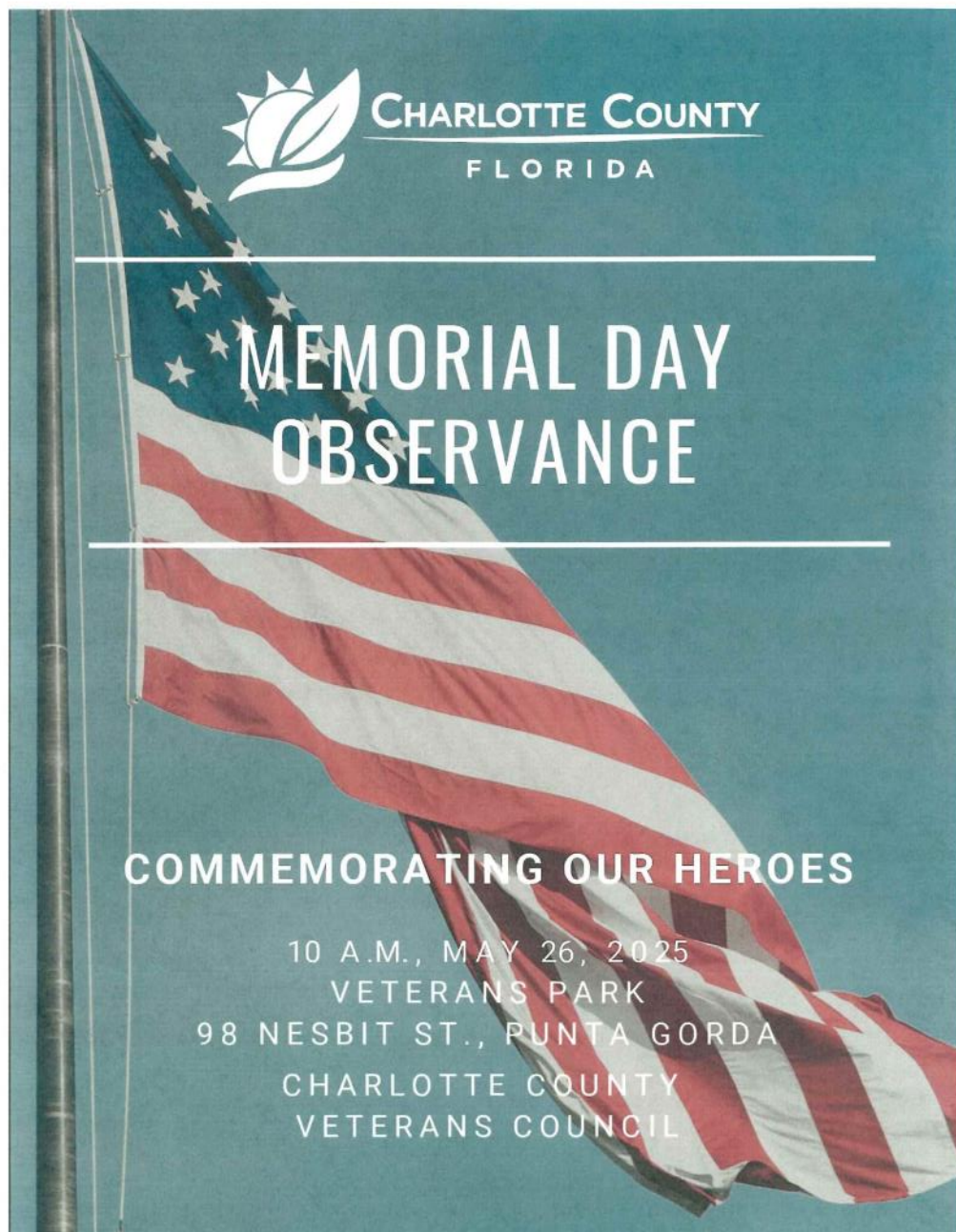


Charlotte County Veterans Council

May 2025
Volume 5, Issue 1

SOUND OFF



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NEW
Meeting Schedule
Last Monday of the
Month
Meetings held at
Charlotte County
Family Services Center
21500 Gibraltar Drive
Port Charlotte



*Charlotte County
Veterans Council President
Steve Cornwell*

Words from our President

Being on the disabled list, I missed the Vietnam Memorial Day Program in March. I did see the videos and they were amazing. With about 550 people in attendance, it was a real tribute to all of the Vietnam veterans.

The CCVC invites all of our community to the County Memorial Day Program on Monday, May 26th at 10:00 am at Veterans Park in Punta Gorda.

