NOVEMBER 2026 ISSUE

VETERANS BULLETIN

A Monthly Publication of the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center

THE FIRE WATCH
VETERAN SAFE PLACE
TOGETHER, WE WILL END VETERAN SUICIDE.



Happy Thanksgiving from the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center!

We're grateful for the opportunity to serve our community and make a difference in the lives of those around us.

Check out some holiday deals for veterans on page 13!

Space Coast Honors 2024 Non-Profit of the Year

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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)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the NAVY, 251 years old on October 13

At last month's General Meeting, we held our election. This was a milestone for me as I did not run for reelection, having decided to step down from the President's position after ten years in the office. Don Pearsall was elected as your next president, and I feel the Veterans Memorial Center is in good hands with Don at the helm (Navy term) and with the rest of the staff as noted in this bulletin.

It is with a heavy heart that I step down from the President's position. I have poured my heart and soul into the Memorial Center because I strongly believe in our mission as the premier veterans organization in Brevard County representing around 75,000 veterans. We presently have 18 tenant commands that call the VMC their home. They meet here and support our mission. One of the things that I am proud of, and that I built and added to the county sign at the entrance of the VMC, are the 18 logos of our tenant organizations.

Donn Weaver and I have worked tirelessly over the last 9-10 years with the Merritt Island Redevelopment Agency (MIRA), the County Commissioners, and the Parks and Recreation Department who administers all county parks, to plan and execute improvements to the facility and the park. Our first project that was approved by the county and the State was the $1.5 million project to build the museum addition. At the same time, we were raising money to replace all windows and doors in the existing building. Both projects were successful. Construction began in Jan 2016 and was completed in July. We closed the museum (which was in what is now the library) for six months and everything was inventoried. All books that were in the old library were moved to a county complex in Rockledge. We received a donation from the Port Commission that was used to purchase new cases for the ground floor, we used the old cases from the museum and the lobby area for the second and third floors of the new museum.

I was the curator of the museum at the time and worked with Becky Zingarelli (now with the lighthouse museum) and Andy Hanna (now curator of the Seal Museum in Fort Pierce) to plan the layout of the new museum. We were assisted by many of the staff, but I want to mention one individual who was a tremendous help, and that was Bill Kowalczyk. Bill was a big part of the original members of the Veterans Memorial Council that acquired the helicopters, A-7E jet, tank, deuce and a half truck, and constructed the Plaza and all the monuments. I was a part of the dedication of the Plaza on Veterans Day, 2010, though still working for NASA.
We completed our inventory of the museum artifacts and were able to move everything into the new museum and had the grand opening, ribbon cutting on Veterans Day, November 11, 2016.

I was elected president in 2016 and eventually turned over the Curator to Ed Pingston. I would like to add a list of noteworthy events and milestones that happened during my tenure as president:

Built transporter for MK-46 torpedo
Built or designed peg board and shelves for sales store
Built the wall separating museum entrance from war on terror

BVMC CONTACTS

President
Dean Schaaf
dschaaf@brevard.net
321-794-4371

Vice President
Don Pearsall
djp32927@gmail.com
321-313-2444

Secretary
Kristi Blanchard
brevardvmc@gmail.com
321-453-1776 ext. 1

Treasurer
Dave Clayton
bvmctreasurer@gmail.com
321-453-1776 ext. 5

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★★★

Built the area around the Korean War and bivouac area under the stairs
A-7E jet arrived from NNAM Pensacola – 12/2014
Acquired anchor of Liberty ship from Port Canaveral – 5/2015
Acquired excess office furniture from NASA – 5/2015
A-7E moved to pad and reassembled – 11/2015
Ivey's Const built museum from 12/2015-7/2016
Acquired Eisenhower couch – 3/2016
Donated Norman Rockwell painting – 4/2016
Delivery of new museum cases – 9/2016
Opening/ribbon cutting of museum – 11/11/2016
Installed UH-l Huey outside museum – 2/2017
Big Kahuna installed Tiki Hut – 2/2017
Procured 10'x16' museum shed - 6/2017
Kowalczyk and I built 4 Chaplains monument – 5/2018
Acquired piece of USS Arizona – 07/2019
Acquired Jeep we can use in parades – 07/2019
Ribbon cutting for Park, 2nd phase – Rush Const – 3/2021
Periscope installed – 3/2021
Copy of our WWI Doughboy installed in Vero Beach – 11/11/2021
Received donation of bronze eagles for lobby – 9/2022
Received Dancing with Space Coast check for $61,205.65 – 9/22/2022
New playground installed in park – 11/2022
Built cart for card tables – 4/2023
Installed Tenant Commands sign at entrance – 4/2023
Installed solar powered tree in park – 12/2023
Groundbreaking for Amphitheater – 10/29/2024
First big event in Park – Key Lime Pie Festival – 1/17/2026
Ribbon cutting for Amphitheater and Park – 4/23/2026
Acquired 9/11 display from NYPD Club 1013, Patriot's Day – 9/11/2026

It has been an honor to have worked with wonderful volunteers over the years. I wish all of you "Fair Winds and Following Seas." Hopefully, I will be "gone but not forgotten."

