



The Joshua Tree

November 11, 2025

CELEBRATING OUR MILITARY SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL

On Veterans Day, the Rotary Club of Victorville welcomed **Brad Letner**, US Army Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.), whose engaging presentation reflected on our nation's long tradition of military service as we approach the Semiquincentennial, America's 250th anniversary next year.

Letner opened by describing the "birth pains" of a new nation, tracing the roots of our armed forces back to the Massachusetts Bay Colony's Citizen Soldiers. The National Guard was formed on December 13, 1636. These first regiments of farmers and tradesmen, originally organized under British authority, evolved into the Provincial and later Continental Congresses, answering the 1774 Call to Arms that led to the Battles of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, the first shots of the American Revolution.

From there, Letner guided the audience through the founding of each military branch:



Army: June 14, 1775: It was established by the Second Continental Congress to raise riflemen to defend Boston.

Navy: October 13, 1775: The Navy was authorized to use swift vessels to intercept British transports.

Marines: November 10, 1775: The Marines were "Born in a Tavern," beginning their recruitment at Philadelphia's Tun Tavern under Samuel Nicholas.

Coast Guard: August 4, 1790: Created by President George Washington as the Revenue Cutter Service to enforce customs laws and protect American maritime interests.

He continued through the evolution of modern branches: the Air Force, created by the National Security Act of 1947, which emerged from earlier Army aviation divisions, and the Space Force, established in 2019 to address the growing importance of space in national defense.

Letner also provided a sobering look at America's history of service and sacrifice, highlighting the proportion of the population that has fought in each major conflict—from 10% during the Revolutionary War and Civil War, to just 3% in the modern Gulf War era. As the nation's population has grown, the percentage of Americans who serve has diminished, underscoring the exceptional commitment of today's military members and veterans.

This Week's Functionaries

Invocation: Chris Ackerman

Flag Salute: Brad Letner

4-Way Test: Don Kinnard

Fine Master: Ryan McEachron

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BILL'S BANTER

Thank you to our own Brad Letner for celebrating Veterans Day with his great

program on the history of our Military. Thank you for your service Brad and all of our Club vets!



If you did not attend this week's meeting, the rumors are true, I have stepped down as your Club President and my final meeting with the Club will be next Tuesday, November 18th. The closing of the Rescue Mission has caused Marianne and me to reevaluate our lives and we are planning to relocate soon to Washington to be closer to our family and grandchildren.

More changes are happening as well! Steve Murray, joined by spouse Pam Murray, have stepped up to take on the role of Club Secretary and we welcome Darron Poulsen as Club Treasurer!

I have truly been blessed to be part of Rotary for the past 10 years. I wanted to thank the Board and the membership for your love and support. You have taught me so much that I will take on my next journey.

Until next week...

Bill Edwards

Letner...

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In closing, Letner shared that while Americans continue to hold great confidence in veterans and the military, that trust and esteem have waned compared to previous decades. Nearly half of Americans rarely or never communicate with veterans. This serves as an important reminder, on Veterans Day and beyond, of the need to engage with, thank, and learn from those who have served.

As we near the nation's 250th birthday, Letner's message was clear: understanding our military's origins helps preserve the freedoms they were created to protect. A fitting tribute to the men and women who have stood watch over our country for nearly two and a half centuries.

Rotary Club of Victorville
cordially invites you to our

Christmas Party

December 11, 2025
5pm

Chateau Chang
15425 Anacapa Rd
Victorville, CA 92392

Please R.S.V.P by December 9, 2025
Pam Murray 760-963-1923
pam75454@msn.com

UNITE FOR GOOD

Big Blue Poker Chip



Ben Tafoya had the chance to draw the Blue Chip, and wouldn't you know it, He did it and won \$325! We start again next week with 14 chips and \$200 for the lucky Rotarian who can draw the Blue Chip.

Rotary Guests

This week we welcomed **Abra Haro** and **Courtney Jefferson** from High Desert Pace as guests of **Chandale Sutton**, and **Aly Martinez** joined **Angel Espino** at the meeting. Finally, **Steve Murray** invited **Denise Pasley** and **Elena Rivera** from the Rotary Club of Barstow.

Giving Back



Our Club was glad to give back to Rotary this week! As a thank you to the Rotary Club of Barstow, The Club presented members **Elena Rivera** and **Denise Pasley** a check in the amount of \$600 for their invaluable help with the Bingo game at our 75th Anniversary Gala Fundraiser. Thank you Rotary Club of Barstow for your wonderful assistance in making our gala a huge success!

