



# Military Heritage Museum

900 West Marion Avenue  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
941-575-9002  
[www.militaryheritagemuseum.org](http://www.militaryheritagemuseum.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## TICKETS ON SALE THROUGH FEBRUARY 10 FOR MILITARY HERITAGE MUSEUM'S THIRD ANNUAL PATRIOTS GALA

**PUNTA GORDA, FL** - The Military Heritage Museum announces that tickets are still on sale through February 10 for its Third Annual Patriots Gala, an elegant evening honoring service, sacrifice, and community leadership. The event will take place on February 21 at 6 p.m. at the Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center in Punta Gorda.

Proceeds from the Patriots Gala directly support the Military Heritage Museum's educational programs, preservation efforts and veteran-focused initiatives.

This year's gala will feature Rocky Bleier as the evening's guest speaker. A Vietnam War veteran and four-time Super Bowl champion with the Pittsburgh Steelers, Bleier is widely recognized for his extraordinary story of resilience. After being severely wounded in combat in Vietnam, he defied all odds to return to professional football and has since dedicated his life to inspiring others through service, leadership and perseverance. Bleier continues his advocacy work with organizations including the Purple Heart Foundation, the Warriors to Citizens Foundation and the National Flag Foundation.

In addition to the featured speaker, the evening will honor several distinguished award recipients:

- **Wall of Warriors Award:** Rear Admiral Lawrence C. Chambers  
A trailblazing naval officer whose historic career included becoming the first African American to command an aircraft carrier and whose leadership during the evacuation of Saigon aboard the *USS Midway* is recognized as one of the U.S. Navy's most critical humanitarian operations.
- **Educational Partner of the Year:** Charlotte County Public Schools  
Honored for their transformative partnership with the Military Heritage Museum, providing immersive, hands-on military history education to nearly 1,300 fifth-grade students annually through interactive exhibits, flight simulators, virtual reality and veteran storytelling.
- **Volunteer of the Year:** Donald Long  
A Vietnam veteran and retired airline captain who volunteers five days a week at the museum, helping build and operate flight simulators and mentoring the next generation of aviators.

The evening will be hosted by Leah Valenti, Supervisor of Elections for Charlotte County, serving as Master of Ceremonies.

We are honored to have as our \$5,000 Gold sponsors for the event:

Sommerville Financial Group of Raymond James

Cheryl Berlon

Jo Jacquelyn Lazzell

Tickets and sponsorships are available online, with ticket sales closing on February 11. Individual tickets are \$150, with sponsorship opportunities available at multiple levels.

**For tickets and information:** <https://onecau.se/patriotgala26>

Tina Figliuolo

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941-205-8546

The Military Heritage Museum is located at 900 West Marion Avenue in Punta Gorda. For more information or reservations, please go to the website and sign up at [www.militaryheritagemuseum.org](http://www.militaryheritagemuseum.org) or call 941-575-9002.

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