



VETERANS BULLETIN

A Monthly Publication of the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center



ON THE COVER: 10th Annual Purple Heart Ceremony at BVMC

More than 150 came to honor ten recipients of America's oldest military honor - The Purple Heart.

Read more on page 10



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CHECK OUT CALENDAR
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SEPTEMBER 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 24 August 2026:

[List of Board 2025-2026](#)

As of 24 August 2026:

[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.

Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, Inc.
400 South Sykes Creek Parkway
Merritt Island, FL 32952-3547
Office 321-453-1776
DAV Service Office 321-452-1774



President's Report

Dean Schaaf, LCDR, USN (Ret)

I was able to take some time off and visit my daughter, Ashley and granddaughters Penny and Piper in Allen, Texas. While I was there, I visited the National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, Texas which is right next to the Dallas Cowboys Stadium. It is an amazing place and a must see if you are in the area. Also, visit President George Bush's presidential library on the grounds of the west campus of Texas A&M University in Dallas.

August has been a busy month, with school starting back up, getting back involved with the JROTC units, speaking engagements in the schools, Sea Cadets, and numerous bookings for the museum and the Gray Hall and Library for bookings.

This month we need to funnel, or focus, our attention to the elections coming up in October. BJ McGuire has stepped up to be the elections chairman and he and his committee will be asking for volunteers to fill the officer and numerous other volunteer positions. As you know, I am stepping down from the president's position to spend more time at home with family. I will still remain involved as your past president on the Board of Directors. I will always be available as I will "never stop serving."

We started August with a meeting of all Military Instructors of the fourteen JROTC units in the county, planning for events in the school year. NVHS held their annual fundraiser dinner and raised over \$300,000 to support their goal of combating homelessness in Brevard County. We had a number of volunteers from the Church of Viera that assisted in sprucing up the Plaza by cutting down most of the dead trees in the Plaza area due to the freeze last winter.

The Navy League held a dinner at the IRCC commemorating the 236th Birthday of the Coast Guard with our Sea Cadets presenting the colors. The Military Order of Purple Heart's held their annual ceremony honoring ten recipients of the award with bricks in the Plaza and recognition from Representative Debbie Mayfield along with a Quilt from Quilts of Valor organization.

On Sunday morning, August 16, we had a vehicle run the main gate, passing under the left wing of the A-7 Jet (causing minor damage), continue out in the park, ran over a bollard protecting the entrance to the amphitheater, do some donuts in the parking lot, and upon exit, finally was stopped by another bollard. The driver was identified and charges are pending. The investigation is continuing and plans are in work to prevent further cars from penetrating our Plaza and Park through the main gate.

Our main events that we are focusing on at present are the remembrance of the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 event, our election, Veterans Day, and a Medal of Honor event on October 10. Patriots Day (9/11) will be held in the parking lot of the Center sponsored by the 1013 NYC Police officer club and Brevard County Sheriffs' organization, Wayne Ivey. This will prove to be a very moving program. The Medal of Honor event will be covered elsewhere in The Bulletin.

There are many other events on the calendar for September and beyond and can be found on our website and the calendar included in this edition of The Bulletin.

Please give serious consideration to becoming more involved in the Veterans Center and volunteer for one of the officer positions that need filling.

God bless the USA, especially on our 250th celebration as a nation. Bless our fallen heroes, MIAs, POWs, and our armed forces.

Dean
Go Navy beat Army!

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Vice President's Report

Don Pearsall USA(Fmr)

Lots going on so let's get started. Here's this month's trivia: What was the AZON bomb? Answer at the end.

I was impressed by how these three people worked behind the scenes to determine the benefactors of our BVMC scholarship program. Every time I passed, or visited the library, I would find Vic Rogers, Garett McKimmie and Mary Ann Tucker sitting among papers spread out as they read every word, on every line, on every page to determine who was best suited for these awards. Jay Longway introduced the benefactors along with their parents at the August membership meeting. Great job from our scholarship committee and a special thank you to all those who read and had to deliberate the aptitudes of these recipients.

On October 10th there will be an epic event in our park and at the new Brevard County amphitheater which sits behind the main BVMC building. It will be the Fall Harvest fundraiser for the Melvin Morris Veterans Assistance Program as you know, Melvin is our very own Medal of Honor recipient awarded the nation's highest military award by President O'Bama in 2014. This event will be the first one we will host sponsored in part, by SpaceX. After many negotiations, we finally brought them on board to sponsor several areas of the event such as the stage and entertainment.

We're not going to tell you who will appear, so you'll just have to attend. In addition to their October sponsorship, they are also sponsoring a breakfast for all of us on Veterans Day Morning. This is a relationship they wish to have with the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center since we have great relationships with so many veteran organizations. Rather than support just one, they wish to reach many veterans, families and the entire community we convinced them what better way than join us. We are also working to enhance our relationships with our active-duty partners.

