



# OFFICERS CALL



Military Officers Association of America Saint Petersburg Area Chapter

## JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026



MOAA-Saint Petersburg Area Chapter  
PO Box 40353  
Saint Petersburg, FL 33743  
[www.moaastpetearea.com](http://www.moaastpetearea.com)

### – DFAS

<https://www.dfas.mil/>  
1-888-332-7411

### – AARP

<https://www.aarp.org/>  
1-888-687-2277

### – ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION

<https://www.elizabethdolefoundation.org/>

### – TAPS

<https://www.taps.org/>  
1-800-959-8277

### – MOAA

[MOAA.org](http://MOAA.org)  
1-800-234-6622

### – VA

<https://www.va.gov/military.com>  
1-800-6982411  
[www.militarycoalition.org](http://www.militarycoalition.org)

### – Health Care Committee-Survivors

[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">President's Note</a>	Page 2
<a href="#">Ladies Luncheon</a>	Page 3
<a href="#">From the desk of the Editor</a>	Page 4
<a href="#">A Date in History</a>	Page 4
<a href="#">Executive Board</a>	Page 5
<a href="#">Contact Information</a>	Page 5
<a href="#">Hospitality &amp; Reservations</a>	Page 6
<a href="#">Surviving Spouse</a>	Page 7
<a href="#">Chaplain's Message</a>	Page 8
<a href="#">Legislative Action</a>	Page 9
<a href="#">TAPS</a>	Page 9
<a href="#">Florida Council of Chapters</a>	Page 10
<a href="#">Legislative Action Center Card</a>	Page 12
<a href="#">Dates to Remember</a>	Page 12
<a href="#">Luncheon/Installation photos</a>	Page 13
<a href="#">5 Priorities</a>	Page 14
<a href="#">Ladies Luncheon</a>	Page 15
<a href="#">Helpful Links &amp; Contacts</a>	Page 16
<a href="#">MOAA 2025 Calendar</a>	Page 17
<a href="#">Membership Application</a>	Page 18

## Growing Our Ranks in 2026: Inviting Officers to Connect, Serve, and Belong

MOAA Saint Petersburg Chapter

—By John Rummel, CDR (ret)

As we look ahead to 2026, the MOAA Saint Petersburg (MOAA-SP) Chapter is focused on strengthening our local presence by growing our membership and expanding our outreach to officers living throughout Pinellas County. With **76 dedicated members currently**, we are proud of our active and engaged chapter, and we also see tremendous opportunity to welcome new officers who share our commitment to service, advocacy, and fellowship.

One of our key goals for 2026 is to **increase personal invitations** to officers in our county. Many current and former officers may not yet be aware of the vibrant, mission-driven community we have here at MOAA-SP. A simple invitation—from a friend, colleague, or fellow officer, can open the door to meaningful involvement and lasting connections.

We encourage all members to **bring friends, colleagues, and fellow officers** to join us at our many chapter and community events. Participation is one of the best ways to experience the value of MOAA membership firsthand. Our chapter is actively involved in a wide range of impactful activities, including:

- VA Homeless Annual Stand Down**
- VA Baby Shower Annual Event**
- Kiwanis Flags of Honor**
- Honor Flight support and participation**
- Golf tournaments and fundraising events**
- Monthly luncheons and dinners**
- JROTC Scholarship Awards and youth leadership events**
- Veterans Court mentorship programs**
- And many other community-focused service opportunities

These events reflect the heart of MOAA-SP—supporting veterans, mentoring future leaders, honoring service, and giving back to our community. They also provide welcoming, low-pressure opportunities for prospective members to meet our chapter, learn about MOAA's advocacy mission, and see the difference we make together.

Membership in MOAA-SP offers more than meetings—it offers **camaraderie, purpose, and impact**. Whether someone is newly retired, still serving, or long separated from active duty, our chapter provides a place to reconnect with fellow officers while continuing to serve.

As we move into 2026, let's make it a collective effort to **reach out, invite, and include**. If you know an officer living in Pinellas County, invite them to a luncheon, a service event, or a community activity. Together, we can grow our chapter, strengthen our voice, and ensure MOAA-SP remains a thriving and influential organization for years to come.

*Stronger together. One invitation at a time.*

## President's Note



**John Rummel**

CDR (ret), President  
St Petersburg  
Area Chapter

Text: 904-250-6117

Email:

[jdhrummel@gmail.com](mailto:jdhrummel@gmail.com)

### A New Era for MOAA: Honoring Leadership, Embracing 2026 Priorities

#### Honoring Outgoing Leadership

As MOAA embarks on a new chapter, it is fitting to reflect on and honor the exceptional service of our outgoing President, MAJ John Kiefer, USA. Throughout his time as Chapter President, John has demonstrated unwavering dedication, a strategic vision, and a profound commitment to both our members and the broader military community. His leadership has not only increased our Chapter's membership but also amplified our overall impact, establishing a benchmark for advocacy, outreach, and camaraderie.

MAJ Kiefer's legacy is marked by significant achievements. He spearheaded efforts to expand our outreach, enhance recruiting, foster teamwork, and maintain seamless communication among our members. Under his guidance, our Chapter's meetings, website, and community initiatives have thrived. His tireless efforts and inspiring leadership have propelled our success. We offer our heartfelt gratitude for his service and look forward to building upon the strong foundation he has established for years to come.

