



MAY-JUNE 2025



MOAA-Saint Petersburg Area Chapter
 PO Box 40353
 Saint Petersburg, FL 33743
www.moaastpetearea.com

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- MOAA**
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 1-800-234-6622
- VA**
<https://www.va.gov/military.com>
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- Health Care Committee-Survivors**
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MOAA St. Petersburg Chapter Member Participates in Honor Flight Mission 52

—By John Rummel, CDR (ret), 1st Vice President

A weary but appreciative band of brothers strolled through the main terminal at St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport after an Honor Flight took them to view war memorials in Washington, D.C on April 15th, 2025. The flight was comprised of 75 (to include 1x World War II, 7x Korea, and 56 Vietnam) Veterans that were greeted by family, friends, Veteran organizations, law enforcement representatives and other well-wishers who applauded and held up handmade “Welcome Home” signs. The Veterans and their “Guardian” volunteer escorts spent a whirlwind day flying from St Petersburg/ Clearwater early that morning to Washington, D.C., and then back again, arriving home shortly before 9 p.m.



— Pictured: COL (R) Wayne McKenney and 1st VP Cdr (R) John Rummel.

In between, those selected for the 52nd Honor Flight of West Central Florida (HFWCF) mission visited the five war monuments and memorials around the National Mall, to include the World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lincoln, and Arlington National Cemetery. For many, this was their first time seeing these memorials dedicated to their service and sacrifice while serving in defense of this great Nation.



According to HFWCF President Tracy Luchtenberg, none of its missions would be possible without the volunteer guardians who accompany the Veterans, Allegiant Air, which donates the chartered plane, and St. Pete-Clearwater Airport, which takes care of all arrangements for the veterans on the honor flight and then organizes a “welcome back” party when they return.

The experience is different for every veteran. Some are moved to tears as they touch the familiar name of a fallen comrade on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Others feel a long-denied sense of closure to a war that never ended in their memories. And nearly all walk away with a sense of pride at seeing these monuments that will stand long after they’re gone, ensuring that their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

continued on pg. 2

MOAA St. Petersburg Chapter Member Participates in Honor Flight Mission 52 cont.

Among the veterans participating in the 52nd Honor Flight was our very own MOAA St. Petersburg member, COL (ret) Wayne McKenney, a 31-year Air Force Veteran. I had the honor of serving as Wayne's guardian for this mission. During our orientation prior to the mission and throughout the trip to Washington, DC, I had the privilege of learning about Wayne's childhood, how he left New York to start his military service at the Air Force Academy, the various platforms that he flew (F-4s, A-10s, and F-16s), the brothers he lost in Vietnam, and his amazing family. As we disembarked the aircraft and ventured down the path towards the end of this journey, you could see the appreciation and joy in his eyes as he thanked every child holding a sign, every Veteran rendering a salute, and the families lining the path to the crowd of Patriots welcoming these Veterans home. It was during the culmination of this Welcome Home event that Wayne whispered over and said that, "this was the welcome I never received when returning from Vietnam." Thank you for your service and welcome home Wayne!

From the Desk of the Editor



Dave Warren
Editor OC

From the Editors Desk

Welcome to the May-June 2025 edition of the OC. It was an eventful two months for the chapter as we had some dynamic speakers for our March and April lunches. Our speaker for the March Luncheon was Ms. Linda Johnson, Veteran Flight Coordinator for the Honor Flights of West Central Florida. She gave a comprehensive briefing of the program and highlighted the next Honor Flight from Clearwater in April. Our May luncheon was attended by the Officer and NCO in charge of the Boca Ciega High School JROTC in St Petersburg. Several students attended the luncheon as their honor guard posted the colors for the luncheon. Boca Ciega High School JROTC was the first detachment to be awarded the from our chapter to purchase equipment for the unit. This donation was made possible by a grant from the Raymond James Valor Foundation Boca Ciega HS ROTC instructors spoke to the membership of the benefit to their program of the donation. Pictures from both lunches can be found in this month's OC.

Congratulations to JROTC students from Hollins, Boca Ciega and Northeast High Schools. The Chapter has awarded \$500 scholarships each to these outstanding cadets who were nominated by their instructors from each school. See pictures of the awardees in this issue.

