



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

COUNCIL COURIER

Space Coast Honors Non-Profit of the Year 2024

AUGUST 2025



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center



WHAT'S INSIDE

VFW Teams up with Wreaths Across America at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery

The VFW will serve as the 501c3 partner to house event funds collected by WAA/CCNC, hold meetings for WAA/CCNC volunteers and host WAA led fundraisers.

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Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Honors Dedicated

VMC proudly recognized the unwavering dedication of its 72 volunteers who collectively contributed nearly 12,000 hours of service over the June, 2024–May, 2025 year.

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Coast Guard Auxiliary Honored at Brevard Veterans Memorial Center

(VMC) held a special ceremony to recognize the outstanding service of Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers who serve as Managers on Duty (MOD) at the center.

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“BCSO Independence Day Parade was a Patriotic Launch to America’s 250th Birthday in 2026”

The Sixth Annual Brevard County Sheriff Office (BCSO) Independence Day Parade was a good start of a special yearlong countdown to mark America’s 250th Birthday.

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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 1 June 2025:

[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)

August looks like we will start returning to our normal pace after a couple of slow months due to vacations. Schools will be back in session on August 11. I, however, will actually take a break with a trip to Indiana for my wife's 50th high school class reunion.

Thanks to Kristi for organizing a great Volunteer Recognition program during our July General Meeting, so, a big "well done" or in Navy talk "Bravo Zulu" goes out to our Secretary! We recognized over 60 volunteers. Thanks to all of our "family" that keeps this great Veterans Center running!

Our Space Coast Honor Flights to Washington DC start again on September 6th and are now operating out of Melbourne Airport. This means it is only a 3 am (instead of 1 am) show at the Wickham Park Senior Center to send off the veterans. It will be a much shorter escort for the Rolling Thunder and other motorcycle riders.

The Amphitheater and the other building which houses the restrooms and concession stand both have roofs now! Progress continues to be made. The grading for the new road into the park from Fortenberry is in work as well as additional parking places. We are close to having water again in the park pavilion restrooms. Roger Scruggs continues to photograph and post the pictures as it is being built. He posted the first ever launch with the amphitheater in the photo.

All three of our "senior" services are celebrating their 250th anniversaries this year with several different ceremonies, so please honor them with your presence. The Coast Guard celebrates its 235th anniversary on August 4th with an open house at the USCG station. I am older than the Air Force. September 18 will be their 77th anniversary and the Space Force will be 6 years old in December 2025.

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

Dean
Go Navy beat Army!

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[YOUTUBE](#)





Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain Chip Hanson
USMC (Fmr)

The United States of America has survived for 249 years. There have been on going arguments concerning our Constitution and the various amendments. As Chaplain, I will attempt to address the issue that our forefathers made very clear.

The first amendment to the US Constitution states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"

Our forefathers quoted John Adams, "The Christian religion is, above all the religions that ever prevailed or existed in ancient or modern times, the religion of wisdom, virtue, equity, and humanity."

Ben Franklin, "As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the system of morals and His religion as He left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see."

John Hancock, "That all nations may bow to the scepter of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and that the whole earth may be filled with his glory."

George Washington, "You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are."

The 1854 Congress, "The great, vital, and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and the divine truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Martin Luther King, "I HEREBY PLEDGE MYSELF--MY PERSON AND MY BODY--TO THE NONVIOLENT MOVEMENT. THEREFORE, I WILL KEEP THE FOLLOWING. MEDITATE daily on the teachings and life of Jesus."

President H.W. Bush was a devout Christian who wove his Episcopal beliefs into his political career, per Religion News Service.

President Barack Obama, "First of all, I agree Jesus Christ is the Lord. I believe in that."

President George W. Bush, "When you turn your heart and your life over to Christ, when you accept Christ as the savior, it changes your heart."

President Donald Trump, "Donald Trump Declares Jesus as King of Kings." All I have done is quote various Patriots, you make your own decision. Peter 2:16

Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.



Secretary's Report

Kristi Blanchard
USA (Fmr)

Below I've inserted an amazing communication about the new transport service being offered by Seniors Helping Seniors for Veterans. Please read the flyer as you can get transportation to important services, and then share the information! They are a new BVMC Partner after joining us at the July 9th General Membership Meeting and we're glad to have them onboard.

Our volunteer awards held at the General Meeting on July 9th were so much fun this year, and I hope you enjoy the article and pictures. Thanks again to all of our amazing volunteers and staff!

