



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

COUNCIL COURIER

Space Coast Honors Non-Profit of the Year 2024

MAY 2025



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center



WHAT'S INSIDE

First Space Coast Honor Flight of 2025

About two hundred people gathered to honor and launch 30 veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam on their Space Coast Honor Flight (SCHF), Mission Number 81.

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Spring Fling – Easter Bunny Meet & Greet

Saturday, April 12, 2025, was another great day for our Veterans and First Responder families at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center.

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Final JROTC Drill Meet at VMC Impresses

Almost 200 JROTC cadets from eight high schools put it all on the field on 29 March on the West side of the VMC Park.

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“A Special Easter Event at VMC Park”

More than 2,200 attended the 19 April Annual Georgianna Church Easter Festival and Egg Hunt at VMC Park.

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MAY 2025

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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 20 December 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.

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)

Spring is here but the April showers to bring in the May flowers have not arrived yet. We need some rain to stop the wildfires.

We just get busier and busier! Rentals are increasing as are bookings for large events in the park. The Executive Staff has been working diligently on the by-laws that will combine the BVC and the VMC into one

organization called the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC). Bear with over the next two months as we present the new bylaws to the General Membership for approval. We have postponed the election until they are passed to avoid having two elections. Our name change request is in its final stages. Thank you for your patience and participation in the process.



Civil War Days - Ed Pinston and Harry Beaver

The VMC Museum worked with several organizations involved in the Civil War on Saturday, April 26 to participate in "Civil War Days" held at the Liberty Bell Museum in Melbourne. It was a successful event, and I want to thank Harry Beaver and Ed Pingston for setting up and manning the VMC display. We had both of our canopies, one with our regular display and one displaying two of our Civil War mannequins. We were promoting the amphitheater with posters on easel.

Back Brevard Heroes will have their fundraiser at the VMC on May 4 from 1100-1500. This is always a major event with plenty of activities going on and a large 50/50. Last year's winner received \$750; I am told. We will need volunteers, so let us know if you can help.

Another big event is an Enlistment Ceremony of the Space Coast to be held at the Viera High School Stadium on May 15. Please join us in honoring and celebrating the men and women enlisting in our armed forces EN MASSE. Brevard County Public Schools is promoting this drawing from counties on the Space Coast, aiming at having a ceremony that will enlist upwards of 300 men and women taking the pledge. The hardest working member of the VMC on this project is Shaun McKinney. He has been "herding cats" the past several weeks to assist in making this a success. Bravo Zulu Shaun! For more information, see the flyers posted around the center.

There are many more events coming up in May including our Memorial Day Program. This year's focus is on Generational Service and Sacrifice with guest speakers COL Jeff Rogers, USA, ret, Vietnam Combat Platoon Leader and LTC Hans Hunt, USA, ret, with comments on the Global War on Terror.

Thanks to all our volunteers for your support and sacrifices to keep the VMC running smoothly.

God bless our fallen heroes, MIAs, and POWs and God bless our armed forces.

Dean
Go Navy beat Army!
Go Purdue in the NCAA tournament!

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Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain Chip Hanson
USMC (Fmr)

Memorial Day is a federal holiday in the United States for remembering the 1,498,240 men and women who died, and the 40,031 still missing in action, while serving in our country's Armed Forces. The holiday, which is observed each year on the last Monday of May, will be held this year on May 26, 2025. Originally, Memorial Day was observed on May 30 from 1868 to 1970 and marks the unofficial start of the summer season. Memorial Day should not be confused with Veterans Day. Memorial Day honors 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 Space Force.

The Merchant Marines are not part of the U.S. Military, which is why they are not recognized on veteran holidays. (Reference: 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 Union war dead with flowers. By the 20th century, various Union and Confederate memorial traditions, once celebrated on different days, merged, and Memorial Day eventually became a day to honor all Americans who died 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 more than two dozen poppies to others present. In 1920, the National American Legion adopted the poppy as their official symbol of remembrance.

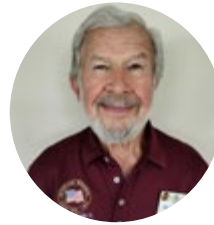
On May 26, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson designated the "official" birthplace of Memorial Day by signing a presidential proclamation naming Waterloo, New York as the holder of the title. This action followed House Concurrent Resolution 587, in which the 89th Congress officially recognized that the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

President John F. Kennedy once quoted: "It is for us the living... to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced."

As Scripture reminds us:
"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13 (ESV)

GOD BLESS AMERICA
Chaplain Chip Hanson

BVMC Educational Scholarship Program



By Jay Longway
Committee Chairman

"Pass the word and turn up the hype", as to the availability of the [BVMC's 2025 Educational Scholarship Applications & Instructions](#), which can be obtained on the BVMC website or in the library. A number of Applications have already been submitted, and are in the process of being evaluated for compliance, rating and ranking by the Scholarship Committee.

