



ROBERT B. MIDDLETON
VICE PRESIDENT, BRODHEAD ASSOCIATION



Brodhead Association Memorial Day event.

BRODHEAD ASSOCIATION: PRESERVING DETROIT’S NAVAL LEGACY AND UPLIFTING VETERANS



Brodhead Naval Armory, Detroit. Inset images: Cdr. Robert Middleton, Memorial Day Dedication. Armory interior woodcarving detail.

Tucked along Detroit’s East Jefferson corridor, **the Brodhead Naval Armory stands as one of the city’s most iconic and historically rich military landmarks.** Built in 1930, the Art Deco building once served as a training and mobilization site for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. Its walls have echoed with the footsteps of sailors, cadets, and community leaders—including President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who visited to recognize Detroit’s pivotal role as the “Arsenal of Democracy” during World War II. With its soaring ceilings, detailed woodwork, and WPA-era murals, the Armory represents both military might and civic pride.

Today, the Brodhead Association is leading efforts to preserve this historic site and reimagine its role for the next century. At the helm is Robert B. Middleton, the association’s vice president, who has dedicated his career to historic preservation and Veteran advocacy.

The organization’s mission is to transform the Armory into a world-class repository honoring over 100 years of Detroit’s military and nautical heritage—while fostering new opportunities for Veteran support, youth mentorship, and community development.

“The Armory is more than a building—it’s a tangible symbol of military, cultural, and community identity,” Middleton said. “It connects generations and reflects the honor, distinction, and sacrifice of those who served.”

Currently, the Brodhead Association is spearheading a \$40 million campaign to restore the building and open it to the public as a center for heritage, education, and economic revitalization. The effort is intended to energize the East Jefferson Business Corridor, attract tourism, and create a gathering place for Veterans and civilians alike.

Beyond restoring this historic site, the Brodhead Association also offers transition assistance, skilled trades training, economic development programs, youth mentorship, and Veteran counseling. **Their community involvement includes long-standing events like the Veterans Day Observance Ceremony and the Heritage Military Banquet & Awards Ceremony, as well as active participation in Detroit’s City Council Veterans Task Force.** That advocacy has already contributed to the re-establishment of the city’s Veterans Task Force and a new Veterans Affairs Office.

“The Brodhead Naval Armory is our sacred home,” Middleton said. “It’s where military heritage lives—and where it will continue to inspire future generations.”

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To support the Brodhead Association or learn more about their preservation and Veteran-focused initiatives, visit brodheadassociation.org.