Seniors Helping Seniors:

"Hi Kristi, Thank you for talking with me after the meeting on Wednesday. I also spoke with BJ McGuire, and he let me know that he has also been receiving calls for help with transportation. I have spoken with my boss Jennifer, and we came up with what we hope could be a solution. I have attached a flyer with information regarding our new veteran transport service package. Please feel free to share this information with your veterans and any other members of the council. I am also copying BJ in on this email. I do plan on attending the August meeting and would be happy to announce this new program to the group. In the meantime, feel free to post or give out this flyer and our information.

In addition, if you know of any active seniors/veterans who would be interested in a part time job and would like to help other seniors in their community, please ask them to call our office at the number below. We are currently hiring in the Cocoa, Merritt Island and Cape Canaveral areas. Seniors Helping Seniors is a non-medical companion/homemaker service. We do not do any type of bathing, dressing, or "hands On" care. Our caregivers do not need any special certifications or training. We do offer an (optional) online dementia training course for those caregivers/employees interested in learning more about dementia and how to care for someone with dementia.

Thank you for all you do! I look forward to talking with you more about how we can help.

Sincerely,
Riki Montgomery
Office Manager
Seniors Helping Seniors"



VMC Librarian Report

Hank Rhodes
USN (Fmr)

We would like to introduce the newest member of the Library Team, our new free book cart. This cart will be displayed at various locations at the BVMC, both to seek a good home for books we can't use and to promote the Library.

One might ask, by what criteria does the Library reject books?

Since our mission is to document the entirety of the American military experience, we are primarily interested in hardback books with direct relevance to the American military.

The most common cause for rejecting a book is that we already have a copy. Due to space constraints, with very few exceptions we only maintain one copy of each book. Donors are supposed to acknowledge this when they sign the form recording the transfer of ownership to the BVMC.

We are very selective of the fiction we accept, primarily focused on "classics" such as Stephen Crane's "The Red Badge of Courage" (The Civil War) or James Webb's "Fields of Fire" (Vietnam).

We do not keep Cruise Books, Recruit Graduation Books nor Year Books, unless they document a historic event or a notable personage. We do not keep Technical Manuals. We do not keep small mass-market paperbacks, books in poor condition nor books in a language other than English.

While these choices are at times difficult, it is necessary in our continuing endeavor to make our Library the best it can be.



Book of the Month: The Guns of August by Barbara Tuchman

Reviewed by H.V. Rhodes

The Guns of August is found in the VMC Library as "WWI-148."

The First World War was a cataclysmic break that divided a strange old world from a modern era recognizable to us. Thousand-year empires fragmented into new countries, and ancient monarchies yielded to new political systems including communism and fascism. The Guns of August is a detailed history of the first month of a titanic struggle that eventually claimed over twenty million lives. The author examines a succession of misunderstandings and miscalculations that ruptured a ninety-year period of relative peace in Europe.

While the stupidity, and in some cases, the duplicity of western politicians is examined and rightfully condemned, much of the blame for the catastrophe is assigned to the German government and its allies.

The author also details the lesser-known German campaign on the eastern front, where the Kaiser's Army inflicted a catastrophic defeat on the Russians. While this victory is regarded as one of the most stunning annihilations of an opposing force in the history of warfare, the narrative goes beyond the result and illustrates the doubt and errors on the part of the Germans in the early phase. This critical campaign had major ramifications for history, as it was one of the major blows to the tottering authority of the Czarist regime that led to the communist revolution. As a result, the German commanders- Hindenburg and Ludendorff- were acclaimed for their success and became national heroes. Both men are noted for their political activities prior to World War II; Hindenburg as President and Ludendorff as one of the founders of the Nazi Party.

In addition to their cynical violation of neutral Belgium, the heavy-handed brutality on the part of some German military commanders in the west served to make more enemies and contributed to their eventual defeat. Of course, in August 1914, with German armies on the outskirts of Paris, this result was unimaginably far off. How individual soldiers of France, Britain and Russia, under the leadership of a few inspired commanders, heroically met the invaders is the bright spot of this otherwise dismal story.

Although there are limited maps, they are sufficient for a general reader to follow the narrative. The prose is clear and the author presents the information in a logical sequence. Long regarded as one of the definitive narratives of World War One, The Guns of August is essential for serious students of that conflict. It is also important for the general reader, as it is part of the origin story of the world we all live in.

Park and Plaza Report

By Donn Weaver

Forget about summer slowing things down. While the BVMC has seen less events and private bookings, the Amphitheater Park upgrades and additions to the Plaza continue at flank speed.

Here are some highlights:

Plaza: C-Spray visited four times this month to not only install bricks but also increase maintenance off the Plaza including extensive paver pressure washing, same on the A-7 Navy Aircraft and in front of the museum and center building. The Flag retirement box was completed and looks great. Sadly, even before the name plate was installed, a terrible driver backed a huge truck with careless abandon, and hit the box, which now needs repair. Needless to say, it was a hit and run.