#### Embracing 2026 Priorities

Looking ahead to 2026, our MOAA Chapter is prepared to advance a set of ambitious priorities that reflect our enduring mission and the evolving needs of our members and the local veteran community. Our focus for the coming year centers on four key areas:

##### 1. Grow Chapter Membership

We are committed to expanding our reach by engaging with virtual MOAA members and strengthening our connection to the St. Petersburg Coast Guard community. By utilizing unassigned members from MOAA's national roster who reside in our area, collaborating with local Veteran Support Organizations, and forging new partnerships with Veteran-friendly businesses, we aim to welcome more members and ensure that every Veteran and Spouse feels welcome, supported, and valued.

##### 2. Foster Community Engagement Opportunities

Our dedication to service will be demonstrated through quarterly support for cookouts at locations such as Fisher House and VA assisted living facilities. Additionally, we will participate monthly in the Bay Pines Funeral for Unattended, held on the first Tuesday at 3pm. These and other initiatives will enable us to honor veterans, support their families, and embody the compassion that defines MOAA.

##### 3. Develop a Long-Term Fundraising Strategy

We will seek partnerships with local charitable organizations, financial industry veteran groups, and local veteran non-profits such as the American Legion, VFW, and Elks. By diversifying our fundraising efforts, we can increase our impact and provide more substantial support to those in need.

##### 4. Increase Chapter Legislative Engagement

Advocacy remains a central part of MOAA's mission. In 2026, we will strengthen our legislative initiatives through Newsletter articles, email notifications, member legislative action signups, and by inviting local legislative representatives as guest speakers. These measures will keep our members informed, empowered, and actively involved in shaping policies that affect the Veteran community.

#### Looking Forward

As we welcome our new board leadership, we remain steadfast, united in purpose, and optimistic about the future. While our priorities for 2026 are ambitious, the dedication of our membership and the legacy established by John Kiefer give us confidence in our ability to achieve them. Together, we will continue to "Never Stop Serving"—honoring our past, embracing new opportunities, and ensuring that MOAA remains a powerful advocate for military officers and their families.

## December Ladies Luncheon



The December ladies' lunch was held at the Athenian Garden on December 12th. These lunches take place every other month on the first Friday and are hosted at different restaurants throughout Pinellas County. Dates, times, and locations are in the OC and on the chapter Facebook page.

Please reach out to your shopping sources and ask them if they would like to advertise. The price per size is available on the web site.

This is a direct add to over 150 military officers and spouses.

***Please patronize our sponsors!***

**MOAA**<sup>®</sup>  
INSURANCE  
PLANS

Standing with you  
at every stage.

97017

1-800-247-2192 • [www.moaainsurance.com/plans](http://www.moaainsurance.com/plans)



**AMERICAN  
LEGION  
POST 273**  
**AUGUSTUS RUSER JR.**  
**600 AMERICAN LEGION DR.**  
**MADEIRA BEACH, FLORIDA**

## From the Desk of the Editor



Dave Warren  
Editor OC

The Saint Petersburg area MOAA chapter began 2026 at a brisk pace, installing new officers at December's meeting. Commander John Rummel (USN, Ret) is the new president, Colonel Tony Clark (USANG (Ret) is vice president, Lieutenant Colonel Dave Warren (USA, Ret) is treasurer, and Captain Christina Manley (USA, Ret) serves as secretary. Lieutenant Colonel Pauline Mallory (USA, Ret) continues as surviving spouse liaison. New Advisory Council member Cathy Patton joins alongside returning members Major Tom Peterson (USAF, Ret) and Lieutenant Colonel Richard Dusincki.

The leadership recently returned from Orlando, having attended the annual Florida Council of Chapters leadership conference. In this issue, CDR Rummel shares insights gleaned from the conference, along with our priorities for 2026. This year, we are particularly focused on increasing membership and generating non-dues revenue through grants and support from other nonprofits. Additionally, we plan to enhance participation in MOA's Legislative Action Center, which offers a straightforward platform to contact state senators and local U.S. Congress representatives. Further details on how to register and take initiative with the Legislative Action Center are provided in this issue.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all members who have renewed their membership for 2026. We will also be reaching out to National MOA members in Pinellas County who are not yet chapter members, inviting them to join us for an upcoming luncheon and encouraging them to become part of our chapter.

We look forward to an active and productive 2026 for the Saint Petersburg Area Chapter of MOAA.

## A Date in History...

### February 15<sup>th</sup>

**1841** – The 1st continuous filibuster in US Senate began and lasting until March 11.

**1846** – “It having been represented to the (Navy) Department, that confusion arises from the use of the words “Larboard” and “Starboard,” in consequence of the similarity of sound, the word “Port” is hereafter to be substituted for “Larboard.” –Navy Department General Order

**1927** – The U.S. and Canada established diplomatic relations independently of Great Britain.

**1962** – Robert F. Kennedy said that U.S. troops would stay in Vietnam until Communism was defeated.

**1965** – The State Department sends secret cables to U.S. ambassadors in nine friendly nations advising of forthcoming bombing operations over North Vietnam, and instructs them to inform their host governments “in strictest confidence” and to report reactions.