Dean
Go Navy beat Army!



Vice President's Report

Don Pearsall
USA(Fmr)

FIRST, Did you know the rare five-star Army rank held by leaders like Dwight Eisenhower during WWII has a grand title. What was it? Answer at the end.

First, I wish to thank you all for electing me President. I am up to the challenge and promise to carry on with the exuberance that will take our organization into the future. There are a few things that need a slight tweak, and some things are headed for an overhaul. In any event our mission will never change. As with every generation, more veterans will be joining our ranks. It's up to all of us to welcome them, help them adjust and make them feel welcome when they visit.

I encourage our membership to brainstorm and let's sit down and discuss your ideas on how we make things better and easier, and just maybe we can improve a bit on our existing programs. We have the best of both worlds. Dedicated civilian patriots assisting the finest former military members in the world. I wish to make the Veterans Memorial Center a destination, not just a whistle stop for the cruise ship folks passing by.

I also wish to further involve our new partners, SpaceX, and others in many new dimensions of service for our veterans and community, while continuing to work with our associates at MIRA, Parks and Recreation and other Brevard County agencies. We have a new events committee that will plan and execute some exciting things both in our plaza and at the amphitheater, so be sure to read our website and attend General Membership meetings.

Like in the military, or with any change of command, there are always a few changes or improvements. This is your Jem. You all contributed to make it what it is today, and you are allowing the Executive Committee to manage it. Support your Board of Directors and please get involved with projects and events. It takes ideas and hard work on both our parts to keep us proud and strong.

I would be remiss if I didn't congratulate the new officers, Board of Directors and announce that Ben Slaughter and Kevin Skope have been appointed to fill the two EXCOM board positions. Those are learning positions and were created to be filled by those who have an interest in becoming future BVMC Officers This past Sunday we honored our dear friend and Army Veteran Ray Norman Sr. who recently passed away. It involved us to muster an honor guard at the last minute, so I wish to thank (left to Right) Ailene Picheco, Shaun McKinney and Doug Douget who stepped up to present the family with the folded funeral flags.

Go Army Beat Navy - No boy ever grew up playing Navy, just a reminder Dean



Answer to Trivia: General of the Army



Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain Chip Hanson

USMC (Fmr)

Now that October and Halloween are over, the holiday season has begun. On Tuesday 11-11-26 we have Veterans Day, on Thursday, November 26, 2023, is Thanksgiving Day.

This is supposed to be a happy time of the year, but there are many those who are serving overseas, many away from their families for the first time, and our seniors who are alone or forgotten living in Nursing homes or worse. Our Military Veterans with T B I or P T S D suffer every day with their memories. The United States has 22 Veterans Day who commit suicide, or 8,030 annually.

According to the Pew Research Center, 96% of Veterans who have served, post-9/11, are proud of their service; however, nearly half say that readjusting to civilian life was difficult, most often citing family issues. About one in six Veterans were wounded in combat and slightly more than half experienced emotional trauma or distress while serving. Tragically, even with the positive, supportive culture we have, 84% of post-9/11 veterans feel like the public just doesn't understand the sacrifices made by them or their families. This touches on one truly hidden wound of war.

What can we do to possibly bring a little joy to these wonderful folks, whose only crime is to have or is serving our country, or growing old, or for those of us who are combat Veterans living with memories from a war?

All of us have our own way of trying to bring some light into life. I think sometimes just a word of encouragement is all it takes.

In the words of Samual Clemmons (Mark Twain) "Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to reform—or pause and reflect."

Psalm 118:24 "This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

God Bless America
Chaplain Chip Hanson



Space Coast Chapter Updates

By Jim "JC" Carleton

USMC (Ret.)

As we head into the fall activities, we have several events scheduled at the BVMC. We have had this year's elections, and I appreciate the encouragement and support that I have received as the new Vice President of the BVMC.