Please note that a high school student's graduation must be by August 1, and submittal of the Application and supporting documentation must be received in the BVMC library by June 27.

The Scholarship Committee is comprised of the following BVMC members: Garet McKimmie, Mary Ann Tucker, Vic Rogers, Doug Bisset, Dean Schaaf, and Jay Longway. Any questions relative to ensuring an applicant is successfully completing the Application, can be directed to Doug Bisset or Dean Schaaf as noted on Page 1 of 4 of the Application form.

NOTE: It is essential, that all applicants submit an Application that fully satisfies all the criteria and completely follows all the instructions, to be considered a compliant and successful submittal.



Secretary's Report

Kristi Blanchard
USA (Fmr)

Dear Membership:

The combined BVC-VMC Board of Directors has unanimously decided to delay the 2025-2026 election because we are very close to becoming a single 501(c)3 known as the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center. We'll keep you informed and hold elections as soon as possible. Thank you!



Sea Cadets Updates

By Paul Julian, USN (Ret)

As of April 24, 2025, we have 23 registered Cadets. This is only two short of our goal of 25. We invite all Brevard Veterans Memorial Center members to bring their children and/or grandchildren (i.e. must be at least 10 years old) to one of our two monthly drill sessions to determine if they would be interested in joining our dynamic unit!

On Saturday, April 19th, there was a "Chief's board" held for two of our cadets. One of the two - Ms. Madilynn Penney, made it on her first try! Our other outstanding cadet was told that he will be able attend another Chiefs board in 60 days.

The remainder of our 2025 schedule until the 2025/2026 school year begins is:

- May 3- Standard drills (focus on Awards ceremony preparation)
- May 17- Standard drills (drills to be performed on CCSFS)
- May 31- Annual Awards & Graduation ceremony (see below note)
- June - No drills due to cadet Advanced Training
- July -No drills due to cadet Advanced Training. Annual Fieldtrip (see below)
- August 2- First drills back from summer begin (CG BD Picnic)

The units next big event will be "by invitation only" the Courageous Division's 22nd Annual Awards and Graduation ceremony at Viera's Indian River Colony Club's Main Colony Hall on May 31, 2025. It will begin at 5:30p and is estimated to be completed by 8p. We have one graduate - soon to be Chief Madilynn Penney. Ms. Penney aspires to be a Coast Guard Officer after her graduation from college.

Finally, the unit's planned annual fieldtrip will be July 11th through July 13th. The cadets will be training at both the Kings Bay Submarine Base as well as the Mayport Naval Station.



A Quick Note from the BVC Vice Chairman

By Jim Carleton, USMC (Ret)

This is the last note from the BVC Vice Chairman because in the very near future we the BVC and we the VMC will become one entity, The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center.

Many of you have worked diligently to finally, after several years make this happen. I for one as the Chair of the Governance Committee would like to pass on a giant Thank You to those who supported and helped the Committee in the mission to combine the bylaws of both organizations into one document. I would also thank the Board of Directors for their unwavering support on this task.

Finally, thanks to all the rest of you who provided comments and constructive criticisms to help us get one outstanding document. I believe next is a brief legal review and then a vote from the General Membership to accept the new bylaws. The bylaw being completed is only one of the several tasks that are being done by all the other various committees. But we are well cared for and are making headway toward the BVMC. Thanks to all those who have helped me as the BVC Vice Chairman.

HELP WANTED - BVMC Color Guard

By Don Pearsall, Drill Captain

The BVMC Color guard is actively recruiting members. You need not be a veteran.

We supply everything including training. Must be 16 yrs of age, and a resident of Brevard County. For sign up or information, call Don Pearsall at 321-313-2444.





VMC Librarian Report

**Hank Rhodes
USN (Fmr)**

Few of us will ever meet anyone enshrined in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. But we all have the privilege of knowing someone who first enlisted in the Navy at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, or at least on the site. In 1973, when Paul Julian signed on, the Rock Hall was far into the future, and that location was occupied by the Naval Reserve Center in Paul's hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.



Initially rated as a Signalman, Paul's active duty time was primarily aboard USS Jason (AR-8), homeported in San Diego, California. The Jason's mission was repair of other ships in forward locations, making her essentially a floating "fix it garage." During Paul's time aboard, the Jason conducted a Western Pacific deployment with port stops in Japan. Paul continued his service in the reserves, for a total of 41 years. He transitioned from Signalman to Quartermaster (Navigation) to Operations Specialist (Radars and position-keeping).

After earning his degree in accounting at Cleveland State University, Paul pursued a career as an auditor with the Department of Defense, but was primarily engaged supporting NASA.

At the BVMC, Paul worked in the library, including several years as lead librarian until he was elected to the Executive Committee. He continues on the BOD, coordinates the library's discussion group programs, and also works the technical side of the Veterans' History Project. Additionally, he fills a leadership role with the local Naval Sea Cadet unit, and helps with Bible study at his church.

Paul has two sons and recently welcomed a granddaughter to the family.

