



THE VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

COUNCIL COURIER

Space Coast Honors Non-Profit of the Year 2024

OCTOBER 2025



A Publication of the Brevard Veterans Council & Veterans Memorial Center



WHAT'S INSIDE

Celebrate the US Marine Corps' 250th Anniversary with BVMC

In honor of two and a half centuries of valor, resilience, and dedication, the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Library is proud to announce a short program commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps.

– page 12

Their Voice of Hope Gets Annual Boost Early

Their Voice of Hope (TVOH) organization received \$4000 from MOAACC's Good Deeds Foundation to help support their FY 2026 annual programs.

– page 14

Always Remember; Never Forget: 9/11 Commemoration at BVMC

In front of about 350 onlookers, the 24th Annual Ceremony to Commemorate the Events and Aftermath of 9/11/2001 was conducted at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center on Merritt Island.

– page 15

★★★
“Election time
is here for the
2026 BVMC
Board”

*Election time is here again,
and we want to remind
everyone about the election
procedure in the BVMC
Bylaws, Article VI, Section 6-7.*

Read more on page 8

OCTOBER 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 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)

September was a busy month, and October will be the same. Rentals are picking up for the holidays and speaking of holidays, there are only 86 days till Christmas! We have our elections at the General Meeting on October the 8th, please get your desires for office to the election committee ASAP. The Executive Committee (EXCOM) signed the new Bylaws and will forward them to the County, which will complete the combining of the BVC and the VMC to become the BVMC.

I want to take this time to speak of a tragic loss we had in our park recently. We had a young man take his life who was a dear friend to some of us at the center. He lived life to the fullest and was a Ninja Warrior competing on the television show. He and his dad hiked the Appalachian trail, and he never shied away from a physical challenge. My wife, Susan, and I are close friends with his parents. Jonathan loved to work out in our park, and he and my son Charles were friends. Charles has placed a plaque on the bridge over the inlet in his memory. His Ninja friends and many others have posted wonderful tributes to Jonathan on Facebook. I just ask that you to keep Jonathan and his family in your prayers.

I am working with Darby Miller, the Project Manager of the Early Learning Coalition of Brevard County to add a couple of activities in our park near the children's playground. One is to install a "Little Free Library" next to the playground and pavilion. Ours will be the 11th installed throughout Brevard County. The second project is still in the planning stage but is a "Learning Trail" designed to create quality engagement opportunities in outdoor environments through a series of signs with learning prompts and coordinating interactive sidewalk activities. I will be reaching out to many of you for ideas on our Learning Trail. The air conditioning unit has been out in the Gray Hall, and a new unit was installed to replace the portable units we have been using. We still have some leaks associated with the units in the men's room, so bear with us as the county tackles this latest challenge.

The Space Coast Office of Tourism Visitor Information Center has invited us to have a 60 day static display of what the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, Museum, Library, Plaza, and Park have to offer to the public. The visitor center is located at 267 W Cocoa Beach Cswy (SR 520). It is in a strip mall across from the Dinosaur Store and Museum in Cocoa Beach. This will be our chance to let the public know of the hidden gem of Merritt Island and Brevard County. We have set up the display and it will run through November. When you visit the Merritt Island Post Office, look to the right as you enter for another permanent museum display.

The Amphitheater and the restroom/concession stand are nearing completion. We had been hoping that they would be finished by Veterans Day, but with the rain delays and storms have put the contractors a little behind. Contractually, it will be finished in January 2026. 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. All three of our "senior" services are celebrating their 250th anniversaries this year with several different ceremonies. The Coast Guard celebrated its 235th anniversary and the Army celebrated its 250th. The Navy League is celebrating our 250th birthday at the Indian River Colony Club on October 14, and you are all invited. See Dean for information. The Marine Corps Birthday Ball is on November 15th, and Dennis Herring can help with information.

I want to thank all of the volunteers and officers that keep the BVMC running, we would not have been the Non-Profit of the year 2024 without your efforts. God bless the USA, our fallen heroes, MIAs, and POWs and God bless our armed forces. -Dean, Go Navy beat Army!

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Brevard Veterans Council

**By Don Pearsall,
Chairman**

Here's how I see it. We are all here for the same reason, to support our 75,000 plus veterans and active military in Brevard County. We occasionally get sidetracked with other projects and forget that it is just as important of how we got here, who we are and where we are going. In general, the center and it's volunteers do an awesome job of assisting our veterans. In fact, through my work with the Disaster Response and Recovery effort of the State VFW, I have traveled extensively around the whole state, and Brevard, hands down, is the leader in providing support for veterans and families.

