

# Rockin' for Heroes

## A celebration of veterans, community and unshakable spirit

Nov 24, 2025

ROCKIN' FOR HEROES delivered everything its name promised. Nearly 900 people filled the grounds of Indian Rocks Beach VFW Post 10094 in Largo, Florida, to celebrate Veterans Day weekend in grand style, honoring military service and paying special tribute to the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps.

What unfolded on Sunday, Nov. 9, was a heartfelt, high-energy celebration that blended music, patriotism, and community pride into a truly unforgettable Gulf Coast experience. From the moment attendees entered the gates, the excitement was electric.

The venue – already known for its strong community culture – rose to new heights with a world-class performance stage, proudly adorned with patriotic symbols and supported by 500 sold-out reserved seats, a spacious covered VIP area and a close knit general admission area where attendees were accommodated by a host of sponsors and vendors, who provided tasty food, cold drink and community outreach.

The entertainment lineup set the tone early with The Surfin' Raccoons, who lit up the afternoon with crowd-pleasing covers that had fans on their feet. They were followed by Nashville rising country star Derek Stoner. A retired U.S. Army Green Beret, Stoner's powerful vocals and deeply personal songs drew from his 20 years in Special Operations, connecting his experiences in service to a grateful nation with the heartfelt admiration of the audience.

As day turned to night, Rockin' for Heroes reached a thrilling crescendo when Southern rock legends Molly Hatchet took the stage. Delivering a high-octane rock-and-roll performance with hit-after-hit, including such iconic anthems like "Gator Country," "Dreams I'll Never See", and their multi-platinum selling "Flirtin' With Disaster" – the standing-room-only crowd roared with enthusiasm and excitement.

Midway through their set, guitarist and bandleader Bobby Ingram invited event organizer

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Steve Kalnasy, Post Commander Dean Lyons, Senior Vice Commander Heather Ingrafina, Junior Vice Commander Niko Troia, and Post Quartermaster Sandra Davis onstage for special recognition by the band, who was grateful for the invitation to salute veterans.

Performing a moving flag-folding ceremony reminiscent of a formal military honor guard, the tribute brought the crowd to its feet as the crowd erupted into chants of “USA! USA! USA!”

The success of Rockin’ for Heroes was made possible through the outstanding support of committed volunteers, and generous sponsors, including CarePlus, Conviva Senior Health Care, Veterans A/C and Heat, Battle Law, Kiewit, Powered by Belltech, Holiday Inn Harbourside – Indian Rocks Beach, Mad Music, The Bluffs of Belleair, The City of Indian Rocks Beach, and a host of others.

Their financial backing, equipment donations and steadfast encouragement – along with a dedicated team of volunteers from throughout the region – brought this celebration to life at Indian Rocks Beach VFW Post 10094.

Rockin’ for Heroes wasn’t just a concert – it was a reminder of what can be accomplished when gratitude, patriotism and community spirit take center stage.

*About the author: Steven Kalnasy is a trustee with VFW Post 10094 in Largo, Florida. This article is featured in the 2025 November issue of Checkpoint. If you're a VFW member and don't currently receive the VFW Checkpoint, please contact VFW magazine at [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org).*