As we roll into the summer months, a reminder is that there will be no member lunches in July or August. EC Meetings in June, July and August will be held via Zoom. Links for these meetings will be published on our Facebook page and website. Stay tuned this summer for some informal Chapter get togethers in the St Pete area!

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President's Note



John Kieffer
Major, USA (Former)
President
St Petersburg
Area Chapter
Text: 813-919-9161
Email:
johnkieffer1234@aol.com

For our April luncheon, we were honored to have the Boca Ciega High School JROTC honor guard and their instructors in attendance. To open our meeting, the cadets, in their inspection ready army uniforms, helmets and shouldered rifles, conducted the ritual presentation of the colors to open our meeting. I was struck how these high school students flawlessly carried out their roles as their cadet leader commanded orders at each step of the process. It was apparent that these students had to have invested significant time and effort to study and practice this military tradition to such perfection.

As I watched the ceremony, I realized that these students were displaying the product of their studies: to be soldiers. That thought made me recall a quote that I had come across decades ago. It was something about studying war so that one's children may study the sciences and so that their children may study art. With a bit of research, I found the quote and its author: John Adams.

In 1780 and prior to being elected as second President of the United States, John Adams was stationed in Paris as the American colonies' commissioner to France attempting to secure French support for the American war effort against the British. During this period, he wrote numerous

letters to his wife, Abigail, who had remained behind in Massachusetts. Among those letters was one in which he describes his admiration for the grandeur of the royal palace with its gardens, marble statues, paintings, tapestry and porcelain artifacts. But the juxtaposition of his American colonies' ongoing struggles in contrast with the French art that he found himself within, he concluded:

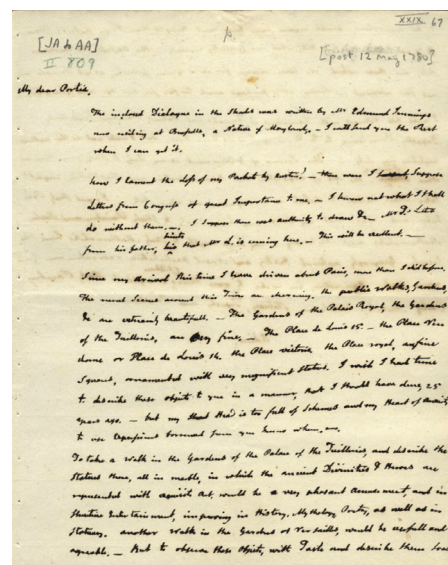
I must study Politicks and War that my sons may have liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy. My sons ought to study Mathematicks and Philosophy, Geography, natural History, Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture, in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Musick, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelain.*

Therein, John Adams had defined what it was that those helmeted young students had demonstrated at our luncheon: the study of war. A study that Adams asserted is prerequisite to provide the opportunity for others to study the sciences and the liberal arts. Importantly, those students may surely have reminded us of our own "study of war" and military service. It is that study and service that we continue with our motto to "Never Stop Serving:" an adage that John Adams would have certainly asserted for himself, and which those JROTC cadets may one day affirm for themselves as they secure the peace for others to study the sciences, which, in turn, create the framework for the fine arts.

Never stop serving!

John Kieffer
Major, USA, Former
Chapter President

*Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 12 May 1780; ref: <https://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=L17800512jasecond>]



Current Board Officers

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VA Office of Survivor Assistance

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

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Term Expires 31 Dec 2026

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Contact Information

Committee	Chairperson
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Visitation	Vacant

Your Executive Board for 2024



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Hospitality and Reservations



Denise & Maj Tom Pederson

Membership Meeting - 16 May

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

Meal selections for the luncheon meeting at the Bayou Country Club:

1. Mediterranean Salmon Salad: Grilled salmon, grape tomatoes, cucumbers, kalamata olives, pepperoncini, red onion, feta cheese & avocado over spring mix with Greek dressing.
2. Half Club Wrap: Turkey, ham, bacon, lettuce, tomato, mayo, cheddar cheese. Served with a cup of soup du jour.
3. Grilled Chicken over Villager Salad: Mixed greens, mandarin oranges, craisins, strawberries, pecans, and raspberry vinaigrette.

All served with coffee, ice tea, rolls and dessert.

Cost is \$25 per meal.

There will be drawings for wine/liquor.

