few if any point deductions.

More than 300 parents, grandparents, siblings and friends came to watch. While there were plenty of umbrellas and soggy clothes in evidence, the spirit and determination of the cadets and the joy in watching them was very evident. It was a day to remember. For the veterans there, it proved the value in finding many ways to support our youth and America's leaders of tomorrow.

Park and Plaza Report by Donn Weaver

What a month November was for our future park as well as the Plaza and our Brick, Tree and Bench programs.

PARK: Less than two weeks after groundbreaking, Ivey Construction and the county began Phase III for the Amphitheater, and much more work in the Veterans Memorial Park. The safety fencing is being set up before Thanksgiving as we adapt to the new reality that only two thirds of the park will be available to support many other scheduled events until the project is complete. We hope that completion will be by early Fall, 2025. During construction the only parking space inside the park that is allowed will be in the 50-space west lot. Others can use U-Haul and Mall parking but not even foot traffic will be allowed through the main entrance due to safety and liability concerns. Please bear with the plan, it will be worth it!!

PLAZA: There was more power washing, painting and other upgrades which have really enhanced the appearance. C-Spray added the name of SFC Melvin Morris to the mid-plaza Medal of Honor Monument. He is the only other MOH recipient claimed by Brevard County. We added 8 bricks last month as well as one of the newer benches under the Vietnam Huey Chopper.

BENCHES: Two more benches were ordered and assembled as we await positioning on the now 18 benches until the park is finished. Thanks to Shaun M. for handling a special request to take one bench to the disabled veterans home!!

TREES: We are now up to 27 trees with all signs on hand waiting for planting as the project in the park finishes next year. Irrigation for the Live Florida Oak Memorial Trees is part of the project. We hope to have a great ceremony to invite the donors and dedicate the trees next Fall.

Veterans Gift Shop

By Jalaine Spears

Hello VMC Gift Shop Patrons! As the holiday season fast approaches, our Gift Shop offers a variety of service-related items for yourself, friends or family.

T-shirts, Polo shirts, Ball Caps, Booney Hats, Challenge Coins, Military/Space related Toys, USA/Service-related Flags and Much More! Proudly wear your gear this holiday season.

Stop on by & you will find that heartfelt present or stocking stuffer for that special someone!



The Brevard County Detachment, Department of Florida, Marine Corps League, celebrated the 249th Birthday of the United States Marine Corps on Friday 15 November 2024 (Actual date is 10 November 1775) at the Space Coast Convention Center in Cocoa. Among the 80+ guests present, VMC President Dean Schaaf (Navy) & his wife Sue, along with Vice President Donn Weaver (Army) & his wife Jeanne shared in our Pride! A huge part of our tradition is the cake cutting ceremony. Pictured below is Detachment Senior Vice Commandant Chuck Betz cutting the cake with the Marine Officer's Mameluke Sword provided by long time VMC, Detachment 513 & MOAA member Bill Muckler! The first piece of cake was presented to the "Oldest Marine" Gary Corbett, who then passed it on to Marine Reservist Lex Jones, the "Youngest Marine" present, passing on the knowledge & wisdom of The Corps!

***Semper Fidelis
Vinnie Howard***

Past Commandant/Membership Outreach- Detachment 513



Museum News

By Rob Whisenant

John Potts and his wife Kathy were visiting the VMC & DAV for some paperwork/admin direction to deal with John's medical issue.

We introduced our BVC Chairman and former door gunner, Don Pearsall, to former Huey Door Gunner, John, and what a shared bond. Wonderful to see, out of war comes friendship and mutual understanding, and even better war stories.



Veterans Day 2024: VMC Ceremony Shines

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice-President

Brevard County was the scene of at least 10 major events during the long Veterans Day Weekend of 2024. There were parades, BBQs, ceremonies, high school programs and much more to honor and celebrate veterans and their service to America.