So, our colleague Paul is the proverbial "one handshake" away from Rock and Roll immortality. With this "virtual handshake," we thank Paul for all he's done for the BVMC over the years.

Book Report: "Annapolis" by William Martin

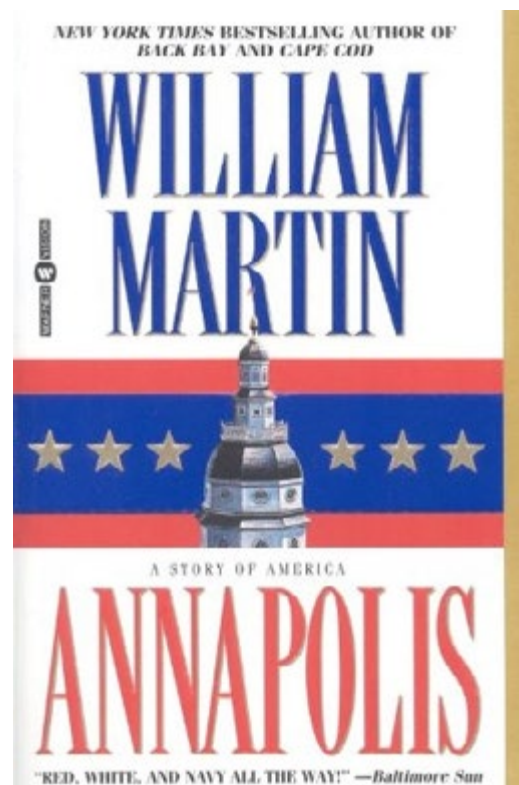
**Book Report by William G. Ellis Jr.
USAF (Retired)**

The story of two families, the Staffords and the Parrishes, unfolds over eight generations in and around the City of Annapolis. Annapolis, founded in 1694, is the Capital of Maryland and the site of the U.S. Naval Academy since 1845. As citizens of a nation that fought for freedom, fought itself, and fought wars around the world, the Staffords and the Parrishes shed their blood for the U.S. Navy and the city that was its mecca.

"From blistering sea battles on wooden ships to the first ironclads, from the shores of Cuba and Tripoli to Pearl Harbor and Vietnam. The Staffords and the Parrishes became midshipmen and commanders, spies and pilots. And with each generation their covenant grew stronger, old grudges became deeper, and America's sea power became the most awesome in the world."

The characters are well defined and you become a part of them. The city of Annapolis grows over time, war and personal strife. The use of flashbacks are well done and spaced. The story of one house is followed through the years and well-used to tell the story of the people and the times.

I highly recommend this book as a read you don't want to miss. Annapolis is located at: "Fic-Marti-01."





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Vietnam War Exhibit & Education Center

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AUSA Space Coast Chapter Updates



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

The Executive Committee continues to work to develop events we believe we be of interest to our members, and ask if you have any ideas for topics of interest to please let us know. You can always email us at pressc@ausa.org or call me at 321.591.9826. If I cannot take your call, please be sure to leave a message.

The Chapter is seeking members O6 (COL) and above and E9 to serve on our Board of Governors. The Board will help the Chapter Executive Committee make connections in the communities and help steer the team towards achievable results in our communities. If you would like to join, please call Kip at 321-591-9826 or email at vincent.e.mathias@gmail.com.

AUSA Scholarship applications are still being accepted until 5 May 2025 at <https://www.ausa.org/scholarships>. If you are an AUSA Premium or Association Member, you are eligible to apply for yourself, spouse, child or grandchild. If you are an Association, be sure to check out the list of Association Organizations and contact AUSA Member Support for your AUSA member number for the application.

Here are activities in which AUSA Space Coast Chapter will be holding or presenting awards. We hope to see you at one of them

Thursday, May 1, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Spruce Creek High School Army JROTC Awards Ceremony, 801 Taylor Rd, Port Orange, FL 32127

Friday, May 2, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. St Lucie West Centennial High School Navy JROTC Awards Ceremony, 1485 SW Cashmere Blvd, Port St Lucie, FL – this program has 3 students enlisting in the Army and we want to let them know the community supports their choice to serve in the U.S. Army.

Monday, May 5, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Cocoa Beach Jr Sr High School Army JROTC Awards Ceremony, 1500 Minutemen Causeway, Cocoa Beach, FL 32931

Tuesday, May 6, 10:00 a.m. Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Commissioning Ceremony, Mori Hosseini Student Union, 610 Aerospace Blvd, Daytona Beach, FL 32114

Tuesday, May 6, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Astronaut High School Army JROTC Awards Ceremony, 800 War Eagle Blvd, Titusville, FL 32796

Thursday, May 8, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Viera High School Army JROTC Awards Ceremony, 6103 Stadium Parkway, Melbourne, FL 32940

Thursday, May 15, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Brevard Enlistment Ceremony, Viera High School, 6103 Stadium Parkway, Melbourne, FL 32940 – This is an event hosted by Brevard Public Schools to celebrate graduating students and other citizens who chose to join the military this year. This will be a mass enlistment ceremony with scheduled Keynote Speaker Brigadier General John Dreska (USA) and Oath of Enlistment by Brigadier General Kristin Panzenhagen (USF).

Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 11:15 -1:00 p.m. 250th Army Birthday Celebration, Azan Shriner's Center, 1591 W Eau Gallie Blvd, Melbourne, FL 32935 The Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon will be a celebration of the Army's 250th Birthday! Our scheduled Keynote Speaker is BG Ed Lewis, Wyoming National Guard, Land Component Commander and will discuss the Army's achievements and current concepts of the Golden Dome Missile Shield Concept. Tickets will be available at www.greaterpalmbaychamber.com.

We hope to continue working with the Space Force Association (SFA) to announce an event in July to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the first launch from Cape Canaveral in 1950 that was an Army Missile Agency activity.

As always, the Space Coast Chapter needs you! If you have some time and can help us continue to communicate to our communities what our Army needs, please join our Executive Committee. I am open to all members to hear your inputs and receive your feedback at vincent.e.mathias@gmail.com or 321-591-9826 (please leave a message and call back number if I cannot answer when you call).

We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event!

Always,
Kip Mathias, Sergeant Major, U.S. Army (Retired)

BVMC May 2025 Discussion Group Series



The US Army's 250th Birthday Presentation

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center's Discussion Group Team (DGT) will have VMC Vice President and former US Army Infantry Captain Donn Weaver make the presentation. It will be held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, in the BVMC Library from 1800 to 1930.

Water and snacks will be provided. Please come and enjoy!

The U.S. Army, the oldest service in the U.S. military, will celebrate its 250th birthday on June 14, 2025. Its birth during the beginning of the Revolutionary War is one stop along the road to America's 250th birthday on July 4, 2026.

The Army traces its origins back to 1775 when the Second Continental Congress established it to defend the newly formed colonies. Initially, it was a militia force, but it has evolved into a world-renowned fighting force, playing a vital role in the nation's growth and development. The Army's primary mission is to provide necessary forces and capabilities for combat operations, support national security, and conduct stability operations.

The Army's history is intertwined with the nation's wars and conflicts, from the American Revolutionary War to more recent engagements. It fought for independence against Great Britain, played a key role in the American Civil War, and participated in major conflicts like World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The Army also played a significant role in the Gulf War, the War in Iraq, and the War in Afghanistan.

Following the Cold War, the Army's focus shifted to Western Asia, and it continues to be a major component of the U.S. military, adapting to modern warfare and maintaining a global presence. The Army has undergone significant changes throughout its history, from reliance on volunteer soldiers to modern conscription, and from small peacetime forces to massive wartime deployments. Today, the Army remains a vital force, providing land dominance and supporting the nation's security.

Next Generation USID Card Announcement

Passed by Congress in 2005, the REAL ID Act enacted the 9/11 Commission’s recommendation that the Federal Government “set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver’s licenses.” The latest information indicates the Department of Homeland Security will start Real ID Act enforcement on 7 May 2025. This will affect what forms of ID/documentation people can use to access certain federal facilities, board domestic commercial flights or individuals visiting military installations.

Even after the Real ID Act is in effect, there is no change for military base access for individuals (military retirees/dependents/surviving spouses) who already possess military, or DoD issued credentials; non-DoD personnel without base access credentials will be the largest demographic affected by REAL ID requirements. If you don’t have the NextGen ID card, but an “old style” ID card (DD Form 2, DD Form 1173, DD Form 1173-1 or DD Form 2765(blue, pink or tan ID)) you will still be able to access a base for now!

It’s important for military retirees/dependents/surviving spouses to know, at some time in the future, these old forms of ID will not be valid to access a military installation, and you will need issuance of the NextGen ID card. This will be true even if your old ID card has an INDEF expiration date on it - the ID will still be invalid.

DoD has not specified a date when this will happen, and we have no idea how much advance warning you will get before you must have the NextGen ID card. Social media and word of mouth, however, you receive information, we are hearing the deadline may be on 1 Jan 2026. We understand DoD will formally announce.

Based on this, we strongly encourage everyone with an old-style ID card to get a NextGen ID card now!

There are several ways to make an appointment to get a new ID card.

1. You can visit the RAPIDS ID Card Office Locator website to find the closest office and either call them to make an appointment
2. Schedule your own appointment using the website. <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/> To make an appointment using this site select the “ID Card Office Locator & Appointments” block.
3. You may be able to renew your ID card online and have it mailed to you, no waiting in line! You select the “Family ID Cards” block on the website at the link above.