Cost is \$25 per meal. There will be drawings for wine/liquor. Also 50-50 Raffle; 3 tickets for \$5

Reservations/meal requests: Email: mtgfoodstpete@gmail.com or Text: 727-688-9908 (Tom Pederson)

Please have requests in by Tuesday evening.

Recent Event Photos



March luncheon



Pictured from Hollins High School is the scholarship winner CDT/C Joeci Burney, flanked on the left by LTC Rollins (Ret), MAJ Kieffer (Fmr) and CSM Rivera (Ret) on the right.



The scholarship winner from Boca Ciega High School CDT/MAJ Ivycanna Mosely, flanked by LTC Warren, USA (ret) and MAJ Kieffer, USA (Fmr)



EC during the April EC meeting



COL (Ret) Tony Clark, Chapter Chaplain and the posting of the colors by the Boca Ciega JROTC Color Guard

Surviving Spouse



LTC Pauline
Mallory,
USA, Retired

My role as the St Petersburg Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison affords me the opportunity to be a member of the virtual Surviving Spouse on-line chapter and book group, plus the Facebook group. I was unable to check into the virtual chapter and the book group, even though you don't need to have read the book (I had! And wanted to join the chat!). My role over the past year has changed to caregiver of a Veteran – my dear sweet husband. I just didn't have the opportunity or time to be on-line during the times offered. My focus has changed over the past year.



I realized that there are many in our chapter who are in the same situation I am in and would like to offer a few of the resources available as caregivers that we have through the VA and other programs.

There are 14.3 million military and veteran caregivers, representing 5.5% of the U.S. adult population, according to a [report from Rand](#). If you find there is a need for a caregiver in your life or if you become a caregiver, know that caregivers are not alone. Many organizations offer information, guidance, and resources.

Below are some programs available to caregivers through the VA. For more information go to moaa.org (veteran caregivers) or click on the links in the article.

VA Programs

The [VA's Caregiver Support Program](#) offers clinical services to caregivers of eligible and a veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. The program's mission is to promote the health and well-being of family caregivers who care for our nation's veterans.

Its programs and resources include the [VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#), which offers enhanced clinical support for family caregivers of eligible veterans; [Caregiver Support Program Teams](#), which have expertise in caregiving and, most importantly, are caring professionals; and [caregiver health and well-being coaching](#), a personal guide who will help you develop a personal health plan based on your values, needs, and goals.

[VA Aid and Attendance](#), or housebound benefits, provide monthly payments added to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified veterans and survivors.

For you wonderful surviving spouses, you are automatically considered as life time members in our chapter. I will be contacting you in the next several weeks to check in and see how you are doing.

Caregiver Support Program Announcements



Caregiver Support Program (CSP) Announcements!

[PCAFC - "New Legal" and Financial Planning Services](#)

[VA Will No Longer Issue PCAFC Paper Checks](#)

[VA Caregiver Support Stipend Scams](#)

[PCAFC Eligibility – Then & Now](#)

[PCAFC - Phase II Expansion](#)

[PCAFC - Reassessment Update](#)

[PCAFC - Appeal Options](#)

[PCAFC - Improved Communication for Caregiver Decision Reviews](#)

VA Caregiver Support Program's Legal and Financial Planning Services

Primary Family Caregivers enrolled in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) can access [expert-led legal and financial planning services](#).

These resources are designed to enhance the caregiving experience, equipping Primary Family Caregivers with valuable knowledge and skills. By clicking the new web-based educational tool: <https://www.CaregiverFinancialLegal.va.gov>, you'll be on your way to accessing essential financial and legal resources from anywhere, at any time.

Chaplain's Message



COL Tony Clark
Chaplain

How do you observe Memorial Day?

My observance has morphed and changed over many years. As an Army Chaplain and pastor of a congregation, I led, participated in, and attended numerous large community-wide Memorial Day (and Veterans Day and Armed Forces Day) observances and ceremonies for more than 30 years.

And quite honestly, those years of ceremonies and observances (combined with numerous military funerals and casualty notifications) took their emotional toll. As I moved into retirement, I needed to give myself permission to NOT attend the large community-wide ceremonies and observances on a regular basis and make Memorial Day, especially, a more personal and “quieter” experience.