On another note, With the election not far off and the retirement of Dean, I have decided to run for the office of President. Being your current Vice President, and past Veterans Council Chairman, I have learned the many aspects of what it takes to run our organization. I had always wondered why some days Dean was working 9 or 10 hours a day. How many times did he make trips down to the center because the alarm was activated, all the speaking engagements representing the center, the endless meetings mostly after our operating hours. Now I know why he was always busy. As I said before, this is no longer a Mom-and-Pop organization. I know how it all works and I am very confident I am ready to step into the position of President.

Many may not know my background and experience in leadership. First, I am from Moravia, a small farming community located in upstate New York's Finger Lakes Region. Still no stop lights, and where my family still has one whole page in the small telephone book. After high school, I enlisted in the military, which was a family tradition. I served with the U.S. Army in Vietnam and Germany.

I am single and reside in Port St. John. I have the time and energy. I have many contacts and associations within the civilian and military community. I am a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, AMVETS, Military order of the Purple Heart, The Association of Helicopter Crewmen, and the Association of United

States Army. I am a Gold Star Father, I own Veterans' Connections, a veteran service and assistance organization, here in Brevard County. My Board of Directors are currently operating the agency while I serve as Vice President. Other positions I hold now, or formerly held are:

- Immediate Past Brevard Veterans Council Chairman of the Board - 2 terms
- Former Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4534 Rockledge - 2 terms
- Former Subordinate Commanders VFW Post 4534 - 4 terms
- Former District 8 Commander responsible for 13 VFW Posts Brevard /Osceola (2,036 members)
- Former District 8 Subordinate Commanders Dept of Florida District 8 - 3 terms
- Current State of Florida VFW / FEMA Director of Disaster Rescue and Response
- Current State of Florida VFW Coordinator Florida Dept / Emergency Management
- Former VFW Southern Conference/ FEMA Director of Emergency response and recovery for Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Texas, North and South Carolina, and Mississippi a total of 1,249 individual VFW posts, approximately 1.7 million members.
- 1 of 4 Captains of the New York State High Angle Mountain Rescue Team 37 Rangers / 4 Canine teams, 2 Cadaver Dogs, 250 State Parks, covering over 365,000 acres
- Former 1st Lieutenant, Engine Company 2 Nesconset Fire Dept. (46 Firemen)
- Former Captain, Engine Company 2 Hook & Ladder Truck Company 2 (51 Firemen)
- Former Certified EMT and Heavy Rescue Nesconset Fire Dept. (16 Firemen)
- Retired Manager, Coin phones, New York Telephone 94,000 pay phones (146 Employees)
- Former NHRA Top Fuel / Nitro Funny Car Drag Racing, Owner/ Operator (12 employees)
- Retired Electric Co Lineman Hot stick aerial Niagara-Mohawk (IBEW)
- Current Sheriff Ivey, BCSO SWAT/ Veteran Crisis Intervention Team Member.
- Current Member of Governor DeSantis Veterans Forward March Initiative.
- Current Member of Congressman Haridopolos's Veterans Task Force.

It takes Vision: Many may not remember when it all started, when the museum was located where the library is now. A hand full of visionaries thought of various ways to assist veterans, to be advocates for themselves and their brothers and sisters. As the years passed, it grew to what we have now. I am capable of and experienced of carrying on the legacy of those visionaries. I would appreciate your continued support for the position of President.

(Trivia Answer) It was an American bomb that could be guided by the aircraft that released it. It was called a vertical bob since the bombardier could only make left- or right-hand corrections during descent.

GO ARMY BEAT NAVY





Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain Chip Hanson
USMC (Fmr)

It was a quiet Tuesday morning; everyone was either at work or on their way to work or just settling in with a warm cup of coffee. Little did we know that a group of men had boarded at least 4 aircraft, not for travel but for death and destruction. The following is a timeline found in Wikipedia

7:59: Flight 11, a Boeing 767 carrying 81 passengers and 11 crew members, departs 14 minutes late from Logan International Airport in Boston, its destination being Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) in Los Angeles, California. [3]

8:46:40:[10] Flight 11 crashes at roughly 466 mph (790 km/h or 219m/s or 425 knots) into the north face of the North Tower (1 WTC) of the World Trade Center, between floors 93 and 99.

9:03:02: Flight 175 crashes at about 590 mph (950 km/h, 264 m/s or 513 knots) into the south face of the South Tower (2 WTC) of the World Trade Center, between floors 77 and 85.[18] All 65

9:03: FAA's New York Center notifies NORAD (NEADS) of the hijacking of Flight 175, at the same time it crashes.

9:04 (approximately): The FAA's Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center stops all departures from

9:06: The FAA bans takeoffs of all flights bound to or through the airspace of New York Center from airports in that Center and the three adjacent Centers—Boston, Cleveland, and Washington. This is referred to as a First Tier groundstop and covers the Northeast from North Carolina north and as far west as eastern Michigan.