It's with great admiration that I have for the many years of service provided to us by Dean Schaaf, Dave Clayton and Kristi Blanchard who have decided to "retire" their positions with us. They will all still be around to help but it will be at a reduced capacity. Thank you to all three for their outstanding leadership through the years.

November 11, 2026, we will be having our swearing in of new officers after which a breakfast will be provided compliments of Space X. November 14, 2026, come join the Red, White and Brass Veteran Musical Tribute by the Space Coast Symphony Orchestra at the Veterans Memorial Park Amphitheater. After the election activities are over, we will be planning the holiday happenings at the center.

Come by and join in on the strategizing. The General Membership meeting is an excellent place to help and get involved. It is all for those who have served and sacrificed.

Semper Fi
JC





Secretary's Report

Kristi Blanchard
USA (Fmr)

A New Team, A New Chapter at BVMC!

After six rewarding years as Secretary, I'm certainly sorry to be stepping away from the office, but don't think you've seen the last of me! I plan to stick around and keep propeling our BVMC to the next level of excellence. From enhancing our online presence and social media to advancing internal IT projects, I'm excited to continue helping our organization grow and thrive as a 501(c)(3). Most importantly, I look forward to using my skills and enthusiasm to help BVMC continue its mission of supporting veterans and their families throughout Brevard County.

How about that election? Before our October 14 General Membership meeting, members came together to choose the leadership team that will help guide the BVMC into the coming year. But first, a heartfelt THANK YOU goes out to our outgoing officers and board members for their time, dedication, and hard work. We especially recognize President Dean Schaaf, Treasurer Dave Clayton, myself and Board Member Jalaine Spears for their contributions and commitment to BVMC. Our efforts have helped keep our mission moving forward, and we're grateful for all you've done!

Please join us in welcoming our new (yet familiar) leadership team: **President Don Pearsall, Vice President Jim Carleton, Secretary Amanda Saul, and Treasurer Paul Julian.** Continuing their service on the Board of Directors are **Ed Pingston and Harry Beaver,** and we're delighted to welcome **Donn Weaver** back to the board. We appreciate everyone who has stepped up to serve and look forward to the ideas, energy, and teamwork this new team will bring!

A big round of applause also goes to our Teller Committee for keeping the election process organized and running smoothly. Special thanks to Jill Rippon for verifying our members' membership status and helping ensure everything was in order. Elections may not be the flashiest event on the calendar, but they're an important part of keeping our organization strong!

Mark your calendars for November 11! Join us at BVMC for our Veterans Day event and the installation of our new officers, which will be conducted by Dana Blickley, Brevard County's Property Appraiser. SpaceX will generously provide brunch in Gray Hall, so we'll have a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our veterans, welcome our new leadership, and enjoy fellowship with our BVMC family.

Here's to our outgoing team, our incoming leaders, and another year of working together to honor and support those who have served. We hope to see you on Veterans Day as we celebrate the people and partnerships that make the BVMC such a special place!



Bake Sale

Wednesday, November 11th

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!









Christmas Party

For Military and Veterans Children

Saturday, December 5th

at Kiwanis Island Park
Sponsored by the
American Legion Auxiliary,
Unit 344, Merritt Island

Noon to 3:00 pm

Food, games, crafts, and Santa Claus.







To Attend: MUST RSVP by 11/28
to Diane Davison 607-382-3405 or dianed276@yahoo.com



VMC Librarian Report

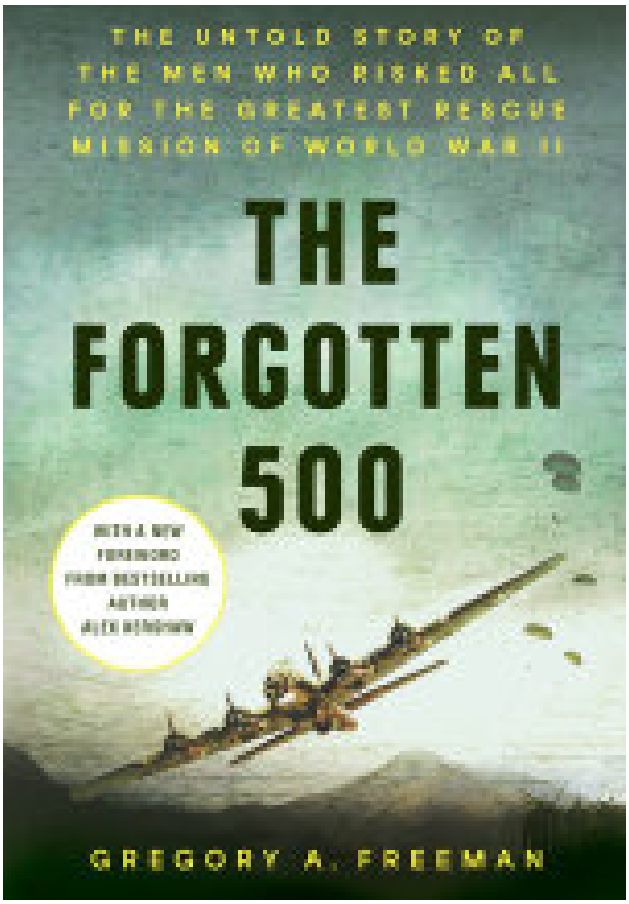
Hank Rhodes
USN (Fmr)