This more personal and quieter observance varies and morphs from year to year. Since I have moved to St. Petersburg in late 2020, I've usually paid a visit to the Pinellas County War Veterans Memorial Park near Bay Pines VA Medical Center. I take advantage of the walking trails and the Memorial Center to remember, pray, reflect, and mourn. Memorial Day this year will likely feature a day hike on the Florida National Scenic Trail near the Everglades to remember, pray, reflect, and mourn.

It's a day to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation, and I'm sure all of us remember specific people and names on Memorial Day. For me, one of those specific people and names is Army Specialist Jeffrey Mattison Wershow, killed in action in Iraq on 6 July 2003. Jeffrey was a Soldier in my unit, we connected through his commitment to the Jewish tradition, I notified his parents of his death, and I participated in his funeral. So yes, his death was personal, and I sort through all those memories on Memorial Day.

I've learned that observing Memorial Day is not a “one size fits all” proposition. I've observed the day on a large community-wide scale and have shifted to a quieter and more solitary time of remembrance. Both styles work because they provide what I think are the necessary ingredients for a Memorial Day observance: reflect, honor, and remember. So however you observe Memorial Day, may your Memorial Day be one of reflection, honor, and remembrance for those who gave “the last full measure of devotion” in service to our nation.

Memorial Day

What Is Memorial Day?

Observed the last Monday in May, Memorial Day honors those who lost their lives while in service to the United States during peace and war.

Memorial Day 2025 is on Monday, May 26.

Memorial Day is not a celebration but a solemn day to reflect on veterans and military personnel who are deceased.

Whom Do We Remember on Memorial Day?

Memorial Day originally honored the Civil War dead, and now honors all service members and veterans who died while in service to the United States during peace and war. This is the United States has fought, in addition to

To read more: <https://www.military.com/memorial-day>

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center Homeless Stand Down

VETERAN STAND DOWN FOR HOMELESS

**April 5, 2025
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

<p>Housing Information Homeless Resources Women Veteran Services Employment Support Pinellas Suncoast Transit Medical Care</p>	<p>Stand Down Court PACT Act Bike Giveaway Pinellas County Animal Services Lunch Haircuts, and More!</p>
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C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center Veterans Courtyard 10000 Bay Pines Blvd Bay Pines FL, 33744



This is the third year that our Chapter has supported the annual **C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center Homeless Stand Down** which took place on April 5th from 0900 - 1300. The event was attended by several hundred Veterans and over 75 agencies from the local community.

The event provides resources such as healthcare screenings, clothing, substance use treatment, Chaplain Services, Suicide Prevention, Veterans Benefits, HPACT Mobile Medical Unit/Vaccine Clinic, mental health resources, Pinellas County Animal Services, cell phones for soldiers, haircuts, housing information, DMV licensing, and employment assistance. There is also a Stand Down Court, which provides opportunities for veterans to speak to legal experts about fines and minor warrants related to a municipal ordinance or inactive criminal case in Pinellas County.

The goal of this event is to help Veterans, and their families build some stability in their life.

“To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.” —Abraham Lincoln

Learn about VA programs

- If you are a Veteran who is homeless or at risk for homelessness or need to connect with a Veterans justice outreach specialist, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).
- Visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness.
- Learn how to [get involved with housing homeless Veterans](#).
- Volunteer at one of our [stand down events](#).

Stand Down Events

Stand Downs are typically one- to three-day events during which VA staff and volunteers provide food, clothing and health screenings to homeless and at-risk Veterans. In addition, Veterans also receive referrals for health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, mental health counseling and other essential services.

Below are upcoming Stand Downs. New events are added regularly, so check this page often for updates. To add upcoming Stand Downs not listed below, please submit a notice of proposed event form to the VA Homeless Coordinator or VA Stand Down point of contact (POC) at your local VA Medical Center.



Donations for veterans baby shower at the Bay Pines VA Stand Down on April 12

Legislative Action

By: SPA MOAA Immediate Past President - CW5 Tom Hofer USA Ret.

Greetings - fellow Officers.

I would like to follow up on President John Kieffer's hand-out at the April meeting. If you were unable to attend, you will find this month's Legislative Action column complements the handout.

MOAA has just completed its April "blitz" in bringing the priorities that we members want our elected representatives to address. In fact, last week saw MOAA leadership and over 150 volunteers travel to Washington DC to meet with our elected representatives.