Bricks: Aside from the seven Purple Heart Ceremony bricks reported on last month, six more were purchased and placed in five different sections of the Plaza. Wayne Fried reported his now fully computerized brick program is up to date and ready to load into a possible database to be kept in the museum store for visitors to search for donated bricks when needed. Benches and trees will also be covered.

Trees: No new orders in July, but the final Memorial Tree Planting Program with 40 trees on the list was approved by the BVMC and county with Blue Bell Nurseries, the landscaping and irrigation contractor. Planting is set for September. A large Christmas Tree was also included in the plan and will be ready for the 6 December illumination in the park.

Benches: Two more were ordered in June bringing the total to 25 which, will be placed all around the park and plaza area according to the donors wishes. About 13 of them match with trees that have been ordered and will be near the tree honoring the same person or group.

Park: July saw terrific progress in the construction of the Amphitheater and concessions/restrooms building. Major earth terracing and leveling began with the removal of the excess pile of dirt near the playground – with thanks to Ivey's and their sub-contractor - done at no charge. A record 54 workers were hard at their tasks on 23 July as we are more hopeful that our November completion goal might be met. Fingers crossed.





BVC Vice-Chairman Report

Jim Carleton

As we see on the news, there have been several significant weather events. We in Florida are now in hurricane season. Hurricane preparedness is a shared responsibility among everyone in Brevard County. By staying informed, creating a plan, and securing your home, you can protect yourself and your loved ones. Preparation today ensures safety tomorrow. The following check list will help you get prepared. If you have not done so yet, here is your chance to get yourself and your family ready!

Two-week minimum supply of medication, regularly used medical supplies, and a list of allergies.

- A list of the style, serial number, and manufacturer information of required medical devices.
- Batteries and Flashlights (Do not use candles).
- NOAA Weather Radio Battery operated or hand cranked.
- Cash Banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm.
- Cell phone chargers Books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children.
- First Aid manual, sterile adhesive bandages of assorted sizes, sterile gauze pads, and hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages, scissors, tweezers, sewing needle, moistened towelettes, antiseptic disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizer.
- Thermometer, tube of petroleum jelly, safety pins, soap, latex gloves, sunscreen, aspirin, or other pain reliever, anti-diarrheal medicine, antacid laxative, cotton balls and Q-tips
- Insurance cards, medical records, banking information, credit card numbers, copies of social security cards, copies of birth and/or marriage certificates.
- Other personal documents, set of car, house, and office keys.
- Service animal I.D., and veterinary records.
- Copy of will and/or trust

*Items should be kept in a waterproof container with other items you may need for your family.

Veterans Connections

By Don Pearsall, CEO

A lot has been going on the last month. We finally ran out of funds to help veterans and families. We rely solely on private donations, and we can only do so much. Losing funding of any kind, hurts the chances to rescue someone who needs it. The demand for services has increased over the last few months. Some veteran's needs are critical while others we can prioritize. We are restructuring our payment policies, to only help those in dire needs until we can figure out a way to subsidize the agency income.

All organizational operating expenses for the 501C (3) non-profit are borne by the sale of our popular PTSD book "Back from the Front" This way, 100% of every donation dollar goes to helping veterans who may occasionally get behind on their bills. Since Brevard County takes such good of their veteran population, the word spreads. Many times, when searching trailheads or wandering the bush, I come across a veteran who needs food, personal items or whatever. While I speak with them, I find many are from other places like Pasco, Hillsborough, Lee or St. John counties.

Our agency mission statement and Articles of Incorporation, state that we only take care of Brevard County veterans and families only, but offer to put others in contact with other charities that may be able to help, like churches etc. It seems it is getting so much more expensive, when we were anticipating just the opposite.

We are seeking your help. Just a few dollars will help us replenish the Veteran Relief Fund. We also provide our IRS information so you can have tax information. Thank you for helping Brevard County Veterans and families. Veterans Connections offers many other programs who are suffering from PTSD of MST. These include our popular Equine Therapy Program which teaches veterans the basics of horsemanship and farm chores. The design is to give the veteran the feel of satisfaction which allows them to deal with many of their problems. Horses are non-judgmental and offer friendship, unconditional love and have a unique sense of relaxation. Another program is held at the Space Coast Regional Airport. It is called "Return to Flight" This program is popular with our veteran aviators. It involves taking retired aircraft and working to restore them for either for display or flight depending on FAA approval. veteran or family member interested in any of these programs please let us know.