The library hosted 222 visitors in September (the last month for which data is available).

One Veterans History Project interview has been conducted, and is in post-production.

In support of alleviating overcrowding on our bookshelves, the Library Team continues to pursue strategies in deaccessioning some of our holdings. One area of consideration is World War I books that are specific to events that occurred before the United States entered that conflict in 1917, over two and a half years after hostilities commenced.

Books removed form the collection, along with book donations that we are not able to use, are deposited on the free book cart outside the library.



Book of the Month: *The Forgotten 500* by Gregory A. Freeman

Reviewed by H.V. Rhodes

During World War II, the mission of the United States 15th Air Force was to attack targets in southern Europe, especially strategic oil-producing infrastructure in Romania. To reach targets in Romania, the 15th Air Force bombers had to overfly Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia from bases in newly-liberated Italy. Battle damage to the B-24 bombers resulted in a large number of downed American airmen who were rescued by anti-Nazi Yugoslav paramilitaries. These Americans were caught behind enemy lines, not combatants but not Prisoners of War.

In the best tradition of “no man left behind,” the Air Force and the Office of Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA) determined to rescue these stranded airmen. Thus, “Operation Halyard” was launched.

How this amazing rescue operation was planned and executed is the main focus of this book. The successful recovery of so many Americans from a precarious situation was facilitated in no small part by the people of Yugoslavia.

In a situation similar to events in China, Yugoslavia was subject to a three-cornered war, between communist paramilitaries, non-communist paramilitaries, and the Nazi invader. After World War II in Europe ended, the two sides fought it out for mastery of Yugoslavia. The communist won the war and the militia leader who greatly added the Americans was subject to a show trial and executed.

The reluctance of the U.S. government to intervene is criticized as a betrayal by the author. He exercises hindsight based on knowledge not available to the American political leadership, who were concerned with containing communism without provoking another war. They also had a natural aversion to enter the quagmire of politics in the Balkans. It should be noted that after a series of atrocities and wars in the 1990s, Yugoslavia split up into seven different countries.

This is a little-known but exhilarating story that reads like an adventure tale.

The Forgotten 500 is located in the BVMC Library at WWIIED-02.





Store Updates & BOGO SALE!

By Jalaine Spears

The most famous and revered military Thanksgiving tradition is the reversal of chain of command during the holiday meal. On this day, commanders, senior officers and NCOs put on aprons, pick up carving knives and ladle gravy, carve turkeys and serve junior service members.This acts as a powerful gesture of humility and gratitude, visually symbolizing that military leadership ultimately exists to protect, guide and serve those under their command.

A massive, months-long logistical operation coordinated by DLA (Defense Logistics Agency) ensures that even the most remotely deployed service members receive a traditional meal. Thousands of pounds of turkey, cranberry sauce, stuffing and pumpkin pies are shipped across oceans and continents. For small or isolated outposts aircrews and helicopter teams prioritize delivering foil-wrapped meals right to the field so troops know they are not forgotten. The military dining facilities are heavily decorated with fall leaves, tablecloths and paper turkeys to ensure a warm family like tradition. For service members stationed in the US but far from home, local communities and chaplains often have local families adopt a pair of servicemen to host them for Thanksgiving dinners.

Wishing you and your families the happiest of Thanksgiving holidays and remember those veterans protecting our freedom, wherever they may be.

In honor of our veterans and the upcoming holiday season, the Gift Store is having a month-long sale. BOGO, buy one get one free. We have lots of new hats, toys and tee shirts for your special person. Hope to see you!





Remembering Raymond Norman

The Brevard Veterans Memorial Center (BVMC) mourns the passing of Raymond Norman, who passed away October 17, 2026. Ray dedicated more than 30 years of service to our organization, contributing his time, leadership, and expertise to the Veterans Center, Museum, and Council.