Hope to see you all there.

Steve Cornwell

CCVC President



Rolling Thunder Ride For Freedom Florida

Memorial Day Weekend May 23 - 25, 2025

Laishley Park, Punta Gorda, FL



Johnny Orr



Registration Link



ROLLING THUNDER



Rolling Thunder Ride For Freedom 25 May 2025

Laishley Park Punta Gorda to Bert's Black Widow Harley Davidson Port Charlotte



Call Hotels direct for discount - Wyvern, Baymont Inn & Suites, Four Points Tiki,

Holiday Inn Express, Springhill Suites, American Inn, Sunseeker Resort

Friday 23 May - Gold Star Family Dinner at American Legion 103 at 6:30pm (private) followed by the

Rolling Thunder Candlelight Vigil at The Vietnam Memorial Wall in Laishley Park at 8:30pm with

Guns & Hoses Pipes and Drums of SW Florida which is open to public

Saturday 24 May - Rolling Thunder in Laishley Park from 2-8pm - Join us for Live Music featuring Pure

Country, Rock Candy, and Johnny Orr along with Food Trucks, Speakers, Vendors, and more!!

Sunday 25 May - Rolling Thunder Ride For Freedom - Laishley Park check in starts at 8am
and Kick Stands Up at 11am for Police escorted ride to Bert's Black Widow and a BBQ Buffet lunch

Use the QR Code above to register for the Ride For Freedom



Commissioner's Corner

Charlotte County Veterans Clinic

*Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch
USCG Veteran and County Liaison*

Several years ago the Veterans Administration agreed to expanding our Charlotte County VA Clinic to 32,000 square feet. They even suggested it would be somewhere between Kings Highway and Tamiami Trail (41) as it goes through Charlotte County.

We were told the VA was waiting for the funds to be appropriated. Not hearing a word for several years, we were all surprised by a press release this past January indicating that the clinic was going to be expanded. But it was going to be located in North port, and our clinic would be closed! North Port has a population of about 90,000 people – Charlotte County has a population of 224,000 people and an estimated veteran population of over 35,000.

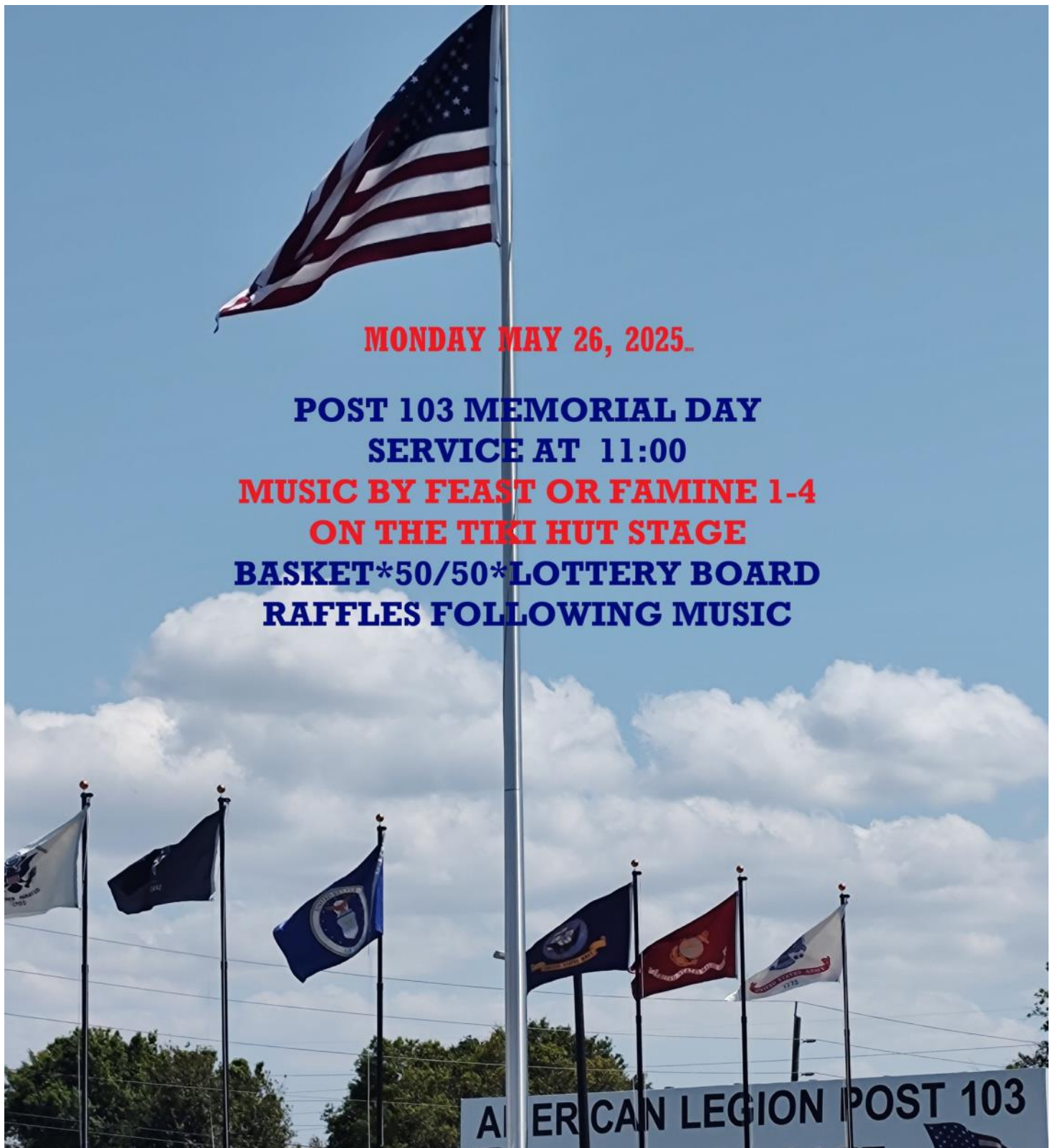
This is not acceptable! We have many veterans who rely on Charlotte Transit to get back and forth from the clinic. Charlotte Transit cannot leave out county. Sarasota County has a clinic. Lee County has a Clinic. We must maintain our Charlotte County clinic. I contacted our Congressional Delegation to seek their support. We formed an ad hoc committee including Punta Gorda Mayor, Dr. Deborah Lux, Air Force Veteran and Kathleen “Kat” Pellegrino and held a Zoom conference