The Veterans Memorial Center was the venue for one of the bigger events with over 300 attending the “Honoring Our Veterans” ceremony on Veterans Day. BVC Chairman Don Pearsall was the master of ceremonies with VMC President Dean Schaaf and VMC VP Donn Weaver in supporting roles. Diverse and interesting talks began with Maj Steve Celeste, USA, Ret and Rockledge JROTC Instructor. Celeste served combat tours in SW Asia and grooms 150 Army JROTC Cadets at “The Rock” to learn about leadership, teamwork, the military and what veterans have done for our country.

Retired USAF Senior NCO Linda Hagen spoke about her experiences and the many roles of women in our military which now number close to 20 percent of our active-duty forces. BVC Vice Chair and Vietnam veteran, Jim Carleton, shared some experiences including the contrast of American support to veterans today, vice what happened when he was released from the hospital after months of recovery from combat wounds in 1970.

More than 15 cadets from the Sea Cadet Courageous Division and Patrick SFB Civil Air Patrol joined to learn and to help with set-up, programs and other tasks. There were many other younger family members in attendance too. The VMC works to present this and other programs to pass along the veteran ethos and contributions to our youth, most of whom do not have a veteran in their immediate family.

We were delighted the Ceremony received great media coverage from Space Coast Daily, Health First Media, Florida Today and Senior Life. Their work impacted thousands in Brevard County who did not make it to any Veteran Day event, but might be moved to do so next year.



Seven Years in the Making: Groundbreaking for the VMC Park Amphitheater and other Park Upgrades

By **Donn Weaver, VMC Vice-President**

More than 100 people attended a milestone event at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Park on 29 October. The occasion was the result of a seven-year process to raise State, County, Merritt Island Redevelopment Agency (MIRA) and Tourist Development funds in the amount of \$8.2M to begin the construction of the new VMC Park Amphitheater, restroom and food prep building, and major upgrades (e.g. power, irrigation, a new entrance, parking, trees and much more).

The Groundbreaking was organized by County Director Mary Ellen Donner and her Parks and Rec Team. It drew many who supported the efforts over the years including FL State Sen Debbie Mayfield, former Parks Director Chuck Nelson, Sheriff Wayne Ivey, District 2 Commissioner Tom Goodson, the VMC leadership Team and many from veteran organizations based at the VMC like Rolling Thunder, MOAACC and others.

MIRA's Director led off the guest speakers as he described the history and vision for the project. He was followed by Sen Mayfield, Sheriff Ivey, prime contractor Ivey's Construction VP Steve Stergis, BVC Chairman Don Pearsall, VMC VP Donn Weaver and Ms. Donner. They and many others joined in the ceremonial gold-painted shovel event after the speeches.

The County expects a 10-month construction effort with hopes to have the Ribbon Cutting before Veterans Day 2025. The new amphitheater will be used for major professional concerts, Space Coast Symphony performances, JROTC and other special events. The VMC will get the chance to reserve dates for military related events, but the new park will truly be a community and Central Brevard entertainment Gem.

Stay tuned for updates on this very special collaborative effort between the government, the private sector and veterans of Brevard. It will be amazing and unique, adding significantly to what is already a great County Park.



(L-R) Dean Schaaf, VMC President; Donn Weaver, VMC VP; Marcus Tucker, MIRA Chair; Larry Lallo; MIRA Administrator; Don Pearsall BVC Chair



(L-R) Steve Stergis, Ivey's VP; Mary Ellen Donner, Parks and Rec Dit; Sheriff Wayne Ivey; State Sen Debbie Mayfield and Commissioner Tom Goodson join the others in "turning over the first shovel full".



Amphitheater Groundbreaking Speakers

Veterans Day Weekend: Two 5K Races Will Make a Difference

Over the 2024 Veterans Day weekend, St Francis Reflections Lifestage Care (SFR) and National Veterans Homeless Support (NVHS) held 5K races to raise funds, staged by Running Zone at the Veterans Memorial Center and in Eau Gallie, respectively. Each was a great success with many veterans around the county either running or supporting the raffles and other aspects of the events.