9:08: The FAA bans all takeoffs nationwide for flights going to or through New York Center airspace. ABC News reports later that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the agency that runs the New York-area airports, asked the FAA for permission to close down the New York Center airspace.

9:13: The F-15 fighters from Otis Air National Guard Base leave military airspace near Long Island, bound for Manhattan.

9:24: The FAA notifies NORAD's Northeast Air Defense Sector about the suspected hijacking of Flight 77. The FAA and NORAD establish an open line to discuss Flight 77, and shortly thereafter Flight 93.

9:25: The Otis-based F-15s establish an air patrol over Manhattan

9:26: The FAA bans takeoffs of all civilian aircraft regardless of destination—a national ground stop. All military bases in the United States are ordered to increase threat conditions to Delta status.[citation needed]

9:26: Flight 93's pilot, Jason Dahl, replies to Ballinger's text message, "Ed, confirm latest msg plz--Jason".[23]

9:28: Hijackers storm the cockpit of Flight 93 and take over the flight. The entry of the hijackers is overheard by flight controllers in Cleveland.

9:32: A radio transmission from Flight 93 is overheard by flight controllers at Cleveland: "Ladies and gentlemen here... is the

captain please sit down... Keep remaining [sic] sitting. We have a bomb on board. So sit."

9:32: Controllers at the Dulles Terminal Radar Approach Control in Virginia observe "a primary radar target tracking eastbound at a high rate of speed", referring to Flight 77.

9:33–9:34: A tower supervisor at Reagan National Airport tells the Secret Service operations center at the White House that "an aircraft [is] coming at you and not talking with us," referring to Flight 77. The White House is about to be evacuated when the tower reports that Flight 77 has turned and is approaching Reagan National Airport.

9:35: Flight 93 reverses direction over Ohio and starts flying eastwards.

9:35: Based on a report that Flight 77 had turned again and was circling back toward the District of Columbia, the Secret Service orders the immediate evacuation of the Vice President from the White House.

9:37:46: Flight 77 crashes into the western side of the Pentagon at 530 mph (853 km/h,

9:45: United States airspace is shut down. No civilian aircraft are allowed to take off, and all aircraft in flight are ordered to land at the nearest airport as soon as possible.

9:57: Passenger revolt begins on Flight 93.

9:58:59:[10] The South Tower of the World Trade Center collapses, 56 minutes after the impact of Flight 175.

America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.

Thank you.

George W. Bush

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

NEVER NEVER FORGET. Even to this day they are still killing Americans on our own soil every chance they can.

GOD BLESS AND PROTECT THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA





Secretary's Report

Kristi Blanchard
USA (Fmr)

Last month I again posted a parcel to Cell Phones for Soldiers that contained 14 outdated mobile phones. Thank you again for cleaning out your drawers and making an impact in a small but significant manner for a soldier or sailor! More information about the Cell Phones for Soldiers program is at their website if you'd like to donate cash instead. <https://cellphonesforsoldiers.com/donate/>

Congratulations to all of the scholarship winners (see Jay's article for details)! I wanted to include the text from an email received by the Executive Committee, which reminds us of the impact scholarships have and the importance of this program. We thank our anonymous donor who has given thousands in support over the last few years. We welcome donations in prep for next years awards. See Dave Clayton the Treasurer.

Dear Mr Clayton and Brevard Veterans Memorial Center,

Thank you very much for selecting me as a recipient of your scholarship. I truly appreciate your generosity and support, you have no idea what this means to me!

After my mom unexpectedly lost her job after 25 years, my family experienced significant financial hardship. College was almost out of the picture for me. Because of this, I shifted gears and decided to stay home and attend Eastern Florida State College for my first year.

Your generosity is giving me hope that I will be able to continue my education and attend Florida Atlantic University next year. This scholarship means so much to me and my family, and it brings me one step closer to reaching my educational and career goals.

Thank you again for your kindness, generosity, and for investing in my future. I am truly grateful for your support.

Sincerely,
Sean Brodigan



Myself with Cadet First Captain Fetter and COL (Ret.) Brasil

Finally, I again returned to West Point in early August to march back with the incoming plebe class of 2030. I'm so grateful to the academy leadership for allowing us old grads to interact with the amazing young people that are committing themselves to serve our country and continue our military traditions. Seems like we're in great hands! I also met the incoming Commandant BG Joseph Katz and incoming Dean BG Nicholas Gist and reconnected with the Class of 1980 (first class with women). After the march back, an old friend from my cadet company COL (Ret.) Donna Brasil, Class of 1983 and I had the honor to meet Cadet Elizabeth Fetter, First Captain of the Corps of Cadets. Only the sixth female First Captain, and she joins the ranks with others like Douglas MacArthur and John Pershing. Go Army!