call with Congressman Steube’s office last week. The Congressman had not been advised of the proposed move and he was also very concerned. The VA Secretary told him after a few calls that our clinic would stay in Charlotte County. I suggested he get it in writing.

We are still looking to get this confirmed and our facility enlarged to include some additional services like vision checks and hearing tests. We are having a second meeting with the Congressman next week and we will keep everyone posted.

Stephen R. Deutsch





MONDAY MAY 26, 2025..

**POST 103 MEMORIAL DAY
SERVICE AT 11:00**

**MUSIC BY FEAST OR FAMINE 1-4
ON THE TIKI HUT STAGE**

**BASKET*50/50*LOTTERY BOARD
RAFFLES FOLLOWING MUSIC**

**D.M. McQUEEN AMERICAN LEGION POST 103
2101 Taylor Rd., Punta Gorda**

Memorial Day Remembrance

Submitted by Stephen R. Deutsch

Over the years, Memorial Day has become better known as the unofficial start of the summer season. All too many folks limit their celebrating the day off with hot dogs and barbeques, forgetting the real meaning of the day.

Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. Originally known as "Decoration Day", the graves of soldiers were decorated with flowers and visited with respectful mourning. Many wore a red poppy in honor of those who made the supreme sacrifice to preserve our nation's freedom.

The history of Memorial Day goes back to the post-civil war era when some women in a small southern town in the south were placing flowers on the graves of their fallen fathers, husbands and sons. One of the women noticed her friend placing flowers on the graves of Union soldier, she asked the woman why she was decorating the grave of a Union soldier. The woman responded and said she had some flowers left and she was sure that there are women in the north placing flowers on the graves of the Confederate soldiers we all loved and cherished.

The day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868, by General John Logan, Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic. It was observed on May 30, 1868, as Decoration Day, with the placing of flowers on graves in

memory and appreciation of both Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

Today Memorial Day honors all Americans who have died in all of our wars. It is a day we remember those who died serving in the United States Armed Forces. Decorating graves may not be, but the importance of remembering those who have given their lives for our freedom is stronger today than ever.

This Memorial Day weekend, some 1,200 soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry will place a small American flag at each one of the more than 400,000 graves Arlington National Cemetery and then they will patrol the area 24 hours per day all weekend to ensure that each and every flag remains flying.

We invite you join us on May 26, and carry on these traditions, in true remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. On Monday May 26th at 10:00 am Charlotte County will have our annual Memorial Day program at the Replica of the Vietnam Wall in Punta Gorda. This is our effort to regain the true spirit of Memorial Day, and to remind us all to continue to honor those who have lost their lives for freedom.