SFR provides year-round support to hundreds of veterans around the county in their latter stages of life through their "Honor Veterans Program" the focus of their 5K. On 9 Nov over 60 volunteers joined a SFR race record of 330 paid runners for the race, and to honor over 80 veterans in attendance afterwards in a moving pinning ceremony in the VMC Plaza.

NVHS also hosted a record of nearly 400 signed-up runners who started in the Eau Gallie Art District and ran over and back the steep causeway bridge nearby. NVHS supports homeless and at-risk veterans and their families all year long. Their focus is to help homeless veterans, assist in transition to stable lives and prevent homelessness when crises arise. The runners included 89 veterans. NVHS CEO George Taylor Jr, led a moving pre-race ceremony that including the Viera JROTC Color Guard.

At least one veteran ran both 5K races: Kristi Blanchard, VMC Secretary and MOAACC member. She finished close to the top in both races in her category and reflected the spirit in Brevard: find ways for the public and other veterans to help their brothers and sisters in arms through SFR and NVHS.

Well done and thanks from the thousands of veterans in Brevard County to both organizations.



The NVHS 7th Annual Homestretch 5K was an incredible success, with **395 participants—including 86 veterans, 16 teams, and 16 sponsors!** The energy, compassion, and unity made it a powerful day, showing how much we can achieve together.



NVHS Race Start in Eau Gallie.



St. Francis Reflections Race Start at the VMC.



Women's Outreach

By Dorothy Walsh

Women Veteran Outreach & Support

In December Yoga with Dena will be moved to Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 11AM. Please sign up to register. We will be holding our Annual Holiday party on December 20, 2024 from 5 – 9. Please see flyer.

Wishing you and your family a Happy and Health Holiday and Blessed New Year.

On 16 Nov a group of VMC based women veterans took care of the silent auction table at another VMC partner event.

That was the MOAACC Good Deeds Foundation annual golf tournament fund raiser held at IRCC.

They helped raise over \$1500 at the Auction as the event set a 10-year record for proceeds. GDF supports many veterans, active duty, youth and veteran organizations. The event will make it easier in 2025.



The women are part of Their Voice of Hope led by Dorothy Walsh (left).

Their Voice of Hope

Happy Holidays everyone!!!!

The month of November was a busy one! We volunteered at the MOAACC Golf Tournament and met some wonderful people. We also participated in HU2H's Bowling for Heroes event to help raise money to prevent veteran suicide.

Busy busy busy. Their Voice of Hope has adopted 6 women veterans from the Viera VA Holiday Giving tree. Thanks to the generosity of so many we can ensure that these single women veterans have a happy holiday.

We will be busy wrapping gifts at the Merritt Square Mall on November 30, December 1 and December 24. You can help support our programs by coming out and having us wrap your gifts for you and if we do a good job – throw a couple of bucks in the donation jar – we would truly appreciate it.

We also have several programs going on as well – see calendar. Please reach out to Dorothy Walsh, dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com for more information and or to register for any of our programs.

For God & Country
Dorothy Walsh

**Fundraising event for
Their Voice of Hope
in support of women Veterans**
**Bring your unwrapped gifts to the
Merritt Square Mall
and we will wrap them for you**
Our designated days:
Nov 30 - 10 to 7pm
Dec 1st - 11 to 5pm
Dec 24th - 10 to 9pm
**You can also help by donating
wrapping paper/ribbon/bows**
call/text Dorothy 321-426-6736



The Major Mission of Supporting Our Youth

By Donn Weaver

The VMC Hosted over 40 business owners and Brevard teachers for the 19 November, Partners in Education Meeting. This group meets monthly during the school year to help with fundraisers and other connections to provide community support to our schools. MOAACC Good Deeds funded the breakfast goodies as Donn Weaver and Doug Bisset represented the VMC. They conducted library and museum tours after the meeting. Supporting youth are major missions for VMC and GDF.