He served in numerous capacities, including Secretary, Board Director, Docent and liaison for the Sons of the American Revolution.

Ray brought a remarkable lifetime of service to everything he did. A NASA veteran, he supported more than 150 launches before retiring in 1990. He also proudly served in Army intelligence, including assignments during the Cold War and Desert Storm, retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer 3 in 1995. Beyond his professional and military accomplishments, Ray was an enthusiastic golfer, community volunteer, and passionate supporter of preserving our nation's history. His dedication to veterans and the BVMC leaves a lasting legacy, and his many years of friendship and service will not be forgotten.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Ray's sons, Raymond and Steven, his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and extended family. Thank you, Ray, for more than three decades of unwavering service to our veterans and our community. You will be greatly missed.



Celebrating Eleanor Fadok's 100th Birthday

On October 30th, the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center family gathered at Hampton Manor to celebrate an incredible milestone — Eleanor Fadok's 100th birthday! While it wasn't her exact birthday, friends, volunteers, and BVMC leadership came together to honor Eleanor's many years of devoted service.

A beloved fixture in the Library every Sunday for many years, please join us in wishing Eleanor a very happy 100th birthday and in thanking her for her unwavering commitment to preserving the stories and spirit of our nation's veterans.







No Longer Forgotten: 18 Veterans Laid to Rest with 100 Acting as Their Families

BNOVLB
Brevard No One Veteran Left Behind

Three years ago, the Support Committee of the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery (CCNC), the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center and the Cape Canaveral Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America came together to complete a mission. They created a new joint volunteer group. For decades in Brevard County and beyond, some veterans have been abandoned at their end of service, sacrifice and life. No family has come to claim them at area funeral homes, as some urns remain in storage for decades. For the fourth time, the Brevard No One Veteran Left Behind group organized a service for 18 such veterans from all service branches on 30 September 2026. The staff at CCNC provided extensive support as Director and Army veteran Cindy VanBibber opened the service with poignant words about the veterans being forgotten no more. She said those who attended that day were their family.



Rep Mike Haridopolos attended and prepares to accept the folded flag for all recognized veterans.

Almost 100 attended the morning ceremony, which included a somber approach via caisson; reading the names and branch of service of all 18; ringing the bell for each veteran; the flag ceremony, rifle salute and TAPS by the North Brevard Honor Guard; and cordons of visitors, including the Patriot Guard Riders, saluting the veterans as their urns and folded flags passed by. It turned out to be the last day of federal service after more than 40 years for CCNC Director Van Bibber. She was joined by U.S. Representative Mike Haridopolos to receive the folded flag. That ended the poignant service for the 18, but the program was not over.



The Caisson with Tom and Denise Fitzgerald begins the trek to the Service honoring 18 Veterans.

CCNC staff read the names of 136 veterans who were laid to rest at CCNC in the past year without any family members present. The 100 became their family, too. CCNC is unique in the country and is the only VA cemetery (Army-run Arlington is another) that includes a volunteer caisson team and a group of ladies. The Cape Canaveral Ladies attend every veteran funeral ceremony at CCNC during the year. The Caisson and North Brevard Honor Guard support many of them as well. In fact, the CC Ladies were there for all 136 veterans at the end of their journey in life.

Thanks to the many organizations that sent volunteers and observers besides the three BNOVLB founders. The Sons of the American Revolution were there in period uniform during America 250, along with Rolling Thunder, the North Brevard Honor Guard and more. As the ceremony closed, the somber mood changed to many smiles when the onlookers realized, as noted by BNOVLB Coordinator Donn Weaver, who led the service, that they had sealed the bargain of America—honor veterans and make sure they are never forgotten. That day, they were also no longer alone.

CPT Donn Weaver USA



Urn and Flag Bearers, the Honor Guard and many who came to pay respects and observe, listen quietly.

Brevard School Board Honors Veterans with Proclamation

At their 27 October meeting and prior to Veterans Day, the Brevard Public Schools Board and Staff honored all Veterans with a moving Proclamation. Members of the BVMC joined in receiving the notice.

School Board Members are above, with Chairman Matt Susin in the center.

BPS Superintendent Dr. Mark Rendell, also a veteran, joins the others on the bottom row. The Declaration, which reflects on the strong Veteran/BPS Partnership in many ways, will be placed at the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center for permanent display.

The event reflected on the unique connections veterans enjoy with not only the schools, but also the Space Coast government and community.