We should encourage each other to visit cemeteries and place flags and flowers on soldier's graves, to visit memorials and reflect with our neighbors, to fly the U.S. Flag at half-staff until noon, to always fly the

Continued on page 7

Memorial Day Remembrance

Continued from page 6

POW/MIA flag to remember, and to honor those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedoms.

Today lots of folks get excited over popular television programs like “The Voice” and “The American Idol” ... well my friends, let me tell you that our real American Idols are not on your TV screen, they are found all around the world...

Our real heroes lie under a grassy field in Southern France... in a small, unmarked cemetery outside of Berlin... or far off in the Pacific on a remote island or on Omaha Beach... the frozen hills of Korea... a swamp in Viet Nam... the remains of a fallen barracks in Beirut, Lebanon...and in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan. These are our real American Idols... these are the people we should remember and idolize.

We are truly blessed to live here in freedom in these great UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. There is no greater sacrifice for our country or nation, our freedom and our liberty than that made by our revered veterans. Please join with us a personal commitment to respect and to honor our fallen veterans and their brothers and sisters who today continue to be our protectors and the guardians of our freedoms throughout the world.

Again, we welcome you to join us on Monday May 26th at 10:00 am for our Memorial Day Remembrance program at the Vietnam Wall in Punta Gorda.



Survivor Benefits for Family Members

If you're the surviving spouse, child, or parent of a service member or Veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness, you may be eligible for VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). DIC is a tax-free monthly financial benefit. Find out if you're eligible and how to apply.

[About VA DIC For Spouses, Dependents, And Parents | Veterans Affairs](#)

Our Accredited Veteran Service Officers will complete all the necessary forms for you.

NEW LOCATION

21500 Gibraltar Drive
Port Charlotte

6868 San Casa Drive
Englewood

941-764-5579

By appointment


CHARLOTTE COUNTY
Veteran Services



Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners Combat Wounded Veteran Recognition Program

Purpose: To recognize those individuals who, in the defense of their Country sustained injuries from combat and were awarded the Purple Heart.

Note: The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the U.S. Armed Services after April 5, 1917, has been wounded or killed.

Criteria: Veteran must have served during a War Time Period as set forth by the Laws of the United States and must have received the Purple Heart for injuries sustained. Veteran MUST be considered a full time Charlotte County resident. *A DD214 or equivalent discharge form (WWII/ some Korean War veterans) will be required along with application. If the Purple Heart medal is not on the discharge, proper documentation showing the award after-the-fact must be provided.*

Nomination Process: All nomination request forms must be turned in to the Charlotte County Veteran Services Office (1050 Loveland Blvd, Port Charlotte) by the 4th Monday of the month for a vote by the Charlotte County Veterans Council (CCVC). Nomination forms that are submitted late will not be reviewed until the next month.

Selection Process: The Charlotte County Veterans Council Executive Board will select the top three candidates and request a vote at the General Membership Meeting on the 4th Saturday of each month. The candidate receiving the most votes will have his/her nomination form forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners. The veteran will be notified of the date, time, and place of this honor.

Name of individual being nominated: _____ Date: _____

Nominee Address: _____

Nominee's Military Activities: (where, when, why was Purple Heart awarded to veteran)

_____ ...CONTINUE ON BACK IF NECESSARY

Veteran's Phone Number: (_____) _____ County of Residence: CHARLOTTE

Awards and Decorations:

Purple Heart, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

Nominated by: _____ Phone number: _____

The above listed veteran was/ was not (circle one) chosen for the Board of County Commissioners Combat Wounded Veteran Recognition Program.

DD 214/ Purple Heart verified by: _____
Charlotte County VSO President, CCVC Date

CCVC Membership

Membership is open to all United States veterans' organizations recognized by the Veterans Administration, The Royal Canadian Legion and such organizations in Charlotte County, that support veterans' issues, as decided by the Board of Directors and approved by a vote of the general membership.



Sign up early! Spots fill quickly.

[Register Here](#)

Participation in the Operation Outdoor Freedom Program has been established for Florida residents, as defined in [Section 379.101\(30\)\(b\), Florida Statutes](#), who are honorably discharged military veterans with either:

- A service-connected disability rating of 30% or greater from the United States Department of Veteran Affairs
- Or Purple Heart recipient

BEWARE OF CLAIMS PREDATORS!

You do not need to pay **ANYONE** to receive your benefits.

VA urges Veterans to use only VA accredited representatives and be on the lookout for aggressive **claims predators**.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs