



VETERANS BULLETIN

A Monthly Publication of the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center



ON THE COVER: Last Naval Battle Ceremony at BVMC

NOTU and America 250th
Highlight Last Naval Battle
Ceremony

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APRIL 2026

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ADVERTISE IN THE VETERANS BULLETIN

Business Card: \$50 per year
 Quarter Page Color: \$100 per year
 Half Page Color: \$200 per year

The Veterans Bulletin is a monthly publication prepared and distributed in both print and electronic forms by the BVMC. 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 December 2025:
[List of Board 2025-2026](#)

As of 31 December 2025:
[BVMC Committee Departments 2025-2026](#)

As of 1 December 2025:
[BVMC Org Chart 2025-2026](#)



Mission Statement

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. BVMC'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. 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.

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President's Report

Dean Schaaf, LCDR, USN (Ret)

The Amphitheater and Park upgrade is finished! We understand that the "Punch List" has been completed and the county is waiting for the Certificate of Occupancy. Once the County has the CO, we will be able to use the facilities by completing a request through the Central Area Parks Operations Manager and the Recreation Superintendent. Another step the County has to complete is the hiring of a Company or Firm to manage the Amphitheater, book events, schedule concerts, etc. We also have yet to complete our new lease agreement with Parks and Recreation to cover the Amphitheater and the rest of the park improvements.

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) will only have responsibility for the main building and the Plaza; we will have oversight for everything until entering the Park. A new gate has been positioned next to the jeep shed leading into the Park. Another gate is already in place at the Fortenberry entrance to the Park.

On March 14 we hosted a 5K run and a Car Show, both of which were fundraisers and to recognize National Medal of Honor Day. There were three Medal of Honor recipients that attended the activities on Saturday, March 14. Only Melvin Morris could attend a very successful dinner on Friday night that was enjoyed by around eighty in attendance.

Our annual Last Naval Battle of the Revolution will be celebrated on March 21 with the DAR, SAR, and CAR all in attendance and in period costume. Naval Ordnance Test Unit (NOTU) supported with their color guard, signal battery, and guest speaker, CDR Brian Purvis. CDR Purvis gave a powerful and more detailed account of the 1783 battle, 400 miles off the coast of Cape Canaveral.

As a member of the Propeller Club, I hosted a group of HELM program students from Rockledge High School with a tour of the museum and a power point presentation of the US Merchant Marines and their contribution to the Naval importance of moving supplies to support our military in all parts of the world.

H.E.L.M. stands for Helping Educate Leaders in Maritime. Rockledge High School is the only school in the county that has this program and with our proximity to the Port of Cape Canaveral, our goal is to help create, educate, and encourage future leaders in the Maritime Industry locally and around the world. The Propeller Club supports a scholarship program focused on encouraging students to attend the Maritime Academies and Trade Schools.

We have several events coming up this summer and with the possibility of using the Amphitheater, who knows what we might be attending. Check out our calendar of events in the Bulletin.

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

Dean

Go Navy beat Army!

March Madness is in full swing. I am rooting for and predicting that Purdue will be in the final game again this year. GO BOILERS!

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Vice President's Report

Don Pearsall USA(Fmr)

The Medal of Honor event was extraordinary. Organized by our BVMC events committee and Maurice Morris, Son of Medal of Honor recipient Melvin Morris, featured many honorable events including a tribute dinner, custom car show and 5K run.

The dinner, catered by Sugar Aunts, was well attended by several prominent members of the MOH society and other distinguished guests. There was also an auction of Medal of Honor memorabilia and raffle baskets of merchandise from local merchants.

We had such great support for this event and wish to thank our supporters and sponsors. We owe much gratitude to David Lane from A1A Outdoors in Cape Canaveral. The local merchants went above and beyond with the donation use of the two golf carts, they also allowed us to use both of their large 10 x 20 tents and even during their busy season, allowed their employees to work the event as volunteers. David also sent us a coupon to clip out (see below) for BVMC members or families to use.

There were so many people involved with this event it is impossible to thank everyone. It seemed like everyone we talked to were excited to either attend, donate or work as a volunteer for the event. We even took on several new BVMC event volunteers including Robyn Boudreaux, Georgia Billings, Ben Slaughter and Larry Buchholtz, Thanks folks for stepping up and welcome aboard.

The fundraiser was sanctioned by the United States Medal of Honor Society, and all proceeds will benefit Brevard County veterans and families. Plans are being made to host this event every year, in our plaza here and at the monument in Riverside Park Cocoa Village. Also in the works, there are plans to hold another large event sometime this summer here at the BVMC. More to follow. - I give up: Go Navy Beat Army

Park and Plaza Report

By Donn Weaver

The fantastic \$8.2 M upgrades to the Veterans Memorial Park are ready. Now, inspections, punch lists, final acceptance by the County from Ivey's and a Ribbon Cutting are all that remain to lift the Amphitheater and many other event curtains. The ribbon cutting should occur during the week of 20 April.

Meanwhile, some highlights:

- The Vet sponsored Flaggpole is installed as are the pavers at the base, thanks to an Eagle Scout Project.
- Two major JROTC Drill Meets in the West Park.
- Completion of all planting including Memorial Trees.
- Working with County Parks and Rec for new event approval requirements.
- Initial planning for patriotic murals on the sides of the Amphitheater. Awaiting opening for design selection and approvals by County.

Thanks to our BVMC Parks Committee for two major meetings, a tour and getting ready for high gear work in the transition to support the county, MIRA and our event partners like Medal of Honor 5K and Classic Car Show, Last Naval Battle and the Enlistment Ceremony coming up on 17 April, which will be held at Viera High School, not the Amphitheater.

Special thanks to Doug Bisset who joined me in the survey of the new Memorial Trees including creating a map and numbering them for assignment after the opening of the park when we will invite the donors to "meet their trees." We are also working on plans to relocate the 25 Memorial benches to the park, getting input from the donors and the county. They will make a dramatic difference in the Park in terms of not just resting but remembering and reflecting.

We hope all of our members will attend the Grand Opening and many events in the future. There are few parks supporting veterans and the community in Florida or the country that can measure up when you include: Museum, Library, Plaza, Support Center, Meeting venues, park trails and work out centers and now the Amphitheater in the Brevard Veterans Memorial Park.



Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain Chip Hanson
USMC (Fmr)

Many of our combat Veterans have seen and been involved with sights sounds and incidence that most people never have seen or been involved. As a combat Veteran myself I fully understand.