I can summarize some of the issues they raised. (P.S. The issues are covered in detail in the latest *MOAA Magazine* and in President Kieffer's Active Legislative Campaigns summary.)

- Improve access to health care.
- Support family caregivers.
- Expand on ending the "wait" efforts.
- Keep focus on military housing.
- Promote Military Spouse Hiring Act.

Now let's break it down...

- **Improve access to health care.** The goal is at least 7% of beneficiary care back to military treatment facilities. There are still disconnects in obtaining TRICARE and VA appointments and members can only make changes annually.
- **Support family caregivers.** There are many spouses of disabled veterans who serve as caregivers. Nearly 75% of these spouses or relatives care for veterans aged 60 and over. There is a pending bill – the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment and Retirement Act which will remedy many of these shortfalls.
- **Expand on ending the wait efforts.** This one is obvious but vital for veterans waiting for appointments who are diagnosed with exposure to toxic substances. It is especially critical given the ongoing review of current VA employment and funding levels.
- **Keep focus on military housing.** We still have

barracks that do not meet minimum DOD standards. More must be done to adequately house our active-duty forces. \$137 billion has been allocated for renovation and construction.

- **Promote military spouse hiring act.** This has been an issue since I was a newly appointed WO1 (1978) and predates that event. The biggest obstacle has always been the local Civilian Personnel Office who favor locals over transient military and their spouses. We also have to overcome the resistance of civilian supervisors who do not want to hire military spouses because of frequent PCS moves.

On a personal note, I am sometimes asked whether sending form letters to Congress via the MOAA website is worth the effort. I know it sounds corny, but the important thing is not the message, but the volume of emails that our elected representatives receive. It may seem at times that they are paying only lip service to us retired and former officers, but I believe it has long term impact. For example, I doubt that we would have ever seen compensation for Agent Orange, the burn pit legislation or the diagnosis of PTSD and its effects without the efforts of MOAA and other military-oriented NGO.

Here are a few numbers to watch in 2025:

- 2026 projected COLA – 2.1% - lowest in many years. (Last year was 2.6%.)
- 2026 military pay – pegged at 3.8%. 14.5% pay raise for E-1 thru E-4 ranks passed in December 2024.

Use MOAA's [Legislative Action Center](https://moaa.quorum.us/home2/) to contact your lawmakers and urge them to support our legislative initiatives. If you are not registered, go to MOAA's Legislative Action Center at <https://moaa.quorum.us/home2/> and TAKE ACTION now. If you have veteran colleagues or former service, they can use this link as well.

- POC addresses for our elected representatives.

Honorable Ana Patricia Luna (R-FL) – District 13
9200 113th St. N. Office Suite: 305
Seminole, FL 33772

[\(727\) 610-3980](tel:7276103980)

1017 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

[\(202\) 225-5961](tel:2022255961)

Legislative Action continued from pg. 8

Senate:

Honorable Ashley B. Moody

Honorable Rick Scott

Note that contact instructions are located on the Action page to recommend specific actions that we want to bring to their attention.

Regards to all.

Tom Hofer, CW5, USA, Ret.

Legislative Affairs officer.

KEEP ON SERVING

Dates to remember

MOAA Ladies Luncheons:

May 8 - Umami Endless Sushi & Bar
3942 Tyrone Blvd N, St Petersburg FL 33709
Time - 12:00 noon

July and August - No summer luncheons.

A reminder will be sent by email prior to each function. These luncheons are open to all MOAA ladies and friends!

Denise Pederson - Email: p3teach@gmail.com
727 656-4139 C
727 343-5969 H

IMPORTANT DATES IN MAY

Month of the Military Caregiver	Month of May
National Military Appreciation Month	Month of May
Silver Star Service Banner Day	May 1
VE Day	May 8
Children of Fallen Patriots Day	May 13
Armed Forces Day	May 20
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May

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

Local

<https://www.moaa.stpetearea.com/>

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

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/moaa_st_pete_area/

Facebook:

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



Surviving Spouse Advisory Council

Surviving Spouse Virtual chapter:
mssvc02@gmail.com

SSAC Chair and Board Member:
virginiagailjoyce@gmail.com

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!