**1998** – United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan receives unanimous support from the U.N. Security Council for his diplomatic trip to Iraq. Annan is scheduled to meet with President Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders in an attempt to reach a diplomatic solution to the standoff between Iraq and the U.N. over weapons inspections.

**2001** – Robert Philip Hanssen (56), senior FBI agent, was arrested for spying. He had allegedly passed information to the Russians for 15 years. It was believed that he had betrayed the construction of a tunnel under the Soviet Embassy in Washington. He pleaded guilty July 3 to avoid execution. His disclosures were later reported to have played a role in the execution or jailing of at least 3 Russians and threatened the identity of another 50 people. Hanssen was sentenced to life in prison on May 10, 2002. (OC editor note: Robert Hanssen died in prison on June 5, 2023 at the age of 79)

## Current Board Officers

**President:** John Rummel (USN, Ret)  
**1st VP:** Col Tony Clark (USANG, Ret)  
**Treasurer:** LTC David Warren (USA, Ret)  
**Secretary:** CPT Christina Costelo-Manley (USA, Ret)  
**Spouse Liaison:** LTC Paulina Mallory (USA, Ret)

## VA Office of Survivor Assistance

<https://www.va.gov/SURVIVORS/FAQs.asp>

## Executive Advisory Board, Term Expires 31 Dec 2027

MAJ Tom Pederson (USAF, Ret)  
 LTC Richard Descincki (USA, Ret)  
 Mrs. Kathi Patton (Spouse)

## Term Expires 31 Dec 2026

Vacant  
 Vacant  
 Vacant

## Contact Information

Committee	Chairperson
Advertising/Website	MAJ John Kieffer
Hospitality & Reservations	Maj Thomas Pederson Mrs. Denise Pederson
Law	Maj Bert Carrier
Legislative	LTC David Warren
Membership	CPT Christina Manley
Personal Affairs	LTC Pauline Mallory COL Tony Clark
JROTC	CDR John Rummel
Scholarships	Vacant
Surviving Spouses	LTC Pauline Mallory

## Your Executive Board for 2026



President  
CDR John Rummel



1st Vice President  
Col. Tony Clark,  
USANG (ret)



Treasurer  
Dave Warren



Secretary  
Christina Manley  
CPT, USA (Ret)



Spouse Liaison  
LTC Pauline Mallory

## Hospitality and Reservations



Denise & Maj Tom  
Pederson

Meal Selections for **February 20th** MOAA Luncheon meeting at the Bayou Country Club:  
11 AM Social; 11:30 Call to Order; 11:45 Meal served.

1. **Mediterranean Salmon Salad:** Grilled salmon, grape tomatoes, cucumbers, kalamata olives, pepperoncini, red onion, feta cheese & avocado over spring mix with Greek dressing
2. **Philly Cheesesteak:** classic Philly cheesesteak with grilled red pepper, grilled onions and provolone cheese served with sweet potato fries
3. **Buffalo Chicken Mac 'n Cheese:** buffalo chicken, grape tomatoes & blue cheese crumbles served over white cheddar cavatappi pasta

All served with coffee, ice tea, rolls and dessert. Cost is \$30 or \$35 for Salmon.

Make reservations/meal requests by Tuesday, Feb 17th evening to: Email: [mtgfoodstpete@gmail.com](mailto:mtgfoodstpete@gmail.com)

Text: 727-688-9908 (Tom Pederson)

Meal Selections for **March 20th** MOAA Luncheon meeting at the Bayou Country Club: 11 AM Social; 11:30 Call to Order; 11:45 Meal served.

4. **Mahi sandwich:** grilled mahi with grilled mushrooms, banana peppers & pepper-jack cheese with lettuce, tomato, pickle & lemon slice, served with a side of tartar sauce.
5. **Bayou Burger:** served with provolone cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion & pickle with a side of French Fries
6. **Turkey Cobb Salad:** sliced turkey, grape tomatoes, hardboiled egg, bacon, bleu cheese crumbles & avocado over romaine lettuce with house dressing

All selections are served with assorted rolls, butter, dessert, coffee and iced tea. Cost is \$30 per meal.

Make reservations/meal requests by Tuesday Mar17th evening to: Email: [mtgfoodstpete@gmail.com](mailto:mtgfoodstpete@gmail.com)

Text: 727-688-9908 (Tom Pederson)

Meal Selections for **April 17th** MOAA Luncheon meeting at the Bayou Country Club

11 AM Social; 11:30 Call to Order; 11:45 Meal served.

7. **Beer Battered Fish 'n Chips:** served with coleslaw and fries
8. **Grilled boneless chicken breast:** on a brioche bun with lettuce, tomato, onion & pickle with a side of coleslaw
9. **Steak Bowl:** Char-grilled skirt steak with wild rice, tomato, avocado, carrot, red onion, and chimichurri

All served with coffee, ice tea, rolls and dessert. Cost is \$30 per meal.

Make reservations/meal requests by Tuesday, Apr 14<sup>th</sup> evening to: Email: [mtgfoodstpete@gmail.com](mailto:mtgfoodstpete@gmail.com)

Text: 727-688-9908 (Tom Pederson)

**NOTE:** If you order a meal and are not able to be at the meeting, let me know as soon as possible. If not cancelled prior to the meeting date, you will be responsible for the meal cost

## Surviving Spouse



LTC Pauline  
Mallory,  
USA, Retired

For many years, spouses of MOAA members were referred to as “auxiliary members” when their spouse member died. When MOAA established the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee (AMAC), a focus group of auxiliary members to advise the association’s president on matters of importance to those who had lost their military spouse, the committee suggested it might be time to move away from the term “auxiliary.”