Myself with BG Gist, Class of 1980 and BG Katz

DASH IN LIFE 5K & MEMORIAL STROLL

Saturday, November 7

5k begins at 7:30am
Stroll begins at 9:30am



WHERE

Veterans Memorial Center Park & Amphitheater

701 Fortenberry Rd, Merritt Island, FL 32952

How Sponsorship Works: The DASH & Stroll offers two ways to support this event and invest in the St. Francis Hospice Veteran Program:

1. **Sponsorship Levels** (Gold, Silver, etc.) provide broad event recognition and benefits.
2. **Impact and Experience Sponsorships** allow businesses to sponsor a specific aspect of the event - supporting a mission-focused activity or enhancing participant experience.

Choose either option, or combination for enhanced recognition.

5th Anniversary DASH in Life 5k

& Inaugural Memorial Stroll featuring:

Emcee Alec Hall of Alliance Cyber Gives • Sheriff Wayne Ivey • Live Entertainment • Food Trucks • Youth and Kid Zone • Veteran Resources • Veteran Recognition and Pinning • Awards • Raffles

Donations benefit St. Francis Hospice Veteran Program

For more information, scan QR code or contact Danika Warren, Foundation Development Officer 321-634-2211 / dwarren@ReflectionsSC.org



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- Speaking Opportunity
- Prominent signage and Booth Space
- 10 complimentary registrations
- Race Course sign

Gold Sponsor: \$2500

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- Recognition during event
- Booth/activation space
- 6 complimentary registrations
- Social media recognition
- Race Course sign

Silver Sponsor: \$1000

- Logo on signage and t-shirts
- Booth presence
- 4 complimentary registrations
- Social Media / Website recognition
- Race Course sign

Bronze sponsor: \$500

- Logo on event signage
- 2 complimentary registrations
- Social Media / Website listing

Distinguished Service: \$250

- Name recognition on signage
- 1 complimentary registration
- Social Media / Website listing

Friend of St. Francis: \$100

- Name on website and Sponsor Board

Impact Sponsors: \$1,500 - \$3,500

- Water Station \$1,500
- Veterans Pinning Ceremony \$2,500
- STAR KIDS Youth Area \$3,000
- Stroll T-shirt Sponsor \$3,500

Experience Sponsors - \$1,500

- Devotion Station - Write notes to Veterans
- Admission Photo Station - Branded photo opportunity / backdrop
- Service Stations - Veteran resources and support partners
- Honor Wall Stations - Share stories, photos and mementos



Thank you to in-kind sponsor, Brevard Veterans Memorial Center



VMC Librarian Report

Hank Rhodes
USN (Fmr)

The library hosted 256 visitors in July (the last month for which data is available).

Two Veterans history Project interviews have been completed and are in post-production. Our VHP team is in touch with several prospective interviewees.

In the interest of making space for recent significant acquisitions and for future acquisitions, we have commenced a process of deaccessioning some of our holdings. One immediate goal is to reduce our fiction section by 80%, so we will only retain novels regarded as classics or works by notable authors. Additionally, we are retaining some works of alternate history because they help to shed light on the consequences of failure in historic military operations. Books removed from the library are typically placed on the free book cart, or otherwise donated to a "good home."

The library team remains committed to best service within our resources. The difficult task of "weeding" is a necessary part of our endeavor.

Book of the Month: *This Hallowed Ground* by Bruce Catton

Reviewed by Hank Rhodes

Although less than two centuries have passed, the Civil War has assumed mythic status in the American mind. With the possible exception of World War II, it is the most documented event in our history.

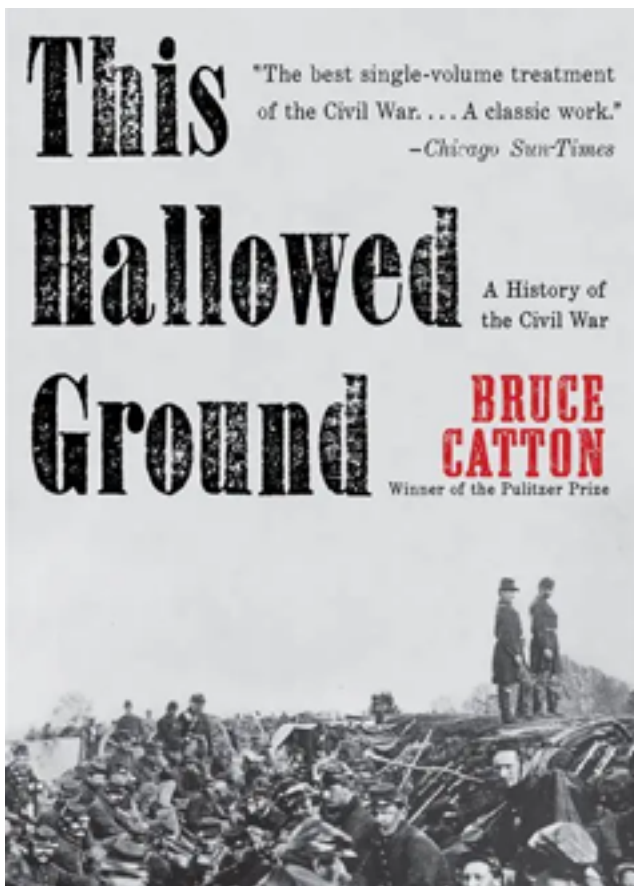
In the forefront of historians specializing in our most deadly conflict was Bruce Catton, who authored what amounts to a small library of Civil War studies. He distilled much of his acquired knowledge into a single volume entitled *This Hallowed Ground*. Balancing coverage of action in the western theater with events in the east, which typically receive greater attention, this book provides a comprehensive but concise history of the Civil War.