Editorial Policy

The St Pete Area Chapter of MOAA is nonpartisan in the content that is published on our website, <https://www.moaastpetearea.com/> Facebook account (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/925278824641972>) and newsletter, The Officer's Call. The information presented is for both the public and members of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) in support of our military members. Our organization focuses on the protection of benefits for our service members and in keeping with a strong military.

Membership in MOAA and the Chapters is open to any Active Duty, Retired or Former officers or Surviving Spouse from those services shown below.

Never Stop Serving

MOAA 2025 Calendar

	EC*	Membership Luncheon**	Ladies Luncheon***
May	6	16	8
June (Zoom Meeting)	3	20	X
July (Zoom Meeting)	1	X	10
August (Zoom Meeting)	5	X	X
September	2	19	11
October	7	17	X
November	4	21	13
December	2	TBA	X

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

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

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

***Ladies Luncheons are held the 2nd 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.

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Please contact OC editor @ editoroc1@gmail.com

Honor Flight of West Central Florida

—By John Rummel, CDR (ret), 1st Vice President

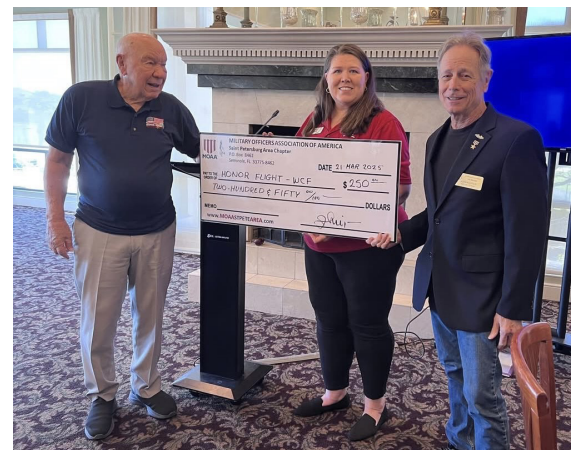
On Friday, 21 March 2025, we were honored to host Ms. Linda Johnson, Honor Flight of West Central Florida (HFWCF) Board Secretary as our monthly regular membership meeting guest speaker. One of 130 hubs across America, HFWCF was established by our very own MOAA St. Petersburg Chapter member and HFWCF Director Emeritus, COL (ret) Fred Olson, in October 2010. Honor Flight's goal is to transport America's Veterans to Washington, D.C. at NO COST, to visit the memorials dedicated to honor their service and sacrifices. Ms. Johnson provided our membership a history of the Honor Flight program and highlighted the significant impact of their local chapter during the last 15 years. Of note, HFWCF has safely transported over 3800 Veterans from St Petersburg to Washington, D.C. and coordinated a community-based welcome home event upon return. HFWCF is operated by a volunteer board and 100% financially supported through donations. She emphasized that 99 cents of every \$1 donated goes directly to support each of the four missions executed yearly. Following the presentation, our MOAA chapter President, John Kieffer, and COL (ret) Olson presented Ms. Johnson with a \$250 donation to HFWCF.



History of Honor Flight

The Honor Flight Network program was conceived by Earl Morse, a physician's assistant and retired Air Force Captain. Earl wanted to honor the veterans he had taken care of for the past 27 years. After retiring from the Air Force in 1998, Earl was hired by the Department of Veterans Affairs to work in a small clinic in Springfield, Ohio. Earl repeatedly asked these veterans if they would ever travel out to visit their memorial. Most felt that eventually, somehow, they would make it to DC, perhaps with a family member or friend. For most of the veterans he asked, reality had settled in; it was clear to most that it simply wasn't financially or physically possible for them to make the journey. Most of these senior heroes were in their 80's and lacked the ability to complete a trip on their own. Families and friends also lacked the resources and time to complete the trip to the nation's capital. Earl could tell that the majority of veterans had given up all hope of ever visiting the memorial that was specifically created to honor their service, as well as the service of their fellow comrades who had paid the ultimate sacrifice. That's when Earl decided that there had to be a way to get these heroes to Washington to see their memorial.