I believe it is important for us to scrutinize, prioritize and be proactive with issues that really matter, such as local, state and federal legislation in regard to veteran's problems, or finding ways to assist veterans before a devastating life event takes place.

On another note, many members here and elsewhere, think that the under-construction amphitheater is ours. It is not. It belongs to Brevard County, and it will be managed by an outside management company. Of course, we hopefully will have a voice in the use for our own events, but I don't feel it should be our focal point. Job one, is that we are still a support hub for assisting veterans.

There are so many programs out there that veterans can take advantage of, and so many things we can provide. Veterans of all ages look to us for answers. We are the stewards of their trust. The BVMC should continue to set the standards for other organizations that also assist veterans. We are absolutely blessed to have organizational tenants that meet here and are top notch in providing services. If a veteran needs assistance that we don't provide, we always contact one of our tenant organizations to take the lead, we are like a network head quarters for veteran services.

The BVMC is taking part in the creating of a brand-new directory called "Brevard Veteran Resource Connecting Care in Brevard." This directory will be valuable to veterans all over the county, and is the result of many organizations listing their services for veterans and families and with enough funding, may be available at our own VA Clinics. There are over 30 organizations that wish to be listed along with a breakdown of exactly what services they can provide.

This will be my last courier article as Board Chairman. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize and thank the great volunteers who show up every day to keep the mission evolving. Also, a shout out to Brevard County Parks and Recreation who provide and help us maintain the beautiful building and grounds. We are without doubt the gem of Merritt Island. Not just a stop on

a tour bus, but a destination. We can do it together. We can fulfill our mission every day.

I wish to thank the membership for supporting me. It has been an absolute honor for me to serve as the BVC Chairman and assisting my countless brothers and sisters. I would also appreciate your support as I run for the new BVMC Vice President position at the election on October 8th from 8:00 A.M. to 9:30 A.M.

Be sure to watch the Army Football Team Beat the Navy on Saturday, December 13, 2025, at the M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore.



Secretary's Report

**Kristi Blanchard
USA (Fmr)**

Hello BVMC Members

We want to remind you that election day is just around the corner, and your vote really does count. The decisions we make at the ballot box shape our future.

Here are a few quick tips to make the process smooth:

- Check your registration status – BVMC members (individual or organizational) may vote
- Know your polling place – 400 S. Sykes Creek Parkway, Merritt Island in the Library
- Review your ballot ahead of time and make a plan – Council Courier October issue lists the candidates
- Mark your calendar and don't forget to vote on October 8th 8:00-9:30 am

Your voice is one of the strongest tools you have. We encourage all our members to participate, encourage friends to vote, and be part of shaping our direction.



VMC Librarian Report

Hank Rhodes
USN (Fmr)

In August 2025 (the most recent month for which data is available), the library hosted 260 visitors.

We have been in contact with several prospective candidates for Veterans History Project (VHP) interviews.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves short of personnel in the BVMC Library to the point where we have had to occasionally close the library during normal business hours. We would certainly rather not have to do this. Thus, we need more volunteers. We are not looking for another Stephen Ambrose or Doris Kearns Goodwin, but simply someone who can welcome visitors and help them find their way around the library.

In October, we commemorate the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Navy.

In November, we commemorate the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps. Currently, a presentation is scheduled for 6PM October 28.

Semper Fidelis – “Always Faithful.” The U.S. Marines have lived up to that motto since 1775.



Book of the Month:

Reviewed by H.V. Rhodes

Foreign policy and national security are two sides of the same coin. Unfortunately, in the American political system, domestic concerns overwhelmingly dominate the public discourse.

Retired Army General and former National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster addresses this situation in *Battlegrounds*. The author discusses numerous failings by both Democratic and Republican administrations in grappling with the threats and challenges from overseas. A fundamental problem is that our national leaders across the political spectrum treat foreign policy as an afterthought, largely neglected except in a time of crisis.

The non-partisan viewpoint of *Battlegrounds* is exceptionally rare in books regarding government policy and is strangely refreshing.

Much of the book is a catalog of adversary nations. The usual suspects – China, Russia and Iran are discussed in detail. Pakistan is something of a surprise but the author presents a compelling case as to why this nation is so counted among the world entities that are hostile to the interests of the United States.

At the core of the book is H.R. McMaster's introduction of a concept he calls “strategic narcissism,” in which American politicians make unsound assumptions about the motives and intentions of other nations based on ignorance and wishful thinking. In fact, our adversaries do not act in ways that we wish or can easily predict but rather according to their own priorities and prerogatives. Thus, conflicts and crises are often mishandled when our national leaders and the public at large are unpleasantly surprised by challenges that arise in the international arena.