The reader is introduced to some of the lesser-known luminaries, such as the otherwise unlabeled Union General Nathaniel Lyon, who saved Missouri from a Confederate invasion but died on the battlefield at Wilson's Creek. Here is flamboyant Confederate General Earl Van Dorn, brilliant tactician, who met his end not on the battlefield but at the end of a jealous husband's pistol.

There is General John Pope, whose early success on the Mississippi River gained him high command in the east, but who alienated friend and foe by his arrogance before suffering a crushing defeat at the Second Bull Run. And then there is a federal general by the unlikely name of Jefferson Columbus Davis. A veteran of the Fort Sumter garrison who endured the shelling and surrender at the start of the war, Davis murdered his commanding officer in 1862. Not only was he never brought to trial, he retained his commission as a general until the end of the war.

Bruce Catton's great gift was his ability to present otherwise dry historic facts in a highly readable and compelling narrative that conveys the immediacy of the events and approaches epic saga. Will future generations regard Bruce Catton as the Homer of the Civil War? A strong case can be made in the affirmative with *This Hallowed Ground* as a prime example.

This Hallowed Ground is located in the BVMC Library at CivilA-002.



Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Upcoming Elections

By Kristi Blanchard
BVMC Secretary

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center is pleased to announce upcoming elections and we're now accepting nominations. Voting will take place on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, 8-9:30 AM, at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (400 South Sykes Creek Parkway, Merritt Island).

The Nominations Committee, chaired by BJ McGuire with members Ben Slaughter and Chaplain Chip Hanson, is now accepting nominations. BVMC Members are encouraged to self-nominate or submit names of qualified candidates by writing directly to the committee via email. You are welcome to write, call, or stop them in the BVMC hallways if you have questions.

BJ McGuire, bjmcguire1@davfla.com, 321-452-1774
Ben Slaughter, bvmcbrickbenttree@gmail.com, 321-453-1776, ext. 1
Chip Hanson, chipvietnam68@aol.com, 321-543-7505

Elected Positions include: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three elected Directors for the Board.

Important Deadlines:

September 1 – September 25, 2026: All nominations must be submitted in writing to ensure they are published in the October Veterans Bulletin newsletter. Organizational members should reach out to Jill Rippon, Membership Chair, jillrvmc@gmail.com, to validate / update their voting member.

October 1, 2026 Newsletter: Full list of nominees will be published in the Veterans Bulletin.

October 14, 2026: Elections held from 8-9:30 AM at the BVMC Library, 400 South Sykes Creek Parkway, Merritt Island.

November 11, 2026: Newly elected officers sworn-in after we also celebrate Veterans Day with breakfast in the Gray Hall and a plaza ceremony.

If you have questions about the nomination process, please contact the Nominations Committee directly. For general questions, you may also reach out to any member of the current Executive Committee at 321-453-1776, ext. 1.

We encourage all members to participate in this important step in shaping the future of the BVMC.



AMERICAN LEGION
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GOLF
Tournament
— BEST BALL SCRAMBLE —

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026
TIME: 7:30 A.M.
HARBOR CITY MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE
LAKE WASHINGTON

ENTRY FEE \$75.00 **HOLE SPONSOR \$100.00**

★ **TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!** ★

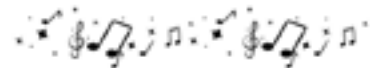
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American Boating Club Cocoa Beach

By Cdr. Sandy Schoonmaker

America's Boating Club Cocoa Beach is a nonprofit organization whose mission includes boating safety through education; fraternalization through boating and social activities; community service through participation in numerous initiatives.

Along with the support of the Brevard Veteran's Memorial Center, the club has also been a long-time participant in the Keep Brevard Beautiful project. KBB's mission statement "to develop, motivate, educate and activate community partners to reduce litter, recycle, beautify, and sustain the environment for the benefit of Brevard County" is compatible with the educational component of ABC Cocoa Beach's mission.