In addition to being a physician's assistant, Earl was also a private pilot and a member of one of the nation's largest aero clubs located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. In December 2004, Earl asked one of his World War II veteran patients if it would be alright if Earl personally flew him to Washington, free of charge, to visit his memorial. The Veteran broke down and cried. He told Earl that at his age he would probably never get to see his memorial otherwise, and graciously accepted the offer. Earl posed the same question to a second World War II veteran a week later. He too, cried and enthusiastically accepted the trip. It didn't take long for Earl to realize that there were many veterans who would have the same reaction. He started asking for help from other pilots to make these dreams a reality. In January 2005, Earl addressed about 150 members of the aero club during a safety meeting, outlining a volunteer program to fly veterans to their memorial. There were two major stipulations to his request. The first was that the veterans pay nothing. The entire aircraft rental would have to be paid solely by the pilots. The second was that the pilots personally escort the veterans around Washington for the entire day. After Earl spoke, eleven pilots who had never met his patients stepped up to volunteer ... and Honor Flight was born.



Boca Ciega High School JROTC Donation

—By John Rummel, CDR (ret), 1st Vice President

On Friday, 18 April 2025, we were honored to host COL (ret) Jay Jackson, SFC (ret) Carlos Vasquez, and members of the Boca Ciega High School Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) Color Guard team as our monthly regular membership meeting guests. A core community engagement mission for our MOAA St. Petersburg Chapter is supporting the five local high school JROTC units. In addition to presenting MOAA medals to outstanding cadets and scholarships to graduating seniors, we are committed to coordinating funding from our gracious donors to help address equipment shortfalls.

Boca Ciega's JROTC program is offered to high school students that teaches them character education, student achievement, wellness, leadership, and diversity. It is a cooperative effort between the Army and Boca Ciega High School to produce successful students and citizens, while fostering a constructive and disciplined learning environment. The Boca Ciega JROTC remains a highly successful program, making substantial contributions to students, schools, and communities, which benefit greatly from its presence.

During the regular membership meeting, COL (ret) Jackson and SFC (ret) Vasquez provided an overview of their JROTC program, highlighting their many successes and opportunities, and closing with the importance of community support in the successful development of these future leaders of our great Nation. Our MOAA chapter President, John Kieffer, who was joined by RJ VALOR / MOAA chapter member LTC (ret) Terry Carr, then presented COL (ret) Jackson and his team with a check and letter detailing our FY25 commitment to address their equipment shortfalls. As mentioned in our last newsletter, our MOAA chapter entered into partnership with Raymond James VALOR (Veterans Inclusion Network) in 2024 to support our engagement with local high school JROTC units. Due to VALOR's generous support, we were pleased to award the following funding to support Boca Ciega High School JROTC:



Item	Qty	Cost	FY25 Award
150ft Rope	3	\$180.95/each	\$542.85
.177 Cal Ammo	80	\$11.69/each	\$935.20
Transportation Cost		\$4000/year	\$1,000
		FY25 Total	\$2478.05

John Kieffer closed the regular membership meeting by commending COL (ret) Jackson for the phenomenal work the Boca Ciega JROTC unit is doing in the community and, more importantly, the impact the JROTC program has in the development of these future leaders. He emphasized how grateful our MOAA chapter is for the opportunity to support the Boca Ciega team and how we look forward to strengthening this relationship in the future.

Consider joining us for our May regular membership meeting as we host Hollins High School JROTC and present their leadership team with our FY25 award check.

A Look Back...

1779 – The court-martial of Benedict Arnold convenes in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After a relatively clean record in the early days of the American Revolution, Arnold was charged with malfeasance, misusing government wagons, illegally buying and selling goods, and favoritism to the British Loyalists. Although his notorious betrayal was still many months away, Arnold's resentment over this order and the perceived mistreatment by the American Army would fuel his traitorous decision. Abruptly interrupted at its outset by a British attack north of New York City, the court-martial did not get underway again until December 23 in Morristown, New Jersey.

1821 – Governor Andrew Jackson officially receives the Florida territory from the Spanish. As no provisions have yet been made for a territorial government, Jackson will act as a quasi-military commander.

1924 – Congress establishes the Border Patrol, under the jurisdiction of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Previously, border duty was done sporadically by the Army or the militia of the border states.

1944 – The British Broadcasting Corp. broadcasted a line of poetry by the 19th century French poet Paul Verlaine. It was a coded message intended to warn the French resistance that the D-Day invasion was imminent, "The long sobs of the violins of autumn."