The serious student of history will readily recognize the fallacy in this approach. Unfortunately, few of our elected officials ever do until it is too late.

Battlegrounds is highly recommended for anyone interested in matters pertaining to national security.

Battlegrounds is found in the BVMC Library as “MiscT-32.

Park and Plaza Report

By Donn Weaver

PARK: The rains and some lightning cost over three days' worth of work during the past month, but the good news was the inside buildout of the amphitheater and Concession Buildings. Major FPL electrical connections were completed along with all the irrigation digging. Ivey contractors also rebuilt some side walk connections to allow the first JROTC 5K/Raider Challenge Meet of the year on 27 Sep. We expect to know date/plan for ribbon cutting for this great project by mid-October. Stay tuned. That event and what happens in 2026 will be quite something.

BENCHES: Orders continued to increase with four in September. One of them was installed along Sykes Creek behind the Gray Hall and another in the Allied Monuments section. More orders are expected as the Park comes on line.

PAVERS/BRICKS/PLAZA: The MOPH pavers were installed and several new orders taken in with CSPRAY continuing year-long repainting and maintenance of sections of the plaza each quarter.

In all, things are looking good with more and better to come. With Elections this month we will also be looking for a couple volunteers to serve on the Park/Plaza committee to keep positive progress going. Please contact Donn Weaver if interested.

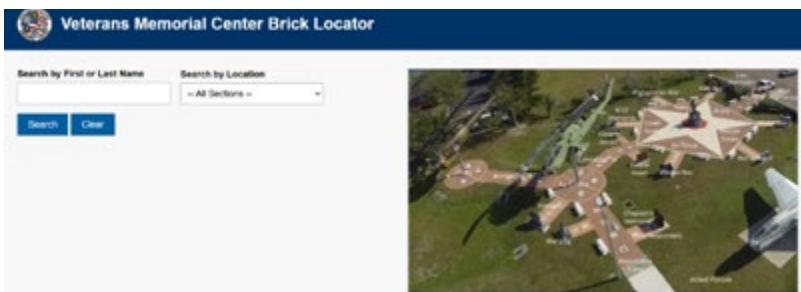


18 Sep Aerial Photo of BVMC Park Amphitheater and Concessions Building Construction.



New Purple Heart Bricks.

Find Your Brick Online!



Thanks to the hard work of Kristi Blanchard and her daughter, Samantha Noble, we now have a brand-new way to find bricks at the Veterans Memorial Center. With guidance from Wayne Fried, Donn Weaver, and Dean Schaaf, they created an easy-to-use program that lets brick purchasers look up the exact location of their brick online. This initial program will be improved to include visual location of the brick locations too.

Just visit bricks.veteransmemorialcenter.org, (be patient as it may take up to 30 seconds to render) type in the name you're searching for, and you'll see right where the brick is placed in the plaza. It's a simple tool that makes every visit to the memorial more personal and meaningful.

AUSA Space Coast Chapter Updates



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

Hi Everyone! AUSA started our new FY25-26 on 1 July, summer is about to end, and a new school year begins, and the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition is gearing up to be held 13 – 15 October 2025, in Washington, D.C. This event is free to all AUSA members. You can register to attend the meeting, tickets for special events, and book a hotel at <https://meetings.ausa.org/annual/2025/index.cfm>.

We're also looking to the new year to support the Army ROTC and JROTC programs in our geographical area of responsibility, which extends from Daytona Beach to Jupiter and Okeechobee. Our goal is to be active where the organizations need our support, helping them to have successful programs where students are acknowledged for their time and commitment to the programs and looking at serving their country in the U.S. Army. We look forward to participating in the JROTC County Raider Challenge on 27 September and all of them throughout the year – and hopefully our mascot Sergeant (SGT) Hero will be able to make an appearance to motivate the cadets! If you would like to help us in this endeavor, please reach out to us via email at presssc@ausa.org.

Our local Recruiting Station efforts continue, and we will assist where requested there also. We are working with the Daytona Beach Recruiting Company and hope to be working more with the Orlando Recruiting Company and their stations in Brevard County, as well as a reach out to our more southern areas from Vero Beach to Jupiter. Volunteers who would like to support local recruiting efforts are always appreciated, and if you're interested in contacting local recruiters to support their mission, please contact us at presssc@ausa.org.