Rockledge Raider JROTC Team Shines at National Meet

The Rockledge JROTC Raider Team worked very hard since August and turned heads at the first Brevard JROTC Raider Challenge Meet on 03 Oct at BVMC Park.

They qualified for a national-level meet at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, in late September and did not disappoint. There were a total of 92 schools from across America, as well as Germany and Guam, competing in male, female and mixed teams in the grueling five-event meet.

The Rockledge mixed team completed the team-building bridge-crossing exercise in just over two minutes, just one-half second behind the first-place finishers. Congratulations, Raiders!

There were two more Raider Challenge JROTC meets at the Amphitheater Park on 31 Oct and 14 Nov, with the State Meet set for 14 December, when Raider teams will have another chance to attend State, Regional and National Raider Challenge meets in January.



Close up of the trophy.



The Rockledge Army JROTC Raider Team after Second Place Finish at National Meet on the Challenging Rope Bridge over water. Sr JROTC Instructor Maj Steven Celeste, USA Ret on right.

What Rain: First JROTC Raider Challenge Meet at BVMC Park a Huge Success



Preparing for Trophy Presentation.



Opening Ceremony.

Despite the threat of rain and a drizzle that early morning just before the team run, more than 300 JROTC Cadets from 12 high schools, along with more than 400 parents, siblings and friends, pushed through a challenging five-event Raider Challenge (RC) Course. It was the first RC meet of the school year and the first held at the Veterans Memorial Amphitheater and Park. RC Meets are also scheduled for Halloween morning and 14 November, when schools will be competing to send teams to the State Championship just before Thanksgiving. The morning was marked with great enthusiasm, cheering, balanced competition and exhausted cadets when it was over.

RC includes 10-person cadet teams in male, female and mixed categories competing in a 5K run (shortened to 3K for the initial RC Meet); truck tire flip; rope bridge crossing; drag, carry and pull; and litter carry of 1km. The entire team has to complete each task, which is timed as well as evaluated on criteria in each event. For this first meet, no overall team trophies were awarded, but the yelling, pride and sense of accomplishment were evident with all JROTC cadets at the closing ceremony.

Teams included Umatilla and East River from Orange County, with Rockledge Raider Battalion, led by LTC Steve Celeste, USA, Ret., as hosts. Thanks to County Parks and Rec for their support at the amazing facility and to Brevard Public Schools for coordinating the approvals and providing EMS services. Some equate the rigor of RC to a football game where EMS is standing by. Several cadets were treated on the spot with no transports!!

In addition to support from the Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, the Good Deeds Foundation of the Military Officers Association provided all the RC trophies and will do so for all JROTC events this school year, saving the programs over $9K. With so many high school students enrolled in JROTC in Brevard County (the number is unofficially over 2400), the veterans who came to watch the first RC had to smile, knowing our country will be in good hands when they have to stop serving.

CPT Donn Weaver USA, Former

Synergy Float Spa Offers Free Floats to 12 Veterans for Veterans Day

Synergy Float Spa will honor Veterans Day by offering complimentary, 60-minute float appointments to 12 veterans during November 9–15. Starting Monday, October 19, veterans can visit the veteran-owned spa at 264 North Grove St., Merritt Island, for a tour and in-person registration. Appointments will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

The tour will introduce veterans to the float rooms and give them an opportunity to ask questions before booking their complimentary session. Participants must be first-time clients at Synergy and present proof of military service at registration. Once all 12 appointments are reserved, additional veterans can join a waitlist; Synergy will contact waitlisted veterans if cancellations create an opening.

During a float, participants lie back in skin-temperature water saturated with Epsom salt. Buoyancy reduces the need to bear body weight against gravity, creating a feeling of weightlessness. Reduced light, sound, and other outside stimulation provide a quiet setting for relaxation. Visitors can discuss comfort preferences and what to expect before deciding whether to float. “During my military career, I felt like my fight-or-flight response never switched off,” said Christopher Jones, founder of Synergy Float Spa and a retired military officer. “Floating changed my relationship with rest. I want fellow veterans to explore that experience and know they have people and resources to turn to.” A 2018 study published in PLOS ONE examined a one-hour float in 50 adults with anxiety and stress-related disorders, including 17 diagnosed with PTSD. Participants reported reductions in immediate anxiety and stress. The findings were preliminary: the study did not establish lasting improvement in PTSD. Synergy presents floating as a complementary relaxation option alongside established care.

Veterans interested in participating must complete a tour at Synergy Float Spa and register in person beginning October 19. Standard intake and waiver requirements apply. For tour information, call 321-305-6275 or email office@synergyfloatspa.com.