1948 – The US Coast Guard Training Center at Cape May, New Jersey, was established as a receiving center for the initial classification, outfitting, and indoctrination of recruits. The primary reason for this move from the training station at Mayport, Florida, which was then be decommissioned, was to locate more centrally the Service's facilities for handling recruits.

1964 – Top U.S. officials concerned about the Vietnam War gather for two days of meetings in Honolulu. Attendees included Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Gen. William Westmoreland, Gen. Maxwell Taylor, and CIA Director John McCone, among others. Much of the discussion focused on the projected air war against North Vietnam, including a list of 94 potential targets.

2025 Dues

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA SAINT PETERSBURG AREA CHAPTER



The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a professional association of United States military officers. It is a nonprofit organization that advocates for a strong national defense, but is politically nonpartisan. The association supports government policies that benefit military members and their families.

Our MOAA chapter, an affiliate of the national MOAA, cordially invites all commissioned and warrant officers of our US military, and their spouses [active duty, retired and veteran (USA, USAF, USCG, USMC, USN, USSF, NOAA and USPHS)] in the Saint Petersburg, Florida area, to join our Five Star Chapter.

Never Stop Serving



For more information about joining our chapter, text 813-919-9161

Mailing address: PO Box 8462, Seminole, FL 33775- 8462

JOIN US

CLICK TO JOIN OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP

You can now join or renew your 2025 dues online!

Effective immediately members can renew their dues online via the Chapter Website. <https://www.moastpetearea.com/>

Go to the website on the splash page and click "Join Us" to sign up for membership OR renew. Both Annual and Life memberships are available

The website looks like this

If you have questions about joining or renewing online, text John Kieffer, Chapter President, at 813-919-9161 or email him at johnkieffer1234@aol.com



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

Month of the Military Caregiver

The Month of the Military Caregiver is observed in May each year to honor more than five million caregivers in the United States. It will next be celebrated in May 2024.

Paying tribute to the people who care for more than two million veterans is an important part of supporting troops and military families. But for some, it's also about recognizing the work they do that qualifies them as caregivers even if they don't think of themselves that way.

A Rand Corporation report on military caregivers reflects this sentiment. "Those caregivers often toil in relative obscurity, and they are challenging to count or describe."

They are spouses, parents, children, and relatives of the wounded veteran, but many coworkers, neighbors, and friends also take on responsibilities. They provide care and assistance, promoting faster recovery for their loved ones and thus saving our nation millions of dollars in

health care costs.

Month Of The Military Caregiver: What Is It?

Unlike some other military-themed observances, Month of the Military Caregiver is not a federal holiday, military bases do not give their contractors and military members time off, etc. It is an observance that primarily acts as a way to raise awareness of both **wounded warriors** and the people who care for them.

Much like observances such as **Month of the Military Child**, Asian-Pacific Heritage Month, and others, the activities and events during the observance remind us of the sacrifices others have made with and for our fellow Americans.

To continue reading: <https://veteran.com/military-care-giver-month/>



MOAA-Saint Petersburg Area Chapter
 PO Box 40353, Saint Petersburg, FL 33743



Personal Data	Applicant	Spouse
Last Name		Last Name
First Name		First Name
Middle Initial		Middle Initial
Nickname		Nickname
DOB (dd/mm/yyyy)		DOB (dd/mm/yyyy) May use 2050 as the year
Phone		Phone
Email		Email

Address

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Snow Bird From month _____ To month _____

Military Data	Status	Applicant
Rank or Spouse	Service	Active, Former or Retired
		MOAA#

Membership Dues

Member	Spouse	Member Name Tag	Spouse Name Tag	Total Amount Sent
\$30.00	\$25.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	

Local Life Dues for Member or Spouse

Age	Under 55	56 to 70	71 to 90	over 90
Cost	\$425.00	\$375.00	\$300.00	Free

Membership is open to Active Duty, Former, Retired, National Guard and Reserve, Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the Uniformed Services and their Sur-viving Spouses. Per chapter bylaws, all chapter members must be members of MOAA (national). If not a national member please call 1-800-234-6622 to speak to a service representative or visit MOAA.org to join. Note: **MOAA is an independent, nonprofit, politically non-partisan organization!**

Note: By joining, you authorize the use of your image in official MOAA publications!

Send check payable to SPA MOAA to the above PO address