Gratitude for Package from OASIS

 **Parents of Deployed ...** ... X
 Carol Sutter · 10h · 🌟

My son Brandon and I would like to thank Oasis Central FL (out of Merritt Island FL), for their kindness and generosity in sending a care package out to my son's unit! It was a wonderful surprise and greatly appreciated!!



****HAPPY St. Patrick's DAY****
Nello from Iraq!
 Thank you so much for your loyal donation of chips & candy. The troops are so grateful for your support with valuable items from home!!
 Best Regards
 Otto, Kelly, & Chad
 Leo & Paul

Nello from Iraq!
 Thank you for your wonderful donation. All the items from home makes the smiles appear. 😊
 Wishing you a Happy Easter
 Leo & Paul
 Otto, Kelly, & Chad

Happy Easter

Thank you so much for the Snacks. Your kind efforts of support is greatly appreciated. Morale is up =)

Thank you for the incredibly thoughtful gifts and treats. They've brightened a lot of faces! at Harrison

Your kindness & generosity was much needed & much appreciated!! Thank you Ms Williams in
 Thank you for the snacks. Our soldiers will enjoy them.
 CH Byrd

The CC started in October 2001 at the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom. It is supported by military and civilian volunteer efforts, as well as individual, organizational and corporate gifts, and funds. It continues today to provide clothes and comfort items for wounded and ill warriors who come to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for treatment. Frequently, they arrive here with minimal clothing items. The CC provides new essential clothing and toiletry items for these men and women. Provision is made for immediate needs such as shoes and appropriate warm and cold weather outerwear.

The Chaplain's Closet serves more than 150 warriors each month. Since the Chaplain's Closet is a non-funded humanitarian entity within the Department of Defense, we rely on the generous donations of fellow Americans and others. One hundred percent of all donations directly support our wounded and ill service members.

Please continue to pray for our wounded warriors, their families and again thank you for your generous donation.

Sincerely,

 Rickie E. Wambles, Jr.
 Chaplain (LTC) USA
 Chief, Clinical Pastoral Division

U.S. MARINE CORPS

For more information go to www.toysfortots.org

www.facebook.com/toysfortots www.twitter.com/ToysForTots_USA

PLEASE DONATE TO SUPPORT HU2H'S BIG SKY RETREAT SUMMER 2025 YELLOWSTONE/PARADISE VALLEY, MONTANA

This retreat aids veterans and first responders in recovering from service related trauma, guiding them toward a brighter future.

Please donate and support HU2H's mission of ending "hero suicide". With your help, we can provide veterans and first responders with the tools necessary to heal from the invisible wounds they sustain while serving their country and communities. Help us help them find their new purpose. Together, we can make a difference.

This retreat is a combination of camaraderie, training and therapy.

Retreat Includes
 All meals and beverages
 Lodging
 Outdoor activities
 Fun Therapy Activities
 Memorable Souvenir

How to Donate

www.HU2H.org

Ways to Donate

- Cash Donations
- Sponsor a Hero
- Host a Fundraiser
- Mail checks to: Heroes United to Heal 3000 Murrell Rd. #560325 Rockledge, FL 32956

Contact Us
 321-228-8435 | www.HU2H.org | contact@hu2h.org

Their Voice of Hope
 Supporting Women Veterans

Holiday Potluck Dinner

Join Us For a Festive Gathering Filled with Delicious Food and Holiday Cheer
All Veteran Women Invited!

Friday, December 20
 Veterans Memorial Center
 400 S. Sykes Creek Pkwy
 5pm - 9pm

Menu Highlights:
 Roasted Turkey - Honey Baked Ham
 Assorted Side Dishes
 Bring Your Favorite Holiday Dessert or Appetizer

Please RSVP by December 12th to Dorothy Walsh
Dorothy@TheirVoiceofHope.com
 Or Text 321-426-6736



Disabled American Veterans
 Space Coast Chapter 123, Inc.
 400 SoVth Sykes Creek Parkway
 Merritt Island, FL 32953-3547
 Phone 321-452-1774 WWW.DAV.org
davfl123@gmail.com



DAV Month End Report For
31-Oct-24

INTERVIEWS/CLAIMS		YTD Interviews/Claims	
Office Interviews/Claims	496 / 363	5,600	4,055
Survivor Briefings	32	712	
Special Event Support	68	403	
Out of Office Interviews	189	1,380	
Veterans Court Interviews	0	190	
Incarcerated Veteran Interviews	0	0	
Total Interviews	785	5,600	
Total Claims Submitted	363		4,055

Monthly Hours		YTD Hours	
Chapter Service Officer Hours	629	5,970	
Department Service Officer Hours	397	796	
DAV Out Reach Hours	2939	98	
Fundraising	0	0	
DAV 5K	0	0	
DAV/AUX (Stand Down)	0	84	
Direct Assistance To Veterans/Families	874	337	
DAV Training	511	1,509	
BPTL (Legislative) Hours	4	36	
Total Hours	5,354	8,830	

Senior Service Officer

Advertise in the Courier

RATES

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

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

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



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 Cocoa Beach FL 32931
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- Share
- Garden
- Cook
- Enjoy life...



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Also read it at www.seniorscenemag.com

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



Vietnam War Exhibit & Education Center



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"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



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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!



321-507-0873

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

Supporting Women Veterans

Date & Time	Upcoming Events & Details	Location
November 30, 2024 10am-7pm	Annual Gift-Wrapping Fundraiser – Set up at 9:30am. Volunteers needed to help take orders, wrap presents and make ribbons/bows. What time can you be there to help? Please contact Dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com call or text 321-426-6736.	Merritt Island Mall Food Court
December 1, 2024 12pm-5pm	Annual Gift-Wrapping Fundraiser – Set up at 11:30am. Volunteers needed to help take orders, wrap presents and make ribbons/bows. What time can you be there to help? Please contact Dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com call or text 321-426-6736.	Merritt Island Mall Food Court
December 3, 2024 11am-1pm	Healing Through Art Expression - No painting experience necessary. We provide the supplies. Female Veterans Only. No cost to attend. RSVP by call or text to 321.426.6736 or by email to Dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com.	Home Office 4411 Ponds Drive Cocoa, FL
December 5, 2024 11am-1pm	Viera VA Tree Lighting Event - Set up at 9:30. Indoor Event. Volunteers needed to come and pass out holiday treats. Please contact Dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com call or text 321-426-6736.	Viera VA Main Lobby 2900 Veterans Way Viera, FL
December 10, 2024 11am	Yoga with Dena - Safe Space Gentle Yoga for female veterans and female spouses of veterans and female 1st responders. Mats, blocks, pillows and blankets are provided. Meet in Grey Hall. RSVP to Dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com call or text 321-426-6736.	Veterans Memorial Center 400 S. Sykes Creek Pkwy Merritt Island, FL
December ?, 2024 10:30-1pm	Bowling For Fun! All veteran women are invited. Costs vary depending on bowling center rates. Call or text Linda @ 321.591.3265 to RSVP.	Shore Lanes 600 N. Courtenay Pkwy Merritt Island, FL
December 11, 2024 Noon	Lunch Bunch! Join us for a monthly get together with fellow sister veterans. We select a new location each month. Call or text Linda @ 321.591.3265 to RSVP.	Thai Thai 100 Harrison St. Cocoa Village, FL
December 20, 2024 5pm-9pm	Holiday Potluck Dinner! - Join us for a festive gathering filled with delicious food and holiday cheer. All veteran women are invited. Bring your favorite holiday dessert or appetizer. Please RSVP by December 12 th to Dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com. Call or text 321-426-6736.	Veterans Memorial Center 400 S. Sykes Creek Pkwy Merritt Island, FL
December 24, 2024 10am-7pm	Annual Gift-Wrapping Fundraiser – Set up at 9:30am. Volunteers needed to help take orders, wrap presents and make ribbons/bows. What time can you be there to help? Please contact Dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com. Call or text 321-426-6736.	Merritt Island Mall Food Court





Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar December 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/>

DECEMBER 2024

01 Dec – NOTE: Amphitheater and other Phase III VMC Park construction underway which will continue into Fall 2025 and result in blocking off portions of the park. JROTC, 5K and other events can still be carried out.