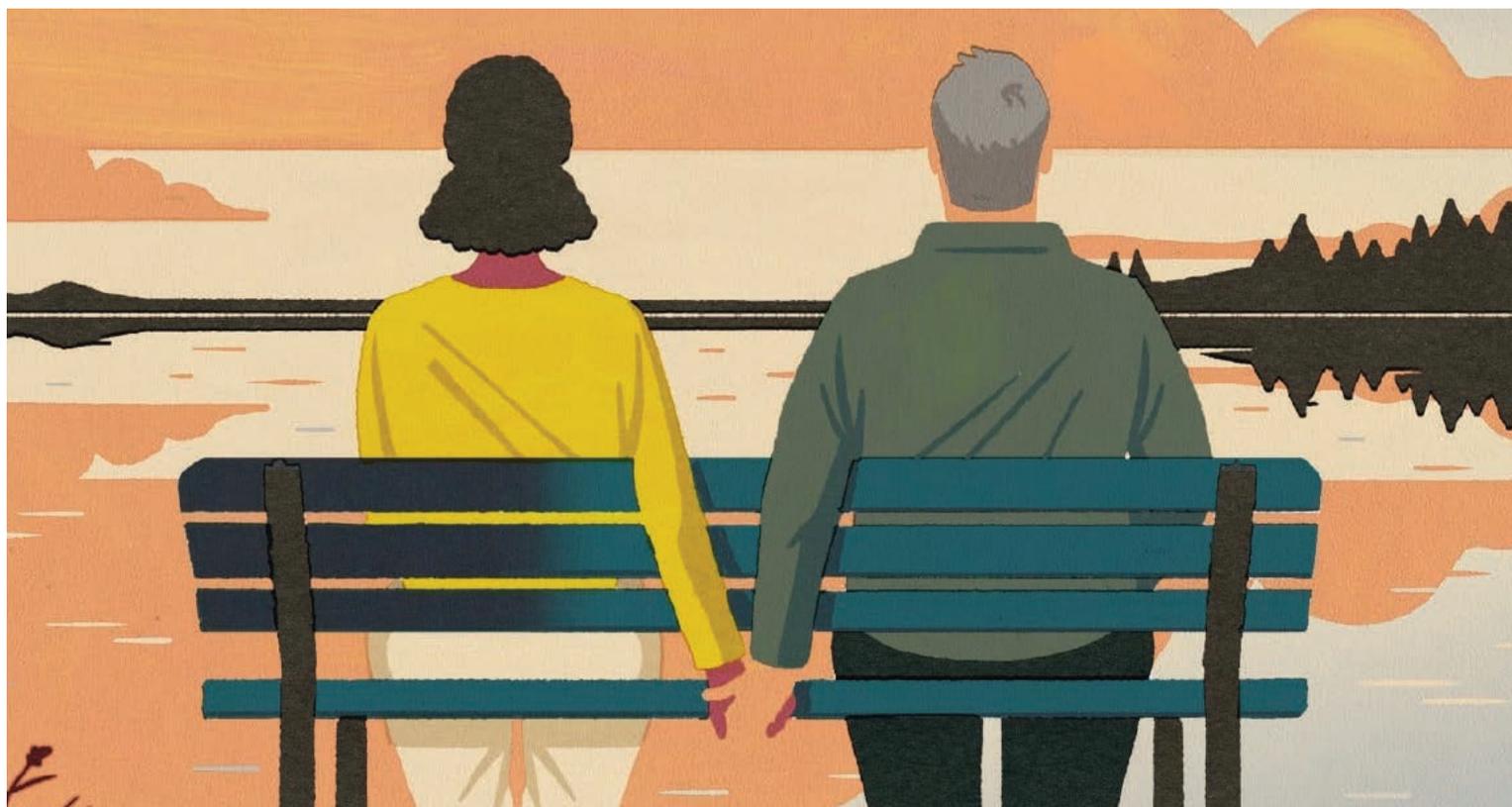


In 2013, MOAA’s board of directors voted to change the name “auxiliary member” to “surviving spouse” and declared them full members with all the rights and privileges of membership.

The Surviving Spouse Advisory Council expanded the focus from advocacy only to a comprehensive development of services benefiting the **spouse and surviving spouse community within MOAA. They also established the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter to include membership to all MOAA Spouses.**

I encourage all spouses to join this Virtual Chapter. For more information or to join the MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter, contact them at [mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com) There is an application online or I have copies that can be mailed.

- Don’t forget, even if your ID card says “Indefinite Expiration Date” you need to get a new ID card that will have new security features.
- Locally, all our MOAA Ladies and Friends continue to meet for lunch every other month on the second Friday of the month. The next lunch will be February 13<sup>th</sup>. For more information contact LTC Pauline Mallory at [pmal-lor50@gmail.com](mailto:pmal-lor50@gmail.com) or 727-365-3759 and leave your name and number and I will give you a call back.
- If you are a caregiver and would like to join together, please contact me also.