Not all wounds from war are visible, P T S D or Post-traumatic stress disorder can be just as serious and painful as a gunshot

A diagnosis of PTSD requires exposure to an upsetting traumatic event. Exposure includes directly experiencing an event, witnessing a traumatic event happening to others, or learning that a traumatic event happened to a close family member or friend. It can also occur as a result of repeated exposure to horrible details of trauma such as police officers being exposed to details of child abuse ca

Symptoms and Diagnosis:Symptoms of PTSD fall into the following four categories. Specific symptoms can vary in severity.

- **Intrusion:** Intrusive thoughts such as repeated, involuntary memories; distressing dreams; or flashbacks of the traumatic event. Flashbacks may be so vivid that people feel they are reliving the traumatic experience or seeing it before their eyes.
- **Avoidance:** Avoiding reminders of the traumatic event may include avoiding people, places, activities, objects, and situations that may trigger distressing memories. People may try to avoid remembering or thinking about the traumatic event. They may resist talking about what happened or how they feel about it.
- **Alterations in cognition and mood:** Inability to remember important aspects of the traumatic event, negative thoughts and feelings leading to ongoing and distorted beliefs about oneself or others (e.g., "I am bad," "No one can be trusted"); distorted thoughts about the cause or consequences of the event leading to wrongly blaming self or other; ongoing fear, horror, anger, guilt or shame; much less interest in activities previously enjoyed; feeling detached or estranged from others; or being unable to experience positive emotions (a void of happiness or satisfaction).
- **Alterations in arousal and reactivity:** Arousal and reactive symptoms may include being irritable and having angry outbursts; behaving recklessly or in a self-destructive way; being overly watchful of one's surroundings in a suspecting way; being easily startled; or having problems concentrating or sleeping.

Many people who are exposed to a traumatic event experience symptoms similar to those described above in the days following the event. For a person to be diagnosed with PTSD, however, symptoms must last for more than

a month and must cause significant distress or problems in the individual's daily functioning. Many individuals develop symptoms within three months of the trauma, but symptoms may appear later and often persist for months and sometimes years. PTSD often occurs with other related conditions, such as depression, substance use, memory problems, and other physical and mental health problems.

These are three important numbers to keep:

- 1 (211) When someone is in the need of help of any kind
- 2 (988) A crisis line such as suicide
- 3 (911) An emergency call line.

"We were not allowed to speak of the unseen wounds of war. We were not allowed to prepare for them. That quote is from Army Psychologist Brig. General Loree Sutton

Psalm 23 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

GOD BLESS AMERICA Chip Hanson



Secretary's Report

Kristi Blanchard
USA (Fmr)

I'm looking forward to traveling to West Point, NY in mid-April for ceremonies recognizing the 50th Anniversary of Women entering West Point and the other academies.

With tributes to the Class of 1980 (I'm 1982), and weaving in activities with current cadets, it should be memorable and commemorative of the successful integration of women into the world's best fighting force. Congrats to my fellow service mates for their accomplishments and continued success too.

Duty, Honor, Country. Go Army, Beat Navy!



VMC Librarian Report

Hank Rhodes
USN (Fmr)

In April, we commemorate two key events in the Civil War. The attack on Fort Sumter (April 12, 1861) and the surrender of Robert E. Lee's Army (April 9, 1865) which bracket major combat during our nation's bloodiest conflict.

In the public's imagination, these two events represent the "start" and "finish" of the Civil War, but this is not precisely correct.

On January 9, 1861 a resupply ship destined for Fort Sumter was fired upon and routed by forces of the newly self-declared independent state of South Carolina. As six* other states of the south severed their ties to the United States in January and February 1861, most federal facilities and military assets in their territory were seized. These were acts of war.

Even earlier, a small-scale civil war raged in the Kansas Territory between pro-slavery and abolitionist militias from 1854 to 1859, resulting in an estimated death toll of 50-120.

At Appomattox, Robert E. Lee surrendered only the Army under his command to Ulysses S. Grant, followed two weeks later by General Joseph Johnson's surrender of a larger force to William Sherman.

On May 12, 1865, what is generally considered the last battle of the Civil War occurred at Palmito Ranch, near Brownsville, Texas. Here, Private John J. Williams of the 34th Indiana is widely regarded as the last soldier to die in the Civil War. A week later in Alabama, Corporal John Skinner of the 1st Florida Cavalry (USA)** was killed under circumstances that resemble banditry rather than combat.

The last Confederate combat unit, the commerce-raider Shenandoah, surrendered to the British government at Liverpool on November 6, 1865.

At the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center we know that history, like war itself, is never simple nor tidy.

*In addition to South Carolina; Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas voted themselves out of the United States early in 1861. The four other states in the Confederacy: Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina and Arkansas seceded after the firing on Fort Sumter.

**The First Florida Cavalry of the U.S. Army was comprised of pro-Unionist volunteers from northern Florida and Southern Alabama.

Book of the Month: *Under Fire* by Fred Burton and Samuel M. Katz

Reviewed by Hank Rhodes

On the night of September 11-12, 2012, four Americans were killed in the city of Benghazi, Libya. Among the dead were our Ambassador, Chis Stevens; and State Department Officer Sean Smith. Also killed were Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty, both Security Specialists affiliated with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Smith was a veteran of the Air Force. Woods and Doherty were former Navy SEALs.

Unfortunately, the inquiry to determine what happened became mired in partisan bickering. *Under Fire* (published in 2013) represents an attempt to shed light on the atrocity.

After the dictator became a casualty of the Arab Spring, Libya fell into a state of civil war and anarchy. Libya's third largest city, Benghazi, was a microcosm of this violent chaos.

In a case of American idealism meeting the worst the world has to offer, Ambassador Stevens conducted a series of meetings in Benghazi in order to represent the interests of the United States. Due to the long distance from the embassy in Tripoli, our diplomats in Benghazi operated out of a location known as the Special Mission Compound. There was also a CIA facility less than a mile away. While the CIA relied on experienced American special operators for protection, security at the Special Mission Compound was provided by a local militia.

When the attack occurred on the night of September 11, the militiamen fled, leaving a compound roughly the size of six football fields to be defended by five Diplomatic Security Service agents. The CIA attempted a rescue mission but these reinforcements arrived too late to save Stevens and Smith. After midnight, the CIA facility was attacked but not breached.

It appears that some in our State Department still cling to the naive assumption that diplomatic posts are sacrosanct. Since at least 1979, there has been sufficient evidence that diplomatic protocols and practices are not globally respected.