About Synergy Float Spa

Synergy Float Spa is a veteran-owned wellness business in Merritt Island, Florida, offering floatation therapy and complementary wellness services. Founded by Christopher Jones, the spa’s mission is “Optimizing Humanity.” Learn more at www.synergyfloatspa.com.



VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER, INC
STORIES OF SERVICE

Brevard Veterans Memorial Center

Salutes our Veterans

2026

"A soldier fights not because he hates what's in front of him, but because he loves what's behind him."

Opening 9:00 A.M.
Vice President Don Pearsall

Invocation
BVMC Chaplin Chip Hanson

Posting Call for Colors

Pledge of Allegiance

National Anthem
Harbor City Harmonizers

Introduction of
LCDR Dean Schaaf
President BVMC

Guest Speaker
Steve Bruch
Military Affairs Counsel

Introductions of Newly Elected Officers
By Dean Schaaf

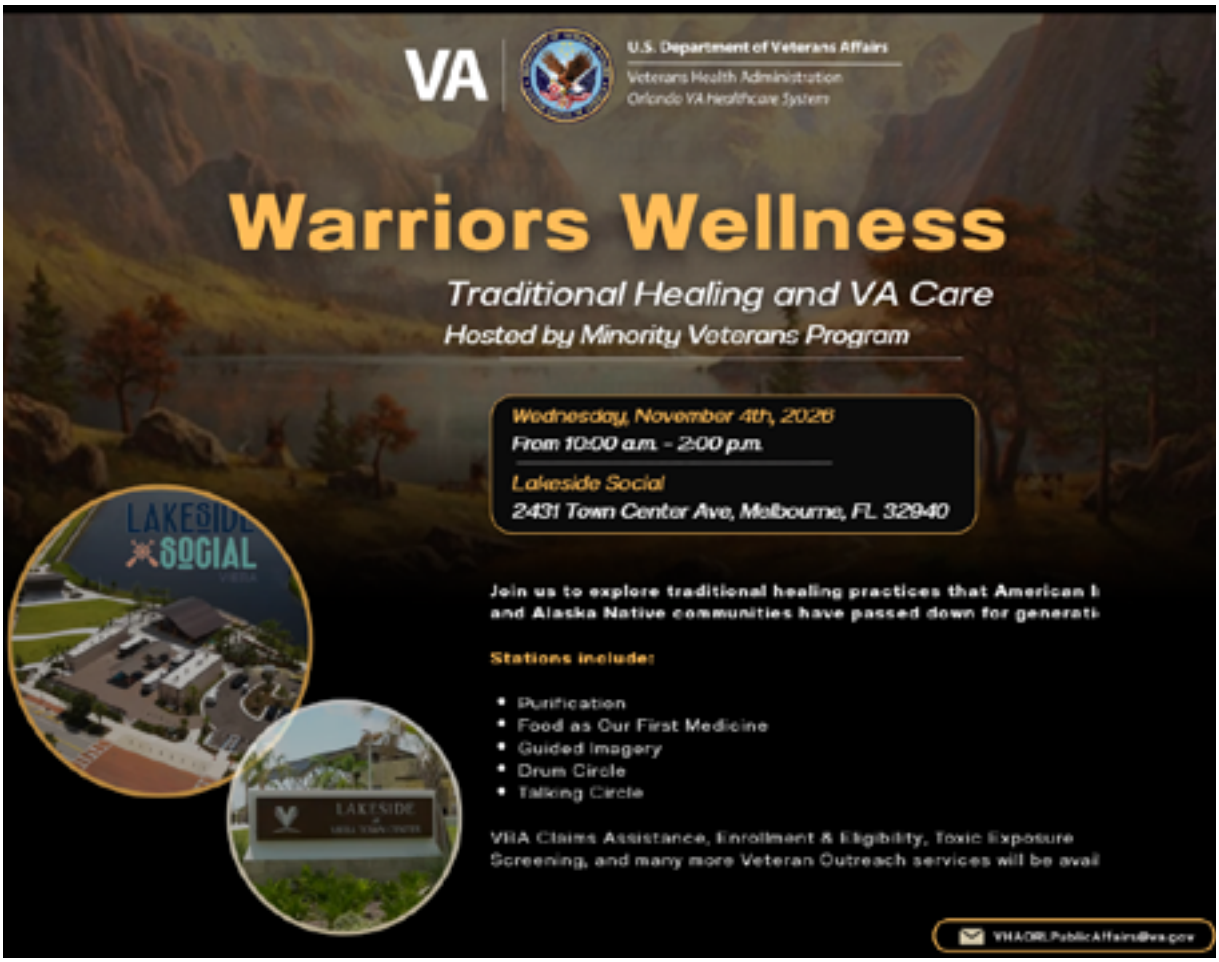
Swearing in of 2026-2027 BVMC Officers
By Dana Bickley -
Brevard County Property Appraiser