I wanted to share with you a very interesting article from Breaking Defense on 6 August 2025, with an interview with Brigadier General Donald Brooks about the Army crafting a new space policy and moving out on counterspace activities. You can read the article at <https://breakingdefense.com/2025/08/army-crafting-a-new-space-policy-moving-out-on-counterspace/>. I met BG Brooks at AUSA Annual Meeting last year, and he is from the Daytona Beach area and holds a master's degree in Earth remote sensing/hyperspectral imagery from the Florida Institute of Technology (FIT). Our Army has an active role in the Nation's defense on the land and see as well as in the air and space, and we look forward to having more presentations on this topic in the future.

We're always looking for ideas for AUSA events or activities. If you have some ideas, please contact me at pressc@ausa.org or call 321-591-9826 and leave a message with your name and phone number and I will return your call. Thank you for your support of our Army!

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

United for Heroes

A Gala for Hope & Healing

VIP Tickets - \$250
General Admission - \$125
Sponsor Packages Available

Go to www.hu2h.org to learn more
 Saturday, February 28th 2026
 5 pm - 10 pm
 Radisson Resort at the Port
 8701 Astronaut Blvd
 Cape Canaveral, FL

Dress Code: Dress to Impress/Formal

Featuring Keynote Speakers
American Sheriff Mark Lamb
&
SOCM Ross Munro, (Ret) US Navy SEAL, Team SIX

Featuring the Evening's Emcee, Brevard County Clerk of Court and Comptroller, Rachel M. Sadoff
&
Auctioneer Extraordinaire, Brevard County Sheriff, Wayne Ivey

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT HEROES UNITED TO HEAL FOUNDATION, A 501C3 NONPROFIT
 DEDICATED TO ENDING VETERAN AND FIRST RESPONDER SUICIDE

Never Forget

PATRIOT NIGHT

6103 STADIUM PKWY, MELBOURNE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17TH 2025 ★ 6-10PM

The October 17th Varsity Football game is our Patriot Night! All military veterans, active duty, and first responders will receive free entry upon showing their credentials! We have an exciting game filled with ceremonies to celebrate our Patriots!

With 7 minutes remaining in the second quarter, we will request any active military, veterans, and first responders who desire to take part in our special recognition ceremony at halftime to report to the east endzone.



FEATURED EVENTS

- Veterans, Active Duty Military, First Responders free admission to game and will be asked to participate in a ceremony to honor them at half-time.
- Brevard County Fire Rescue will provide a ladder truck on display near field.
- This will be a wonderful night to honor and reflect upon the events of 9/11.

We would be honored if you joined us!



As a result of 9/11 and the Global War on Terror, this special "Patriots Night" game will serve as a moment of reflection and memorial for all those first responders and service members who served their nation and state and those who made the ultimate sacrifice.



Reviewing Voting Procedures

By Jim Carleton, Governance Committee Chairman

Well, here it is election time again, and we should just remind everyone what the bylaws state about election procedure in the BVMC Bylaws, Article VI, Section 6-7.

- The BVMC President will work with the Secretary to email the ballot to active BVMC members and add it to the newsletter.
- At the election month October 8th General Membership meeting, individual and organizational members will elect the officers and Board members for the coming year.
- There will be a 1.5-hour time frame, 8:00 to 9:30 AM, for members to cast votes prior to the start of the October 8th general membership meeting.
- The Membership Chair or teller will verify individual or organizational membership of each member. All members 18 years and older will be verified via the membership printout or electronically upon showing a valid picture ID.
- For organizational memberships, the validated point of contact for that organization, upon presentation of photo ID, will receive one ballot to be cast as the organization's

representative and may not vote as an individual. (One person, one vote). If the organization does not have an accurate representative listed, the individual cannot vote for the organization.

- Upon verification, the verified member or organizational representative, will receive a numbered ticket. Numbered tickets are used for tracking purposes and validation of number of ballots distributed and received.
- Upon entering the voting room, the voting member will receive one ballot which will be completed and placed in the ballot box.
- At the completion of the allotted time, voting is closed, the tellers tally the votes, and report the results to the current BVMC President.
- A majority of votes will be required to elect a candidate for officer or board member. In event of a tie, there will be a run-off election announced by the secretary

Please see the Sample Ballot on the next page.

The Women Veterans Call Center is your guide to VA.