The authors are stepping up where our government failed us, in an attempt to recover the truth. We owe that to the four men who lost their lives. We also owe that to all brave Americans who serve our national interest in dangerous places.

Under Fire (WarOnTerror-156) is both compelling and disturbing.

The Naval Armed Guard (NAG)

By Jalaine Spears

This was a specialized WW2 Navy branch (1941 - 1945) that stationed sailors on merchant ships to protect them from enemy submarines, surface raiders and aircraft with the motto "We Aim to Deliver!". These gun crews manned deck guns, provided communications services and served in highly dangerous zones.

The purpose of the NAG was to defend merchant vessels, specifically Liberty and Victory, Tankers and troop support ships when there was a shortage of naval escorts. They were stationed directly aboard civilian merchant marine ships during WW2. While they were active-duty US Navy sailors, they lived and worked alongside the civilian Merchant Marine crews to defend the vessels from enemy attack. The crew consisted of Navy officers and enlisted personnel (gunners, coxswains, radiomen, signalmen) stationed in small detachments of about 24 to 28 men on ships. They received roughly 6 weeks of training on 3 and 5 inch and 20 mm guns before deployment.

Beyond firing weapons, they often trained civilian crew members in gunnery and round the clock watches. While the Ship's Master (captain) was a civilian in charge of navigating the vessel, The NAG Office had exclusive control over all military functions and the deck guns.

During battle, civilian merchant mariners often assisted the NAG by passing ammunition or manning guns if the Navy crew was incapacitated.

The service was highly dangerous, resulting in 1810 deaths in WW2. The force was originally formed in WW1, deactivated and then reactivated in 1941. The largest training and administrative centers for them were in Brooklyn NY and specialized units in Sampson, NY and Treasure Island, CA.

By the end of the war, approximately 144,857 Naval Armed Guardsmen were serving across roughly 6200 merchant ships.

Happy Easter and Happy Spring! Stop by for a visit to the gift store for something for your favorite veteran or just say "Hi". We always enjoy hearing about your time serving our country and many thanks for that!



A Note From Jim JC Carlton

On March 5, I had the pleasure of attending an awesome event in Palm Bay. Thanks to Mayor Rob Medina, the Palm Bay City Council and Commander Keith Van Buren of Chapter 453, Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), the proclamation making Palm Bay the first city in Brevard County to join the Purple Heart Trail and the 84th city in Florida was approved. It was my honor to be there representing MOPH and BVMC for the proclamation. The city, along with the proclamation, created a great sign to be put along Palm Bay roadways bringing attention to our Purple Heart veterans and recognizing their sacrifices.

Moving forward several weeks, I was asked to investigate making Titusville a Purple Heart City by Mayor Medina and Commander Van Buren. To that end, I had a meeting with Mayor Andrew Conners of Titusville, Commander DAV Chapter 109, Bob Walter and Sr. Vice Commander of Chapter 109, John Dunn. Mayor Conners was very enthusiastic about Titusville becoming a Purple Heart city. He agreed to generate a proclamation for Titusville and support the celebration. Bob and John offered to host the event at DAV Chapter 109 facilities on Singleton in Titusville. This event will be in conjunction with other veteran support activities planned at the same time. There will be more information available as the planning continues and the date gets closer. The time frame will be mid-May. I'll keep all those interested apprised of any new information. Semper Fi



Special 'Flight of Honor' off to DC with Brevard Vets

Article by Florida Today

All-women journey recognizes those who paved the way

Around 50 Brevard County female veterans and their supporters boarded a bus outside the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center on Merritt Island, as a Brevard County Sheriff's Office motorcycle escort led the way, for a special memory-making journey.

The women were part of a dedicated "Flight of Honor" mission recognizing female veterans by taking them to Washington, DC, to see the monuments and be honored for their service.

"My big mission is to bring awareness that women did serve in the military, because so many of them are forgotten," Dorothy Walsh told FLORIDA TODAY. Walsh is president of Their Voice of Hope, a Brevard County nonprofit which assists and supports women veterans.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Apply for BVMC Scholarships Now

By Jay Longway (USMC Fmr.)

The [BVMC 2026 Educational Scholarship Program application](#) is now available for graduating Brevard County seniors who plan to continue their education at a college, university, or technical/trade school. We are proud to support the next generation as they pursue their academic and career goals.

Students may download the application directly from the BVMC website or pick up a printed copy in the BVMC Library or Museum. Scholarships will be awarded to applicants who meet all stated requirements and demonstrate strong academic achievement, complete documentation, and financial need.

To be eligible, applicants must graduate from high school by August 1. Completed applications must be received in the BVMC Library no later than Friday, June 26. Each submission will be carefully reviewed by the Scholarship Committee for compliance, evaluation, and ranking.

This year's Scholarship Committee includes BVMC members Garet McKimmie, Mary Ann Tucker, Vic Rogers, Ray Norman, Doug Bisset, Dean Schafer, and Jay Longway. They are committed to ensuring a fair and thoughtful review process. If applicants have questions about completing the application successfully, they are encouraged to contact the individuals listed on Page 1 of the application.

We strongly encourage students to carefully follow all instructions and ensure that their application fully satisfies every requirement. Attention to detail is essential for a compliant and successful submission.

BVMC is honored to invest in the future of our community and looks forward to recognizing outstanding students who exemplify dedication, achievement, and promise.

Vinny Bonck
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 321-536-1752
vinny@vinnystechservices.com
 I.T. Services and Security
 Networking and wireless
 Break/Fix Computer Repair Service

Women Veterans Health Care

5 REASONS TO CONSIDER VA

Your VA benefits include personalized, comprehensive health care such as **routine check-ups, cancer screenings, birth control, mammograms, maternity care, and more.** VA also offers mental health care tailored to women Veterans. You are welcome at VA and will be treated with the respect you deserve.

1 YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR VA BENEFITS

Did you serve honorably on active duty or in the National Guard or Reserve? You may be eligible for VA health care benefits. You do not have to be disabled, have a service-connected injury, or have experienced combat.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

If you experienced sexual assault or harassment during your time in the service, VA can help. You can receive care for this even if you:

- ✓ Are not enrolled in VA health care
- ✓ Are not eligible for other care at VA
- ✓ Have no documentation or proof of the incident(s)

2 MORE AND MORE WOMEN ARE CHOOSING VA

Women are the fastest growing Veteran group at VA.



Today, women make up about **30% of all new VA patients.**

60% of VA employees are women, and of that **60%**, over a third are Veterans.