Detail by Entity Name Sun Biz

Florida Not For Profit Corporation

Florida State Tax Certificate Number: 82-0816082
US / FL Document Number NP1600088983

Corporation Name: Connections to a New Life Inc.
Filing Information: DBA Veterans' Connections

Document Number N19000011984FEI/
Date Filed 10/03/19
Business started 3/12/2014
Status: Active

AUSA Space Coast Chapter Updates



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

Where has the time gone this summer! We just had graduations and the fantastic Enlistment Ceremony at Viera High School, and now we are getting ready to start our AUSA 2025-2026 Fiscal Year!

AUSA Space Coast Chapter will be reaching out to all the Army JROTC programs in our geographical area of responsibility (13 programs) to find ways to support the parents who contribute so much of their commitment to JROTC through their time and money to make every event special to the cadets. We want to do more than just show up at the end of the year awards ceremonies to present medals and certificates. We are also looking to get more involved by recognizing the students at our local schools (regardless of JROTC participation) who choose to enlist in the Army and be a resource for them and their families as they make their transition. If you are interested in helping us succeed in this area of interest, please reach out to us.

The AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition will be 13-15 October 2025, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C., and this year we will be celebrating AUSA's 75th Anniversary. Attendance at this event is free to AUSA members and it is a great opportunity to see what your Army is doing to be at the forefront of readiness in the National Security structure. If you'd like to know more, please check out the website at <https://meetings.ause.org/annual/2025/index.cfm> for registration as well as exhibit and other information. We look forward to supporting our Community Partners who will be attending on coordinating AUSA Meeting Rooms that are near the main floor.

AUSA Space Coast Chapter is proud to be a strong tenant of the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, and we appreciate the support we receive from the organization. If you have any spare time and would like to be more involved in the Chapter Executive Committee (EXCOM) or if you are a retired Colonel or above or Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major and would like to be on our Board of Directors, we would like to talk with you. Please contact me at pressc@ause.org or 321-591-9826 for more information.

With summer coming to a quick close, we are ready to get back to work in our community supporting veterans and those serving or looking to serve and we welcome any ideas from the community.

This We'll Defend!

VMC Speaker's Bureau Announces October Event

By Paul Julian, Committee Chairman



Please plan to come by our VMC library in the early evening of Tuesday, October 28th to celebrate the US Marine Corps' dynamic history.

The discussion group will include:
* MS PowerPoint based historical presentation developed by Marine veterans
* Questions & comments period after the presentation *

Two tables of rare historical Marine books & artifacts *

Commemorative cake, cookies, and bottled water Contact Paul Julian or Vinnie Howard if you have any questions or comments.

In closing, please plan on coming to what is shaping up to be a very interesting and engaging celebration of one of our most revered military services!



SAVE THE DATE

JOIN US TO COMMEMORATE THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR NATION BY RECOGNIZING THE REMARKABLE HEROES AND THE PROFOUND SACRIFICES THEY HAVE MADE TO SECURE OUR FREEDOM.

EVENT DETAILS:

DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2026
TIME: 5 PM - 10 PM
LOCATION: RADISSON RESORT AT THE PORT
8701 ASTRONAUT BLVD,
CAPE CANAVERAL, FL
ADMISSION: STARTING AT \$125

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THE HEROES WHO HAVE SECURED OUR NATION'S FREEDOM AND THE SAFETY OF OUR COMMUNITIES. DRESS TO IMPRESS, FORMAL/BLACK TIE OPTIONAL. DON'T MISS OUT ON THE EXCITING AUCTION ITEMS AND INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS!

MORE INFO: WWW.HU2H.ORG

A New Partnership: VFW Teams up with Wreaths Across America at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice President



In July, VFW Post 10131 completed a new partnership with Wreaths Across America (WAA) at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery (CCNC). The action took place over two months and included approvals from VFW District and State leadership. This is important since the CCNC area of coverage support includes five counties, not only Brevard. There are dozens of VFW Posts in those counties which will hopefully lead to more fund-raising support for wreath purchases at \$17 each, and fundraising events to make sure expenses for the 13 December 2025 WAA Ceremony at CCNC are covered.

VFW Post 10131 is the active Cape Canaveral VFW Post whose quartermaster Mike Tucker has spearheaded the partnership. The VFW will serve as the 501c3 partner to house event funds collected by WAA/CCNC, hold meetings for WAA/CCNC volunteers and host WAA led fundraisers. Eventually more VFW Posts in the five counties will do the two latter missions bringing in more wreaths as well as getting more people outside Brevard to be engaged at the WAA annual Ceremony. Last year WAA covered all eligible grade sites with over 10,000 wreaths but this year the number has expanded to almost 13,000.