Below are the requirements to renew a card online:

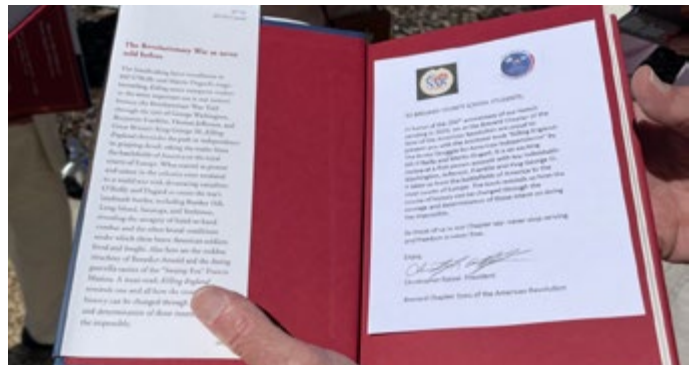
- Sponsor must be a CAC holder or have a DoD Self-Service Logon username/password
- Must be requesting a renewal of an active USID card
- Sponsor and Cardholder must have email addresses listed in DEERS that they have authorized DoD to use for contacting them

- Sponsor’s personnel status must extend at least 30 days into the future
- Cardholder has a photo saved in DEERS taken in the last 12 years
- Cardholder’s mailing address is present in DEERS and is in United States or Overseas.
- USID cards cannot be shipped to PO Boxes If you have an old-style ID card, you can get the new NextGen ID at any time - do it now!

Civics and American History Back to BPS Schools: A Small SAR Step

By Donn Weaver

The Brevard Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), which includes a number of MOAACC and BVMC members, made a special presentation of 18 copies of “Killing England” for all Brevard Middle Schools on 14 April. The ceremony was held at the BPS Headquarters in Viera days before the 250th Anniversary of the beginning of the American Revolution, when “shots heard round the world” were fired in Massachusetts.



Each book included a certificate signed by SAR President Christopher Ratzel



Hans Hunt, Doug Bisset, Jennifer Jolley (Social Studies BPS Coordinator), Nic Mihora and Donn Weaver are there to present the books and thus help encourage young people to learn more about America

Veterans Connections

By Don Pearsall, CEO & Founder

The last few months have been rather hectic. We handled many cases, in fact, thanks to our supporters, it may have been a record. It started when we are asked by American Legion Post 332 to assist a veteran's wife with car repairs. Her Navy veteran husband was in Lake Nona Domiciliary and the family had a car that kept overheating and needed repairs. The mechanic who was going to charge almost \$900.00. said he would work with us to help bring the price down some.

After that, a Flight Attendant from Southwest Airlines contacted our office about a veteran living in the woods behind her house. We made a visit and got information about him and contacted NVHS. We gave him food, gift cards from Publix, and some other basics like a flashlight, bus passes from SCAT and other things. Meantime his case worker was contacted, while the Flight Attendant, who wished to remain anonymous, took up a collection from her airline friends and along with our financial help we put that veteran in a motel for 9 nights. We wrote a letter to Southwest commending this employee and her friends who helped this unfortunate veteran.

There are still many snowbird veterans down here needing services. On the same token, many of these veterans love to step up and help serve others too. I spoke to one veteran from Massachusetts down here for the winter. He volunteers every Monday at House of Home distributing food to people who are in need. Not all snowbird veterans need assistance, but those who do are well taken care of by the many organizations in Brevard County. We will miss many of our snowbird helpers when they return to their northern homes. We thank them while we await their return this fall.

It always seems like we are falling behind when it comes to vetting and assisting veterans. One major problem is that when a veteran needs assistance, they wait until the lights go off before they ask for help. It takes time for us to vet the individual, check their financial background and get funds in place to pay. At the same time, we are working with the veteran to see if, and how they will be able to pay the next month's bill. We remind them not to wait until the last possible minute to contact us. It is a sense of accomplishment to see a family we helped get back on their feet again and managing their own affairs. That, is what's so rewarding about this job. If you care to help a veteran please use one of these QR Codes to donate.



Zelle



PayPal

A Special Easter Event at VMC Park

By Donn Weaver

Despite the limits of ongoing Park Construction with our new amphitheater and much more ongoing through November, more than 2,200 attended the 19 April Annual Georgianna Church Easter Festival and Egg Hunt. More than two-thirds of the Veterans Memorial Park were available with entry from the West and over a foot bridge. Despite these complicated logistics, the weather was beautiful, the purpose and focus were clear and children of all ages had a wonderful time. The VMC supported the event, but more than 230 Church volunteers did all the work set up, covering 20 fun stations for the kids and cleaning up all from 0630-1300 that day.

Georgianna Church, which has given the VMC thousands of dollars over the years and has a special granite plaque on the Memorial Plaza Wall, not only covered the rent that day but provided another generous donation.



Ready, Set Go — after thousands of plastic stuffed eggs!!!



Park and Plaza Report

By Donn Weaver

Bricks: More than 15 were ordered including several more for the Richard Elmore Bench Area under the Vietnam Era Huey Helicopter. Dr. Elmore, a combat dust-off pilot in Vietnam saved many lives and earned respect of the now 18 comrades and FIT connected former students who are creating this section to honor him. He still does not know about this great gesture which the group hopes to complete and share with him on Memorial Day Weekend. The BVMC also worked with CSpray to approve the annual maintenance and spruce up plan for the plaza. Many improvements can be seen every month.