## Chaplain's Message



COL Tony Clark  
Chaplain

The Opening Ceremony for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy is underway. For the next several days, I will pay attention to sports that I do not watch on a regular basis: downhill skiing, bobsled, luge, and of course, curling. I watch because the Olympics showcase some of the finest examples of international competition and can illustrate in vivid terms the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.



Athletes from across the globe have the honor of representing their country on the international stage. Regional rivalries (like the Tampa Bay Lightning versus the Florida Panthers) are set aside for a time and we cheer for the flag, chant U S A, U S A, and cheer for National Hockey League rivals now wearing the red, white, and blue. Yes, this Tampa Bay Lightning fan will cheer for Matthew Tkachuk while he skates for Team USA instead of the loathed Florida Panthers.

While surfing the web for Olympic information and history, I happened upon the Olympic Values: Excellence, Respect, and Friendship. As the International Olympic Committee's website notes, The original [Olympic] values were to "encourage effort", "preserve human dignity" and "develop harmony". Over time, they have evolved and are now expressed in more contemporary terms [such] as:

- Striving for **excellence** and encouraging people to be the best they can be.
- Demonstrating **respect** in many different manners: respect towards yourself, the rules, your opponents, the environment, the public, etc.
- Celebrating **friendship**, which is quite unique to the Olympic Games – an event that brings people together every few years.

Striving or searching for excellence can be a tricky proposition for an athlete, a student, or a recreational golfer. That pursuit of excellence can be a tricky proposition because we often confuse "excellence" with "perfection." Perfection – without flaw, mistake, or error - can be obtained in some aspects of life: 100% correct on a math exam or a baseball pitcher throwing a "perfect game" with no runs, no hits, no walks, and no errors.

The pursuit of perfection and the search for life without flaws, mistakes, or errors will, over time, profoundly disappoint us. I have seen the chase for perfection wreck many a man or woman simply because the chase, the pursuit, the search is not sustainable over the long run. That cannot live without mistake, flaw, or error day after day, month after month, year after year.

The search for excellence, on the other hand, can be a sustainable lifelong pursuit and realization. The search for excellence can be sustainable because it involves a focus on continuous improvement in our life and becoming the best version of ourselves that we can become. Improvement of who we are and how we interact with the people and circumstances around us day after day, month after month, year after year.

It can also be sustainable because we "customize" excellence for our circumstances and season of life. An excellent 5K time for me, for example, will never rival a world class athlete's time covering that distance. But my 5K times, over a succession of months, can improve as I pursue excellence and improvement through my training, nutrition, hydration, and rest.

At the end of the day, perfection asks us, "Were you without error, flaw or mistake today?" Excellence, on the other hand, asks us, "Was today's version of you better than yesterday's version of you? And, how can you improve tomorrow's version of you?"

## Legislative Action

### Caregivers Sustain Our Veterans. Ask Congress to Protect Their Futures

Family caregivers quietly sustain our veterans' health care system. They manage medications, provide personal care, coordinate appointments, and stand watch through complex physical and behavioral health challenges. Because of them, veterans can remain at home, avoid costly institutional care, and live with dignity.

But when caregiving ends, too many caregivers face an uncertain future.

As the House Veterans' Affairs Committee prepares for a critical Feb. 12 hearing, MOAA urges Congress to advance the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act ([H.R. 2148](#) | [S. 879](#)) out of committee and toward passage. This bipartisan legislation recognizes a simple truth: Caregiving is an essential service, and serving as a caregiver should not jeopardize an individual's future well-being.

The need for caregivers is growing rapidly. Veterans age 65 and older represent an increasing share of VA patients, and most will require some level of long-term support as they age. Millions of family members and loved ones provide this care every day, often over many years.

VA's [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) (PCAFC) offers clinical support and a monthly stipend to tens of thousands of families. But that stipend is classified as unearned income, meaning caregivers cannot build Social Security credits or retirement savings during years of fulltime caregiving. When caregiving ends – because a veteran recovers, eligibility changes, or a loved one passes away – caregivers may face a sudden loss of support with no clear transition path.

The result can be frightening and financially destabilizing.

The Senate has already advanced its bill (S. 879) with bipartisan support. The House must now do its part. Caregivers enable veterans to live with independence and dignity. They stabilize families, communities, and the VA health care system itself. They should not be left to rebuild their own lives alone once caregiving ends.

MOAA calls on lawmakers to promptly move the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act out of committee and pass it through the House without delay. Add your voice to our cause [via our Legislative Action Center](#).

Caregivers stepped up for our veterans. Now, Congress must step up for them.

TAKE ACTION NOW!!!

Click this link to go the MOAA Legislative Action Center and email your rep to support this bill!!!

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/news-listing/?cat=107>

Source for this article:

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/advocacy/caregivers-sustain-our-veterans.-ask-congress-to-protect-their-futures/>

## TAPS



LTC (Ret) Judith Warren, a longtime Chapter and Lifetime MOAA member from St Petersburg, passed away on January 15th. She served as an Air Force Nurse for 20 years after commissioning through Ball State ROTC, then worked as a midwife. She was interred at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell on February 13th.

## 2026 Florida Council of Chapters

### 2026 Florida Council of Chapters Leadership Training Symposium: Advancing MOAA's Mission

—By John Rummel, CDR (Ret), President

The 2026 Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC) Leadership Training Symposium (LTS), held in Orlando, stands as a testament to the enduring commitment of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and its Florida affiliates to the principles of legislative advocacy, philanthropy, community service, and camaraderie. This annual event, now in its 49th year, brought together Chapter leaders, council officers, and members from across the state to strengthen leadership, share best practices, and advance MOAA's core missions.



#### MOAA's Core Missions: Foundation of the Symposium

##### 1. Legislative Advocacy

MOAA's number one mission is to advocate for the interests of military officers, Veterans, and their families. The symposium featured sessions on Advocacy in Action (AiA), with updates from national leaders and Florida's own legislative affairs experts.

At the federal level, MOAA has been recognized for 19 consecutive years by The Hill as a top lobbying organization, representing over 360,000 members nationwide. Florida leads the nation in advocacy, with 4,115 registered advocates and 22,570 actions taken in 2025, more than any other state.

At the state level, the 2026 Florida Legislative Session features significant investments in veterans' services, including \$8.6 million for maintenance and repairs for State Veterans' Homes, \$3.1 million in cybersecurity updates for the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA), and \$2.3 million for safe and secure medication management systems. Members are encouraged to subscribe to the Forward March Veterans' Newsletter and stay updated on 2026 veteran legislation at FloridaVets.org.

The Legislative Action Center (LAC) is the engine of MOAA's advocacy efforts. Members are encouraged to log in to [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org), navigate to Advocacy, and use the LAC to send personalized messages to Congress (note: The legislative action section of our newsletter has step-by-step instructions for registering with the LAC.) Every "Take Action" alert is an opportunity to amplify MOAA's voice on critical issues such as the NDAA, continuing resolutions, and priority campaigns. The symposium also introduces the "Mission AI Advocacy" model: Define, Delegate, Debrief. Whether acting as an individual advocate or Chapter leader, members are urged to clarify their roles, delegate tasks, and continually refine their advocacy processes for maximum impact.

##### 2. Philanthropy & Community Service

The FCoC is deeply committed to supporting charitable initiatives, from fundraising for the MOAA Foundation to partnering with local Veteran Support Organizations. The symposium highlighted statewide projects, community outreach grants, and innovative fundraising efforts. Chapters were encouraged to expand their philanthropic reach and participate in service activities that benefit veterans and their families.

A key workshop was the MOAA Foundation Community Outreach Grants program, which addresses ten critical areas of need: food assistance, health, community reintegration, legal assistance, crisis relief, housing, employment, family support, financial assistance, and transportation. All councils and Chapters are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$5,000. Chapters were encouraged to partner with other community organizations, maximize their applications, and use the grant as a catalyst for local impact.

The Northwest Florida Military Officers Association (NWFMOA) provided a compelling example: their Commissary Gift Card Program for junior enlisted families in need has raised \$15,000 and reached 600 families in 2025 alone. Since inception, the program has raised \$42,450 and assisted 1,698 families, demonstrating the power of MOAA Foundation grants to drive awareness, encourage involvement, and foster camaraderie with purpose.

##### 3. Fundraising and Non-Dues Revenue

Innovative fundraising is essential for sustaining MOAA's mission. Non-dues revenue (NDR), income from sources other than membership dues, such as donations, reduces risk, enhances value, supports retention, and enables innovation. Chapters were encouraged to diversify their fundraising strategies, aligning with the overall MOAA mission and ensuring adherence to state solicitation requirements and tax laws.

## 2026 Florida Council of Chapters cont.

Online options discussed included email campaigns, designated days of giving, virtual events, paid advertising, and local grant opportunities. In-person engagements such as golf tournaments, awards dinners, auctions, runs, restaurant nights, and sponsorships require resources and buy-in but can be highly effective. Communication, stewardship, and impact measurement were key elements highlighted in any successful fundraising program.

### 4. Camaraderie

“Never Stop Serving” is more than a motto, it’s a way of life for MOAA members. The LTS fostered camaraderie throughout the weekend by leading networking events, team-building activities, and providing a venue for Chapter leaders to share best practices, experiences, and lessons learned.

#### Why St Petersburg MOAA Chapter Board Member Attendance Matters

The 2026 Florida Council of Chapters Leadership Training Symposium is not just a statewide gathering, it was a strategic opportunity for the St Petersburg MOAA Chapter to strengthen our executive leadership, strengthen relationships with other Chapter leaders, and ensure alignment with MOAA’s core missions of advocacy, philanthropy, and camaraderie. Chapter board member attendance is critical for several reasons:

**Direct Access to Legislative Updates:** Board members received the latest federal and state legislative priorities, including Florida’s leadership in advocacy and the specifics of the 2026 legislative session. This knowledge is essential for effective local advocacy and for keeping Chapter members informed and engaged.

**Networking and Best Practice Sharing:** The symposium brought together leaders from 36 Chapters across Florida. Board members exchanged ideas, learn from high-performing Chapters, and bring back proven strategies for recruitment, fundraising, and community outreach.

**Training and Succession Planning:** Workshops on Chapter health, leadership development, Chapter Treasurer training, and Surviving Spouse updates equipped our board members with tools to ensure the long-term vitality of the St Petersburg Chapter.

**Access to Grant and Fundraising Guidance:** Sessions on MOAA Foundation Community Outreach Grants and innovative fundraising strategies will help our Chapter develop a plan to secure resources for local programs and maximize non-dues revenue.

**Amplifying Local Impact:** By participating in statewide initiatives and bringing back actionable insights, board members can help the St Petersburg Chapter remain a leader in advocacy, service, and support for veterans and their families.

In short, board member attendance at the LTS was an investment in the Chapter’s future and its ability to “Never Stop Serving.” The knowledge, connections, and resources gained will directly benefit the St Petersburg MOAA Chapter and the broader military community we serve.

#### Looking Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

The 2026 calendar is packed with events, including Advocacy in Action Week, virtual workshops, and statewide appreciation days. The Council continues to innovate, with plans for combined conventions, expanded virtual networks, and enhanced communications. The goal is clear: to unite all 38,000 MOAA members in Florida under the Council umbrella for advocacy, awareness, and Chapter recruitment.

The 2026 Florida Council of Chapters Leadership Training Symposium exemplified MOAA’s unwavering commitment to legislative advocacy, philanthropy, community service, and camaraderie. Through dynamic programming, strategic initiatives, and a spirit of collaboration, the symposium empowered leaders to “Never Stop Serving.” As Florida’s Council of Chapters continues to set the standard for excellence, MOAA’s core mission remains the guiding force, ensuring that every officer, Veteran, and family member has the support, opportunities, and community they have earned.



# Legislative Action Center Card



## TAKE ACTION!

### GROUND ZERO

Open your browser and go to [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

### STEP 1

Click Log In and enter your MOAA username and password **\*IF this is your first time, you must enter correct address that is displayed in the box that is shown.\***

### STEP 2

From the top menu, click Advocacy

### STEP 3

Select Legislative Action Center from the dropdown

### STEP 4

Browse the list and choose a campaign you support **\*IF responding to a "Take Action" Alert, the campaign will appear on screen.**

### STEP 5

Review the pre-written message and personalize if desired

### STEP 6

Click Send to submit your message to Congress

### STEP 7

Look for the confirmation screen – your action is complete

**\*IMPORTANT: Make sure cookies are enabled in your browser or the site may not load properly.**

NEVER STOP SERVING

## ATTENTION:

When using the MOAA Action Center to email your legislators about an issue, be sure to use the **code FL-23** to denote our chapter.

### Dates to remember

#### February

Black History Month

Ground Hog Day

Four Chaplains Day

USO Birthday

Feb 2

Feb 3

Feb 4

National Salute to Veteran Patients

Valentine's Day

President's Day

Ramadan

19 Coast Guard Reserve Birthday

Feb 8-14

Feb 14

Feb 16

17 Feb –19 March

Feb 19

# January Luncheon and Installation photos



## 5 Priorities

—By MOAA Staff; updated Jan. 23, 2026

As the legislative slate resets for the second session of the 119th Congress, MOAA member engagement will become even more vital to achieving our advocacy objectives.

Learn more about our top MOAA legislative priorities, and how you can support MOAA's work to pass key legislation, below. Note: This is not an all-encompassing list of MOAA's legislative efforts. For more, visit our [Legislative Action Center](#).

### **Shutdown Fairness Act ([S. 3168](#))**

**What it does:** Allows the Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security to continue paying servicemembers during any future funding lapse

**Who it supports:** Currently serving, including National Guard and Reserve members.

**MOAA's take:** The best solution remains a timely appropriations process. The bills does NOT include members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps or the NOAA Commissioned Corps; MOAA continues to advocate for their inclusion.

**How you can help:** [Send a letter to your lawmakers now.](#)

### **Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Act ([H.R. 6231](#) | [S. 3265](#))**

**What it does:** Modernizes the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), a nonrefundable tax credit employers can take for hiring target group members during the employee's first year on the job, by increasing the amount of the credit and adding military spouses as a target group. The program is intended to reduce the unemployment rate of "job seekers who have consistently faced barriers to employment" by incentivizing employers with a tax credit, according to the Labor Department.

**Who it supports:** Unemployed veterans and military spouses.

**MOAA's take:** MOAA has long championed this program, and the addition of military spouses. Continuing to offer this tax credit to employers while enhancing the program will ensure the veteran unemployment rate remains low. Expanding this benefit to military spouses improves financial stability for the currently serving military family, increasing military readiness and retention rates.

**How you can help:** [Send a letter to your lawmakers now.](#)

### **Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding (GUARD) VA Benefits Act ([H.R. 1732](#))**

**What it does:** Reinstates criminal penalties for unaccredited claim representatives who charge unauthorized fees while assisting veterans with filing a claim for VA disability compensation benefits.

**Who it supports:** Veterans and retirees.

**MOAA's take:** Veterans deserve trusted, ethical, and accountable support when filing disability claims – support that protects their privacy, respects their service, and preserves their earned compensation. The goal is not to limit veterans' ability to seek help, but to guarantee that when they do, the assistance comes from accredited professionals bound by high ethical and professional standards ... and that our veterans will not be forced to surrender a portion of the benefits they earned in service to the nation.

**How you can help:** Keep following [MOAA advocacy news](#). A call to action is coming soon.

### **Military CARE Act ([H.R. 6796](#))**

**What it does:** Requires the Pentagon to establish a digital system designed to improve access to care at military treatment facilities (MTFs) by providing beneficiaries with a standardized platform to report barriers to MTF care and creating a data record that does not exist today to give Defense Health Agency leadership and Congress the insights

## 5 Priorities cont.

needed to address systemic access challenges.