3 VA HAS SPECIALLY TRAINED STAFF TO CARE FOR YOU

At VA, you will see providers and staff who have an interest and training in working with women Veterans. You have access to:



Women's health providers for your general health and women-specific care. They understand how military service impacts your health.



People designated to help you navigate VA and assist you with appointments. Call your local VA and ask for the Women Veteran Program Manager.



Mental health professionals and counselors who have specific training and expertise in women Veterans mental health.



A team of medical staff who help you coordinate your care to align with your personal health plans and goals.

4 YOU HAVE CHOICES AT VA

- You can choose the gender of your providers
- Telehealth or in-person appointments
- Mailed or pick-up prescriptions
- An online system for making appointments, messaging your care team, and accessing your records (My HealtheVet)



5 GETTING STARTED IS ONLY ONE CALL AWAY

The Women Veterans Call Center is your guide to VA. Trained women representatives can answer questions and connect you with your local Women Veteran Program Manager for appointments. Hours are weekdays 8:00 am – 10:00 pm ET and Saturday 8:00 am – 6:30 pm ET.



CALL OR TEXT 855-829-6636

Veterans Connections

By Don Pearsall

Wow, this cold weather is playing havoc on some veterans living in the bush. This past month we had a Navy veteran living in Mims and his family of five lose heat in their mobile home. Because of the cold, trying to get a repairman was almost impossible. The family consisted of the veteran and his wife, who had a bad cold, a toddler and an 11-month-old infant. There was no option but to place this family in temporary housing.

Now, here is the problem. Whenever there is a race in Daytona, motels are booked as far away as Ft. Pierce, which was the case. If necessary, I would let them stay at my house. But at the last minute, I found a nice room when someone canceled in Palm Bay, so we paid for a four-night stay. I also arranged for several gift cards from Cracker Barrel and other local eateries, as well as gas for their car.

With our budget now expended and the coffers empty I was looking forward to bringing my veteran and family support agency into March with no funds. Being with the 1st Cavalry Air Assault in Vietnam, I knew what it was like to fly in the last second to neutralize a real serious situation and save lives. That's what happened to us at the eleventh hour with the help of the community.

I wish to thank Brevard Veterans Memorial Center for stepping up a helping me avert further crisis with the use of their VERF (Veterans Emergency Relief Fund) they reimbursed some of the money so it could be recycled at another time to another vet in need.

The fund is supported by business and community donations and controlled by the Executive committee. I encourage those who may have a few extra dollars to spare and wish to donate to VERF, please see Dave Clayton, our Treasurer. In addition, to all that, we also handled many more cases last month like taking a family food shopping at Sam's Club and making emergency purchases of a mattress set, helping a veteran who needed their home septic tank pumped, and several automotive issues. Hopefully, the Month of April will see some better temperatures and less demand for our services.

Launch of the 2nd Family Premier In-Home Care

By Crystal Merz

2nd Family of Melbourne wants to extend our sincere THANK YOU for attending the Grand Opening or showing interest/support, even if you were unable to attend. We are thrilled to bring premier in-home care to Brevard County, Florida. We had a wonderful time connecting with each and every (80+) one of you!

Please find more information about 2nd Family of Melbourne below. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Follow us below for updates:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/2nd-family-melbourne-florida/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/2ndfamilymelbourneflorida?igsh=MWFzdW1xdWZuY2tyOA%3D%3D&utm_source=qr

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/17LQJuoZqU/?-mibextid=wwXlfr>

[2nd Family Resources](#)

2nd Family Website - submit your inquiries here: <https://2ndfamily.com/location/fl/melbourne/>

Social Platforms, About the Owner, and More: <https://dot.cards/casperjones>

2nd Family Merritt Island Now Magazine Cover: [Merritt Island Now Magazine 2nd Family Cover](#)



AUSA Space Coast Chapter Updates



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

Hi Everyone!

We hope that everyone is warmed up a little after our cold winter period, and we're looking forward to doing more things across our footprint from Volusia through Martin Counties. Let's get going on with what the AUSA Space Coast Chapter is doing.

JROTC Awards season is upon us, and we could use your support if you would like to represent AUSA at an awards ceremony near you. Current locations where we need support are:

Cocoa High School Cocoa, FL 10 April 10:15 a.m.

South Fork High School Stuart, FL 10 April 5:30 p.m.

Okeechobee High School Okeechobee, FL 18 April 6:00 p.m.

Viera High School Viera, FL 14 May 6:00 p.m.

Just a reminder that the AUSA National Scholarship portal is open for applications. AUSA Premium Members are eligible to apply as Soldiers, family members (to include spouses, children, and grandchildren) at www.ausa.org/scholarships. For questions, please contact our Scholarships Team at scholarships@ausa.org.

Just a couple of other events coming up where we will be present and hope that you can come out and visit with us as well as support local organizations. You can find more info on the websites provided.

28 March 2026 Space Coast Range Days Palm Bay, FL Website:
<https://spacecoastrangeday.com/event-information/>

11 April 2026 Heroes for Military Kids 5K Viera, FL Website:
<https://avet-project.org/heroes-4-military-kids-5k>

22 April 2026 GovTech Networking Event Patrick SFB, FL

Website: <https://www.ausa.org/space-coast-chapter/blog/govtech-networking-event-patrick-sfb-april-22-2026>

AUSA Space Coast Chapter members will soon receive ballots for our elected Chapter Officer positions of President and Executive Vice President. I will be on the ballot again for President and Mr.

Thomas McMahon will be standing as Executive Vice President. We ask that when you receive your notice the election is open that you will take just a couple of minutes to submit your ballot. Your vote matters. It helps us understand if we're on track to serving our membership across a large area.

We are growing and we need your participation in our Chapter events. If you're not sure what you can or want to do, just reach out and send me an email or leave me a voice message on my phone to call and chat with you. We would really like you to be active with some great upcoming events!

Here's looking forward to a wonderful spring and supporting your United States Army!

Kip Mathias, Sergeant Major, USA (Retired)
President, AUSA Space Coast Chapter
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NOTU and America 250th Highlight Last Naval Battle Ceremony

On a beautiful Saturday morning of 21 March, over 200 gathered to celebrate and remember the Last Naval Battle of the American Revolutionary War. Fought off the coast of Cape Canaveral AFTER the British had surrendered at Yorktown, the battle was a crucial American victory since our fleet saved the silver brought north from Mexico to pay our soldiers and sailors. During America's 250th anniversary, the ceremony at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center was special.