Raffle

During this week's Raffle, **Chris Ackerman** donated a couple of Victor Valley Transit VVTA blankets that will keep **Brad Letner** and **Dan Dever** nice and warm.

Steve Murray donated a Bob's Tire coffee mug that was won by guest **Abra Haro** and a Rotary 75th Anniversary swag bag went to **Elena Rivera** from the Barstow Club. Finally, **Don Lager** will enjoy a \$15 cup of coffee from Starbucks, thanks to the gift card he won courtesy of Mr. Letner.

Fine Session



Ryan McEachron was our Fine Master and he gave all of our Past Presidents in attendance a fine of \$10. Those who received fines included **Ben Tafoya, Brad Letner, Mike Page, Steve Murray, Arsalee Morales** and even Ryan himself.

Spoon of Exception

Chandale Sutton had the Spoon this week and gave more information on High Desert PACE. He shared they take care of senior healthcare, physical therapy, occupational therapy and more, plus have their own transportation program to assist with bringing their clients to and from their Victorville facility.



The Polio Pig

Collected this week: \$16.00

Collected to Date: \$21,635.68

Total equals: 104,250 Doses!

**One dollar equals 2 Doses of Vaccine!
\$500 pays for a Polio Clinic!**



VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS

Board of Directors

President 2025-2026	TBA
President 2026 - 2027	Please be Interviewed
Immediate Past President/Club Service	Bryan Gillespie
Executive Secretary/Grants	Steve and Pam Murray
Treasurer	Darron Poulsen
Youth Services/Ethics Essay	Please Volunteer
Foundation.....	Darron Poulsen
Club Service & Membership	Bryan Gillespie
International Service.....	Ben Tafoya
Youth Service	Ryan McEachron
Community Service	Arsalee Morales
Vocational Service	Angel Espino

Members-at-Large: Bob Basen, Ron Boyd, Steve Murray, Ron Boyd, Rob Kilpatrick

Positions & Committee Chairs

BOD/PP Secretary.....	Pam Murray
Scholarships.....	Please Volunteer
Special Billing	Esther Mears (TBD)
Public Service Awards.....	Please Volunteer
Teacher Mini-Grants	Angel Espino
Special Projects.....	Rob Kilpatrick
Dan Stover Music Contest.....	Angel Espino
Joshua Tree Editor	Chris Ackerman
Read B4K	Brad Letner
Grants.....	Please Volunteer
Food Baskets.....	Bill Edwards
Interact (Junior Rotary).....	Please Volunteer
Programs	Mike Page
Fundraising	Stefanie Montoya
S.T.A.R. Students	Angel Espino
Club Learning Facilitator.....	Please Volunteer

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship
at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Bear Valley
Country Club, 13229 Spring Valley Parkway, Victorville

Make-up Days and Locations

MONDAY:	San Bernardino East, Imperial Palace, noon
TUESDAY:	Rancho Cucamonga Sunrise, 7:15 a.m. Empire Lakes Golf Course Rancho Cucamonga, 12:00 p.m., Etiwanda Gardens
WEDNESDAY:	San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon, Barstow, DiNapoli's Firehouse, 1358 E Main St, Barstow, CA
THURSDAY:	Apple Valley, Rusty Bull, 13685 John Glenn Rd, Apple Valley, Noon. Ontario, 12:15 p.m., Doubletree Hotel San Bernardino, Denny's at I-15, 7 a.m. Redlands, Masonic Temple, noon
FRIDAY:	San Bernardino North, Elks Lodge, 12:05 p.m.

Calendar Dates

- Dec 1** **Board of Directors Meeting**
5:30pm Board Meeting
ISU ARMAC Insurance Agency
17177 Yuma St., Victorville, CA 92395
- Dec 11** **Rotary Christmas Party**
5:00pm at Chateau Chang
15425 Anacapa Rd, Victorville
\$65 per person; \$130 per couple
RSVP to Pam Murray at 760-963-1923 or
fill out sign-up sheet at meetings.

Upcoming Programs

- Nov 18** Mike Johnson **TOPIC "Exploring Ancient Egypt"** (Page)
- Nov 25** Chris and Jason Lamoreaux, Coldwell Banker Home Source **TOPIC "Real Estate Update"** (Page)
- Dec 2** **OPEN**
- Dec 9** Jason Anderson, San Bernardino County District Attorney **TOPIC "TBA"** (Page)



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