01 Dec – Gold Star Family Christmas Tree installed in the VMC Museum 1400 - 1600. It will remain until 05 January 1400 hrs. Next year the live Merritt Island Community Christmas Tree will be unveiled during illumination evening with Gold Star Families involved and adding their loved ones Stars to the tree just for that evening.

13 Dec – JROTC District Air Rifle Championship 1200- 1700 Palm Beach Jr/Sr Magnet School. State Qualifier Meet.

14 Dec – Wreaths Across America Day in many Brevard Locations. The largest event is the Ceremony at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery 1000-1100. Families of veterans resting at CCNC will have opportunities to place wreaths Friday 13 Dec afternoon 1600-1730 and before the Ceremony. Contact Donn Weaver at 757-871-6576 for more info.

14 Dec – JROTC District Invitational Air Rifle Meet at Palm Bay HS 0800-1200. Support dozens of cadets from 10 or more High Schools compete at the indoor range for marksmanship team honors.

14 Dec EAA Chapter 724 31st Annual Merritt Island Airport Breakfast and Toys for Tots USMC drive 0830-1100. Servant Air Ministries Hangar, 471 Manor Drive, MI. Admission is new unwrapped toy with all toys going to Toys for Tots. Call Don White 321-266-7410 for questions and info.

14 Dec – Second Annual Merritt Island Holiday Tree Illumination and Celebration. VMC Plaza area 1500- 2000. Sponsored by the Community Advocacy for Merritt Island (CAMI) and Veterans Memorial Center. Free Community Concert by PINK, Christmas Market, Food Trucks, Tree Lighting and Much More. Special recognition for Gold Star Family Members set for 2025. More info at ca4mi.com

15 Dec – Wreaths Across America at Pinecrest Cemetery/ Brevard County Honors Veterans 1400 - 1600, 815 Clearlake Road, Cocoa. Honors also Medal of Honor Recipient Emory Bennett, and all deceased veterans and Gold Star Families of veterans as well as First responders. Rolling Thunder FL-1 Chapter will escort the wreaths from VMC with KSU at 1300. Contact Dorothy Walsh for more information through the VMC.

JANUARY 2025

11 Jan – Second Annual Stop the Traffic 5K Fundraiser, VMC PARK 0700-1200. Organized by Edgewood HS students and parents to raise money to bring awareness and action to help stop human trafficking, a growing problem even in America. More details in Early January.

10-11 Jan – Palm Bay JROTC Air Rifle Commanders Cup Match, PM Friday; 0800-1200 Saturday at Palm Bay Jr/Sr HS.

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

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

Clayton, David & Anne July, 2026

Ericson, Robert & Robin Mar 2026

Fadok, Eleanor Dec, 2024

Fleet Reserve Branch 263 July, 2026

Florida State University College of Social
Work, August, 2025

Garcia, Jackie & Danny June, 2025

Kanis, Jussara & Michael Nov, 2027

Kappes, Bea (RIP) & Mickey July, 2025

Longway, J.P & Donna Dec, 2028

McKinney, Shaun & Adora Sept, 2025

Muckler, Bill, CAPT. USMC May, 2028

Norman, Ray April, 2027

Rowe, Wayne June, 2025

Schaaf, Dean & Susan July, 2025

Taylor, Skip Aug, 2025

Weaver, Donn & Jeanne Sep, 2025

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) _____