Memorial Trees: Two more were requested, making the total 25. Good news was received when the County and Ivey Construction coordinated to approve at least 40 Florida Live Oak Memorial Trees for planting in the Park this summer, so dedication of Memorial Trees around Veterans Day is looking good.

Memorial Park Benches: Three more were ordered and assembled thanks to Charles Schaaf and Bill Pollock. They will be installed in their various positions once the Amphitheater project is completed in the late Fall.

Park Construction: Check out the late April photos below. Progress is great and on track with the Concession Stand and Restrooms already getting the slab and walls going up. The amphitheater slab is expected to be poured in early May with the steel pillar frames already going up. Roger Scruggs plans an updated drone photo next week which really best shows the scope and size if this \$8.2 M effort.

Contact the VMC ExComm and Donn Weaver for more information.



The Ivey's Site Trailer with the BVMC Memorial Park Ground Breaking sign!!



The base of the amphitheater in the distance.



Slab done and walls going up at Concessions and Restroom Building.

First Space Coast Honor Flight of 2025 By Donn Weaver

Very early on Saturday 5 April, about two hundred people gathered to honor and launch 30 veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam on their Space Coast Honor Flight (SCHF), Mission Number 81. SCHF began operations as a 501(c)3 in October 2010. When the Mission 81 veterans departed on two buses from the Wickham Park Senior Center at 0300 hours, they joined 2,098 other veterans honored for a very special day in our nation's capital. They saw 6 monuments and special events, including the changing of the guard at Arlington National Cemetery and the Women's Military Memorial.

The oldest veteran was almost 98 and fought in WWII. Five were over 90, along with many veterans of the Cold War, and 26 with tours in or around Vietnam. SCHF has grown in sponsorships with one of the biggest coming from MOAACC's Good Deeds Foundation (GDF). For four years in a row GDF has funded Florida Tech ROTC Cadets and PhD Veteran Students in VA sponsored programs. On that night GDF presented a check for \$6400 to cover 8 students from each group to be Guardians on the six flights scheduled through October 2025. Two FIT PhD students were booked on Mission 81.

The SCHF President RADM Jim Hart, USN ret. led the program to prepare for the flight and praised the MOAACC/GDF partnership with SCHF. Many VMC and MOAACC members have taken the flight as honorees and have served as Guardians over the years.

Contact Space Coast Honor Flight directly to sign up as an honoree or guardian.



RADM Hart with Welch, VMC VP Weaver and two FIT Grad students



Ampitheater Updates



OASIS Mission Continues to Support Deployed Troops

By Donn Weaver

Over 50 people from the OASIS 501(c)3 Troop Support organization, a local middle school and Courageous Division Sea Cadets came to the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center on an early Saturday morning on 5 April. They all came together for a great mission. Stuffing and sending "care" packages to troops currently deployed overseas. The boxes totaled 130 that day, and the visitors included a special guest, Army ROTC Cadet Daniel Weaver. He and his battle buddies had received several boxes two years before, when he was deployed as an enlisted Army soldier in Djibouti, and he wanted to give back.

OASIS is led by Tess Heribaka who, as a military mom, began sending care packages to her two deployed sons starting in 2008. They have long since left the military, but her and the OASIS Mission go on. Five times per year, for more than 12 years, they have sent out boxes to as many troops as they can locate and have donations to support. The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center hosts one such event every year and the MOAACC Good Deeds Foundation provides over \$1500 annually to help with mailing costs. What a great mission and event to bring the community together as we continue to support our troops in harm's way 24 years after 9/11.



OASIS volunteers (l) with ROTC Cadet Danial Weaver and his 1LT US Army girl friend, Talia (r)



VMC Long Term Volunteer and Donor Turns 90

By Donn Weaver

On 31 Jan 2025 former US Army aviator and participant in four armed conflicts after Korea, Ray Norman, turned 90. His two sons threw a great party at his home on Merritt Island with at least 40 neighbors, family and friends attending. Ray has volunteered at the VMC for more than three decades and been an amazing donor as well as working thousands of hours on many projects. He remains a museum docent and can be seen there almost every Sunday with his son Steve at his side.

Ray had a long history in the US Army, mostly focused on flying observer aircraft and was awarded recognition for his role in four major combat actions. He retired at the rank of CW04 and continued working in space related contracts after buying his home on Merritt Island.

During his birthday toasts, VMC chimed in with recognition of his military and veteran volunteer service and gifted him a brand-new American Flag to fly from his lighted home flagpole. His current flag is of course not tattered, but flags do not age well in the Florida sun, unlike Ray!!!

Steve and Ray are headed for a Hilton Head vacation in February but we hope he will join us for the March VMC General Meeting to be recognized and honored with cupcakes and cheer.

Thank you, Ray Norman. We know that you will keep going strong.