In February a new WAA/CCNC Location Coordinator volunteered for the leadership position with approval from WAA Regional and National. She is Ruth Osborne and lives in the Lake Mary area. She is a USMC Veteran, owns an accounting business and one of her hobbies is cleaning veteran tombstones. She was recognized by the Orlando Business Journal in 2021 as Veteran of Influence. Donn Weaver of MOAACC and the BVMC remains as the WAA Deputy Location Coordinator.

Partnerships between veteran organizations in Brevard and elsewhere bring huge dividends. This newest one should be no different. Good luck WAA/CCNC and VFW!!



Ruth Osborne



GAMES INCLUDE:

Card Games:

- Hand & Foot
- Hearts
- Bridge
- Spades
- Poker
- Mahjong
- Rummikub
- Mexican Train
- Dominos

Other Games of Your Choice

THE CLUB
for Active Seniors

All men & women are welcome to join us for fun, fellowship, & coffee

WEEKLY ON MONDAYS
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM


Invite your friends, make new friends, & learn a new game

The Club membership is just \$10 a year!

ONE SENIOR place
The Experts in Aging

321.339.0551
8085 Spyglass Hill Road
Viera, Florida 32940

OneSeniorPlace.com



Heroes United to Heal
is excited to announce,
Tickets are on Sale Now

Designer Bag BINGO

Sunday, November 16, 2025
3pm - 6pm

Merritt Island Moose Lodge #2073
3150 N Courtenay Pkwy,
Merritt Island, FL 32953

Admission - \$40 per person or \$200 for a table of 6

Your admission includes 15 exciting bingo games with the chance to win gorgeous designer handbags, all while giving back to those who serve our country and community. Reserve a table of 6 for a discounted rate and enjoy the fun together! Seats are limited - grab yours early and help us celebrate heroes, one bag at a time!

Hero & Handbag - \$300

Be a hero with high style! As a Hero & Handbag Sponsor, your \$300 contribution provides a stunning designer handbag for our Designer Bag Bingo giveaway. You'll enjoy admission for two and receive special recognition during the event as a valued supporter helping us make a difference - one bag at a time!

Valor & Vogue Sponsor - \$650

Where bravery meets elegance - as a Valor & Vogue Sponsor, your contribution covers the cost of a designer handbag and premier seating for 10 in addition to being prominently recognized as one of our top sponsors throughout the event and promotional materials.

For more information visit www.hu2h.org
email contact@hu2h.org
or call (850) 919-4824

All proceeds benefit Heroes United to Heal Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit that supports veterans and first responders

Why You Should Read the Constitution on Constitution Day

By Julie Adamson, Daughters of the American Revolution

Each year on September 17th, we commemorate the signing of one of the most important documents in American history—the United States Constitution. But more than just a date on the calendar, Constitution Day is a call to action. It's a reminder for every citizen—young and old—to read, understand, and uphold the supreme law of the land.

A Document Written by Everyday Americans

Many people are surprised to learn that only half of the Constitution's signers went to college. These were farmers, merchants, lawyers, and soldiers—ordinary people who cared deeply about creating a better future. The Constitution was written and signed in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and on September 17, 1787, at exactly 4:00 p.m., the church bells rang to celebrate its completion.

The Structure: More Than Just Words

The Constitution is not just a historic artifact—it's a working document. It consists of:

- Seven Articles, each covering a major aspect of how our government functions.
- Sections and Clauses within each Article, laying out specifics on powers and responsibilities.
- 27 Amendments, which protect the rights of the people and adjust the Constitution as society evolves.

Each clause is typically cited using Roman numerals—for example: Article I, Section V, Clause VI.

Why Reading It Matters

Federal law requires that all public schools observe Constitution Day by reading and studying the document. But it's not just for students—it's for all of us. Reading the Constitution helps us:

1. Read – Know the actual words and meaning.
2. Study – Understand the structure and purpose.
3. Teach – Pass it on to the next generation.
4. Know – Be aware of your rights.
5. Perceive – Recognize when those rights are threatened.
6. Defend – Stand up for constitutional principles.
7. Assert – Exercise your freedoms confidently.

Inalienable Rights: Worth Defending

The Constitution—and especially the Bill of Rights—protects what the Framers called “inalienable rights”:

- Freedom of Religion
- Freedom of the Press
- Freedom of Speech
- Freedom to Assemble

These are not rights granted by the government; they are God-given, and government exists to protect them, not to control them.

A Living Legacy

The average national constitution lasts just 17 years. The U.S. Constitution has stood strong for over 230 years—a global record. But its strength depends on us. As Franklin D. Roosevelt once said,

“The United States Constitution has proven itself the most marvelously elastic compilation of rules of government ever written.”

That elasticity—its ability to endure through change—is only possible if we the people continue to understand and cherish it.