The Club's original involvement began as early as 2012 with the clean-up of several spoil islands. The participation has since evolved into responsibility for the cleaning of the roads leading into BVMC property.

Under the leadership of Past Commander Jay Longway, the original clean-up began at the junction of State Route 520 and Sykes Creek Parkway heading south into the center's entrance and the grounds surrounding the property. An additional area was adopted in 2025 with the inclusion of Fortenberry Road east to Harbor Woods Boulevard.

On a quarterly basis and prior to such events as Memorial Day, and Veteran's Day, a group of volunteers convenes, using supplies provided by the county. They spread out along the roadways and onto the BVMC grounds, picking up trash for proper disposal.



The signage along the roads is the only recognition this group of boaters receives, but the sense of contributing to the community sustains their volunteerism.

Store Updates

By Jalaine Spears

Happy Fall!

It's hard to believe that summer is over and the kids are back in school, but here we are! Hope you are ready to start thinking about the holidays. Have you had a chance to come and see our museum? One of the many interesting artifacts we have is General Dwight D. Eisenhower's red leather couch from Germany. He used the couch in his office during his tenure as the Military Governor of the American Zone of Occupied Germany in 1945 as the Army Chief of Staff following the Axis surrender. The couch was saved by a manager of the Corp of Engineers who served during D-Day in Germany. Custody of the couch was passed to Larry McMichen who shipped the couch to the United States as part of his personal household items. Mr. McMichen had custody of the couch until he donated it to the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Museum on March 17, 2016.

Come and visit the library where the couch is located and wander down to the museum to see the other artifacts we have in the museum, such as the Willys Jeep, a working periscope from a nuclear submarine, one of the pianos that were dropped from an airplane to entertain the troops and many other interesting items.

Don't forget to stop in the gift shop. We have many items to purchase also. Latest items are the Veteran handsewn potato bags, tote bags and placemats. Thanks, hope to see you soon!





Space Coast Chapter Updates

By Jim "JC" Carleton
USMC (Ret.)

The heat is on, but Fall is coming. Along with that will be the annual BVMC Elections. All those who would like to support our organization in a greater capacity, please consider running for an office. Everything is on the table, forward your name into the Nomination Committees for inclusion into the election process.

I have been your Brevard Veterans Council Vice Chairman for the last three years. Now that we are transitioning to the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, I plan to put my name in the hat for the BVMC Vice President.

In 1969 I served in Vietnam as a Marine with Lima Co 3/5, an infantry company. Our area of responsibility extended from west Danang to the Laos border. I was severely wounded in combat and eventually I retired from the Marines. After completion of education at the Florida Institute of Technology I went into Engineering, worked as an engineer on the F-15 engine program, and then on the Trident C-4 Fleet Ballistic Missile program. After the Trident test program was completed, I joined the Space Shuttle Program. Wow, now we are working on "manned" space flight. Starting as an engineer, worked up to Chief of Production Engineering, Manager of Engineering, Director of Operations, Director of Shuttle Upgrades, Director of Program and then I was finally the Space Shuttle Solid Rocket Booster Program Manager. I supported all 135 Shuttle Missions and retired after the last flight.

I'm a member of several other veterans' organizations such as, Life Member Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 453, Life Member DAV Chapter 109, Life Member Vietnam Veterans of America, Life Member Missile, Space and Range Pioneers, American Legion Post 1, Life Member Vietnam Veterans of Brevard, Cape Canaveral National Cemetery Support Committee Chairman (first four years), I'm here to help! And a final note, consider running for a spot, come to the General Membership meeting and vote.

Semper Fi!

BVMC 2006 Scholarship Awards

By Jay Longway (USMC Fmr.)
Committee Chairman

The BVMC Scholarship Committee reviewed all applications received by June 26 2026. The Committee members, Garett McKimmie, Vic Rogers, Mary Ann Tucker, Doug Bisset and Jay Longway, were the core team for reviewing all applications received, to ensure compliance with the many application requirements, accomplishments, and skill sets acquired. As a result, each was evaluated, rated and ranked to ensure a positive conclusion. Upon which the Executive office staff (Dean Schaaf, Kristi Blanchard & Dave Clayton), provided their means to administer the process for presentation of Scholarships at the August 12th General Membership meeting. A total of eight Scholarships were awarded at the ceremony, which included parents:

1. Sean Brodigan (JROTC) - Santa Fe college
2. Jolie Johnson (JROTC) - Florida State University
3. Sabrina Bree - Florida Institute of Technology
4. Hadlee Fuller - University of Florida
5. Michael Carlin - Eastern Florida State College
6. Brandt McLallen - University of South Florida
7. Grace McKinley - Kaiser University
8. Ashley Galus - Eastern Florida State College

The Committee once again, offer their congratulations to the above Scholarship recipients, for their compliance to the requirements as set forth in the BVMC's 2026 Educational Scholarship Program Application & Instructions.