Call, Text, or Chat Online
855-829-6636

Weekdays: 8:00 am – 10:00 pm ET
Saturday: 8:00 am – 6:30 pm ET

GET ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'VE EARNED AND DESERVE

GET CONNECTED WITH LOCAL VA SERVICES

Kay Rathke, U.S. Army (Retired) Master Sgt. & Women Veterans Call Center Representative

855.VA.WOMEN
WOMEN VETERANS
CALL CENTER

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



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

BALLOT 2025-2026 BVMC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ELECTION: OCTOBER 8, 2025

BVMC President

Select One

Dean Schaaf

Ted Suzor

BVMC Secretary

Select One

Kristi Blanchard

BVMC Vice-President

Select One

Don Pearsall

Donn Weaver

BVMC Treasurer

Select One

Dave Clayton

BVMC Board of Directors 1-year

Select Three Only

Harry Beaver

Paul Julian

Ed Pingston

Bill Pollock

Vic Rogers

Jalaine Spears

Our Constitution & It's History

By Julie Adamson

FEW FACTS:

- America was the first nation to sign a law banning the slave trade.
- America broke out of socialism in the 1600s before any other nation.
- The first form of government is self-government.

U.S. Constitution At A Glance Amendments:

1-10 = Bill of Rights, 12, 20, 22, 23, 25 = Presidency, 11 = Judiciary (suits against states), 17, 20, 27 = Congress (Senate elect, dates \$\$\$), 13, 14, 15 = End slavery; & Civil Rights, 15, 19, 24, 26 = Voting Rights (race, gender, \$\$\$ age), 16 = Income Tax, 18 & 21 = To drink or not to drink

It is important to spend time in the past because history shows us the formula that has made us the most successful nation in history up to this point.

"The great natural law of self-preservation cannot be repealed or superseded or suspended by any human institution. The right of the citizens to bear arms in the defense of themselves shall not be questioned. Every man's house is deemed by the law to be his castle; and the law invests him with the power and places on him the duty of the commanding officer of his house. Every man's house is his castle, and if anyone be robbed in it, it shall be esteemed his own default and negligence." – James Wilson

Veterans Connections

By Don Pearsall, CEO

Lots of changes going on at this organization. We are working with other county resources to be listed in a directory. This directory will be available throughout the county for veterans and families that need assistance. It will be available here at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center hopefully within the next month.

We have taken on several new people to assist our mission. We are now able to better assist female veterans, and our financial structure was overhauled. I am working on completion of two new books. The first one "Back from the Front" was first published in 2015 and has enjoyed sales in 8 countries assisting veterans of other foreign military organizations in conquering their PTSD. However, it is now being updated because since publication, there are many more therapies, methods and medications are available. So, Volume 2 is on its way.

My next book "After the Trauma," hopefully will be released sometime in the spring of 2026. This book deals with other types of PTSD. From Bullying at school, auto accidents, disastrous storms, other fears and phobias and how to mentally survive them. Needless to say, the research for this subject is quite more extensive.

We have a busy fall approaching trying to gear up for the return of our seasonal guests. We have about eleven homeless camps in Brevard and in many cases, there are those who are in need of warm sleeping bags and clothing. I am taking another sabbatical for a short time so I can run for Vice President of this veterans' center, a position that will allow me to better serve veterans from a bidirectional approach.

THE PREMIER SPACE COAST MAGAZINE ESPECIALLY FOR ADULTS 50+

SENIOR SCENE®

SEPTEMBER 2025

FREE

BREVARD ZOO

Who Pays The Bills? Rating Nursing Agencies Florida's Natural Challenges We Remember The Marx Brothers

Helping
SENIORS
of Brevard

FINANCE | HEALTH | ENTERTAINMENT | CALENDARS | NEWS

"The new issue of Senior Scene Magazine is now available to pick up at locations around the Space Coast, including the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center. Enjoy the many informative and entertaining articles and challenging puzzles, including the VMC calendar and patriotic articles. You can also read the entire issue on our website <https://seniorscenemag.com/>

Announcement: Brevard Veterans Memorial Center to Celebrate the US Marine Corps' 250th Anniversary

A Presentation of Tradition, Service, and Sacrifice

In honor of two and a half centuries of valor, resilience, and dedication, the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Library is proud to announce a short program commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps. This historic milestone is not only a reflection on the Corps' illustrious legacy but also a celebration of the unwavering spirit that has shaped the Marines and inspired generations of Americans.

Celebrating 250 Years of the United States Marine Corps
 The Marine Corps, founded on November 10, 1775, at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, has stood as a bastion of honor and courage through the tides of American history. From the Revolutionary War to the present day, Marines have walked steadfastly into the breach, defending the ideals of freedom and democracy at home and abroad.

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, a cornerstone of remembrance and community in Brevard County, invites all veterans, active-duty service members, their families, and the general public to join in this landmark commemoration.

Event Details

Date: October 28, 2025

Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Location: Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Library, 400 S Sykes Creek Pkwy, Merritt Island, FL

Admission: Free and open to the public

An Evening of Honor, History, & Community

- The 250th Anniversary event promises a full day of reflection, fellowship, and patriotic pride. The program will feature:
- Marine Corps History Exhibits: Explore a special exhibition chronicling the proud history of the Marine Corps—from its origins in 1775, through pivotal battles, legendary figures, and the evolution of the Corps' mission and values through military displays, artifacts & memorabilia
- Veterans Honor Roll: Recognition of Brevard County Marines, past and present, who have served with distinction.
- The Marine Corps League, Brevard County Detachment 513 will present the program detailing tales of heroism, hardship, and camaraderie from conflicts such as WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf Wars, and present-day operations.
- Food and Refreshments: Cookies, Cake and drinks will be served.
- Door prizes will be raffled after the presentation.
- Closing Ceremony: Final remarks, the playing of "Taps," and a collective pledge to uphold the values that define the Marine Corps.

Why Celebrate the Marine Corps?

The United States Marine Corps is more than a branch of the military—it is an ideal, a tradition, and a family. Throughout its 250-year history, the Corps has embodied the highest standards of integrity, courage,

and selfless service. The Marines' motto, "Semper Fidelis" ("Always Faithful"), rings true in every story of sacrifice and every act of heroism.

This anniversary is a time to reflect on the Marine Corps' legacy, salute its veterans, and educate younger generations about the impact of the Marines in world history. It's an opportunity to:

- Recognize the dedication and achievements of Marines past and present.
- Foster community connections among veterans, families, and supporters.
- Renew our commitment to the values that make the Marine Corps and our nation strong.

Community Involvement

The event is made possible through the generous support of local businesses, military veterans groups, and individuals. Volunteers are welcome to assist with event logistics and hospitality.

A Message from the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center

"We are honored to host the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps," said the Board of Directors of the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center. "This is more than an anniversary—it's a gathering of history, remembrance, and hope. We invite all members of our community to join us in saluting the Marine Corps and the generations of men and women who have worn the uniform with pride."

Conclusion

As the Marine Corps enters its 250th year, the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center stands ready to honor its past and inspire its future. This anniversary is a testament to the enduring spirit of the Marine Corps—a legacy built on courage, loyalty, and service. Join us as we pay tribute to the few, the proud, the Marines.

Semper Fidelis!

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

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8085 Spyglass Hill Road
Viera, Florida 32940

The Club membership is just \$10 a year!

OneSeniorPlace.com




Vets Back to Class and STEM Impact

By **Donn Weaver**

For several years the Brevard Vets Back to Class Program has expended a STEM feature focused on all grade levels. MOAACC's Good Deeds Foundation is a sponsor of that effort for FY 2026. VBC STEM lead is Dr. Pankaj Sharma, retired Purdue Engineering Professor. On 27 Sep he supported a major STEM event at the FPL Solar Energy Center in Melbourne. Dr Sharma provided some interesting details:

EVENT: RESEARCH RULES! 2025

- A Science Fair Conference for Students in Grades 4–8, Their Parents, and Teachers
- Organized by the Space Coast Science Education Alliance (SCSEA) Date: September 27, 2025

PURPOSE

- Inspire Brevard County students to explore what scientists do
- Promote inquiry-based learning and original student research
- - Build long-term interest in STEM fields

IMPACT

- Attendance: 150+ parents and students
- Representation: 100+ Brevard Public Schools

SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

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Dr Sharma at one of the sessions.

A Holiday to Remember in Italy

By **Doug Bisset, VMC Staff**

My wife, Sandy, and I paid our respects to the fallen WWII military at the Florence American Cemetery and Memorial in Florence, Italy on August 26th, and in honor of the 250th Anniversary of the USA.

It is one of two cemeteries for those who fought in the Campaign in Italy.

There are 4,322 headstones and "tablets of the missing" with 1,409 names (interestingly mostly from lost aircraft bomber groups). There are 6 sets of brothers and 2 medal of honor recipients. The property of 70 acres was given to the US by the Italian Government in perpetuity, tax free. As is true of all American memorial cemeteries I have been to, it is extremely tasteful and well cared for.

Note, I am wearing my VMC shirt.

"Time will not dim the glory of their deeds."



Their Voice of Hope Gets Annual Boost Early

By **Donn Weaver**

During their 26 Sep quarterly luncheon meeting more than thirty women veterans and members of Their Voice of Hope (TVOH) organization received \$4000 from MOAAC's Good Deeds Foundation to help support their FY 2026 annual programs. The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center provided the facility and other support as the veterans made lots of plans for the coming year. Dorothy Walsh is Founder and CEO of TVOH. Good luck to this growing organization in the year ahead.