Take Action

On this Constitution Day—and every Constitution Day—take a moment to read it. Reflect on the rights it protects, the freedoms it guarantees, and the responsibilities it asks of each citizen.

Here are a few helpful resources:

- Read the Constitution from the National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution>
- Free Constitution Day Presentation from Patriot Academy: <https://www.patriotacademy.com/about/celebrate-freedom-week/>

In Closing

The Framers gave us a formula for lasting freedom: “That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” It is your consent, your voice, and your knowledge that keep this nation free.

Therefore, on this Constitution Day, take the time. Read the Constitution. Preserve it for the next generation.

Countdown to the 250th: BCSO Independence Day Parade of 2025

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice President

Finishing just before the rains came on a cooler than usual Fourth of July, the Sixth Annual Brevard County Sheriff Office (BCSO) Independence Day Parade was a good start of a special yearlong countdown to mark America's 250th Birthday. There were more first responder entries than ever as Sheriff Wayne Ivey and his team also made sure security was everywhere — just in case, given the nationwide threats in the days before.

There were hundreds and hundreds of spectators lining the route from Merritt Island High School south on Courtney Blvd to Merritt Ave. While other parades may have had more spectators in the five previous years, all of these spectators were enthusiastic and applauded the entrants, including four major veteran groups — Veterans Memorial Center, MOAA Cape Canaveral Chapter, Marine Corps League and Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution.

There were three big stars of the parade this year: Sheriff Ivey who greeted everyone at the finish line; Grand Marshal Medal of Honor Recipient SFC Melvin Morris, USA Ret; and 99 year old WWII and Korean War Veteran Maj George Rosenfield, USA, Ret.

The BCSO Huey Helicopter flew overhead much of the Parade as hand held flags and pounds of candy were passed out to spectators along the route. So many of those who came to watch were children - a good omen for the future of American patriotism.

The photos were taken during final set up for the parade and of some of the over 70 participant groups. They capture the enthusiasm and outright fun of keeping this old American tradition alive and well. It is worth remembering that this parade was even held in 2020 during the Covid restrictions, though that year it was a Parade in Reverse. Participants lined route 520 on Merritt Island as hundreds of cars passed by heading to the beach with many honking while their passengers smiled and waved.



WWII and Korean War Vet George Rosenfield seated L-R. Brian Whalen, Rick Kniseley, Gary Eppler, Steve Cusik, Donn Weaver.



Marine Corps League of Brevard County.



VMC President Dean Schaaf and family get ready to lead the veteran groups. There was only one helicopter!!



VMC President Dean Schaaf's granddaughters joined him.



DAR and SAR with several VMC Members included.



U.S. Navy



1775-2025

At least six places claim to be the birthplace of the U.S. Navy. Join us as we discuss each claim and uncover the origins of America's Guardian on the Seas.

6PM Tuesday Sep 30
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VMC Designated as a Fire Watch Veterans Safe Place

By Kristi Blanchard, VMC Secretary



Henry Angulo speaks to the audience while the BVC-VMC Board of Directors stand in the background.

Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Honored for Suicide Prevention Efforts

On July 9, 2025, during the General Membership Meeting, the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (VMC) was officially recognized as a Fire Watch Veterans Safe Place, a designation awarded to organizations committed to supporting veterans at risk of suicide.

Henry Angulo, South FL Regional Programs Director for The Fire Watch, presented the official certificate to Kristi Blanchard, VMC Secretary, in front of a room full of volunteers and members. This recognition comes after 50 VMC volunteers completed a combination of online and in-person training over the past year to better understand and respond to the warning signs of veteran suicide.

Angulo spoke about how this is more than a certificate — it's a commitment and how the VMC has shown that it is not only a place of honor and remembrance, but also one of hope and proactive support.

The Fire Watch is Florida's fight to end veteran suicide. By becoming a Veterans Safe Place, the VMC now stands as a visible symbol of safety and support for veterans in crisis. The designation also means staff and volunteers are trained in suicide prevention techniques and equipped with resources to help connect veterans to life-saving services.

VMC Secretary Kristi Blanchard who spearheaded the effort accepted the award on behalf of the team: "We're honored by this designation. Our volunteers care deeply about veterans' well-being—not just honoring their past, but protecting their future."

With veteran suicide continuing to be a national crisis, the VMC's commitment to prevention through education, awareness, and direct action shows that community-driven efforts can make a real difference.