Ray at the center of the action on his patio with pool

Spring Fling – Easter Bunny Meet & Greet

Saturday, April 12, 2025, was another great day for our Veterans and First Responder families at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center. American Legion Auxiliary Unit 344 and Their Voice of Hope held a great Spring Fling – Easter Bunny Meet & Greet.

There were 45 – 50 children and their parents in attendance. Each one left with an Easter bag full of goodies they collected throughout the day. Easter egg hunts, hot dogs, snow cone machine, searching the sand pile for coins, bounce house, giant slide, and face painting gave these children “memories they will always remember”. It also made for very grateful parents who enjoyed watching their “kids be kids for a day”.

Hugs from the kids and the parents made it a great day for all the volunteers as well. We cannot thank our volunteers and donors enough for supporting us in making this happen. Special thanks to Elevation Church for supplying the food and to Good Deeds Foundation for their extreme generosity. “It Takes A Village”.

Carol Axelrod
President
ALA Unit 344

Diane & Adrienne Davison
Co-Chairs, Children & Youth
ALA Unit 344

Dorothy Walsh
President
Their Voice of Hope



GENERATIONAL SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

Join us on Monday, May 26
For a Memorial Day Ceremony
Veterans Memorial Center Plaza
0930 - 1030



PROGRAM

- Patriotic Music
- Guest Speakers:
COL Jeff Rogers, USA, Ret
Vietnam Combat PLT LDR
- LTC Hans Hunt, USA, Ret
Global War on Terror Vet
- Brevard VMC
Color Guard, Folded Flag/ TAPS
- Located at 400 South Sykes Creek
Parkway on Merritt Island - behind the
mall*



**Remember
Our
Fallen**



Final JROTC Drill Meet at VMC Impresses

By Donn Weaver

Almost 200 JROTC cadets from eight high schools put it all on the field on 29 March on the West side of the VMC Park. Events included individual and dual rifle skills, and drill teams, armed and unarmed, squad and platoon drills, in male and female categories. Hundreds of parents and family joined the instructors, and MOAACC/VMC team in congratulating the cadets on their great efforts. It was among the best such meets many had seen in years.

The performances resulted in five schools placing teams in the various categories that would have qualified for the State Championship, but this year the event was shelved given ongoing examination of DoD funding links. Plenty of trophies were handed out and the cadets were very engaged throughout the morning. Next year the new VMC Park Amphitheater will be the venue for the awards ceremony and Brevard will likely again qualify many teams for the State.

The teams came from Astronaut, Cocoa, Cocoa Beach, Rockledge, Heritage, Merritt Island, Satellite and Viera High Schools with Cocoa Beach narrowly beating out Astronaut for the annual MOAACC Stafford Texas AM Sabre Award as the outstanding District JROTC Drill team of the school year. The award was provided by Lloyd Stafford a MOAACC member now living in Virginia. This was the third straight year Cocoa Beach earned the coveted trophy.

Thanks to MOAACC and VMC members who came to the event and helped pass out trophies: Mike Broski, Mike Tucker, Doug Bisset, Joe Tichich, Gary Eppler and Donn Weaver. What a great day in terms of weather results and satisfaction in seeing our veteran support to our youth pay off.



MOAACCVMC Team, l-r Bisset, Eppler, Weaver, Tichich and Tucker with the Stafford Trophy awarded to Cocoa Beach HS JROTC Cadets.



NEW LEADERSHIP FOR DETACHMENT 513 MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

One of the most exciting times in any organization's history is the change of leadership resulting in new possibilities and ideas. With this change comes "fresh blood" and a chance for renewed direction and a re- focusing of objectives, style, and goals. While the overall intentions remain constant, the methods of achieving those intents may alter.

And so it is for Detachment 513 of the Marine Corps League. On Thursday, 03 April 2025, our detachment installed newly elected and appointed officers to guide the future proceedings at the local level and establish a working relationship with our department and national leadership. This is extremely important as much of our doctrine and operating procedures are handed down from these parent organizations. It is, in a sense, our "chain of command". However, at the local level, we are given discretionary opportunities to govern and direct the affairs of the detachment. This year, we have elected to fill four positions in the detachment and our newly elected Commandant has appointed five members to fill administrative posts. The Installation of officers was not without ceremony. The newly elected Officers of the detachment are:



(FRONT ROW)
 Commandant – Charles "Chuck" Betz Senior Vice Commandant – John Kayda
 Junior Vice Commandant – Christopher "Chris" Wier
 Judge Advocate – Thomas "Tom" Fitzgerald
 And the five appointed officers (thus far) are:

(BACK ROW)
 Adjutant - Dennis Herring Sgt. At Arms - Gary Corbett
 Historian – Normand "Norm" Desmarais Chaplain – Robert "Bob" Doyle
 Jr. Past Commandant – Richard "Rick" Bedford

It is likely that the Commandant will appoint additional officers throughout his tenure to serve the needs of the detachment as situations arise.