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



10th Annual Purple Heart Ceremony is Special

By Donn Weaver

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center Military Museum was packed on Sunday, 09 August. More than 150 came to honor ten recipients of America's oldest military honor - The Purple Heart. The ceremony marked a decade the event has taken place at BVMC under the sponsorship of the Space Coast Chapter 453 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. They are based at the BVMC and have grown to over 130 members in recent years. Purple Heart recipients are those seriously wounded or killed in direct combat. George Washington established the award in 1782.

With family members coming in from many states, the ten honored this year were:

Joseph Holly	USMC	Iraq/Afghanistan
Earl Fugleberg	USA	WWII/Korea
Erwin Hayward	USA	Vietnam
John Juliano	USA	Vietnam
Willie Stephensen	USA	Somalia
Cody Queen	USA	Iraq/Afghanistan
Mark Dusel	USA	Iraq/Afghanistan
Tom Feigel	USA	Vietnam
Jim Huckabee	USA	WWII/Korea
Tony Hodge	USMC	Vietnam

Three of the awardees were deceased, but not killed in action, and well remembered with their families in attendance. Each received an engraved 8x8 in paver which will be added at the site of the Purple Heart Monument in the BVMC Memorial Plaza later. MOPH presented them challenge coins and a PH license plate. President of the Sons of the American Revolution, Hans Hunt, presented a SAR challenge coin and certificate while State Senator Debbie Mayfield also gave them a certificate from Tallahassee. Each of the Purple Heart honorees also received a beautiful hand made quilt from Karmel Sowers and her Quilts of Valor team and will later be recognized by Rep Mike Haridopolos when rage DC Legislative session ends.

MOPH 453 Commandeer, Keith Van Buren, served as Master of Ceremonies as he and other Chapter members read some of the highlights of the service, sacrifice and post military lives of the honorees.

The ceremony was moving and emotional but also uplifting as the assembled visitors and family members remembered and honored the Purple Heart recipients. An official MOPH cake cutting ended the afternoon.



JROTC Launched with Great Support got 2026-27 School Year

By Donn Weaver

All Brevard JROTC Instructors from 14 Army (7), Navy (2) Air Force (3) Marine (1) and Space Force (1) visited the BVMC Military Museum on 05 August for a workshop designed to kick off another banner school year, less than week before students/ cadets return to classes. Over 15 MOAACC and BVMC attended the first 90 minutes of the program which featured community supporters. Highlights of the session included"

- Welcome by BVMC President Dean Schaaf who reminded how the museum and VM Park make for great field trips.
- MOAACC Good Deeds Foundation presentation of a record \$49,000 garter to help all the programs launch at \$3500 each.
- JROTC Units signed up for Color Guards all year long at BVMC and MOAACC.
- Brevard Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Mark Rendell presented encouraging remarks and support to the programs and the veteran groups that help them.
- Briefings from FIT ROTC Leaders, all military recruiting offices, new program to support ROTC and Academy applications by Scott Waggoner, former MIHS JROTC Instructor, SAR and other veteran groups on awards and scholarship money. Coffee, donuts and lunch was provided courtesy of GDF.

It was a great start to what promises to be a solid year for Brevard JROTC programs with plenty of support from GDF, BVMC and many other veteran organizations. We know how important supporting such programs is to the future of our country.



Getting the word out with Hans Hunt in the foreground right.



All 14 JROTC Schools with both Instructors joined by MOAACC, BVMC members and BPS Supt Mark Rendell to celebrate the new year with big checks in hand.



Great Community Support at NVHS Fundraising Dinner

By Donn Weaver

Counting State grants and funds raised through table sponsorships, silent auction and Sheriff Ivey's amazing live auction, the National Veterans Homeless Support 501c3 organization reaped over \$400,000 at their 2026 dinner fundraiser on 07 Aug. The event was held at the Cape Canaveral Conference Center and featured keynote speeches from Florida US Rep Mike Haridopolos and Florida Rep and Candidate for Governor, Byron Donald. The Cocoa Beach JROTC cadets presented the missing man table ceremony even though school has not yet started and the BCSO Fife and Drum Corps led the CBHS Color Guard into the hall. NVHS CEO George Taylor, Jr. gave great update on NVHS success the past year to reduce veteran homelessness and prevent same for over 60 veterans and 20 family members, along with many other activities.

Many veteran organizations purchased a table as the event recognized more than 100 veterans in attendance in addition to some Gold Star Families and Purple Heart recipients.

It was an amazing evening showing how much our Brevard community truly does support veterans in many ways, including when they are in crisis.



Table (l-r) : Larry and Lynda Jackson; Hans and Sabrina Hunt, Dan and Mary McIntyre, Donn Weaver, Dean Schaaf (Photo courtesy of Amir Pishdad with apologies to Larry and Dean).