Complimentary Breakfast for Guests
New Officers Reception
Courtesy of SpaceX





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



MELBOURNE VET CENTER





CELEBRATES

NOVEMEBER 5TH 2026 at the Melbourne Vet Center

2098 Sarno Rd

Melbourne FL

321-254-3410

10am—2pm

Refreshments Music







Brevard VMC Vets Calendar

November 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/

NOVEMBER

06 Nov — Boomer Bash and Senior Expo at RT7 Facility on APR Way off Route 1 in Rockledge. 0900-1300. Booths, music, food and lots of information. Sponsored by Senior Life.

07 Nov — Annual St Francis Hospice 5K Run for Veterans at the new Veterans Memorial Park Amphitheater and Plaza 0730- 1130. Includes vendors, awards, veteran pinning as SFH raises funds for their "We Honor Veterans Program "throughout the County all year. Details and registration in September.

07 Nov — Third Annual Cape Canaveral Veterans Day Parade sponsored by VFW Post 10131. Starts and Ends near the Cape Canaveral City Hall at 1111 Hours until 1330. Includes music, vendors, food, and more. Sign ups and more information via VFW Post 10131 and the City of Cape Canaveral.

07 Nov — Second Annual VyStar MOACC Good Deeds Foundation Veterans Recognition Dinner 1700-2000 Fundraiser at the Melbourne Hilton Rialto as they recognize veteran organizations, projects and individuals who have made major contributions on the Space Coast 2025-26. Keynote Speaker is Rep Mike Haridopolos, with Clerk of Courts Rachel Sadoff as MC and Sheriff Wayne Ivey as Auctioneer. Sign up to reserve seats NLT 03 Nov at moaacc.org

07 Nov — Veterans Day Parade in Palm Bay 1000-1200. The parade "Honoring All Who Served"starts at the Tony Rosa Community Center and end at Palm Bay Veterans Memorial Park. contact HolidayParade@palmbayfl.gov for more info and to register an entry.

08 Nov — Home Stretch 9th Annual 5K sponsored by National Veterans Homeless Support in the Eau Gallie Arts District with the start at 0800 hours. Sign up at https://runsignup.com/homestretch5k

11 Nov — Veteran Day Event at BVMC Plaza and Gray Hall 0900-1130 to include Ceremony and swearing - in new BVMC Officers and Board by Dana Blickley, County Property Appraiser. Brunch and celebration meal courtesy of Space X.

13 Nov — Annual Marine Corps Ball at Space Coast Convention Center, Cape Canaveral 1700-2200 sponsored by Brevard Marine Corps League Chapter 513. Ceremony, dinner, silent auction, tradition, dancing and fun. Contact: mclbrevard513@gmail.com to sign up, pay and for more information. Tickets $60 each.

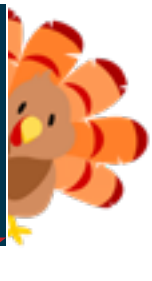
14 Nov — JROTC Raider Challenge Meet #3 for District Championship at BVMC Park and Amphitheater (0630-1300) NOTE: State Championships on 12 Dec. Welcome observers and veterans1000-1230 to help provide trophies covered by the MOAACC Good Deeds Foundation.

14 Nov — Red, White and Brass Free Veteran Musical Tribute by the Space Coast Symphony Orchestra 1800-2000 at the Veterans Memorial Park Amphitheater. Bring Lawn Chairs for Seating and enjoy beautiful Patriotic Music to wrap up Veterans Day Week. Contact the BVMC or SCSO for more information. Thanks to SpaceX for sponsorship. Thanks to SCSO, a BVMC/County Partner in the new Amphitheater.

14 Nov — The Support Committee at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery (501(c)3) will be having their annual Fall Fundraiser on November 14 at American Legion Post 1 in Titusville. Beginning at 5:30, dinner tickets are available at $25 per person; a 50/50 raffle and many raffle items will be available in a silent auction. With a DJ, the evening will be fun, tasty and entertaining while supporting the efforts to enhance ceremonies and education about Cape Canaveral National Cemetery For reservations and more information: saavik31324@yahoo.com

For more events, visit our website!

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