As important as these positions are for piloting and managing our detachment, we could not conduct our mission to serve the veterans of Brevard County and our community without the countless hours and dollars spent by the general membership of Marine Corps League, Detachment 513. With a membership of approximately 50 Marines, FMF Corpsmen, and Associate members, we typically have 35% to 45% in attendance at our monthly meetings. With-in the confines of these monthly meetings which typically last about an hour, we plan and organize the up-coming monthly agenda.



From our Color Guard performing at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center celebration of the Last Naval Battle of the Revolutionary War, to our members providing memorial services to a departed Korean War Marine, or honoring the veterans present at the Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery, and even honoring the accomplishments of our young Brevard County Boy Scouts receiving his Eagle Scout Award, our detachment is available and honored to serve the communities in Brevard County, the state of Florida, and our Nation. The United States Marine Corps is celebrating its 250th glorious year of existence on 10 November 2025 and likewise, our Marine Corps League is alive and vibrant.

Join us at one of our meetings on the first Thursday of every month at 18:00 (6 PM) in the Gray Hall of the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, 400 South Sykes Creek Pkwy, Merritt Island, FL 32952 or drop us an email at detachment513marinecorpsleague@gmail.com or leave a message with our membership representative at 612-670-1772

WE ARE HERE.
 Dennis Herring, Adjutant
 Detachment 513 Marine Corps League

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.

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Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar May 2025 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

04 May – Back Brevard Hero Fest VMC Plaza 1000-1600.

Entertainment, food, food trucks, music, special events for kids and much more all to honor our county first responders many of whom are also military veterans.

06 May – Their Voice of Hope, Healing Through

Art Expression Event 1130- 1330. contact dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com to register and for more info. No cost to register.

08-11 May – 37th Veterans Memorial Reunion, Wickham Park 0900-1800 daily. Formerly Vietnam Veterans of Brevard Vietnam Reunion. Now hosted by a new organization – Veterans Memorial Reunion, Inc (VMRI) a 501c3. Wreath laying Ceremony on Monday 05 May 1600-1900. Check web site below to register. Vietnam and Global War on Terror Some Gave all walls included. Escort and wall construction on Sunday 04 May from EFSC to Wickham Park. Vendor registration required and more info at www.veteransmemorialreunioninc.org. Note: Wreath laying registration available on the website in mid- April.

14 May – DAV Chapter 32 Veterans Appreciation Day

1700 - 2000 at the Eau Gallie Civic Center, 1551 Highland Ave, Melbourne. Open to the public. RSVP Required to mail@fldav32.org. Free food and drinks from 17-1800 hours followed by special events and Guest Speaker, Palm Bay Mayor and USMC Vet Rob Medina. Door prizes, 50/50 raffle and lots of camaraderie among veterans and their families.

15 May – First Annual Military Enlistment Ceremony of the Space Coast to recognize and honor those high school seniors or recent graduates from area counties who have enlisted in all six branches of our military services. Viera HS Football Stadium 1800-2000. Free Admission as we witness the initial swearing in of from 2-300 young adults who have chosen to begin their post high school years serving our country. Please arrive by 1730. All family members, friends, veterans and the public are welcome to share in this special moment where focused young people have chosen Service before Self. Sponsored by Brevard Public Schools and the veteran

community for students of all categories – Public, Private, Charter, Virtual and Home Schooling. Contact Shaun McKinney or Donn Weaver at the Brevard VMC for more information - 321-783-1776.

19-27 May – Gold Star Mother and Artist Jeanne Weaver

display of 21 paintings - Losing Todd: A Mother's Journey. 1LT Todd Weaver, USA was killed in combat in Afghanistan 09 Sep 2010. Porcher House in Cocoa Village 0900-1500 daily. More details in March.

20 May – Their Voice of Hope and Yoga with Dena – Yoga for women veterans and first responders. Contact dorothy@theirvoiceofhope.com for more information and registration. No cost to participate.

26 May – Brevard Veterans Memorial Day Ceremony VMC Plaza 0930 -1030. Generations of Service and Sacrifice for America featuring Vietnam and GWOT guest speakers with music and remembrance the focus. Contact Donn Weaver 757-871-6576.

26 May – Memorial Day Ceremony at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery in Mims 1000-1100. RADM James Hart, USN, Ret and President of Space Coast Honor Flight will the Keynote Speaker with Norm Moody, noted veteran and military journalist as Emcee. Bring Lawn chairs and umbrellas. Call 321-403-0128 for more info.

26 May – Parade and Memorial Day Ceremony Cocoa Village and Riverfront Park 1500 Parade and 1700 Ceremony. Look for more details of the program in April.

27 May – VMC Library Discussion Series "Salute to the First American Military Service: 250 Years of the US Army". 1800-1930 hours in the VMC Library. Presented by Army veteran Donn Weaver. An inside look at the history and progression of our largest service branch. Fifty years ago Weaver taught Basic Training troops about our 200-year-old Army and has managed to keep current. The actual birthday is in June, but this is your chance to get a jump on the crowds and help us cut and eat a special US Army - 250 Cake.

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