Cynthia Watkins-Pishdad sings the National Anthem next to MC Dana Blikley and the pastor (NFI).



Almost 500 enjoying a dinner and contributing lots of money.



BCSO Fife and Drum Procession.

America at 250: AVET Project Calls On Community To Support Those Who Served

Veterans Day Weekend Recuperation & Reintegration Retreat • November 6–8, 2026

MELBOURNE, Fla. — As America celebrates its 250th anniversary, AVET Project is asking the community to remember the men and women—and the families beside them—whose service and sacrifice helped protect the freedoms we celebrate today.

AVET Project, Inc., an all-volunteer Brevard County 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, will host its annual Recuperation & Reintegration (PR&R) Retreat November 6–8, 2026, during Veterans Day weekend. The retreat is provided at no cost to participating veterans, military members and their families. AVET Project is seeking sponsors, businesses and donors to help make this important weekend possible.

MORE THAN A WEEKEND AWAY

The PR&R Retreat gives military families an opportunity to rest, reconnect, heal and thrive alongside others who understand the unique challenges of military life.

Participants receive lodging, meals, mental-health and suicide-prevention resources, VA benefits assistance, transition support, financial education, alternative therapies, family activities and outdoor recreation, while building meaningful connections and support networks. The goal is simple: give those who have spent so much of their lives serving others time to focus on themselves, their well-being and their families.

“Our military members and their families have already paid through service and sacrifice. They should not have to pay to attend a weekend designed to help them reconnect, heal and access resources that could change their lives.”

— Garren S. Cone, Founder & President, AVET Project

THIS VETERANS DAY, THE COMMUNITY CAN SERVE THEM

Every contribution helps strengthen the people and families behind the uniform.

As America celebrates 250 years, this is an opportunity to do more than say “thank you.” It is an opportunity to give back.

They stepped up for us. This Veterans Day, let's step up for them.
www.avet-project.org



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Brevard VMC Vets Calendar

September 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/>

SEPTEMBER

04 Sep — Their Voice of Hope Welcome Back Happy Birthday and Appreciation Luncheon 1130-1330 at Gray Hall of BVMC. RSVP and registration required at [events@theirvoiceofhope.com](https://theirvoiceofhope.com). For women veterans and the organizations that support TVOH.

11 Sep — 25th Annual Commemoration of the attacks on America on 9/11/2001 sponsored by Club 1013 And BVMC. (1800-1930) In the new Park Amphitheater. Focused on those who fell on 9/11 as well as thousands who were affected by toxins and went to the fight abroad. This major event supports and remembers the Fire, Police, EMS, Civilians, Military who lost their lives on or because of 9/11. We will honor and remember all their families as well.

12 Sep — Space Coast Honor Flight #4 of 5 2026 visits by veterans to see their monuments and memorials in Wash DC. 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.

26 Sep — Special Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Dinner and Celebration sponsored by the Vietnam Exhibit Project led by Ben Bydalek. Azon Temple , 1591 W Eau Gallie Blvd, Melbourne. Event starts at 1530. FREE Dinner 1630 -1730 with other events until 2000. VVA Chapter 1096 co sponsor. Contact Ben for more info. thenamwar@yahoo.com

27 Sep — Dice Run by AMVETS riders Chapter 2415 (0830-1600. Ride Cycles, Roll Dice and Win with 6 stops starting with AM Legion Post 1 in Titusville. Plenty of eats and drinks (non- alcoholic) at \$20 per rider and \$10 per passenger. Proceeds benefit Veteran Barry Munn's battle with cancer. Contact AMVETS for more info. Register at 0900-1000 at AL Post 1.

30 Sep — Brevard No One Veteran Left Behind Memorial Service at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery in Mims 0900-1000. We will lay to rest almost 20 Veterans and Spouses who were abandoned by their families and left on funeral home shelves in some cases for decades. Call to support with urn, flag and flower bearers along with witnesses will be made before Labor Day. CCNC will also read the names of all veterans and spouses laid to rest during the past year with no family present. Let us thus pay respects to our veterans that will finally lay in honored rest as America promised. Contact Donn Weaver, donnweaver2020@gmail.com for more information and to volunteer.

OCTOBER

03 Oct — JROTC Raider Challenge Meet #1 at BVMC Park and Amphitheater. (0630- 1230)

10 Oct — Medal of Honor BBQ , Craft Fair, Specialty Car show, live music, food trucks and more. Sponsored by SpaceX and other MOH Foundation supporters with proceeds going to support veteran families in distress. Contact BVMC VP Don Pearsall for more information on 321-313-2444. . (1000-1600). .

17 Oct — Space Coast Honor Flight #5 of 5 2026 visits by veterans to see their monuments and memorials in Wash DC. 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.

31 Oct — JROTC Raider Challenge Meets #2 at BVMC Park and Amphitheater. (0630-1230)

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

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