For more information about The Fire Watch and how to get involved, visit: <https://www.thefirewatch.org>



Henry Angulo presents The Fire Watch Veteran Safe Place Designation Certificate



TFW Veteran Safe Place Digital Badge

Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Honors Dedicated Volunteers with Patriotic Celebration

By Kristi Blanchard, VMC Secretary

On July 9, 2025, the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) proudly recognized the unwavering dedication of its 72 volunteers who collectively contributed nearly 12,000 hours of service over the June, 2024–May, 2025 year. The recognition event, held during the VMC's General Membership Meeting on July 9, brought together 33 of those volunteers for a festive and heartfelt celebration. Congratulations to Dorothy Walsh and Dave Clayton who became Lifetime awardees with 4,000+ hours over multiple years. In addition, Dean Schaaf, Donn Weaver, Bill Pollock and Dorothy Walsh volunteered more than 1,000 hours in the last year.

The event served as a powerful reminder of the Center's core mission to support veterans and preserve their legacy. Volunteers were honored with personalized certificates, commemorative challenge coins, gift certificates, and a raffle filled with fun prizes as tokens of appreciation for their service. Thanks to assistance from Paul Julian, Jalaine Spears, Bill Pollock and the maintenance staff (Thomas and Charles) the room was decked out in patriotic decorations, and guests enjoyed red, white, and blue cupcakes and pastries that added to the celebratory atmosphere. Another huge thanks to Donn Weaver for helping with engraving, Jalaine for the raffle prize donations from our gift shop and to Chick Fil A and First Watch for coupons and \$20 gift certificates respectively. VMC President Dean Schaaf spoke to the gathered crowd about how our volunteers are the heartbeat of this Center and about how their commitment and passion are what allow us to continue serving veterans and educating the public every day.

From museum docents and librarians to managers on duty and executive staff, VMC volunteers ensure that the Center remains a vital hub for the local veteran community and the public. The nearly 12,000 volunteer hours reflect a year of tireless dedication, community service, and honor.

The morning event was filled with camaraderie, laughter, and sincere appreciation — a fitting tribute to those who give so generously of their time and hearts. The Veterans Memorial Center extends a heartfelt thank you to all of its volunteers for their incredible contributions over the past year.

Silver Coin and Plaque Awards for Outstanding Contributions (2023-2025): J. Carleton, K. Croft, W. Fried, R. Gore, D. Herring, R. Perini, V. Rogers

Awardees not present:

500+ hours: D. Boyd

250-499 hours: W. Ellis, P. Julian, J. Pirotti

100-249 hours: S. McKinney, C. Calub, W. Rowe, H. Magner, N. Desmarais, R. Shapiro, G. Schlegel, J. Adamson, D. Bisset, W. Fried, M. Ray

Up to 99 hours: J. Longway, D. Longway, W. Wilkening, T. Ellis, A. Saul, E. Fadok, H. Adams



500+ hours (L-R) Dorothy, Dean, Jalaine, Dave, Kristi, Vic, Garet, Donn, Bill, Ed, Richard, Don



250-499 hours (L-R) Dean, Kathleen, Rita, Karen, Ray, Mike, Joe, Bob, Hank, Jim, Brian (raffle items on table)



100-249 hours (L-R) Dean, Joe, Roger, Mary Ann, Don, Ross, Kay, Joe



Up to 99 hours (L-R) Dean, Bill, Jill, Dennis, Harry

Celebrating Volunteer Service: Coast Guard Auxiliary Honored at Brevard Veterans Memorial Center

By Kristi Blanchard, VMC Secretary

On July 8, the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (VMC) held a special ceremony to recognize the outstanding service of Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers who serve as Managers on Duty (MOD) at the center. These dedicated volunteers assist with answering phones, supporting the VMC staff, veterans and visitors, and handling donations during their on-duty time. With thanks to the Flotilla Commander, Anda Ray, who welcomed VMC President Dean Schaaf and VMC Secretary Kristi Blanchard, to their monthly Flotilla meeting to celebrate nine dedicated volunteers. The volunteers were honored with certificates of recognition and challenge coins, symbols of their invaluable contributions. Their support has been instrumental in ensuring the VMC runs smoothly and continues to serve as a welcoming place for veterans and their families.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary's partnership with the VMC is essential, with volunteers working closely with the Executive Committee to help with daily operations and ensure veterans' needs are met. Their contributions go beyond administrative support, providing a personal touch to every visitor.

During the ceremony, Dean and Kristi, expressed deep appreciation for the volunteers' hard work and dedication. Their service not only helps the center operate effectively but also ensures it remains a place of support and respect for veterans. The VMC looks forward to continuing this valuable collaboration and thanks all the volunteers for their tireless commitment. Awardees not present: Bob Caldo, Eustace King and Faron Petteys.



Greg Hendricks



Steven Laur



Coleen Seitter



Anda Ray



Coast Guard Auxiliary gathering.



Michele Laur



David Hooks

Steinway Pianos in World War II

By Jalaine Spears, Assistant Store Manager

So, have you seen our Steinway? Did you know that over 3,000 Steinway pianos were airdropped onto battlefields during World War II to entertain the troops? They were specifically designed for the troops in battle between 1942 and 1953 and were olive, blue or gray drab. They were an excellent way to give the troops peace of mind and remember why they were fighting. Come on in and see them for yourself. While you are here, stop by the gift shop for a t-shirt, hat, decal or any of the many items we have for your favorite veteran. We have many items to choose from and you will be surprised to learn some new military history facts while you are here. Have a safe and happy summer!



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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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-  UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'VE EARNED AND DESERVE
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Key Rathke, U.S. Army (Retired) Master Sgt. & Women Veterans Call Center Representative

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WOMEN VETERANS CALL CENTER

For more info or to chat online:
womenshealth.va.gov

VA  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar August 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/>

AUGUST

10 Aug – (NOTE NEW DATE) – Annual Military Order of Purple Heart Honor Ceremony 1400 at VMC Gray Hall. Seven Purple Heart Recipients from Vietnam to Afghanistan will be recognized. By Invitation -Contact Donn Weaver, 757-871-6576.

18 Aug – Brevard Public Schools Partners in Education (PIE) Kick Off Fair at BPS District Office in Melbourne. 0830-1130. Lunch served. Supporting schools including JROTC from businesses and veteran organizations, etc. Sponsorship Tables available. VMC, Vets Back to Class and MOAACC/Good Deeds plan to attend. Contact to book a table and for any questions. Yvette Cruz: cruz.Yvette@brevardschools.org

SEPTEMBER

06 Sep – Space Coast Honor Flight Send Off 0300-0430 hours at Wickham Park Senior Center at Wickham Drive Park Entrance Honors 20 plus veterans and guardians with travel to Wash DC to visit their monuments and memorials. check out SCHF.org for more info.

10 Sep – DAV Chapter 32 9-11 Special Event and Remembrance 1700-1930 at Eau Gallie Civic Center, 1531 Highland Ave, Melbourne. FREE EVENT for Veterans, First Responders and families. Food at 1700, Ceremony with guest speakers at 1800. Raffles, Silent Auction, Military Art Auction and more. RSVP to mail@fldav32.org

11 Sep – 09/11 Remembrance Ceremony BVMC Plaza and Gray Hall 1300 - 1430 (NOTE NEW TIME) Sponsored by Retired NYPD Club 1013, MOAACC/GDF and BVMC. Featuring Police and Fire Color Guards, Fife and Drum Corp and much more with speakers who were there in NYC and DC on 9/11. Contact Donn Weaver at BVMC 757-871-6576 for more information.

11 Sep – Patriot Day Firearms Fun Night, Family Friendly, at Frogbones Shooting Center 404 S Harbor Blvd, Melbourne 1730-2030. Free to active-duty military and veterans. Others are \$100, which includes dinner, gun rental, prizes and much

more. Fundraiser event by AVET. Contact AVET at www.avet-project.org to register and get more information.

12 Sep – Seventh Annual Tuskegee Airmen Golf Tournament Fundraiser, 0730-1300 at the Indian River Colony Golf Club in Viera. Celebrate the legacy of the Tuskegee Airman along a beautiful course. Registration \$130 per golfer; \$500 per foursome. Luncheon after play with all proceeds benefiting Youth Outreach programs. Contact tai-cfl.org for info and to register.

27 Sep – First JROTC County Raider Challenge Invitational Meet at BVMC Park 0630-1230. At least 12 schools from three counties and over 300 JROTC cadets are expected. While the Amphitheater project will still be underway, the 3.5K long pathways and plenty of other field space will be available. Contact Donn Weaver of BVMC on 757-871-6576 for any questions. Veteran organizations pass out trophies and are welcome to support our youth. Most action including awards ceremony takes place 1030-1230.

30 Sep – BVMC Discussion Series at the Library 1800-1930. The US Navy 250th Anniversary will be explained and celebrated including details about the six places that claim to be the Navy's birthplace. Contact Hank Rhodes, BVMC Librarian for more details. Refreshments and special cake.

OCTOBER

03 Oct. Annual NVHS Dinner and Fundraiser to support homeless and at-risk veterans and their families. Save the Date. The Difference a Decade Has Made. 1700 -2100 at Radisson Resort by the Port. Hosted by Brevard's Constitutional Officers Semi to formal attire. Sign up starting in July.

11 Oct – Space Coast Honor Flight Send Off 0300 -0430 hours at Wickham Park Senior Center at Wickham Drive Park Entrance Honors 20 plus veterans and guardians with travel to Wash DC to visit their monuments and memorials. check out SCHF.org for more info.

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