

Veterans Memorial Museum & Park News Letter

by Dave Braun, chairman



Located on Highway 301 north, on the banks of the Tampa By-Pass Canal, just south of the Florida State Fair at I-4, the Veterans Museum and park is dedicated to American service personnel who have served their country both in the past and the present.

The museum is a 3,652-square-foot building located in the 35-acre park. The museum and park was a vision of area veterans in 1985, with construction starting in 1990. On July 4, 1991, the museum was dedicated in a patriotic ceremony.

This educational and cultural resource advances the understanding and knowledge of military history in the United States, with an emphasis on Florida. The displays and exhibits change from time to time, so that new material can be studied and examined both by veterans and the general public.

Past exhibits have included the Civil War, Second Seminole Indian War, Vietnam, Florida soldiers and the National Guard, World War II, live reenactments with a living history walk through time display, Korea, Spanish-American War, and the actual U.S. Coast Guard cutter Blackthorn display, featuring the ship's bell and the names of the crew members who were lost.

Special events are held throughout the year, sponsored by the Veterans Council of Hillsborough County. These include a Memorial Day tribute, POW/MIA Day, Veterans Day, Pearl Harbor Day, and a September 11th remembrance.

The static displays on the grounds of the park include The Veterans' Freedom Memorial, Hillsborough County's "official" memorial dedicated to all of America's veterans. The State of Florida submarine veterans of WWII relocated their official memorial to the park after the Orlando Naval Base closed.

In 2002, the Vietnam Helicopter Aircrew Museum, Inc., committee moved a Vietnam era OH-58 helicopter to the park. There are other choppers on display from time to time. The VHAM committee has an extensive display inside the museum as well.

The Veterans Museum Committee has been the driving force and host of the Salute to Vietnam Veterans and the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall event for the past nine years, and is planning Year 10 for April 2003.



Veterans Memorial Museum & Park
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