The Naval Ordnance Test Unit from Port Canaveral opened and closed the program in rousing fashion with the NOTU XO, CRD Brian Purvis giving a rousing and historically fascinating keynote speech. Connecting our Naval roots to today's Navy was smoothly done. The NOTU Color guard led the Parade of colors and the Saluting Battery of Submarine 4-in-deck guns brought the program to a dramatic conclusion. Thanks to NOTU for community liaison at a very high level.

This event is presented every year by the Brevard Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution supported by many other SAR Chapters in Florida as well as numerous Daughters and one Children of the American Revolution Chapters. More than 35 SAR, DAR and CAR members in colonial attire participated and laid memorial wreaths of remembrance. Brevard SAR President Christopher Ratzel was the MC with Florida State SAR, DAR and CAR leaders bringing greetings. Dean Schaaf, BVMC President, welcomed the guests and spoke about the new Amphitheater, which will host the event in 2027. Donn Weaver, BVMC Member and MOAACC

Good Deeds Foundation President, (MOAACC is a major sponsor) focused on the America 250 aspect of the event noting 100 large handheld America 250 flags were passed out thanks to GDF and SAR.

Courageous Division Sea Cadets had 20 plus cadets in support; despite the fact Spring Break began the day before. Lonnie and Delinda Griffis did a great job with audio and music support; and many BVMC volunteers took care of set up, tear down and many behind the scenes roles. American history came alive that day and all seemed very happy to have been there.



Medal of Honor Events Bring Community Together in a Powerful Tribute

March was a remarkable and inspiring month as our community came together to honor our nation's heroes through a series of unforgettable Medal of Honor events—celebrating service, sacrifice, and the enduring spirit of giving back.



At the heart of these events was the vision and leadership of Maurice Morris (son of local Medal of Honor recipient Melvin Morris) whose passion for honoring Medal of Honor recipients and supporting veterans and their families brought this ambitious effort to life. What began as an idea grew—through his determination and coordination—into a multi-event tribute that united organizations, volunteers, sponsors, and the broader community.

The kickoff event on March 13 featured a sold-out dinner the presence of Vietnam Medal of Honor recipient and former Special Forces SFC (ret) Melvin Morris, whose humility and courage left a lasting impression on all in attendance. Guests were also inspired by powerful remarks from Palm Bay Mayor Rob Medina (USMC) and RADM (ret) Denise Hinton, former Deputy U.S. Surgeon General, who shared messages of resilience, leadership, and hope.

A special touch to the evening came from Their Voice of Hope, whose volunteers not only helped serve dinner but also presented meaningful mementos to SFC Morris and others. Through Maurice's leadership, partnerships like these came



together seamlessly, creating a heartfelt and memorable experience for all involved.

These events coincided with a larger national effort tied to National Medal of Honor Day, with parallel celebrations taking place in Texas. Maurice's coordination helped align local efforts with this national moment of recognition, amplifying both awareness and impact, and it is igniting others to step up in 2027.

The celebration continued with a vibrant 5K Fun Run, drawing more than 160 participants, including over 40 enthusiastic JROTC runners representing five local high schools. Donn Weaver's and Maurice's ability to rally youth participation and community involvement was evident, as the event brought together runners of all ages in a shared mission. With beautiful weather setting the stage, and a rousing helicopter flyover



courtesy of the Brevard County Sheriff's Office, the day was filled with energy, camaraderie, and purpose (and we'll have a timer and better course markings next year!).

Two additional Medal of Honor recipients traveled to join the festivities, including MCPO Britt K. Slabinski, a retired U.S. Navy SEAL and current President of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, and MSG (ret) Earl Plumlee, Operation Enduring Freedom Special Forces. Following the awards ceremony, runners and attendees had the rare and meaningful opportunity to take photos and speak personally with these distinguished heroes—moments that will not soon be forgotten, and reflected the deep connections Maurice envisioned when planning the event.

Adding to the day's excitement was a Classic Car Show featuring nearly 30 vehicles, along with a variety of food vendors that helped create a festive, family-friendly



Medal of Honor Events Bring Community Together in a Powerful Tribute Cont.

atmosphere. Coordinated in just a few short months, the success of these events is a testament not only to strong teamwork by Sponsors and Supporters but to Maurice's leadership in bringing all the moving pieces together.



Thanks to the dedication of many—and the clear vision that guided the effort—the events raised thousands of dollars to support local veteran-focused initiatives.

Leadership from the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) played a critical role in execution. President Dean Schaaf and Vice President Don Pearsall led the coordination of the dinner and car show. Secretary Kristi Blanchard developed the event website and managed registration, while Treasurer Dave Clayton ensured proper insurance coverage. Robyn Boudreaux played a key role in obtaining sponsors and raffle items, which contributed to the fundraising goal. Other key BVMC Volunteers involved in planning and set up included Board Member Paul Julian, Karen Croft, Jalaine Spears, Bill Pollock, and Charles Schaaf. Working alongside Maurice, this team helped turn vision into reality.

Most importantly, this success would not have been possible without the tens of dedicated volunteers from the VA, BVMC, JROTC, Veterans Connections, and Their Voice of Hope. Their time, energy, and passion made every detail shine and every guest feel welcome.

Honoring Those Who Went Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

As we reflect on these meaningful events, we are reminded of the extraordinary courage and sacrifice of those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty. Their legacy inspires us to continue serving, supporting, and uplifting our veteran community.



These events would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors and community partners. We extend our sincere gratitude to:

Platinum Sponsor: MOAACC Good Deeds Foundation

Gold Sponsors: A1A Outdoors, Ivey's Construction, Inc., Merritt Square

Silver Sponsor: Sugar Aunts Catering Kitchen, Alfresco, The Garden on Grove Wine & Beer Bar, Sonny's BBQ, OG Enterprises, Deep Roots Landscape Contractors, Largey Law, C.K.'s Creations

Supporters: Their Voice of Hope, Veterans Connections, Brevard Veterans Memorial Center

Your generosity and commitment made a lasting impact, helping us honor our heroes while raising vital funds to support veterans and their families. Together, we continue to build a stronger, more connected community rooted in gratitude and service.

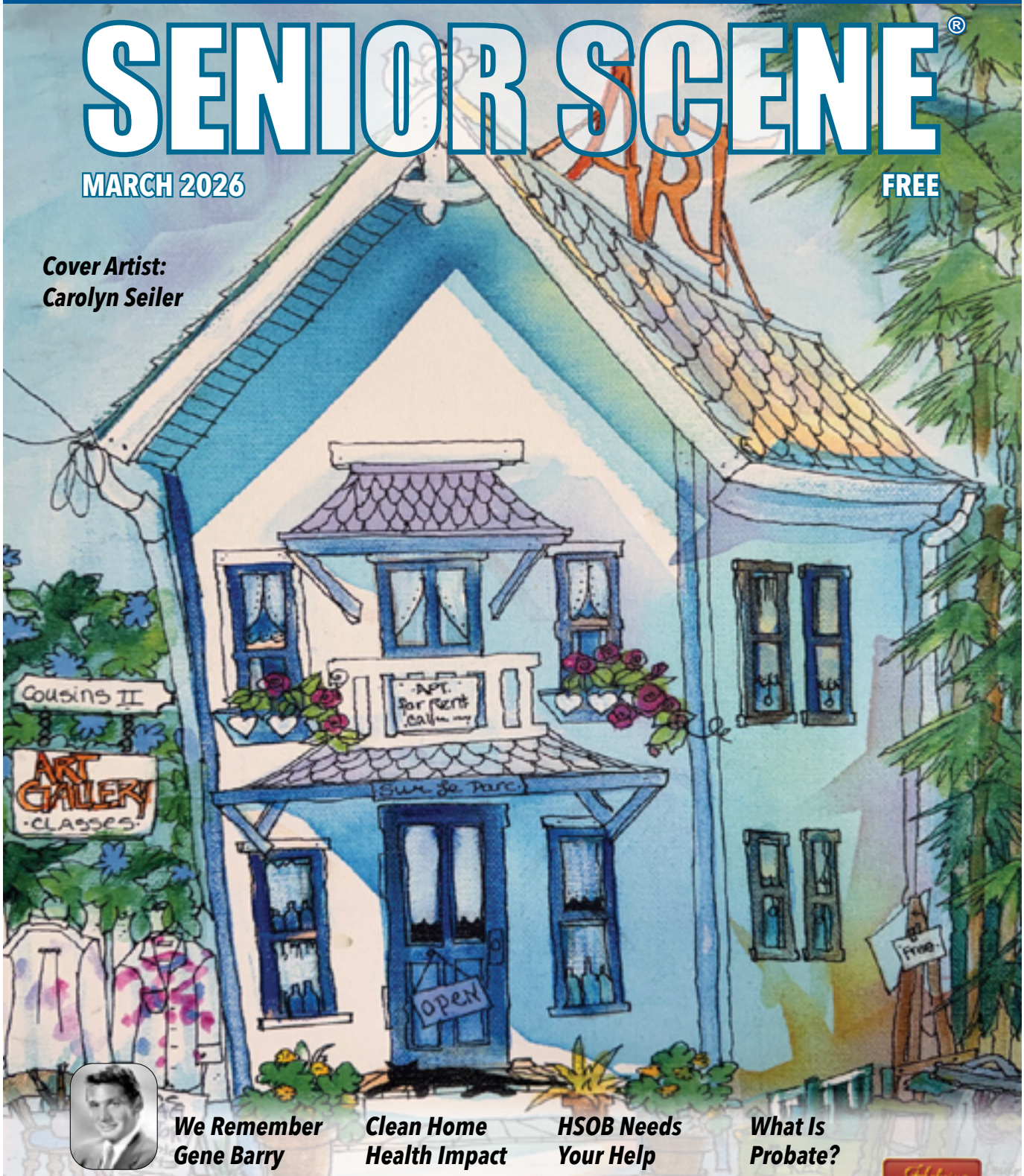
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"The new issue of Senior Scene Magazine is now available to pick up at locations around the Space Coast, including the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center. Enjoy the many informative and entertaining articles and challenging puzzles, including the BVMC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

JROTC Stages District Championship at VMP and Learns About the Medal of Honor

More than 150 cadets from seven Army JROTC programs in Brevard County showed tremendous improvement in six drill phases in a razor thin competition at Veterans Memorial Park on 14 March. In addition, they learned a lot about the Medal of Honor during the first annual MOH 5K and Car Show Fundraiser at the same venue. Forty-two cadets, who were not on their drill teams, ran in the 5K and many had a chance to talk with two MOH recipients. It was a remarkable end to the local JROTC Drill season this year and a very memorable day for the cadets and more than 300 family members.

After the Good Deeds Foundation provided trophies and medals were passed out, Viera was declared the overall winner and awarded the MOAACC annual Lloyd Stafford Texas AM Cadet trophy, taking over from last year's winner, Cocoa Beach. Four schools qualified various teams for the April State Championship Drill Meet. The categories are Color Guard, Individual and Dual Rifle Exhibition, armed and unarmed squad drill and armed and unarmed platoon drill.

During the awards presentation we asked Richard Kartowski, an official from the Sebring FL Medal of Honor Memorial, to talk with all the cadets about the MOH and GDF provided a MOH Memorial Challenge coin to all Battalions on the field. MOAACC, MOPH and other veterans at the event took turns in presenting the dozens of trophies and medals.

GDF President Weaver thanked the parents for raising great kids and promised an even better series of JROTC events every year starting in September 2026 when the Amphitheater, Concessions Stand and much more will be fully available for all JROTC events, including award presentations on the Amphitheater stage. The project began in November 2024 meant 11 JROTC events had to be arranged using the West side of the park, but no longer.



Finally Laid to Rest after 76 Years. - Korean War KIA Army Soldier Willard Edwards

While the process is very slow and arduous, America has not given up trying to locate its fallen in all wars since WWII who became POW's or Missing in Action. An amazing story of that effort, and a decorated hero of what many call, our Forgotten War, Korea 1950-52, came home to be honored on 27 February.

Private First Class Willard Hoyt Edwards, born in West Virginia, died on his twentieth birthday, 2 December 1950, during the brutal fighting at the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. He served in the 31st Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division. His combat heroism is reflected in the shadowbox, and which was assembled by the US Army for his descendants, many of whom now live in Florida. Some came far away to honor him and had not seen each other in 30 years.

Edwards remains were discovered in North Korea about two years ago and only two months ago were positively identified by the Defense POW/MIA Agency in Hawaii. Finally, PFC Edwards came home. There was a moving, if short, service and sharing memories at the North Brevard Funeral Home in Titusville, followed by internment at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery.

Rolling Thunder FL-Chapter 1 escorted the hearse and formed an honor line, Tom and Denise Fitzgerald led their new Caisson horse team and Donn Weaver, who served in Korea two decades after Edwards, offered reflections on Edward's service and sacrifice. He linked Edwards to Cocoa Native Emory Bennett, who fell in Korea in 1952 and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Bennett is buried at the Pinecrest Cemetery in Cocoa. As far as is known, Edwards becomes the first combat death from a war buried at CCNC. He was finally laid to honored rest and will be neither missing nor forgotten any longer.






VETERAN TRANSPORT SERVICES

Veterans have gone above and beyond in their service, and we believe it's our turn to reciprocate. While we typically offer weekly services, we have developed special packages to offer greater flexibility for our veterans.

Whether it's attending a doctor's appointment, grocery shopping, completing errands, or simply enjoying social activities, we are here to provide the support you need!

YOU CHOOSE!

- 6 Hours - \$190.00
- 10 Hours - \$300.00
- 20 Hours - \$580.00

- No additional mileage charge.
- Package must be used within 90 days.
- 2 Hour minimum each transport
- 48 Hour notice required

321-722-2999

info@shsofbrevard.com

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FREE TAX PREPARATION FOR VETERANS

Provided by **AARP**
Foundation Tax-Aide

 *Orlando VA Medical Center*
13800 Veterans Way
Orlando, Florida 32827
Crescent Room

FEBRUARY 18

MARCH 9

APRIL 6

 **10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**
By appointment only



What to Bring:

- Photo ID
- IRS letters & all Tax Documents
- Bank routing and account numbers
- Social Security cards for everyone on the return



Scan to Schedule an appointment





CHAMPION SALUTES OUR VETERANS

We honor the bravery, sacrifice, and dedication of the individuals who have served our country. Veterans deserve the highest level of respect and care, and our team is committed to supporting them in every season of life.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE:

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www.ChampionHomeCare.com



Rufus Fairbanks
Red, White and Blue Ball

Come and join the Rufus Fairbanks Chapter, NSDAR in celebrating
America's Semiquincentennial

Tides Collocated Club
Patrick Space Force Base
1001 North Hwy. A1A
June 13, 2026
5:00 - 10:00
Formal/Semi-Formal

Price: \$95 per person
Includes: Champagne toast, appetizers, surf and turf dinner,
dessert, music, dancing, cash bar
His and Hers Gift Baskets
50/50 drawing
Tickets 6 for \$20

For Tickets contact *Deb Regan-Smith*
321-431-7867 or debs129@mindspring.com



Special guests
George and Martha Washington



Celebrating America 250!



You're invited to a Life Line Screening event!

Where: Veterans Memorial Center
When: Tuesday April 28, 2026

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

Trusted by over 10 million customers.


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

Who should attend: Anyone over the age of 40

Special Pricing for \$159

- Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- Plus a FREE Hypertension Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

Scan here:  Call 888-814-0466 and use promo code: HSCA001 | Visit LLSA.SOCIAL/HSCA | Text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607

These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease. Those with abnormal results should discuss possible next steps with their family healthcare provider and ensure they understand the risk and benefits of any additional testing or procedures.



BREVARD VETERANS COALITION

Veteran Resource Fair

Join us for the Brevard Veterans Coalition's Veteran Resource Fair where veterans and their families can connect with valuable services, support, and community resources.

FREE BREAKFAST
Sponsored by: 

- 📅 April 4, 2026
- 🕒 Start at 1030 - 1230
- 📍 Viera Community Center
12300 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Melbourne, FL 32940

📞 For More Info (321) 403-5857



Heroes for Military Kids 5k/Kids Dash

April 11, 2026 at 8am at The Avenue Viera

Logos include: Coastal, Kel Tec, Space Coast Runners, Palm Point Behavioral Health, McDonald's, KFC, Thrifty, Daily, Durbin's, No Infringe, Rise, Texas, Prestige Veteran, MPACT Warriors, Everything Brevard, Decco, Viera Voice, Northrop Grumman, BBN, StenoOutfront, Office Depot, and many others.

2025DAVTS PROJECT INC 50113 Nonprofit P O BOX 254555, PALM, FL 32925



Join us in celebrating... **OUR HEROES** THE MILITARY WOMEN

Army Navy Marines Air Force Coast Guard Space Force

Come show your support

FREE to military women with Military ID June 12, 2026 at 11:30-1:00 at Holiday Inn Viera

Logos include: AUNT Project, Kel Tec, Space Coast Runners, Palm Point Behavioral Health, McDonald's, KFC, Thrifty, Daily, Durbin's, No Infringe, Rise, Texas, Prestige Veteran, MPACT Warriors, Everything Brevard, Decco, Viera Voice, Northrop Grumman, BBN, StenoOutfront, Office Depot, and many others.

2025DAVTS PROJECT INC 50113 Nonprofit P O BOX 254555, PALM, FL 32925

Ascend Brevard: Space Coast Entrepreneur Program | Cohort 1 Getting Started

This six-week intensive program is designed to equip veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses with the skills, strategy, and network needed to build a successful business right here in Brevard County.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN: EACH SESSION IS STRUCTURED, PRACTICAL, AND RESULTS-FOCUSED:

- Business Ideation & Legal Structure**
Clarify your concept, validate your market, and choose the right entity structure.
- Stakeholder & Pipeline Development**
Identify key customers, partners, and revenue pipelines.
- Launching Your Business**
Operational readiness, compliance, timelines, and go-to-market execution.
- Marketing & Brand Positioning**
Build visibility, refine messaging, and develop customer acquisition strategies.
- Funding Your Venture**
Understand capital options—from bootstrapping to debt and equity financing.
- Pitch Preparation & Presentation**
Craft and deliver a compelling investor or customer pitch with confidence.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- U.S. Military Veterans
- Active Duty Transitioning Service Members
- Military Spouses
- Early-stage entrepreneurs/ideas through early revenue

NO-COST TO QUALIFIED PARTICIPANTS.

START DATE: APRIL 2, 2026
Duration: 6 Consecutive Weeks
Format: Weekly in-person sessions (2 hours each)
Brevard County Emergency Operations Center (EOCC)
1752 Huntington Lane, Rockledge, FL 32955

TURN YOUR MISSION INTO A BUSINESS

Whether you're refining an idea or preparing to scale, this cohort provides vital time, accountability, and resources.

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BAKE SALE
Wednesday, April 8

at Brevard Veterans Center
400 South Sykes Creek Parkway
Merritt Island
Sponsored by the
**American Legion Auxiliary,
Unit 344, Merritt Island**

**From 9:00 AM
to NOON**

Cakes, Pies, Cookies & more!



MISSION 86
Sponsored by MLB



Join Us For The Honor Flight Welcome Home Celebration

Saturday, April 11th
8:30 - 10:30 p.m.

Hosted By:

Melbourne Orlando International Airport
1 Air Terminal Parkway, Melbourne FL 32901

- 8:00 P.M. | Doors Open
- 8:30 P.M. | Red White & You Pre-Flight Party
- 9:34 P.M. | Scheduled Flight Return
- 10:00 P.M. | Veteran Walk of Honor

FREE event! Live performance by Panama, plus food & beer (21+) trucks, and more!

Let's give our heroes the welcome home they deserve!



Learn more at: MLBair.com/HonorFlight

MAY 7-10, 2026

Veterans Memorial Reunion Inc.
Presents:



Florida's 38th Annual
"All Veterans Reunion"

One of the Nation's Largest and Longest Running Veterans Reunion
PUBLIC WELCOME and INVITED TO ATTEND
Thursday to Sunday • Wickham Park, Melbourne Florida

- Memorial Wall
- Live Music and Entertainment
- Food Trucks and Beverage Tent
- Vendor Marketplace
- Static Displays
- Job Fair (Thursday Only)

FIRST RESPONDERS
Honored & Welcomed

FREE ADMISSION
Bring the whole family!



2026 WALL ESCORT – Sunday, May 3*
Departs 30am Eastern Florida State College Cocoa Campus to be escorted to Wickham Park,
WICKHAM PARK 2500 Parkway Drive, Melbourne FL 321-255-4307
No Coolers, Glass or Pets allowed in Reunion Area

*The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall and Some Gave All – The Moving Tribute, are being donated for the duration of The All Veterans Reunion, thanks to Vietnam and all Veterans of Brevard (VVB). Learn more: Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall: <https://travelingwall.us>

Veterans Memorial Reunion Inc. is an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit. Visit www.VMRI.org for more information.



Unofficial Brevard VMC Vets Calendar April 2026 and Beyond

Contact BVMC for any additions or other information.

NOTE: Some events change in between our monthly mailing of the BVMC Calendar. Keep up to date with those changes using our web link: <https://veteransmemorialcenter.org/upcoming-veterans-events/>

PLEASE NOTE: As of December, 2025, The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center can no longer book the pavilion or the Veterans Memorial Park. Please send your request to Terry Lane at terry.lane@brevardparks.com and/or call Central Area Parks and Recreation, 321-633-1874.

APRIL

04 Apr – Easter Egg Hunt presented by Georgianna Church for almost 1000 kids. BVMC Park. 0900- 1300

04 Apr - Field Manor Founders Day fundraiser - 1100-1600. **04 Apr - Veterans Resource Fair** - Viera Community Center - 1030-1230.

04 Apr - Veterans Resource Fair - Viera Community Center - 1030-1230.

09 Apr - Veterans Resource Roundtable #4 - Palm Cottages, Rockledge - 0830-1000.

10 Apr – 2026 Shrimp Feast sponsored by the Propeller Club 1800-2200 at Gator's Portside in Cape Canaveral Port. Event helps Propeller Club Maritime Education Programs while enjoying great seafood and having fun with door prizes, live auction and dancing. Cocktails at 1800 with Shrimp Dinner beginning at 1830. Tickets much be purchased in advance at \$50 each before 17 March and \$60 each after that date. contact 321-698-5286 or register at www.spacecoastshrtimpfeast.com.

11 Apr – Heroes for Military Kids 5 K Kids Dash. 0800-1030 at the Avenues in Viera. Sponsored by AVET. Check out www/avet-project.org.

11 Apr – Space Coast Honor Flight #1 of 5 2026 visits by veterans to see their monuments and memorials in Wash DC. It starts at 0400 hours at Melbourne International Airport Main Terminal

with Welcome home set 2030 hours same evening. Come out and honor these veterans, some from the Korean War era and their Guardians that will travel with them. Many veteran organizations and community groups support this amazing program. MOAACC Good Deeds funds FIT ROTC Cadets and Veterans in the VA sponsored FIT Psych PhD program to serve as guardians throughout the year. Contact schf.org for more information and to sign up on the waiting list for both honorees and guardians.

11 Apr - NOTU Submarine Ball - 1800-2200.

12 Apr - Space Coast Jazz Society concert - BVMC - 1200-1400.

12 Apr - Military Affairs Council (MAC) - Military Family Appreciation Month - Brevard Zoo - Active Duty and Families - Kick off 1000 - Free admission, food voucher, photos, goodie bags, animal encounter at 1000.

17 Apr – 30th Annual Stars and Stripes Patriotic Golf Classic hosted by the Military Affairs Council of Accelerate Brevard 1100- 1800. At the Cocoa Beach Country Club on 5000 Tom Warriner Blvd, Cocoa Beach. Sign up to Golf or come for auctions and raffles. See Accelerate Brevard Events Web site for info.

17 Apr – NEW VENUE Second Annual Space Coast Military Enlistment Ceremony 1500- Check in; 1600-1800 Ceremony. Viera High School Football Field Support more than 300 young men and women who have elected to enlist in all military service branches at or near high school graduation. Contact Donn Weaver, 757-871-6576 for more information.

For more events, [visit our website!](https://veteransmemorialcenter.org/upcoming-veterans-events/)

BECOME A BOOSTER TODAY and help defray the cost of producing our newsletter.
Only \$10.00 per name, per year.



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Bisset, M Doug Sept, 2026

Carleton, Jim March, 2026

Clark, Garrett Nov, 2026

Clayton, David & Anne July, 2026

Ericson, Robert & Robin Mar 2026

Fleet Reserve Branch 263 July, 2026

Florida State University College of Social
Work, August, 2026

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Longway, J.P & Donna Dec, 2028

McKinney, Shaun & Adora Sept, 2026

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Rowe, Wayne June, 2026

Rozek, Tom & Anne Marie May, 2026

Schaaf, Dean & Susan July, 2026

Weaver, Donn & Jeanne Sep, 2026

If you feel your name is missing and that you paid for Booster sponsorship this year, please contact the Treasurer. Thank you for your forbearance and understanding. Fill in your names and send to the BVMC along with your check.

Please make your check payable to: Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (Boosters).

Single Name per year- \$10.00 / Double Names - \$20.00

Name(s) _____