**Who it supports:** All TRICARE beneficiaries, but especially military families.

**MOAA's take:** We advocated aggressively for this priority in 2025 as part of our spring Advocacy in Action campaign. Military families must have a more effective option for reporting access problems — an option that also increases transparency to beneficiary challenges and leads to greater accountability and oversight of the MHS.

**How you can help:** [Send a letter to your lawmakers now.](#)

### **Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act ([H.R. 2148](#) | [S. 879](#))**

**What it does:** Expands health care coverage and career transition support for caregivers, and would require a study designed to provide caregivers with a path toward financial security in retirement.

**Who it supports:** Millions of caregivers.

**MOAA's take:** “Just as our veterans answered the call to serve our nation, their caregivers also answered the call to step up and serve them,” said Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), MOAA's president and CEO. “These dedicated individuals put their own futures on hold — sacrificing financial security, career advancement, and personal well-being — to fulfill the nation's promise to take care of our veterans and provide the care veterans deserve.

**How you can help:** [Send a letter to your lawmakers now.](#)

Source: <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/moaas-legislative-priorities-for-the-119th-congress/>

## Ladies Luncheon

### February MOAA Ladies and Friends Luncheon at Umami Restaurant

On Friday, February 13th, the Ladies and Friends Luncheon was held at Umami. These monthly gatherings welcome spouses, surviving spouses, caregivers, and friends. The next luncheon will take place on March 13th at Athenian Garden, starting at Noon, located at 6940 22nd Avenue North, St. Petersburg.

—Pauline Mallory, Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison





**Our Mission:** The Raymond James National Veterans Inclusion Network (Valor) supports all branches of the military, military spouses, first responders, and their families, aiming to foster camaraderie, networking, and community involvement. We partner with local and national nonprofits across the country to collaborate, support, promote, and amplify each other and fellow veterans/ first responders.

### Recruiting & Retention

Valor recognizes the sacrifices that military members, veterans, spouses and their families make for our nation, and our priority is to make Raymond James their employer of choice. Applicants with a military background and military spouses can send their resume to be reviewed by a team that understands the nuances of a military resume. **Scan here** to email us!



### Community Outreach & Engagement



Valor aims to support the veteran community nationwide through national and local outreach programs. We partner with local veteran organizations across the country to collaborate, support, promote, and amplify each other and fellow veterans in their communities and nationwide. **Scan here** and learn more about our nonprofit partners.

### Annual Golf Tournament

Our annual Golf tourney fundraiser supports veteran/ first responder nonprofits in their commitment and mission to help our community and give back to those who have already given so much. Proceeds of this tourney are directly donated to numerous non-profits. **Scan here** to learn about #GolfToGiveBack



### Military Spouse Network



Valor's Military Spouse Network supports and connects military spouses within Raymond James. This network also supports recruitment of military spouses looking to transition into a corporate career. The program focuses primarily on three key areas - professional development, recruitment, and support. **Scan here** to connect with us.

**RAYMOND JAMES**

## Helpful Links and Contacts

### National

<https://www.moaa.org/>

For general and Legislation Action Information.

**Note: MOAA is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization!**

### State

<https://flmoaa.org/>

For Florida specific information about Florida Council of Chapters

### Surviving Spouse Advisory Council

Surviving Spouse Virtual chapter: [mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com)

SSAC Chair and Board Member: [virginiagailjoyce@gmail.com](mailto:virginiagailjoyce@gmail.com)

### Local

<https://www.moaastpetearea.com/>

For membership eligibility and membership application as well as other chapter related information.

### Instagram:

[https://www.instagram.com/moaa\\_st\\_pete\\_area/](https://www.instagram.com/moaa_st_pete_area/)

### Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/925278824641972>



**Visit your Chapter's Web page and social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram) on a regular basis. Don't forget the Florida Council and National sites. chapter web and social media accounts!**

## MOAA 2026 Calendar

### 2026 Meetings and Luncheons

	Executive Committee Mtg*	Membership Luncheon**	Ladies Luncheon***
February	XX	20	13
March	3	20	XX
April	1	17	10
May	6	15	XX
June	3	19	12
July	1	XX	XX
August	5	XX	XX
September	2	18	XX
October	7	16	9
November	4	20	XX
December	2	18	13

\*EC meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Bayou Club, Private Dining Room, 1830 hrs.

<https://www.bayouclubgolf.com/>

\*\*Monthly Luncheons are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday each month at the Bayou Club, Banquet Room, 1100 hrs. social, 1130 lunch.

\*\*\*Ladies Luncheons are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday every other month. Place/Time TBA

**Always check with the [Chapter Facebook page](#) for update times/dates/location!!**

**(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/925278824641972>) or website (<https://www.moaastpetearea.com/>) for location or time changes.**

***WANT TO ADVERTISE IN THE OC?  
OR KNOW A BUSINESS THAT DOES?***

Annual Subscription Costs:

Half Page Ad: \$500 Quarter Page Ad: \$250 • 1/8 Page Ad: \$125

Please contact OC editor @ [editoroc1@gmail.com](mailto:editoroc1@gmail.com)