GDF President Donn Weaver presents the check and good wishes from MOAAC to Ms. Walsh and those enjoying lunch and special camaraderie.



VBC at No Limits Academy for 9/11 Presentation

By **Donn Weaver**

For the first time since Vets Back to Class (VBC) was founded in 2014, VBC was invited to present a class on the impact of 9/11 to more than 20 students and as many staff at the No Limits Academy in Melbourne on 12 September. The students run from elementary to high school age and are faced with challenges they work hard to overcome. During the 40-minute presentation they paid close attention and had some great questions. Thanks to Lead Teacher Savannah Moffett and the entire staff for the invite, and for what they and the parents do for these amazing children.



9/11 Ceremony at Private School in Melbourne is Special

By **Donn Weaver**

On an early morning, 24 years later, Saint Paul's Classical School held a moving Ceremony of Remembrance of 11 Sep 2001. The event included student effort, led by 8th grader Anthony Toffler to pre-position 2,977 small flags representing those killed on 9/11 at the three locations. All 100 students and over fifty parents attended. Vets Back to Class was invited and Donn Weaver offered reflections for the diverse audience. It was great to learn about many such events in schools and across Brevard this year.



8th grader Anthony Toffler kicks off the ceremony.



VMC VP Donn Weaver addresses the crowd.

Always Remember; Never Forget: 9/11 Commemoration at BVMC

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice President

In front of about 350 onlookers, the 24th Annual Ceremony to Commemorate the Events and Aftermath of 9/11/2001 was conducted at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center on Merritt Island. The event was led by Club 1013, which operates all over the country and is made up of retired NYPD officers. Marco Calderon, 1013 Brevard President, and Al Boettjer worked with BVMC and the Good Deeds Foundation of the Cape Canaveral Chapter of MOAA to make sure the event reflected solemn remembrance and honor. All remembered the nearly 3,000 killed that day and the many thousands since who perished from toxic exposure, from combat casualties (7,053 through this year) and as a result of military and first responder service combating terrorism.

More than 80 Brevard County Sheriff, City Police, Fire Department and EMT personnel participated in the hour-long ceremony. Speakers included Al Boettjer who spoke about the events and toll in lives then and over the 24 years since; from former NYFD Fire Captain Bruce Happle, whose Long Island Unit rushed to help within minutes after the attack and stayed on for weeks; from RADM Wayne Justice, USCG Ret, a NYC native, who was near the Pentagon that day and recounted sacrifices of his high school friends then and USCG members in the aftermath; from Sheriff Wayne Ivey who spoke about why we must remember and the crucial roles of first responders and our military as we go forward; and from Donn Weaver, VMC VP and Gold Star Dad whose son fell in combat in Afghanistan.

Honor Guards and Color Guards from Club 1013 BCSO, Police and Fire Units, the Knights of Columbus as well as the Brevard Police and Fire Pipes and Drums Corps, made the event and remembrance very special. BFD sent their hook and ladder engine with the giant American Flag. Lonnie and Delinda's Beach Band provided great sound and music, including Delinda singing the National Anthem. Retired NYFD member John Diognan and the BCSO Honor Guard offered TAPS and the 21 Gun Salute to end the solemn but important day. There were at least four other major 9/11 events in Brevard as all promised to re-stage an even better event for the 25th Anniversary of the "Pearl Harbor of our Generation" in 2026 at the new BVMC Park Amphitheater.



Space Coast Jr/Sr High School Holds POW/MIA Ceremony

By Donn Weaver, VMC Vice President

On 19 September, the Space Coast Jr/Sr High School (SCHS) led by Space Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SFJROTC) hosted a campus ceremony in honor of National Prisoner of War and Missing in Action Recognition Day. Along with all 14 Brevard JROTC programs, MOAAC/Good Deeds and the BVMC support JROTC Units throughout the year and applaud this kind of teaching and ceremony.

The event featured a memorial walk with more than 90 cadets rotating and carrying the POW/MIA flag in continuous motion around the track for the entire school day. The cadets were joined by more than 70 students, community leaders, and SCHS administrators. The event also included a remembrance ceremony and performances of the National Anthem and TAPS.

Photos Courtesy of SFJROTC.



The Challenge Coin Tradition

By Jalaine Spears, Veterans Sales Store Assistant Manager

While the exact historical origin is debated, the most widely accepted story dates back to WWI. An American Lieutenant in a newly formed flying squadron (who was wealthy) had a bronze medallion struck with the squad's emblem for each unit member. Legend goes that one of the young pilots carried his medallion in a pouch around his neck. He was shot down behind enemy lines. He was captured by a German patrol who took all his personal Id but missed the pouch. The pilot escaped and stumbled into a French outpost wearing civilian clothes. The French were going to execute him as a spy. To prove his identity, the pilot showed them his bronze medallion and one of the French soldiers recognized the squadron's insignia and the pilot's life was saved. When he returned to his unit and the story was spread around it became a tradition that all members must carry their coin at all times.

This led to where a member could challenge another to produce their coin anytime. If the challenged person failed to produce the coin, they would have to buy a round of drinks for the challenger. Today the usage of the coin has become used as a personal, on the spot award for outstanding service or a job well done. Receiving a coin from an officer or dignitary is a great honor.

Carrying a unit challenge coin signifies shared experience and

reinforces trust and loyalty among members. The tradition of the challenge coin has evolved from a simple identifier into a symbol of honor, esprit de corps and shared history.

Come see the large collection that we have on the 2nd floor of the BVMC Museum or purchase one from the gift store for your veteran.



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Questions? americanlegionaux344@gmail.com



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- Expose students to Brevard Museums
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Tammy Dennis
 ECAC Coordinator
10ennsone@gmail.com



Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar October 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/>

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. SOLD OUT.

11 Oct – NEW TIME AND VENUE Space Coast Honor Flight Send Off 0400 -0530 hrs at Melbourne Airport Terminal. Honors 30 plus veterans and guardians with travel to Wash DC to visit their monuments and memorials. MOAACC/Good Deeds will present annual SCHF and FIT guardians support check at this event. See SCHF.org for more info.

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

17 Oct – Annual Patriot Night Honoring Veterans at the Viera HS Football Field 1800-2100. Veterans get in free and will be honored at halftime. All vets and first responders' father on the track seven minutes before halftime to be honored at mid-field. Contact Donn Weaver 757-871-6576 for more information or to get a poster.

25 Oct – BBQ, Bourbon and Blues, Cryderman's BBQ 3915 Old Settlement RD MI, 1800-2200. Sponsored by CAMI as Fundraiser for the third Annual Merritt Island Holiday and Gold Star Family Tree Illumination at BVMC on 13 Dec (see below). Payment of \$125 per ticket includes dinner, beer and wine.

28 Oct – BVMC Discussion Series at the Library 1800-1930. The US Marine Corps 250th Anniversary will be explained and celebrated including tables of Marine memorabilia and a commemorative cake cutting ceremony. Marine Corp League Members will be there to answer questions and discuss

Marine History and ethos. Vinnie Howard is organizing the evening.

NOVEMBER

01 Nov – District Championship JROTC Raider Challenge Invitational Meet at BVMC Park. 0630-1300. Veteran organizations pass out trophies and are welcome to support our youth. Most action including awards ceremony takes place 1030-1300. Contact Donn Weaver of BVMC on 757-871-6576 for any questions.

08 Nov – Space Coast Honor Flight Send Off 0400 -0530 hrs at Melbourne Airport Terminal. Honors 20 plus veterans and guardians with travel to Wash DC to visit their monuments and memorials. check out SCHF.org for more info.

08 Nov – Annual St Francis Hospice Foundation Dash 5K In Life Fundraiser at VMC Plaza and Park. 0800 - 1200 Includes veteran recognition and pinning. Focused on Devotion, Admiration, Service and Honor for Veterans in support SFH We Honor Veterans Program sign up: <https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/MerrittIsland/5KDASHHonoringVeterans>

08 Nov – Annual VFW Post 10131 and City of Cape Canaveral Veterans Day Parade 1000-1130. Entry Details in September This year VFW Post in Cape Canaveral is hosting and managing the event. Food and music at the Post after the parade.

09 Nov – 8th Annual Homestretch 5K for Veterans by NVHS for Homeless and at-Risk Veterans. 0800-1100. Eau Gallie Arts District at the Square Park. Sponsors, Volunteers, Runners needed. Last day to sign up as a sponsor is 10 October. SEE: runsignup.com/Homestretch5K

12 Nov - FREE CONCERT “Music at Noon” & Snacks Veterans and others join us at the Martin Andersen Senior Center in Rockledge to continue celebrating Veterans Day. 1200-1300, 1025 S Florida Avenue, Rockledge, FL 32955. The New Horizons Band of Rockledge and JD Daniel, a keyboardist, vocalist & composer who resides in Titusville and performs regularly at Heidi's in Cocoa Beach will perform his new recording “The Bells of Freedom”.

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